

**REPORT TO:** Full Council

**DATE:** 21 October 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Children and Young People Directorate, Strategic Director Health and Community Directorate

**SUBJECT:** The Role of the Lead Member and Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Adult Safeguarding Board

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Department for Children, Schools and Families has recently issued revised Guidance on *The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services*. This replaces the 2005 Guidance
- 1.2 The Document includes guidance on the role of the Lead Member in relation to Local Safeguarding Children Boards. This Report highlights the implications for Halton Safeguarding Children Board including proposed action to be taken to comply with the revised statutory guidance

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

- i) **Endorse the Portfolio Holder, Children & Young People as Lead Member for Children's Services routinely attending HSCB Main Board meetings as a "participant observer" and receiving all its written reports in order to comply with Statutory Guidance.**
- ii) **Endorse the Portfolio Holder, Health & Social Care as Lead Member for Adult's Services to routinely attend the Adult Safeguarding Main Board Meetings.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The *Every Child Matters* Green Paper (2003) launched a programme of systematic change to improve well being for every child. While it is the responsibility of all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives to ensure that arrangements are in place to provide Political and Professional leadership and accountability for delivering this programme, these arrangements will be in the main provided the Director for Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services who

between them should provide a clear and unambiguous top line of accountability for children's well-being.

- 3.2 This reflects Lord Laming's recommendation that *"the single most important change in the future must be the drawing of a clear line of accountability, from top to bottom, without doubt or ambiguity about who is responsible at every level for the well-being of vulnerable children."*
- 3.3 The Department of Children, Schools and Families *"Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities of Lead Member and DCS"* has been updated to take account of: the good progress already made; to reinforce existing practices which have been shown to work; to highlight the importance of the Lead Members and Director of Children's Services as leaders and champions for children, young people and their families; and to ensure that these arrangements are supported within each Local Authority and Local Strategic Partnership.
- 3.4 The revised Guidance outlines that Lead Members need to be well-informed about safeguarding practice in their area, to receive regular updates from the Director of Children's Services, and to receive ongoing training to help them scrutinise and challenge safeguarding service delivery to children and young people. The Guidance states that the Lead Member should be a "participant observer" of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. In practice, this means routinely attending meetings as an observer and receiving all its written reports. Lead Members should engage in discussions, ask questions and seek clarity, but not be part of the decision making process. This will provide the Lead Member with the independence to challenge when necessary from a well-informed position.
- 3.5 At the same time, the Council is the lead for Adult Safeguarding and has emphasised the importance of ensuring the safety of vulnerable adults. Although the Adult Safeguarding Board has a shorter history than the Safeguarding Children Board its work is of equal importance. This will be further enhanced by applying the same principle of member attendance to the main Board meetings.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Halton Borough Council and Halton Safeguarding Children Board comply with the requirements in Statutory Guidance. Halton Adult Safeguarding Board will mirror the Safeguarding Children Board in recognition that adults may be vulnerable.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Halton Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism responsible for ensuring that children in Halton are safeguarded effectively. Independent scrutiny from the Portfolio Holder, Children & Young People as the Lead Member for Children's Services will serve to challenge the Board in meeting its outcomes for safeguarding children.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Independent scrutiny from the Portfolio Holder, Health and Social Care as the for Lead Member will serve to challenge the Board in meeting its outcomes for safeguarding vulnerable adults

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Challenging the Safeguarding Children Board and the Adult's Safeguarding Board will contribute to children, young people and vulnerable adults being safer in the Borough

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to comply with the guidance would deny opportunities to challenge Policy decisions.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The proposed change in procedure will enable a greater degree of independent challenge of the Safeguarding Children Board's role in safeguarding children and young people in Halton. A similar challenge will apply to the Adult Safeguarding Board in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults,