

## Test of Assurance

## Six Key Questions (Statutory Guidance – DfE – April 2013)

Assurance Parameters	Evidence Provided in 2015	Risk Assessment	Remarks/Action Plan
Clarity about how senior management arrangements ensure that the safety and the educational, social and emotional needs of children and young people are given due priority and how they enable staff to help the local authority discharge its statutory duties in an integrated and coherent way.	The two senior posts of AD for Safeguarding and Head of Education, Learning and Skills retain the direct responsibility for the safety and the educational, social and emotional needs of young people. They will both be direct reports to the new post and appropriate supervision and line management arrangements will be put in place. A clear delivery plan will be in place for each service area based upon clarity of the strengths and weaknesses of the services. The Executive Director will maintain an overview of these arrangements and appraises the independent Chair of the TSCB.	Good	To be monitored and appraised at first year review.
Clarity about how the local authority intends to discharge its children's services functions and be held accountable for them from political, professional, legal and corporate perspectives (including where, for example, services are commissioned from external providers or mutualised in an arm's length body)	Staff, partners and Councillors are clear about structure through regular briefings (staff ) involvement in multi-agency forums (partners) or through a variety of reporting mechanisms to Councillors (Overview and Scrutiny, Members Conversations, Corporate Parenting Group, Policy Development Group and Members Monitoring Group). Specific training and briefing for Councillors is arranged on Safeguarding. The work of the Social Work Innovation Fund Torbay (SWIFT) is extending and enhancing the partnership for Childrens, young people and	Good	On-going monitoring and appraisal at first year review.

	families, exploring new opportunities for funding, working practices and governance		
The seniority of and breadth of responsibilities allocated to individual post holders and how this impacts on their ability to undertake those responsibilities (especially where a local authority is considering allocating any additional functions to the DCS and LMCS posts)	The new post will carry a range of responsibilities from Public Health to Adult Social Care to Housing and Children and Young People. All of which have an explicit interrelationship that will ensure clarity of planning and more effective use of resources. The work of the SWIFT project will, in the course of the next 18 months, either integrate Children's Services with the ICO or look at an arms length arrangement to ensure the new role (joint DCS/DHS) is focussed on commissioning the right service with operational day-to-day management under the AD Safeguarding. The financial/strategic focus for this work will be through SWIFT.	Good	Full appraisal at first year review in parallel with SWIFT progress report.
The involvement and experiences of children and young people in relation to local services	There are a wide variety of measures to ensure the involvement and experience of children can influence the development of local services. These are detailed in the Participation Strategy and the Children's Services Self Evaluation Form (SEF). Within this document, the service area is graded as "requires improvement" and is currently the focus of on-going work within Children's Services.	Requires Improvement	To be monitored in parallel with Ofsted preparation.
Clarity about child protection systems, ensuring that professional leadership and practice is robust and can be challenged on a regular basis, including an appropriate focus on offering early help and	The development of the SWIFT project is strengthening the focus on partnership work through offering a new early help approach. This is now in the formative stages of development and will be rolling out in the next few months. Child protection systems are constantly under review through a comprehensive internal and external	Good	Key focus for the role of the TSCB Independent Chair at the first review.

<p>working with other agencies in doing so.</p>	<p>quality assurance system. Operational management and practice are supported via Tri.x online procedures and supplemented by a comprehensive programme of single and multi-agency training.</p> <p>There is a named Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) based within Children’s Services alongside the Independent Reviewing Officer specifically to respond to professional allegations within the system.</p>		
<p>The adequacy and effectiveness of local partnership arrangements (e.g. the local authority’s relationship with schools, the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB), the courts, children’s trust co-operation arrangements, Community Safety Partnerships, health and wellbeing boards, Young Offending Team partnerships, police, probation, Multi-Agency Public Protection arrangements and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) and their respective accountabilities</p>	<p>The TSCB leads the partnership arrangements/scrutiny for safeguarding. It has a clear business plan and reports regularly through the Health and Wellbeing Board. Partners are involved in a range of subgroups and are fully participative. It would assess itself as “requiring improvement” and the Independent Chair is taking action to address this. There are comprehensive partnership arrangements with schools to address safeguarding behaviour issues and to focus on school improvement through the Teaching School Alliance. Children’s Services are represented at all partnership boards and within the commissioning arrangements for the future.</p>	<p>Requires Improvement</p>	<p>On-going monitoring and focus for first annual review.</p>