

Information

for County Councillors

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From:	Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services
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To:	All County Councillors

Effective support for children and families in Somerset – Thresholds for assessment and services

On Thursday 11 February 2016, the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) will launch some new Thresholds guidance for professionals and managers in every agency who work with children, young people and their families. The guidance will assist professional judgment around the provision of effective support for children and families in Somerset.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges within a family, and is far more effective in promoting the wellbeing of a child or young person and far more cost effective than reacting later. Embedding Early Help is one of the nine priorities for improving Children's Services in Somerset.

The guidance, called "Effective support for children and families in Somerset", aims to make existing thresholds of need clearer for professionals so they can identify if a child or family might need some help and support. Understanding when children and families might need support can ensure they are given the right service, in the right place, at the right time.

In order to ensure the new Threshold guidance is properly embedded, a number of "train the trainer" sessions have been organised in February and March. This will ensure all agencies have staff within their organisation trained in Thresholds, who can then cascade their knowledge on to their colleagues in the context of their organisations.

To complement the launch of the Threshold document, a new phone line has been launched. The Children's Safeguarding Leads' Consultation Line, which is staffed by qualified social workers, will provide Safeguarding Leads in all

agencies with support and advice if they are unsure whether or not they need to make a referral to Children's Social Care.

The consultation line is not a short cut to access Children's Social Care, it is an advice service. If the social worker establishes that a referral to Children's Social Care is required they will transfer the call to Somerset Direct so that a referral can be taken.

The new Threshold document can be viewed here:

www.somerset.gov.uk/sscbthresholds

The new Consultation Line for Safeguarding Leads phone number is 0300 123 3078

For more information please contact:	Name: Julie Breeze Email: jbreeze@somerset.gov.uk Tel Number: 01823 359113
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