



Leeds
Safeguarding
Children Board

Report title: Presentation of Annual Report 2012/13

Report of: Jane Held, Independent Chair Leeds Safeguarding Children Board

Report to: Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

1.0 Purpose of report and decisions to be made

1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress being made by and through the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board to improve safeguarding children practice in Leeds.

1.2 The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked:

- To note and comment on the content of the LSCB Annual Report and agree those issues that most need HWB leadership.
- To note the challenges for 2013/14, including those accepted by the Children's Trust Board.

2. Background information

2.1 It is a statutory requirement under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 for the LSCB to publish an annual report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in the local area.

The LSCB Annual Performance Report, including challenges for 2013/14 The final report was received and accepted by the LSCB on 13.09.2013. Due to the meeting cycle the Annual Report was presented to the CTB on 05.09.13 in final draft form. The Report was also received and discussed at the Council's Chief Officer's Leadership Team in draft form on 16.07.13

The CTB must take account of the report in preparing and refreshing the Children & Young people's Plan. The HWB is expected to take account of the report in preparing and refreshing the JSNA.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 This cover report introduces the attached Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report following its acceptance at the LSCB on 13th September 2013. The report is (as required) being presented to the Council's Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is also published on the LSCB website.
- 3.2 The Annual Report of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) evaluates the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Leeds in 2012/13 and sets out how the Board's work will be developed and strengthened in 2013/14. It is drawn from a wide range of sources from across the children's partnership and reflects the continuation of an 'improvement journey' that has involved a high degree of multi-agency co-operation and collaboration
- 3.3 The report includes a comprehensive review of performance, quality assurance and audit findings which clearly outlines the breadth and depth of work being undertaken to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Leeds. Engaging children and young people about safeguarding matters and their own care is being progressed and good use is being made of external expertise to shape the planning and development of services. Significant service restructuring has and is taking place to respond to the changing circumstances of the public sector and to promote more effective ways of working with children, young people and their families. More quantitative and qualitative information is being collated to help analyse:
- Where progress is being made
 - What outcomes are being achieved
 - What difference this is making
 - Where more improvement is required
 - What requires further investigation and understanding.
- 3.4 There are positive indications that the improvement journey has sound foundations:
- There is a clear, coherent strategic direction which is focused on increasing the availability and effectiveness of Early Help (preventative) services and reducing the need for statutory intervention. This is formalised in the Children and Young People's Plan and supported by the challenges from the LSCB to 'rebalance the safeguarding system'.
 - A shared partnership culture is developing underpinned by a restorative approach to working with children, young people and their families that seeks to 'never do nothing' and to provide the right service at the right time with 'high support and high challenge
- 3.5 There is evidence of good progress being made in the aims and objectives set by the partnership as shown by:

- The reduction in the number of children and young people who need to be looked after
- The quality of services being provided for children and young people in the care of the Local Authority
- The establishment of revised Children's Services 'Front Door' arrangements which have supported:
 - An increase in conversations between partners about how best to respond to children and young people about whom concerns have been raised
 - A reduction in the number of referrals accepted by Children's Social Work Service
 - An improved understanding of the nature and scale of patterns of domestic violence across the city
- Continuing the investment in and co-ordination of Early Help services

3.6 Emerging challenges are identified which have contributed to those set for the LSCB and Children's Trust Board in 2013/14: A greater understanding is required of:

- The trends and profile of the number of children and young people who are subject to child protection plans
- The full nature and extent of multi-agency Early Help and preventative activity being undertaken currently
- How the development of a single assessment framework across the partnership and the continuum of 'risk' and 'need' can enhance the planning of Early Help interventions

3.7 Areas identified for improvement include:

- The timeliness of child protection processes
- The effectiveness of child protection plans
- The provision of services for children and young people at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation

Areas identified for development include:

- The agreement to a single (multi-agency) assessment framework and process which is robust and straightforward to use
- The updating of the Leeds 'Think Family Protocol' to improve multi-agency responses to children and young people living in the context of 'compromised parenting'. (the impact of drugs and alcohol, mental ill health, learning disability, domestic violence, and poverty)
- The exploration of a partnership approach to establishing a Young People's Service (16 – 25 yrs) that would cater for vulnerable young people, including care leavers

3.8 During a period of 'whole system re-orientation' it is particularly important that the Board is assured that risk in individual cases is being managed appropriately and safely. The report provides the following information to inform

that judgment:

