

# scrutiny

focus on performance

**REPORT OF:** The Chair of Children's Task Group – Safeguarding Children and Young People

**REPORT TO:** Children's and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**ON:** 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**RE:** Report of Children's Task Group – Safeguarding Children and Young People

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

The report sets out the recommendations for the Children's Task Group – Safeguarding Children and Young People.

## 2. Background

In June 2012 at the first meeting of the Municipal year, Members of the Children's and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the top priorities and risks of the Children's Social Care Portfolio and as a result the Committee agreed the following topics and timelines over which the Children's Task Group would scrutinise their selected work programme topics.

Topic	Timeline	Completed
Safeguarding Children and young people	July to November	✓
Strengthening the voice across the wider community and increasing its impact	November to March	

The Children's Task Group has met five times between July / November to receive information on safeguarding children and young people. The information the Task Group received included a number of presentations, formal discussions with Executive Members, question and answer sessions with a range of internal officers and external agencies/stakeholders. This wide ranging information gathering has enabled Members to hold an informed scrutiny review. The information Members have gathered has included:

- Where the Council is on Children's services and against the Inspection /Action Plan and thresholds.

- The structure of Local Safeguarding Children's Board and policy frameworks, quality and performance, staff support and capacity.
- How this links in with the Public Health Agenda.
- A list of Agencies in safeguarding and what they do.
- The use of Think Family Model approach from Joint Strategic Needs health (Universal Service) assessment.
- Viewing a video of participants/service users.
- Receiving a presentation on what is significant harm and MASH what it does, and how it works etc.

The Children's Task Group has reviewed the information received and following in depth discussion, Members now wish to put forward the following recommendations to the Children's and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.

### **3. Key Recommendations**

1. That the Committee endorse the principles of early intervention strategies, but wish to be provided with the fundamental review of Think Family as previously requested before fully endorsing that policy.
2. That before the beginning of the next Financial Year the Executive Member for Schools and Education revisits and promotes child safeguarding through the Pupil Premium with Head Teachers reporting the outcomes to Committee in six months time.
3. That the Executive Member for Children Services considers funding partnership provision in line with the Local Authority Settlement (i.e. 2 years) and revises Service Level Agreements on that basis to increase and improve performance in line with increased length of Agreements.
4. That the LSCB consider a fundamental review to ensure it is fit for purpose and fit for the future, with robust arrangements and policies in place that will withstand the new Ofsted inspection challenges to supporting organisations.
5. That all Child Protection Plans contain Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-led child focussed outcomes and that this development be reported back to the Committee at 13th March 2013 meeting.
6. That a review of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub be brought to the Committee in six months time demonstrating;
  - Improved outcomes and the value of Quality Assessments - and therefore improved services.
  - The willingness of agencies to continue to participate in the Hub.
  - A revised toolkit bespoke to Blackburn with Darwen that can be used from 1st April, which supports robust risk assessments.

7. That the Committee appreciates the complexities facing the staff involved with safeguarding of children and the current efforts being made to promote the best outcomes for the children, however more promotion needs to be done of the actual costs of Care, as does the myth that Care is an easy answer.
8. That the Executive Member for Children Services reviews and refreshes The Continuum Of Need And Response, for Child Safeguarding and evidence that refresh to the Committee in six months time.

**4. Recommendations for the Children's and Health Overview and Scrutiny to Consider**

That the Children's and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to endorse the recommendations set out above on the issues that have been the subject of the review by the Children's Task Group Safeguarding children and young people.

**Children's Task Group**  
Councillor Phil Riley  
Chair of Children's Task Group