



Leeds
Safeguarding
Children Board



LSCB ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Jane Held, Independent Chair of Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (2010-15)

Foreword

I am delighted to be able to present to the Board and all partners as well as to the children, young people, families and communities, my last Annual Report as the Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Board.

For the second year running we have a good story to tell about the work of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board and in this report we set out the progress made locally over the year.

There will always be a lot to do, and many challenges ahead, but the report demonstrates the good work that was done by the Board and through all Board partners to protect children and young people and promote their welfare in 2014/15.

Central to our work is the Student LSCB, and the young people who are members of it. They have challenged us, worked with us, set their own key priorities and, over the year, influenced what we do and how we do it. We have also been externally

inspected by Ofsted and found to be good, which provides independent verification of the progress we have made.

Leeds continues to be a city that is ambitious for its children and young people, and has invested in children because they see children as being the economic future of the City.


Despite the challenges of public sector expenditure pressures, and a constantly changing policy world, across the partnership we have collectively in Leeds “kept the faith” in terms of being both a child friendly city and a City that is the best place to grow up. Our leadership has remained stable, our vision enduring and our multi-agency commitment to shared principles, behaviours and ways of working retained.

This report shows how that collective ambition and strong leadership coupled with high support and high challenge by the LSCB, has had a significant impact

on the outcomes achieved for its children and young people.

The LSCB too is steadily continuing to build on the progress of previous years in improving in its ability to both support that progress and actively scrutinise and challenge it. Despite the challenges, I am able to say with confidence that in Leeds, children’s welfare is a priority for every organisation and that safeguarding children and young people is central to being a Child Friendly City.

The more we improve the more we realise just how much more we have to do. Over the next year our key challenge is to move from a “good” organisation and partnership towards being great. I am incredibly proud to have had the privilege of being the LSCB Chair for the last 5 years, and I know that children over the next few years will get an even better deal than they do now, where their safety is more assured, their opportunities realised and their welfare maximised wherever they live in Leeds.



“Leeds continues to be a city that is ambitious for its children and young people, and has invested in children because they see children as being the economic future of the City.”



Introduction

Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. It is independently chaired (as required by statute) and consists of senior representatives of all the principle stakeholders working together to safeguard children and young people in the City. Its statutory objectives are to:

- Co-ordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
- To ensure the effectiveness of that work

Working Together (2015) requires each Local Safeguarding Children Board to produce and publish an Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. The guidance states that the Annual Report 'should provide a rigorous and

transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action'. The Report should:

- Recognise achievements and progress made as well as identifying challenges
- Demonstrate the extent to which the functions of the LSCB are being effectively discharged
- Include an account of progress made in implementing actions from Serious Case Reviews
- Provide robust challenge to the work of the Children's and Families Trust Board.

This Executive Summary Report summarises the progress made by Leeds LSCB in 2014/15 through and with its partners and analyses the effectiveness of:

- Safeguarding arrangements in the city
- The LSCB itself in supporting and coordinating safeguarding arrangements and in monitoring and challenging those who provide them.

It is a summary of the full Annual Report which is available on the LSCB website along with significant amounts of additional information attached as appendices.



“Services in Leeds for children and young people have been on a steady journey of improvement since 2009”

Context and strategic overview



Leeds is the second largest city council in England, with a population that has increased rapidly in recent years. The population of children and young people aged 0-19 is 186,000. Within this, the number of very young children (0-4 year olds) has increased faster with over 10,000 children being born in Leeds every year and the city has a significantly higher proportion of 15–25 year olds compared to both the regional and national averages, with a total population of 289,000 0-25 year olds living in the city.

Leeds is a very diverse city, with over 130 nationalities included in a minority ethnic population of 19%. The proportion of pupils in Leeds schools that are of minority ethnic heritage has increased since 2005 to 28.1%. A higher proportion of primary than secondary pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Some 16% of pupils have English as an additional language and over 170 languages are

recorded as spoken in Leeds schools. The largest minority ethnic groups in the city are the Indian and Pakistani communities, but more recently there has also been a significant increase in economic migration, mainly from Eastern Europe.

Overall around 33,000 children and young people live in poverty (20% of those aged 0 – 16). There is significant variation in the circumstances of children and young people living in Leeds, with 37% living in the 20% most deprived areas of the city and 26% in the 10% most deprived areas in the country. In some areas the proportion of children and young people subject to Child Protection Plans is three times the Leeds average, low birth weight twice as high and obesity rates 50% higher than average.

Within that context the City's services for children and young people have been on a steady journey of improvement. Assessed as inadequate by Ofsted in

2009, each year since has seen a step change in the quality and effectiveness of its services. Improvement has been driven through:

- The City's ambition to become a Child Friendly City
- The Children and Young People's Plan, which has provided stability, sustained focus and strength of purpose based on shared principles
- The use of a restorative practice approach (working *with* children, young people and their families).

Implementing the Children and Young People's Plan

As a key stakeholder, the LSCB has contributed to the development of a new Children and Young People's Plan for 2015 – 19, which has built on the key elements of the previous plan and highlights three underpinning behaviours:

- Listening and responding to the voice of the child
- A Restorative Practice approach: doing with not for or to children, young people and their families
- An Outcomes Based Accountability approach which asks is anyone better off as a result of work undertaken.

The objectives of the plan are clear, with an appropriate focus on keeping children and young people safe from harm.

