

Notes of Safeguarding Summit Friday 6 September 2013

Police and Crime Commissioner, Bob Jones

There have been numerous high profile cases and public expectation is high, and this is coupled with a reduction in all of our resources. There does seem to be a theme across the various reviews and inspections and of a lack of partnership working - that is what we are here to discuss today. This is not a public event, it is between colleagues and this allows us to speak frankly and discuss possible solutions.

Inspector Simon Richards

Inspector Richards gave an overview of the current review of the Public Protection Unit (PPU) being undertaken by the West Midlands Police Service Transformation Team. Consultation has been undertaken internally and with a wide range of external partners to examine what is not working at present. The results were considered by a Project Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and a business case is now being developed. There will be a further report back to the Project Board on 16th September followed by the development of detailed proposals. No decisions have been taken as yet. The report on the detailed work should be completed in January 2014. The project is evidence based, using continuous improvement methodology, and is not just about reducing resources, it is about improving the service.

The Deputy Chief Constable added that the review is looking at investigations and this covers all of the work the Force does. There are seven local authorities and there must be some areas that represent good practice. The amount of variation across the region presents a massive challenge to the Force and it would be helpful to find ways of delivering a consistent level of service. Gaps in services are often linked to information sharing and joined up management. Partners need to work together, and this leads to a broader discussion on place based provision and management between police and local authorities.

Mark Rogers, Chief Executive, Solihull Council

Local authorities have historically had the statutory lead on safeguarding and will continue to take the lead role. However, the context we are working within is a difficult one – a multitude of different agendas and some very challenging times for all of us.

Regulation presents a particular pressure. Ofsted has decided to only inspect the local authority element of children's services and we may wish to make representations on this. We need to concentrate upon what is enshrined in legislation and in particular need to listen to the vulnerable. LAs must not lose focus and most not allow partners to lose focus.

Information sharing is a really important issue that has been on the agenda for a long time and we need to get beyond the "should we" question to and ensure timely exchange. There is also a need to put continuous improvement of practice front and centre. How do we give the tools to everybody who may be able to make a contribution to safeguarding and not just the experts?

Should assume a contribution and not assume a non-contribution.

LAs will continue to want to have a partnership board, and focus on both commissioning and quality assurance/scrutiny. LAs are becoming concerned about joint investment in shared priorities (eg CSE, DV) when for some partners resources are increasingly brought into the centre (Police, Probation).

In future we need more co-located and/or integrated multi agency activity and CSE is a good example of this imperative with examples elsewhere in the country of models that works. Multi-agency teams are what makes the difference and we need to be less cautious in our decision making - we know what works already so, for CSE, let's just get on with it.

Safeguarding as an area of work is growing therefore we need to work at greater pace, and investment needs to keep up with this.

Supt Tim Bacon, West Midlands Police

Role of unit is safeguarding children and adults. West Midlands Police is absolutely committed to these partnerships and the need to stand shoulder to shoulder to improve safeguarding. New developments such as the Central Referral Unit and the Vulnerable Adult Hub are in response to demand and are positive changes. There are many ways of delivering when we look around the country and we need to move to a sustainable model to protect victims. The safeguarding adult and children boards are crucial. The funding contribution from West Midlands Police is over £250k and this is a significant contribution that represents the Force commitment to the partnerships. Senior officers are present at all of the Boards and again this demonstrates the commitment. There may be economies of scale that can be achieved by more joint working for example at sub-group level between LAs. What we see far less of in recent times is joint training. Joint training is effective and builds on good practice, understanding and trust. A lot of the difficulties such as confusion over who should attend meetings etc, could be overcome by joint training.

Supt Martin Hurcombe, West Midlands Police

There is a lot to be proud of in terms of protecting adults including the new Vulnerable Adult Hub. We need to look at the safeguarding adult Boards and assess whether they are delivering in terms of improved safety for vulnerable adults. We also need to ensure that the focus on vulnerable adults continues in order to build on the good work that has been achieved. The Force now makes a financial contribution to all of the safeguarding adult boards and is the first Force in the country to do so.

At this point the Commissioner opened a general discussion and asked people to focus on potential solutions.

Open Forum

- Recent CSE arrests in Coventry were very good news and were the result of good partnership working. Discussion has a different perspective for some of those present as some people have a West Midlands perspective whilst others have a more local perspective. Ultimately, systems can make improvements but they do not make the solution. Appreciate the police financial contribution to safeguarding boards but £250k is not a lot in relation to what needs to be achieved.
- There are seven boards and 28 sub-groups with four main areas of business being discussed. The Force cannot send 28 officers to sub-group discussions. This is why the Force is focused upon assessing demand.
- However, it is at the sub groups that important discussions take place and solutions are developed. Maybe, if police cannot attend sub groups they could at least take part in some of the project work they produce? If police do not participate in the sub-groups this is worry because there should be local officers with a contribution to make. The suggestion that there could be just four sub-groups and a senior police officer attends these sounds like box-ticking rather than a genuine contribution to partnership working.
- There is more emphasis than ever before on the Prevent agenda. Health are a most significant partner and they need to be invited to future events, as part of the problem is getting health to recognise their significant role in the Prevent agenda.
- A big concern about the approach taken in the review of PPU is the broad brushed assumption that one central referral unit can cater for entire West Midlands. This is a worry, instead of dealing with a gap we have at the moment around appropriate local advice on local matters we are moving in the opposite direction.
- It is disappointing that LAs have not been able to take up the opportunity to take part in the working groups for the review of the PPU. The review is about how to deliver the best service in the area, within a context of growing demand. There are opportunities as a collective group here today to introduce more joint working.
- Simon Cottingham - also need to consider the role of other partners including health and the voluntary sector. One of the roles of the voluntary sector is that of provider. The sector has a level of commitment and ability to lever in other monies that brings a lot to the table, so need to consider wider partnerships.
- Training could be delivered jointly as there is inter-changeability in some of the things we do. This would enable partnerships to concentrate on the area specific sub groups that are needed.
- It has been agreed in principle to introduce a pilot MASH arrangement in Sandwell. When it comes to safeguarding individuals what makes a difference is a team of professionals who know each other well, see each other frequently and work

together. We need to acknowledge the distinction between managing the system and providing the service.

