

AGENDA ITEM: 5 Pages: 1 – 6

Meeting	Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 January 2012
Subject	Member's Item – The achievements of the Children's Service Safeguarding team.
Report of	Head of Governance
Summary	This report informs the Committee of a Member's Item and requests instructions from the Committee.

Officer Contributors	Melissa James - Scrutiny Officer
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Press Release (7 December 2011)
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Melissa James, Scrutiny Officer, 020 8359 7034

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 The Committee's instructions are requested.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

2.1 None.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Consideration of the issues raised must take place within the context of the Corporate Plan.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 None in the context of this report.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

5.1 Members' Items allow Members of the Committee to bring a wide range of issues to the attention of the Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution. All of these issues must be considered for their equalities and diversity implications.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

6.1 None in the context of this report.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

7.1 None save those contained in the body of the report

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

8.1 Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules – Paragraph 8.1 states that “Any member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the Head of Governance that he/she wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee. On receipt of such a request, the Head of Governance will ensure that the item is included on the next available agenda”.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9.1 Councillor Kate Salinger has requested that a Member's Item be put on the agenda of this Committee to report on the achievements and successes of the Children's Services Safeguarding Team. Further details of the achievements and successes are set out in the press release attached at Appendix A.

9.2 An officer from Children's Services will make verbal representations at the meeting.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Email from Councillor Kate Salinger dated 7th December 2011.

10.2 Any person wishing to inspect the background paper above should telephone 020 8359 7034.

Legal – NB
CFO – MC

07/12/2011

Council ‘highly commended’ for safeguarding projects

Barnet Council’s Children’s Service – in collaboration with partner agencies - has been ‘highly commended’ for its safeguarding work during a prestigious awards ceremony last night.

Recognised for its ‘Safer Families Project’, ‘Young People’s Safeguarding Board’ (Youth Shield) and ‘Multi-Faith Group’, Barnet picked up ‘highly commended’ for each of the three projects nominated for an award at the first London Safeguarding Children Awards held last night (5 December).

The ceremony, hosted by the London Safeguarding Children Board and London Councils, celebrates and recognises best practice within the field of safeguarding, while aiming to promote shared learning and development between individuals, organisations and agencies.

The first nominated project, Barnet’s Safer Families Project, aims to identify children and families where domestic abuse and conflict is a feature of family life, but who do not require social care intervention.

Run from three Children centres across the borough with the support of a range of agencies, the project aims to intervene early, providing services and support for the family to prevent the issues escalating further.

Originally piloted between March 2010 and September 2011, the focus is on preventative work for families with children aged 0-11 years-old affected by domestic violence by offering a diverse range of services which are tailor-made to meet the needs of individual families.

Commenting on the Barnet Safer Families Project, the judging panel said they were particularly impressed with the ‘extremely friendly atmosphere’ of the project, noting that ‘it feels like a family there and everyone was smiling.’

The second nomination was for Youth Shield, Barnet’s Youth Safeguarding Panel run in partnership with CommUNITY Barnet, which works alongside the Barnet

Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) to keep children and young people safe as well as to communicate the work of the board to the youth community.

Since their formation in 2009, Youth Shield has been active in consulting with groups of young people and service users. Their influence has already reached Barnet Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panel, where Youth Shield members spoke about their role and began to discuss how best to link their work with that of council committees.

The judges highlighted that 'the drive and commitment of the young people involved was evident throughout, and they were particularly heartened to see the strong commitment to ensuring that their work made a real impact to local services'.

The final recommendation, Barnet's multi-faith project run in partnership with voluntary and community organisations, aims to promote better engagement with local communities and faith groups around safeguarding, helping to support their access to training, resources and advice.

The wider goal is to strengthen safeguarding arrangements for children in these communities through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of what helps to keep children safe.

Judges were impressed with the 'imaginative approach to community engagement, and particularly with the clear commitment to tailoring services around the needs of the community', taking safeguarding messages out to synagogues and mosques rather than expecting these groups to come to them.

Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, Councillor Andrew Harper, said:

"It's a fantastic achievement for our Children's Service to be highly recommended for its safeguarding practices on a London-wide level. Despite tough economic times, the council is committed to ensuring we meet our obligations towards those most in need of help and support. These acclaims demonstrate we are not only achieving our goals but we are working to a very high and well regarded standard."