There is a partnership agreement that the children's safeguarding system needs to be 're-balanced' in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and this is articulated through one of three 'obsessions'; to safely and appropriately reduce the number of children and young people who are 'looked after.' The development and implementation of the Early Help approach (to ensure that children and young people receive the right service at the right time) is already having a positive impact and will be developed further during 2015-18.

This approach is supported and monitored by the LSCB through annual reports and challenges to other strategic bodies in the city.

LSCB Partners

The Public Sector continues to face the challenges of financial restriction and increasing demand for services that were identified and considered in the 2014 Annual Report. In their annual safeguarding reports to the LSCB, partner agencies have identified the key challenges that they are facing and the steps that they are taking to respond to them. Common challenges identified include:

- Engaging more effectively with children and young people in the review and planning of services
- Responding to budget pressures, undertaking further restructuring of services and demonstrating value for money
- Better evidencing of outcomes for children and young people and developing an outcomes focus to care planning
- Contributing to the implementation and embedding of the Think Family, Work Family protocol
- Supporting the further development of the Front Door Safeguarding Hub and evaluating the impact of multi-agency engagement in this
- Considering how best to contribute to multi-agency approaches to Children in Need.

All partners stress the importance of good multi-agency working in responding effectively to the needs of vulnerable children and young people and in improving outcomes for them. Common areas of development and progress made includes:

- Embedding a restorative culture
- Engaging with the Early Help approach
- Developing more comprehensive and robust quality assurance and audit processes
- Establishing a more qualitative approach to auditing, focusing on outcomes for children and young people as well as compliance with procedures and timescales
- Reviewing the effectiveness of commissioned services
- Learning from complaints and compliments.

The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Leeds

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Leeds, evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources which are analysed together to assess the whole system:

- Engagement with children and young people
- Monitoring and reviewing
- Performance management and quality assurance:
 - How much did we do?
 - How well did we do it?
 - What difference has it made?
- External inspections and reviews.



Engagement of children and young people

Young people (students at Leeds City College), through the 'Student LSCB' (Voice & Influence sub group), have attended and presented at Board meetings throughout 2014/15, contributing to its work through:

- Involvement in the selection of lay members and a new independent LSCB Chair
- Seeking assurance from partners about safeguarding arrangements from a young person's perspective
- Assisting in the delivery of workshops at the LSCB annual conference
- Developing campaigns on behalf of West Yorkshire LSCBs and Police Force which raised awareness about the dangers of:
 - On line grooming ('Who are you really talking to?')
 - Sexting ('Think before you send') which targets teenagers on the consequences of sending inappropriate images of themselves.
- Evaluating the accessibility for children and young people of complaints processes used by partners
- Making proposals for partners to consider establishing young people's advisory groups in order to support the making of short videos to highlight key issues from a young person's perspective.

All the annual safeguarding reports from partners talk

about the importance of engaging with children and young people when reviewing and planning services. There is a consensus that more needs to be done in this area, but also evidence that initiatives are being developed and implemented eg:

- Involvement in the Children's Commissioner's take over day in November 2014
- The establishment of formal structures to capture young people's views on shaping services
- Engagement with other strategic bodies
- Undertaking surveys of young people's views about services and developing action plans to respond to the results
- Improving the collation and assessment of existing feedback from young people to more easily identify areas for improvement
- Establishing children and young people's sections on websites.



Monitoring and reviewing

Reviewing Child deaths

The Child Death Overview Panel continues to see an overall reduction in the number of deaths of children and young people in the city (although there was a slight increase in 2014/15). This is an encouraging trend, in line with that experienced nationally, to which the work of many sectors, agencies and organisations has contributed.

By far the greatest number of deaths occurs to very young babies aged under a month, with babies of very young mothers and of non-white ethnicity being at greatest risk. From a public health perspective, the single factor most amenable to change in the neonatal age group is tobacco, with nearly a quarter of all neonatal deaths occurring to babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy. Smoking is, of course, also a contributory factor across many other prominent causes of death such as sudden infant death and deaths from infections. There is no doubt that efforts to prevent smoking need to be maintained and renewed.

Among older children, once again two particular areas emerge as priorities for preventive action. The first of these is traumatic accidental injuries, of which the biggest group is road traffic accidents with around half of victims being pedestrians and nearly a quarter motorcyclists. The other priority area is the prevention of sudden infant deaths, with household smoking and bottle feeding being the two most common risk factors amenable to preventive action. The pattern may well now be familiar, but there is no place for complacency. Indeed, it is only through renewed efforts to address these issues that a sustained downward trend in childhood deaths will be sustained.

Recommendations have been made and progressed in support of public health campaigns to draw attention in the wider community to these risks.

Managing Allegations against professionals

The Designated Officer team (based in the Local Authority) is well established and provides a co-ordination role for partners dealing with allegations made against professionals. The 2014/15 annual report highlighted that:

- The number of notifications to the service increased by 20% to 521
 - 80% of these were from agencies which have the most contact with or access to children and young people (eg education, foster carers, early years settings, residential provision)
 - 40% of notifications relate to allegations of physical abuse and 17% to inappropriate behaviour (including ICT/internet use).
- 35% of notifications received resulted in Initial Allegations Management Meetings, where there is a clear indication that a child or young person has suffered significant harm or that the behaviour of a professional may pose a significant risk to a child.
- 13% of notifications resulted in a Police investigation and to date there have been 4 criminal convictions.