- A CSE task and finish group has been set up to look at ways of working and in particular the feasibility of multi-agency teams. Whilst we await the outcome of the review in January, we need to continue to pursue the various work strands before then.
- How do we reconcile the desire to operate things in a standard way at a force level with the need for local delivery? There is a conversation to be had in terms of the flexibility we need to meet both needs. We also need to acknowledge that LA contribution to the PPU Review has not been what was requested and how can we remedy that? We need to make some progress on the spectrum of solutions at local authority level and also at force level.
- Impossible to get all partnerships to agree to all the solutions but we can start to introduce some common ways of doing things. This will be easier to achieve if all partners are included in the exercise and we identify those issues that are cross - boundary. There are lots of things we can do to enable the Boards to work together and one of those things is not to ask people to attend a huge number of meetings.
- It would be helpful today if we could identify the common sets of work that we can do and move to agreement about what is practice and what is infrastructure. This might lead to understanding of how we fund the infrastructure. Also need to emphasise the importance of early help, what this looks like and what the contribution should be from different agencies.

At this point, Commissioner suggested the following areas to discuss with a view to move towards solutions:

MASH

There is a debate about whether partnerships should be co-located or virtual. Agreement in principle has been reached to pilot a co-located team in Sandwell. It would be useful to know the outcomes of this pilot and use this to inform future strategy for the whole of the West Midlands.

It is not always clear what is meant by a multi-agency or a co-located team and there may be different interpretations of what is involved. We need to have a common understanding of what is being reviewed and what is in or out of scope of such a review. Various models may be possible and to inform the review in the West Midlands it would be useful to have an understanding of these models.

Attendance at meetings

This will be largely covered by the work in progress being led by Jane Held. Need to be sure that we are all genuine in terms of working together, and not simply going to agree but then set up a local approach in addition. Jane Held review should be complete by November.

It would be useful to go on behalf of the West Midlands to joint ADCS meeting next week that need to form a West midlands structure to discuss training and other joint potential areas.

Information Sharing

This has been repeatedly raised as an area where improvements are needed, but what can we do about it?

The Vulnerable Adult Hub was set up to address this very issue, and information sharing also forms part of the work of the Service Transformation Team. There are no logistical reasons not to share but it still doesn't happen!

The richest picture comes when we add health information to police and LA information but this rarely happens. The discussion is different for adults - it is still about the what, not just the how. This is already being addressed by the current review and by the new Central Referral Unit.

Noted that there is already a competency framework for adult safeguarding and a training toolkit is being developed.

Early Intervention

Prevention will be discussed more at the Summit on 8 October. Hope as many as possible will take part in that.

Future Working

Overall it was agreed that the Summit had been useful. It would be of benefit to repeat and:

- discuss the agreed actions from today's event
- receive and discuss updated information on the review of the PPU
- receive a report from the task and finish group on ways of working
- determine whether there is a need for an ongoing meeting structure for this group

It was agreed that a further meeting take place in January 2014. Health colleagues should also be invited to attend.

Summary of actions

Pursue the MASH pilot in Sandwell	Jan Britten WMP
Mark Rogers and DCC to further discuss the detail of how MASHs could work in future, to be pursued through planned engagement of the DCC with WM met Chief Execs	Mark Rogers David Thompson
Invitation this month to attend meeting to discuss the PPU review further at a chief executives joint meeting	
At next meeting consider if there is a need for a review of the national learning to see what can work, possibly to be undertaken by a reference group rather than appointing a single person to act as expert in this field.	All
Jane Held be asked to consider whether the review she is currently leading could also addresses the issues from emerging from today. The group could be asked to consider extending its initial terms of reference to accommodate this work. This would include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance at meetings - what would be the impact on the requirement to attend case review and other meetings if the MASH model was to be pursued? 2. What are the possibilities and opportunities in relation to joint training between partners? 3. Consider and comment upon the issues raised at the Safeguarding Summit on 6 September. 	Stephen Hughes
Chief and Deputy Chief Constable to discuss information sharing when they attend the meeting of West Midlands Chief Executives, and in particular how the work of the central referral unit and the service transformation project can feed in to this wider debate (this should also include dissemination of information from DHRs). Alternatives for improving information sharing should be explored with a view to implementing improvements as soon as possible.	Deputy Chief Constable All

Pursue joint training possibilities but first consider the recommendations of the Quality Assurance review of the Black Country and any learning from the review being led by Jane Held.	All
Add joint training possibilities to agenda for ADCS meeting	Simon White
Jane Held to consider joint training as part of the review she is leading	Stephen Hughes
Pursue development of competency framework and the training toolkit being developed for the Safeguarding Adult Boards, and examine this to see if there are cross-overs that can be developed for other areas of joint training	Safeguarding Adult Board chairs initially
Further meeting in January 2014	All (WMOPC to organise)
Consider future arrangements for Safeguarding Boards, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Police capacity to attend all Boards and Subgroups ii) Future funding for Boards 	All – at next meeting