

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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SHARING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

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Summary

This report advises the Board of a letter received from 5 Secretaries of State on a joint commitment to share information effectively for the protection of children and invites comments from Members.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a duty on local authorities to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) for its area. The HWB has a statutory duty to encourage providers of health or social care services to work in an integrated manner to advance the health and wellbeing of people in Medway.
- 1.2 This item concerns a letter signed by five Secretaries of State, received since the publication of the agenda, on effective information sharing for the protection of children. Following consultation with the Chairman, it was agreed that it is important for the Board to decide how best to take this matter forward given that the next Board meeting is not for some time.

2. Background

- 2.1 The joint letter, attached at Appendix 1, from the Secretaries of State for Health, Education, Communities and Local Government, the Justice Secretary and the Home Secretary is addressed to the Chief Executive of Local Authorities, Directors of Children's Services, Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, Health and Wellbeing Boards and GPs. It highlights the importance of sharing personal information effectively for the protection of children and sets out an initiative to improve this. Local agencies are encouraged to commit to five principles for multi-agency working.

- 2.2 This letter was presented to the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board on 27 February 2015 and it was noted that this report was to be reported at the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.3 It is the intention of Cllr O'Brien, Lead Member Children's Services, to ensure this letter and its contents are brought to the attention of the Leader and the Cabinet.

3. Risk management

- 3.1 There is a risk of failure to comply with the statutory duty to protect children.

4. Financial and Legal implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial and legal implications arising from the report. However, the Council has a duty to work with partners to ensure that children in Medway are protected from harm. Whilst there are no immediate legal implications arising from the report, any failure to implement effective information sharing strategies, which leads to the failure to protect children, could give rise to potential judicial review/claims for damages from the child concerned.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Board is asked to consider how it can best support the Secretaries of State to achieve the aims of this initiative.

Lead officer contact

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Background papers

None