

Divisions Affected - All

Cabinet – 21 December 2021

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) Annual Report Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to** note the annual report of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board senior safeguarding partners and to consider the key messages.

Executive Summary

2. This paper highlights findings from the Board's annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

Background

3. Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are the collective responsibility of chief officers in the county council, the NHS clinical commissioning group and the police.
4. These three senior safeguarding partners agree ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services for children; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents. They work with relevant partners through the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board', under the leadership of an Independent Chair. The arrangement is referred to as the "Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)".
5. The report can be accessed in full on the [OSCB website](#).

Key Issues

6. The OSCB Annual Report sets out the safeguarding challenges in Oxfordshire. The local safeguarding issues where collective **action** can make a difference are:
 - 1) Working to identify and act where we see neglect
 - 2) Improving our strategic efforts to deal with the exploitation of children
 - 3) Better connectivity with schools and shared sign up to the same safeguarding principles

7. There are four key messages for system leaders to bring a collective **focus** to:
- a) **‘Oxfordshire needs traction on changing practice’**. The whole system must work together to effect change, which means each organisation must take responsibility for embedding change and learning. We are doing a lot of things to improve how we work together but the challenge is making it sustainable.
 - b) **‘The Jacob CSPR shows that we need to improve how we work together across our whole partnership’**. This includes community safety, children’s safeguarding, education and health. We need to bring strategic leadership and direction to this work to make it easier to keep children safe from harm outside the home.
 - c) **‘Post-pandemic interventions will need to be at scale and volume’**. Pace and purpose is needed to deal with the emerging issues such as increased safeguarding referrals, visibility of children through school attendance, increased referrals for mental health and domestic abuse concerns.
 - d) **‘Education settings are key partners’**. Whilst they are not named as senior safeguarding partners in the guidance ‘Working Together 2018’, we are clear in Oxfordshire that our education colleagues are central to keeping children safe. They must be part of our conversations and actions for us to work better together. The report should be aimed at the general reader but assuming a reasonable knowledge of the service and budget and of the local government context.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

8. The report outlines the Safeguarding Children Board priorities, the learning from case review work, the outcomes of quality assurance work and the summarised findings with respect to the unexpected child deaths in Oxfordshire. The report supports the Vision, Values, Objectives and Strategic Priorities in the County Council’s Corporate Plan (see [Corporate Plan](#)).

Financial Implications

9. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is funded by the local safeguarding partnership including the county council, district councils, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Thames Valley Police and the National Probation Service. The budget contributions and expenditure is outlined in full detail in appendix B of the report.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications for the Local Authority. Checked by: Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer
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