

Briefing report



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD MEETING

10th February 2010

agenda item number 3

BRIEFING REPORT from Chris Few

Briefing Note – Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board meeting, 27th January 2010

The following provides a brief summary of the key relevant items discussed at the above meeting of the NSCB.

Presentation by Mouchel

The first section of the meeting was taken up with an interactive presentation in preparation for the expected forthcoming announced Ofsted inspection. The Board noted and discussed a range of key challenges notably in demonstrating the effectiveness of the Board in improving outcomes for C&YP in Nottinghamshire.

A range of areas were discussed that more fully illustrated a positive picture than that obtained from document review to date. Clive Chambers will consider this against the self evaluations completed with a view to strengthening as appropriate.

Safeguarding and Looked After Services Improvement Programme

The Board gave close consideration to an overview report and the 18 separate action plans relating to the Improvement Programme. The Board noted the positive programme of work in all areas but reiterated its view that progress is regularly reviewed by the Board both at each NSCB meeting but also outside of meetings via the Chair.

To assist the Board it was agreed that future meetings should be provided with an action plan 'highlights' report, drawing attention to key successes or exceptions. Within the current plans Anthony May noted the red grading relating to Safer working practices and information available to schools re safeguarding, which he believed were not a fair reflection of the current position. Anthony undertook to have these areas reviewed as a matter of urgency.

The development of threshold criteria (for access to children's social care services) in the context of a wider pathway to services document was discussed. It was agreed that these should not be seen as stand alone documents and that it was essential that there was multi-agency engagement in their development.

Performance information

The Board considered quarter 3 performance information. It was of particular concern to the meeting that performance regarding the percentage of Initial and core assessments completed on timescale had dropped.

The meeting appraised a range of actions taken by children's social care to address this area of performance, including the appointment of agency staff to address a backlog. It was noted that as the backlog was cleared a consequence was that as a percentage (rather than absolute numbers) the performance would drop as older cases were cleared. This area is receiving very close management attention. It was agreed that this area will be included within the Improvement programme report to the next NSCB meeting.

As part of the performance information available, the Board also considered attendance figures for agencies at child protection conferences. It was agreed further work was required to break data down further in terms of nature of staff invited and by district. The very low attendance or provision of reports by GPs was noted as a cause for concern. This issue will be referred to the NSCB GP representative for further consideration along with the commissioning PCTs.

The Board noted what appeared to be a low level of attendance by children and young people at child protection conferences. This area will receive further attention, given the importance of as the engagement of children and young people in these processes. However it was acknowledged that, given the ages of many children subject to child protection processes, attendance at meetings should be seen as only one way such engagement can occur.

Six month review of CYPP and NSCB business plan

The Board received reports regarding progress against these connected plans. Positive overall progress was noted. Further scrutiny will be given at the next NSCB meeting. It was acknowledged that there is a need to align business cycles of the NSCB and Trust to ensure timely consideration of reports. This work is in progress.

Issues impacting on agency safeguarding practice

A positive report was received from **Cafcass** regarding new child protection procedures. Also noted was the positive performance on timescales for public law allocation, although delays in allocation for private law cases were also noted.

The Nottinghamshire Police representative advised the Board of the recent arrival of a National Intervention Team in Nottinghamshire due to concerns about the Force's performance. Adrian noted that some colleagues will be contacted by the team in the course of their work. Adrian did not identify particular areas of safeguarding work in relation to children that had thus far been highlighted for attention.

It was noted that a review of the management structure of the Force was also underway. At the point proposals had been worked up there will be full consultation with partners. The NSCB Chair and DCS are to meet with the Chief Constable to discuss further. The outcome of this activity will be reported back to the April 2010 NSCB meeting.

NSCB Resource Strategy

The current resourcing and expenditure of the Board is currently under review. A full report on the outcome of this will be presented to the April 2010 Board meeting.

NSCB Training

The Board noted the increasing demands for NSCB 'working together' training and agreed to a proposal to restructure the way this is delivered to allow for a significant increase in training places available in 2010/11.

The Board also noted that an additional 260 training places had been made available for schools since November to allow their designated staff to attend such training. This has not met all of the demand and further consideration is being given as to how demand can be accommodated in the future.

There remains a need to link NSCB training with the overall workforce development led by the Children's Trust.

Schools/ College representation on the NSCB

From April 2010, the NSCB must take reasonable steps to appoint a schools representative. Anthony May advised that this was being progressed via the Education Trust board and will update progress to the next meeting.

Performance reporting for the NSCB annual report

The Board agreed to proposals for member organisations to prepare self evaluation reports regarding their safeguarding arrangements and performance, to be submitted to the NSCB by 30th April 2010. These will go beyond the current S11 self assessments and will inform the new style NSCB annual report that will be produced by July 2010.

Children's Trust Board members are asked to consider the support needs of their organisation's NSCB representative in delivering the self evaluation report. Board members also agreed to advise on the range of safeguarding performance information currently collected within their organisations, for consideration for inclusion in a revised suite of performance information for the Board.

NSCB/ Children's Trust Board Protocol

The latest draft of the protocol outlining the relationship and working arrangements between the NSCB and Children's Trust Board was discussed and agreed (subject to one area for clarification). This document will be further considered, particularly in relation to its implementation, by both bodies at the joint event on 12th March 2010. The NSCB Chair will present this document for approval to the forthcoming Children's Trust Board meeting on 10th February 2010.

Joe Foley
Manager
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board