

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## INFORMATION REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

15 SEPTEMBER 2009

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN

#### REPORT ON SAFEGUARDING REVIEWS OF:

1. BRIDGEND LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD
2. BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AS THEY AFFECT LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

#### 1. Purpose of Report.

To provide information to the Committee on the outcome of two national safeguarding reviews undertaken in Bridgend by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2009, where relevant to looked after children.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

This report links with the theme "Young Voices", one of the new corporate themes for 2009/10.

#### 3. Background.

Peter Connolly, known as Baby P, died in Haringey in 2007. When the parents were brought to criminal trial and sentenced in November 2008, the media reported the details of his abuse and death. This particular child's death, though one among many, hit the national headlines and resulted in the dismissal of a number of professionals either involved in the case or who were service managers. As a result of the case, Lord Laming was commissioned to review child protection arrangements in Haringey and has made recommendations for practice in England. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly required the CSSIW to conduct a review of professional practice and political oversight in every local authority and also review the effectiveness of multi-agency local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs).

The Bridgend inspections took place on 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009, followed by an inspection of the Safeguarding and Family Support Service as part of the "Serious Concerns" protocol process, from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April.

All three reports have now been received in draft and returned, with some suggested amendments, to CSSIW. We await the final reports, which can then be circulated to Members.

#### 4. Current situation / proposal.

##### 4.1 For Members to note the following:

Although awaiting the final reports of the two safeguarding reviews, the draft versions are reliable in terms of identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

Thus, it is proposed, for the purpose of this report, that I refer to the final draft in relation to any issues with respect to looked after children.

#### 4.2 Review of Bridgend's Local Safeguarding Children Board:

This report provides an overview of the effectiveness of the LSCB arrangements to safeguard and protect children in its area. The report makes no specific mention of looked after children but there is implicit reference to them in their comments with regard to the serious case reviews that have been undertaken by Board Members and in their reference to the audit and evaluation sub groups.

All local authority involvement with a child who is subject to a serious case review must be reported and analysed as part of a serious case review, including any period spent in care as a looked after child. In addition, the sub group reviews individual cases on a multi-agency basis and this can include looked after children.

The report observes that the audit and evaluation sub group has had less capacity to meet in the last 12 months because of the pressures resulting from the large number of serious case reviews generated by the number of unexplained deaths/suicides. However, in general, the report comments that this crisis has brought agencies together and achieved very effective partnership working in dealing both with the media attention and also the high number of serious case reviews. It also states that the chair and vice-chair have a clear vision and strategy for the development of the LSCB and are realistic about the challenges that have to be met in order to implement their plans.

#### 4.3 Review of Children's Safeguarding Arrangements in Bridgend County Borough Council:

This report focuses largely on frontline services and the need to ensure that all activity is recorded adequately when undertaking child protection enquiries. Also emphasized is the need to improve care planning so that it is based on outcomes. Both these issues have a direct impact on looked after children as child protection enquiries can be initiated in respect of some of these children and we are also increasingly focusing on outcome based care planning, particularly when placing children in residential care. This ensures that the placement is commissioned to achieve these outcomes for the child placed, rather than just providing services that may or may not be effective.

In other respects, the report commended our comprehensive procedures, training provision, risk assessment and risk management and the new quality assurances framework. All the processes benefit the looked after children population.

Among other strengths listed in the findings, the inspectors saw the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee as a strength, and commented on its "ambitious programme to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, which is being driven by the lead member."

### 5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

#### 5.1 None.

**6. Legal Implications.**

6.1 None.

**7. Financial Implications.**

7.1 None.

**8. Recommendation.**

8.1 That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee notes the information contained within this report where it is relevant to looked after children.

**Hilary Anthony**  
**Corporate Director Children**  
**14<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

**Contact Officer:** Lindsay Harper  
Head of Safeguarding and Family Support

**Telephone:** (01656) 642314

**E-mail:** Lindsay.harper@bridgend.gov.uk

**Postal Address** Children's Directorate, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Sunnyside,  
Bridgend, CF31 4AR