Learning from Serious Incidents involving Children and Young People

One of the key functions of the LSCB is to ensure that lessons are learnt from the circumstances of serious child care incidents that will improve future practice and reduce the risk of such incidents re-occurring in the future. In 2014/15 the LSCB published two Serious Case Reviews (available on the LSCB website) and completed 3 Local Learning Lessons Reviews. The learning from these reviews can be summarised as:

- Child protection processes must be undertaken in a timely manner (eg Strategy Meetings, child abuse investigations) and informed by good sharing of information between agencies.
- Techniques and interpretation of findings in child protection medicals to be consistent with Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health guidelines.
- To be effective assessments must be multi-agency and timely with good analyses and inclusion of the child's wishes and feelings.
- Professionals from different agencies to be better able to effectively challenge each other.
- Core groups need improve the effectiveness of child protection plans and avoid 'drift'.
- Where Child in Need Plans prove to be ineffective the timely consideration of child protection processes need to be considered.
- Better co-ordination of multi-agency services is required when care leavers are leading an unsettled and chaotic life characterised by frequent and recurring crises.
- Greater clarity is required about the use of witness protection schemes to ensure they do not have the unintended consequence of hindering information sharing and multi-agency working.
- It is important that professionals with relevant information and understanding about a case input and attend Child Protection Conferences as appropriate.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance

Partner Compliance with Statutory Safeguarding Requirements

Effective practice to safeguard children and young people is dependent on partners having appropriate policies, procedures and arrangements in place to support their staff. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 set out the requirements for agencies and form the basis for regular self-auditing of compliance.

A full self-assessment of statutory partners' compliance with s(11) responsibilities was undertaken in April / May 2014 which demonstrated a journey of improvement since their previous full Section 11 assessment in 2012/13. Overall, full compliance against the standards was demonstrated in 92% of the returns, with partial compliance in 7% and no compliance in 1%. Partner agency annual safeguarding reports include issues raised by the assessment and work undertaken to respond.

The key themes identified as requiring review or improvement by organisations included:

- Seeking the views of children and families when the organisation is developing a new service or piece of work is an area for development.
- The need to ensure that staff are encouraged and required to attend child protection and safeguarding training (as appropriate)
- To ensure that children are being made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.

Agencies commissioned by statutory partners (often from the third sector) are also required to undertake self-assessments, with 186 being completed by March 2015 and a further 125 in progress. Assessments are dip sampled by commissioning organisations.

All partners that submit a Section 11 self-assessment also provide an action plan on how they will address areas that they have identified as requiring improvement or review. In 2015/16 the Performance Management sub group is undertaking a thematic evaluation of partners' assessments focusing on arrangements for children and young people with complex needs.

Schools complete a self-assessment against the requirements of s(175) of the Education Act 2002 which provides the starting point for supporting all schools to ensure safeguarding arrangements are secure. In 2013/14 there was a 100% return which identified that:

- Over 93% have updated and relevant policy and procedures in place
- 98% have identified designated staff and governors with key responsibilities for safeguarding
- 98% have head teachers trained in 'safer recruitment'.

The Children's Services Integrated Safeguarding Unit (Education Safeguarding Team) collates the returns from schools and provides advice and support as requested.

Evaluating the Child's Journey through the Safeguarding System

Reviewing how the safeguarding system responds when concerns are identified about vulnerable children and young people throws light on how they may become the subject of statutory intervention and contributes to an understanding of the extent to which Early Help services are effective in addressing and managing risk and need.

The development of a Children's Services multi-agency Duty and Advice team has supported front line practice to ensure that children's and family's needs are met with an appropriate and proportional response. A skilled team of multi-agency professionals from social care, health and police are co-located, which has strengthened decision making where there are concerns about a child or young person. Weekly multi-agency referral reviews look at the consistency of decision making at the front door. Increased practitioner confidence in contacting the duty and advice team was evidenced in the LSCB practitioner questionnaire (2014).

Crucial to ensuring that children and young people receive the right service at the right time is the development and implementation of the Leeds 'Early Help Approach' which was launched by the LSCB in May 2014 and is underpinned by multi-agency locality (cluster) arrangements. There are currently 25 Cluster partnerships within Leeds based around a family of schools within a locality. Evidence from the clusters demonstrates earlier engagement with families is growing and numbers of children and young people accessing support from local cluster guidance and support meetings are increasing year on year. The number of children and young people supported through Early Help Assessments during 2014/15 was 1,110, a significant increase from 400 in 2013/14. Family Intervention Service worked with 452 children and the Troubled Families team has seen sustainable change in 2,190 families they have worked with.

The LSCB review of cluster working identified a children's workforce 'clearly committed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. Cluster managers are very supportive of their staff and operate a 'high support, high challenge' management style. Nevertheless, concerns were raised about how consistent services were across the city and the continuing pressure to prioritise statutory cases which limits the ability to respond on an early help basis.

Challenges have been highlighted in working effectively in a multi-agency environment and the need to engage more effectively with Adult Services where there is compromised parenting through drug / alcohol / domestic violence and mental health issues. This emphasised the need to embed the relaunched Think Family Work Family protocol.

The Early Help approach will receive a considerable boost in 2015/16 with the implementation of an expanded Family Group Conference service facilitated by Children's Services successful Innovations Fund bid.

Children and Young People subject to a Child Protection Plan

The overall number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan (because they are at risk of suffering significant harm) can also give an indication of the effectiveness of the system as a whole. The number in Leeds increased steadily from 2009 – 2011 to a level (1,171) considerably higher than for comparator authorities. The introduction of the Strengthening Families Approach helped to stabilise and then gradually reduce the number of children and young people requiring this level of statutory intervention. At the end of 2014/15 the number stood at 641, a level slightly lower than for statistical neighbours.

The LSCB has been keen to be assured that this reduction is happening in a safe and appropriate manner. A series of multi-agency audits 2012 – 15 indicate that the quality of services and outcomes for this group are steadily improving.

There is an increased focus on including the views of children and young people to ensure that risk and how to manage it is more clearly identified and to receive feedback from them and their families about the effectiveness of child protection conferences.

However, both the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Ofsted noted that that attendance at child protection conferences by key professionals needed to be more consistent. The Children's Services Integrated Safeguarding unit is exploring how to improve the invite process to ensure that key professionals are invited contribute to conferences in a timely way. This will be a key area for the LSCB to monitor during 2015/16.

Children and Young People who are Looked After

Similarly, the number of children and young people who need to be 'looked after' in Leeds had increased steadily up to 2012 (1474), a figure significantly higher than for statutory neighbours. The implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan (2011-15) has been successful in progressing one of its obsessions (to safely and appropriately reduce this number) to 1,259 at the end of 2014/15. Moreover, there is clear evidence, through LSCB auditing and external inspection that services provided to this group are of a high quality.

Performance reports to the LSCB have noted:

- Improved placement stability with children and young people subject to less moves while in care.
- Better use of kinship care, foster carers
- Less children and young people placed out of local authority area
- All children and young people who are looked after have an allocated social worker
- Independent reviewing officers provide robust oversight of care plans.

The independent Reviewing Service is promoting the inclusion of children and young people's views in reviewing and planning processes through direct contact and increasing their contributions to review meetings. 75% of care plans are judged to fully reflect the views of children and young people.

However, the need to support children and young people who are looked after through their transition to adulthood remains an area that needs further work, with improvements required in case recording and multi-agency working with care leavers. Reports to the LSCB have set out improved multi-agency arrangements to support care leavers, the impact of which will be monitored in 2015/16.

Children and Young People suffering or at risk of Sexual Exploitation

The partnership has maintained a strong focus on improving structures, policies, procedures and multi-agency practice in order to respond more effectively to the needs of this group.

In the Autumn of 2014 the Independent Chair of the LSCB led a review of partnership arrangements and the effectiveness of responses to sexual exploitation, concluding :

'That whilst we have made steady progress in tackling sexual exploitation there is a significant amount still to do. We can be confident that we have done some positive work and that we respond to those at the highest risk. We have increased the resources deployed to support those young people. However we do not know "what we do not know" and there are significant areas of work we need to develop. These include: getting a better understanding of our data and intelligence, identifying what good disruption activity could look like, how better to ensure frontline staff are trained about signs and indicators and young people are aware of what sexual exploitation is and how to avoid it. Work needs to be further developed in schools, and how best to engage with communities to ensure they themselves act preventatively'.

During 2014/15 there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals relating to children and young people who are experiencing / at risk of being sexually exploited. External inspection confirmed that this was more likely to represent an increased awareness of the nature and scale of the abuse rather than an increase in victimisation.

Multi-agency working and information sharing has been significantly enhanced through:

- A focus on disruption and investigation, resulting in a number of successful court cases and conviction of perpetrators
- The deployment of resources to increase capacity to respond more effectively to exploitation and related forms of abuse through the establishment of a multi-agency team (The Safe Project) , a Risk and Vulnerability team and an enhanced intelligence capability.
- Piloting safeguarding training for taxi drivers as part of the licensing process

- Collaboration with other LSCBs, Local authorities and the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire to improve regional working and launch campaigns aimed at parents, children and young people.

The annual report of the Child sexual exploitation sub group concluded that there is evidence of:

- Increasing awareness across the partnership
- Improved identification
- More consistency in multi-agency assessments
- Engaging with the broader nature of the challenge – not just responding to ‘high risk’.

Addressing sexual exploitation remains a key priority for the LSCB in 2015/16.

Children and Young People who Go Missing

A broader definition and more proactive approach has been developed to respond more effectively to children and young people who go missing in a range of circumstances; from: home/care, education, and the view of universal services; and that these need to be linked to: honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, radicalisation / extremism and modern day slavery. In 2014/15 progress has been made to finalise the Missing Strategy and initiate a partnership action plan to address these issues. The sub group is progressing this work in 2015/16

Awareness is being raised across the partnership about the nature and scale of the challenge, which is reflected through increased reporting of missing incidents over the last three years. A new return interview service was launched in April 2015 which will facilitate a more coordinated response to children and young people who go missing and enable more robust data collection and the monitoring of performance indicators.

Numbers for children and young people who are missing from education have increased annually for the last 3 years but an improved process involving locality based staff has been able to keep pace with this. The use of restorative techniques with families and schools has helped to resolve fractured relationships between schools and parents. More than 120 children have made transitions back into school over the last four terms.

There is a close relationship between children and young people being reported as missing and the risk of sexual exploitation. In acknowledgment of this, the Children’s Services Integrated Safeguarding Unit and the Partnership Safeguarding Intelligence Hub are in the early stages of developing the ability to cross reference and match the data of those children and young people who are reported missing from home or care against those identified as at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation.

External Inspections and Reviews

There have been a number of external inspections across the partnership in 2014/15, providing a useful independent measure of how well safeguarding children and young people is being carried out in Leeds. There have been a number with particular relevance for the partnership as a whole.

In January 2015 Ofsted undertook an unannounced inspection of services for children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers and a review of the effectiveness of Leeds Safeguarding Children Board. Ofsted judgements were 'Good' in all areas with an 'Outstanding' judgement for leadership, management and governance. The report noted that 'There have been significant improvements in every part of the local authority's arrangements for safeguarding children and young people.'

Significantly, despite extensive auditing of cases, no children and young people were referred to the Local Authority as being at immediate risk of significant harm. There were no priority or immediate actions the local authority needed to address, with 15 areas for improvement noted. Robust action plans have been developed to address these and regular updates on implementation will be provided to the Performance Management sub group during the year.

Within Ofsted's new schools inspection framework are judgements on 'behaviour and safety' and this takes into account safeguarding. In Leeds 68 schools were inspected during 2014/15. 78% were judged either 'good' or 'outstanding' with 22% 'requires improvement'. There were no schools judged as 'inadequate'.

85.6% of child minders inspected in Leeds were judged either 'good' or 'outstanding' with 14% 'requires improvement' Only 0.4% was judged 'inadequate'. Within Day Care settings 91% of those inspected were judged either 'good' or 'outstanding' with 8% 'requires improvement' with 1% 'inadequate'. Early Years settings that are judged inadequate are visited and supported by Leeds City Council Integrated Safeguarding Unit Education and Early Start Safeguarding Unit.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police undertook as part of a national inspection and inspection of West Yorkshire Police into on the experiences, progress and outcomes for children who need help and protection. The inspectors raised some concerns about the approach in Leeds to child sexual exploitation, the operation of the Children's Services Front Door, police engagement in child protection conferences and the management and detention of children and young people in custody.

Despite not recognising the circumstances described in the report relating to sexual exploitation and the front door, the LSCB put in place a work plan to review arrangements and identify actions as appropriate. The subsequent Ofsted inspection provided reassurance in a number of areas and work is underway to address outstanding issues. Remand foster care placements are now available for young people as an alternative to detention in police custody.

In 2014/15 national and local enquiries into the abusive activities of Jimmy Savile were also brought to a conclusion and published. In February 2015, themes and lessons learnt from the NHS investigations into matters relating to Jimmy Savile (Lampard, 2015) was published, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare Trust and Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust have reviewed the recommendations and actioned as appropriate. Assurance and progress against actions has been received from these trusts and reviewed by the Clinical Commissioning Groups. The National Safeguarding Steering Group will monitor progress of the recommendations on a quarterly basis through NHS England regional and local Quality Surveillance Groups.



“The LSCB has effective leadership and has been instrumental in developing a strong support and challenge culture.”

The effectiveness of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board



How the Board undertakes it's work

During 2014/15 the Board has continued to meet bi-monthly, with the Executive meeting on the intervening months. The annual review process (April to July) culminated in the Annual Review Meeting on 16 July 2015 to review progress made, the impact the Board is having and to confirm priorities for itself and other strategic boards for 2015/16. Board meetings are well attended (75% by primary representatives) and employ a mixture of approaches to ensure the active engagement of participants and the efficient consideration of business.

The work of the LSCB is largely undertaken through the sub / reference / task group structure, supported by the Business Unit and is heavily reliant on the input of staff from all partner agencies. The commitment shown by agencies and their staff is testament to the seriousness with which the LSCB is viewed and the shared intent across the partnership to improve multi-agency working, services and outcomes for children and young people.

Significant developments in 2014/15 included:

- Revised governance arrangements for the Serious Case Review subcommittee, to ensure clear lines of accountability when making decisions about undertaking reviews
- Concluding the work of the Front Door reference Group and handing strategic oversight of ongoing developments to the Safer Leeds Executive
- Progressing the work and influence of the Secure Settings sub group
- Implementing the work plan of the Sudden Unexpected Death In Childhood Reference Group.

Progress on the objectives and tasks within the LSCB Business Plan are monitored through Executive Group meetings and reported on a regular basis to the Board. In 2014/15 the plan comprised 182 tasks, of which 89% have been completed or are proceeding on time. As in previous years those tasks that remain ongoing or are identified as requiring increased attention have been considered for inclusion in the Business Plan for 2015/16.

Promoting Effective Partnership Working

The LSCB is responsible for the co-ordination of local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and thus to develop and maintain effective multi-agency working, at both strategic and operational levels.

The Board engages with other strategic bodies in Leeds and collaborates on the development of common issues. Its annual report is presented to the other key boards in the city and includes specific challenges from the LSCB.

The launch of two major initiatives in 2014/15 (The Early Help Approach and the Think Family Work Family Protocol) was the result of intensive multi-agency consultation and input from across both the Children's and Adult's partnerships. The Early Help Approach is being embedded in multi-agency working and practice whilst the implementation of Think Family Work Family protocol has been identified by all strategic bodies as a priority for 2015/16. The LSCB has set up a multi-agency strategic steering group, supported by a full time worker jointly seconded to the Business Unit and Families First to progress this. A full launch is planned for the Autumn 2015 with a focus on engaging further with Adult Services.

Since 2012/13 the LSCB has been promoting the need for practitioners to appropriately challenge each other in order to facilitate more effective multi-agency working and better planning and reviewing of progress made with children and young people. In 2014/15 the LSCB Concerns Resolution Process was updated and relaunched, providing a framework for practitioners to air and resolve any concerns about how individual cases are being collectively managed.

A restorative approach to multi-agency working is being promoted across the partnership, with the underpinning framework of policies, procedures and processes being regularly reviewed and updated.

Communicating and Raising Awareness

A central part of the leadership role of the LSCB is to ensure that key safeguarding messages and emerging lessons from its activity are disseminated quickly and effectively across the partnership so that front-line staff can act on them, develop their practice and multi-agency working accordingly and improve outcomes for children and young people. While the Business Unit underpins and operates communication between the components of the Board, the Communications task group leads and shapes the dissemination of the work of the Board across the partnership via the LSCB website and the LSCB e-bulletin. Over 1,000 practitioners are signed up to receiving monthly e-bulletins. The LSCB now has a social media presence via Twitter and Facebook with over 500 followers. This has proved invaluable in widely disseminating LSCB campaigns and drawing attention to the range of information available on the LSCB website. The campaign to raise awareness about on line grooming resulted in over 4,000 hits from social media activity and 5,000 direct hits on the website.

The following areas for work have been identified for 2015/16:

- To develop a framework for evaluating the impact of communication activity undertaken by the Board and its partners
- To build on current campaigns about child sexual exploitation and include the related issue of children and young people who go missing
- To increase the number of practitioners who are signed up to the monthly e-bulletin.

Holding Partners to account for Safeguarding Practice

The LSCB maintains an overview of the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of safeguarding practice through its Performance & Quality Management System, the undertaking of Reviews and the findings from the Child Death Overview Panel. Performance and Quality reports are presented to the Board on a quarterly basis and the Annual Performance Report (received in June) provides the basis for the analysis of the effectiveness of partnership safeguarding arrangements and practice summarised above. Areas identified for action in 2015/16 include:

- To broaden the range of performance data collected and analysed from across the partnership.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Think Family, Work Family protocol
- To further develop the support and challenge culture within the Performance Management sub group.

The Quality Assurance and Audit Programme includes a range of methods in order to inform the Board of the quality of multi-agency practice and identify areas for improvement. This has been central in providing assurance that during a time of significant change across the partnership and the introduction of new ways of multi-agency working that risk for individual children and young people continues to be safely and appropriately managed.

Learning and Improving

The LSCB seeks to actively lead the partnership in identifying areas of safeguarding working and practice that need to be improved and to ensure that action is taken as a result. This work is coordinated through the Leeds Framework for Learning and Improvement which comprises:

- A partnership approach to learning and improving
- Transparency and public accountability
- Clarity about the responsibilities of partners
- Learning methodologies (including responding to child deaths and undertaking Serious Case Reviews and Local Learning Lesson Reviews)
- Planning and implementing improvements
- Disseminating lessons learnt and changes required
- Monitoring the impact of changes made.

The annual review of the impact of learning and improvement activity provides assurance that lessons are responded to through actions which are then monitored. There is considerable evidence of positive impact on policies, procedures and multi-agency working, with more to do in order to link such improvements to outcomes for children and young people.

The Annual Review

The LSCB Annual Review process runs from April to July, with the Board receiving and considering:

- Reports from sub and reference groups
- Safeguarding reports from partners
- Reports from other strategic bodies
- The Annual Performance and Quality Report
- The Annual Strategic Performance Report.
- The findings from Board member assessments.

Discussions within the review process indicate that overall the Board is performing well and identified a number of areas for further improvement:

- To work more closely with other strategic boards to deliver the shared agenda for helping and protecting children, young people and families
- Partners to more effectively hold each other to account for their contribution to the safety and protection of children and young people
- To use the views and experiences of children and young people in Leeds to more effectively and consistently to improve practice, influence change and shape services.
- To more consistently use evidence of children's experiences as a key measure of the difference in outcomes being made through local services.

OFSTED Inspection Findings

In January 2015 the LSCB was inspected by Ofsted as part of the Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Its report was published in March. Ofsted stated that the arrangements in place to evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and board partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are 'good'. The LSCB is 'good' because it:

- Fulfils its statutory responsibilities and coordinates the work of partners
- Scrutinises, analyses and improves multi-agency working
- Has effective leadership and holds partners to account
- Operates robust performance management and quality assurance arrangements
- Has been instrumental in developing a strong support and challenge culture
- Is influential in:
 - Work to re-balance the safeguarding system
 - Ensuring a strong focus on sexual exploitation and children and young people who go missing.
- Has a strong focus on the voice and influence of children and young people through an innovative Student LSCB.

5 areas for improvement were identified:

- Report on the effectiveness of all key partner agencies, through broader performance management datasets in order that all safeguarding activity is measured and evaluated in addition to children's social care.
- Develop improved intelligence and analysis of child sexual exploitation hotspots to inform disruption efforts.
- Collate and aggregate intelligence from return interviews of missing children to inform child sexual exploitation intelligence and analysis.
- Accelerate efforts to both understand and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in some harder to reach religious settings and Black and minority ethnic, third and community sector groups engaging with children, with particular awareness of the possibility of radicalisation in some religious and cultural settings.
- Scrutinise the absence of serious incident notifications from partner agencies to ensure that the criteria are well understood and effectively in operation.

An action plan has been developed to address these areas requiring improvement which has been included in the business plan for 2015/16.



Responding to challenges

As part of its responsibility to hold other strategic bodies to account for their role in safeguarding children and young people, the LSCB presents them with annual challenges.

The Children and Families Trust Board has reported good progress in responding to the following challenges in 2014/15:

- To strengthen the voice of the child in the delivery and planning of services
- To embed the Early Help Approach
- To maintain momentum in developing effective multi-agency services for care leavers
- To further promote the co-ordination of effective multi-agency child protection plans
- To establish a more coordinated partnership response to adolescent mental ill health, self-harm and suicide behaviours
- To intervene effectively to reduce the incidence of sexual exploitation

The Trust Board, the Adult Safeguarding Board, the Safer Leeds Executive and the Health & Wellbeing Board all identified the need for more work to effectively implement the revised Think family, Work Family protocol.

For 2014/15 the LSCB set itself 24 challenges (or high priorities) and can report good progress on 12 of these. A number of areas require more / ongoing work, including:

- Transitions between children's and adult mental health services
- Ensuring all adult and children's services embed the safeguarding of children and young people
- Improving engagement with the education sector and faith and community groups
- Responding to issues of radicalisation, child trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced marriage
- Undertaking a more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of Early Help services
- Evaluating the quality of services and outcomes for 3 groups of vulnerable children and young people; those in secure settings, at risk of sexual exploitation, who are disabled / have complex needs.
- To further develop the partnership approach to children and young people who go missing.



Are we doing the right things?
Are we making sufficient progress?
Are we managing risk safely and appropriately?
Is the LSCB making sufficient progress?
What impact is the Board having?

Summary and whole system analysis



Are we doing the right things?

The Partnership responded to previous Ofsted inspections of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by embarking on an 'improvement journey' based on an ambitious but sustainable strategic plan underpinned by political and professional support and co-operation. Central to this is a partnership agreement that the children's safeguarding system needs to be 'rebalanced' in order to improve outcomes for children and young people by intervening earlier and more effectively in the life of a problem. This involves:

- A restorative approach to working with children, young people and their families
- A commitment to a culture of continuous improvement
- An early help approach to providing 'the right service at the right time'
- A reduction in the need for statutory intervention.

The findings in the Ofsted Inspection report of March 2015 highlighted that:

- Clear priorities for children's services are outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan and driven by an active Children's Trust
- Priorities are strategically aligned with the overall local authority plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Safer Communities Strategy
- Cross-cutting priorities and the 'three obsessions' are facilitating a shared ambition for children across the city and providing a sharp focus for strategic and operational thinking.

The review of the Children & Young People's plan 2011-15 identified a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people, and the framework of obsessions, outcomes and priorities has been retained for the 2015-19 Plan.

Are we making sufficient progress?

There is evidence that good progress continues to be made to rebalance the safeguarding system:

- There has been a significant rise in the use of Early Help services
- An increase in the number of Early Help Assessments
- The establishment and growth of Family Group Conferences

Overall the need for statutory intervention is reducing:

- Gradually falling numbers of children and young people who need to be Looked After.
- The number of children and young people subject to child protection plans continues to fall, with Leeds becoming more in line with national comparators.
- However the number of children and young people becoming subject to a child protection plan has remained constant over 2013 – 15.

Despite the continuing reduction in the number of children and young people requiring statutory intervention, more work is being undertaken to assess and respond where there are concerns about a child:

- More referrals are being accepted by Children's Social Work Service
- More child abuse investigations are being carried out
- More Initial Child Protection Conferences are being held.

A particular focus in 2014/15 has been to better understand and improve the partnership response to child sexual exploitation. Reviews undertaken indicate that whilst good progress is being made, momentum needs to be maintained in 2015/16; there remains much more to do.

Are we managing risk safely and appropriately?

The LSCB has considered the following factors in assuring itself that practice and multi-agency working is appropriate and safe:

- Findings from external inspections
- Partner compliance with statutory duties to ensure arrangements are in place to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

- Performance data and trends
- Quality Assurance Processes
- Findings from Audits.

All the data we have indicates good attention is paid to managing risk appropriately and safely within the frameworks in place.



Is the LSCB making sufficient progress?

The Board monitors progress against its objectives, self-challenges and responsibilities through a variety of methods eg:

- The Business Plan which indicates that 89% of tasks were completed or proceeding on time
- The Performance Management System, which indicates improving partner compliance with safeguarding requirements, the continued re-balancing of the children's safeguarding system and assurance that the quality of multi-agency interventions with children and young people is steadily improving
- The review of work to address self-challenges, which indicates that progress had been made on all but 1 of the 24 set for 2014/15
- The Annual Review process, which included Board members' assessments that overall 88% of tasks and responsibilities are being progressed.

The Ofsted inspection judgment of 'good' in March 2015 provides external assurance that the Board is making good progress. The report highlighted:

- Leadership of the partnership and the development of a support and challenge culture
- Alignment of strategic priorities with those of other strategic bodies
- Contribution to developing the corporate objective of Leeds becoming a child friendly city
- Clear work programmes driving forward business plans
- Use of a learning and improvement framework to review the impact of learning
- Increasing the voice of the child in the work of the Board.

The LSCB continues to make good progress in implementing its plans and responding to emerging issues. Regular evaluation of progress routinely identifies areas for improvement and where more needs to be done.

What Impact is the Board having?

The Leeds Learning and Improvement Framework brings together:

- The safeguarding lessons learnt from the full range of the work of the LSCB and partners
- The actions that are being taken to improve services
- The impact on practice, multi-agency working and outcomes for children and young people.

There is good evidence of significant impact on the development of policies and procedures which underpin practice and multi-agency working. Although these are technically 'outputs', they help to consolidate and improve the functioning of the children's safeguarding system in order to better support vulnerable children and young people.

The Board has undertaken a leadership role in prompting partners to engage in changes to the way in which professionals work together and with children, young people and their families in order to improve outcomes through earlier and more effective intervention. This is contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people evidenced in the gradual reduction in the number of child deaths and the need for statutory intervention and the increase in Early Help services.



Challenges for 2015/16

From the annual review process the LSCB has identified a series of challenges for strategic bodies and for itself to address in 2015/16. These are designed to maintain and increase the current momentum for positive change in the development and delivery of multi-agency services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Leeds.

An overarching challenge for all strategic boards is to work more collaboratively together to address areas of common / interlinked issues and concerns.

Challenges to strategic bodies for 2015/16

For the Children and Families Trust Board

The following challenge was presented to and accepted by the Children and Families Trust Board on 7th July 2015:

To maintain progress in safely rebalancing the children's safeguarding system in Leeds in line with the partnership's commitment to ensuring that vulnerable children and young people receive the right service at the right time and that this contributes to improving outcomes and reducing the need for statutory intervention.

This progress to be maintained and embedded further through:

- Maintaining an overview of the individual agency and shared allocation (and re-allocation as a result of collective changes to meet priorities differently) of resources across the partnership to support the further development of the Leeds Early Help Approach
- Promoting the implementation of
 - The 'Think Family Work Family' protocol (a continuing challenge from 2014/15)
 - The Family Group Conference system
- Ensuring that workforce development across the partnership keeps pace with the scale of change to be implemented within the safeguarding system
- Supporting Clusters in the development and delivery of Early Help Services.

For the Health & Well Being Board

To consider how best to use the LSCB's intelligence about the impact of compromised parenting on children and young people in reducing health inequalities.

For the Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board

To ensure there is:

- Effective embedding across the adult partnership of the Think Family, Work Family protocol
- A developing shared understanding of the issues relating to 'transitions' for vulnerable children and young people who may not have care and support needs from children's to adults' services.

For the Safer Leeds Executive

To ensure there is:

- Effective embedding across the adult partnership of the Think Family, Work Family protocol
- A developing shared understanding of the issues relating to 'transitions' for vulnerable children and young people from children's to adults' services.

Challenges the LSCB is setting itself for 2015/16

The LSCB has adopted an overall challenge for itself in 2015/16:

To be ambitious for the children and young people in Leeds and moving what we do with and for them from 'good' to 'great'.

Supporting this are 9 specific challenges:

- (1) To focus on our ability to 'Know the Story – Challenge the Practice' and better hold partners to account for improving safeguarding practice. Key elements of this are:
 - Increasing the consistency of partner attendance at the Performance Management Sub Group
 - Improving the challenge and consequent analysis in PMSG deliberations
 - Undertaking the annual review of the data base that underpins the LSCB Performance Management Framework (to ensure relevant data from all partners is captured appropriately)
 - To make clear the cost / resource implications of the enhanced audit methodologies.
- (2) To further promote the 'voice of the child' in the work of the Board and Partners.
- (3) To maintain an overview of work undertaken by the partnership to safely re-balance the children's safeguarding system as outlined in Working Together 2015. To include a focus on:
 - The use of Child In Need Plans
 - The quality of Early Help interventions
- (4) To develop a focus on safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people undergoing key transitions
- (5) To further develop and embed the partnership response to children and young people who are suffering / at risk of sexual exploitation and / or 'go missing.'
- (6) To develop the partnership response to radicalisation.
- (7) To further promote the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and ensure that all who self-harm have access to mental health services
- (8) To further promote and embed the restorative approach in the work of the partnership eg:
 - Implementation of the Think Family, Work Family protocol
 - The expansion of family group conferences
- (9) To undertake Board meetings in a SMARTer way.



Conclusion

Overall, looking back over 2014-15 the Board through all its partners delivered a strong, effective and challenging programme of work designed to consistently and continuously improve what it is like to be a child growing up in Leeds.

This report demonstrates the range of work and the impact it has had, as well as the Board's ambition to be even better at meeting its statutory objectives and functions.

Whilst there is, as always, a lot to still to do, 2014-15 was a year which culminated in a strong Ofsted report, much improved internal and external challenge between partners on the Board, a strong degree of shared ownership and excellent co-operation. The journey over the last 5 years has been one of steady forward progress, coupled with growing mutuality of purpose, and respect. As a consequence the Board is able to set its priorities for 2015-18 with confidence.

The challenges the Board have agreed to pose across the system are based on sound evidence and good data, and are designed to keep partners focused on the complex issues that need resolved. The greatest challenge of all is maintaining the progress of the last 5 years, in a challenging public sector environment, through a time of policy changes and new national priorities without losing sight of what matters – the children of the City.