- The reduction in the number of looked after children and young people is gradual and is being actively managed. The reduction is due to a combination of fewer receptions into care (with alternative, more appropriate, options being rigorously explored) and improved permanency planning.
- Although the number and make-up of the cohort of children and young people who are subject to child protection plans requires further investigation and improvements are required in the effectiveness of plans, it is notable that the LSCB audits have confirmed the Ofsted findings of 2011 that children and young people are not being left in unsafe situations.
- Concerns remain about the high rate of re-referral to Children's Social Work Services with the implication that some children and young people may not be receiving a timely and effective response. Nevertheless, the introduction of the new Duty and Advice Team has impacted positively on these figures and the trend is expected to continue in 2013/14 as the new arrangements bed in.
- Considerable audit and review activity is being undertaken to better understand the working of the safeguarding system as a whole and the performance of its component parts

3.9 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note that areas of particular interest to the LSCB include the effectiveness of mental health, drugs and alcohol, and learning disability services to parents, as well as CAHMS services. The LSCB also draws out, through its responsibilities in relation to the sudden unexpected death of children and the child death overview process key wellbeing themes such as death through overlays, and suicide in young people which may also be of interest to the work of the HWB.

4.0 Context

4.1 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

4.2 Its statutory objectives are to:

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

Safeguarding is defined as any activity which prevents a child's health, welfare or development being impaired, and includes activity to protect them from abuse, (although that is only part of the Board's responsibilities

4.3 The Board is independent of any of the partners, funded by them all and hosted and supported by Leeds Council. It has a collective and corporate responsibility for fulfilling its statutory functions and for holding to account the whole system of services across the city to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The

Chair is appointed by the Board together with the Chief Executive of the City Council, is accountable to the Board and Chief Executive in terms of their performance but holds the Board, the Chief Executive and the Governance bodies of every statutory partner agency to account. The Council's Lead Member for Children has participant observer status on the Board.

- 4.4 Statutory Partner Agencies (which includes both all the health commissioning bodies and provider bodies, the police, probation and the council, are under a duty to co-operate with the Board and those accountabilities are defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and the NHS Accountability Framework
- 4.5 The Board has no service delivery functions but is required to inform (through its co-ordination and effectiveness responsibilities) the commissioning intentions of partner agencies, It is also required to monitor, quality assure and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the services commissioned and delivered in the local area.
- 4.6 Working Together (2013) requires each Local Safeguarding Children Board to produce and publish an Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Local Authority, reflecting that overall accountability for the safety and welfare of children and young people must be led by them. It should also be sent to the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Well Being Board. There is also a local agreement to submit it to the Children's Trust Board, Leeds City Council Scrutiny Board for Children and Families and to the governance bodies of all partner organisations to support their governance of safeguarding practice in Leeds.

This is the first LSCB Annual Report to be presented to the HWB. 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 partner agencies
- 4.7 In Leeds, the LSCB works closely with the Children's Trust Board which is specifically accountable for overseeing the development and delivery of the

Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP). This Report identifies challenges for both the LSCB and the Children's Trust Board. The Children's Trust Board considers the report in preparing and refreshing the Children & Young People's Plan. The Health and Well-being Board is expected to consider the report in completing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

- 4.8 The LSCB is also required to review all serious incidents and where necessary to undertake and report publically Serious Case Review and to ensure that there is a learning and improvement framework to support and disseminate the learning arising from quality assurance and case review processes as well as provide a comprehensive multi-agency workforce development and training programme for all front line staff who work with children, and those staff who work with vulnerable families

5 Main issues

5.1 Effectiveness of the LSCB:

The report indicates that the LSCB has made good progress in addressing the challenges it set for itself in 2012/13.

The over-arching challenge it is setting itself for 2013/14 is to 'step up a gear'; to build on progress made in 2012/13 in order to more fully understand the effectiveness of the safeguarding system in Leeds and better lead the partnership in developing services and multi-agency working in order to improve outcomes for C&YP.

5.2 Performance against challenges to CTB for 2012/13:

The overarching challenge to the CTB remained to 'rebalance the safeguarding system' to reduce the need for statutory intervention to safeguard C&YP.

Evidence of progress made in the year is provided by:

- The gradual reduction in the number of children and young people who need to be looked after
- The establishment of a CSWS Duty and Advice Team and revised arrangements for responding to contacts and referrals from partner agencies
- The continued investment in Early Help Services

5.3 Summary of the Effectiveness of Safeguarding arrangements:

Ensuring that risk is being managed appropriately and safely is a crucial factor at all times; but particularly so during a period of 'whole system re-orientation' as is currently the circumstances in Leeds. It is important that the LSCB is able to be satisfied that risk is being managed safely and appropriately in individual cases.

The evidence that was considered by the LSCB includes:

- The reduction in the number of looked after children and young people is gradual and is being actively managed. The reduction is due to a combination of fewer receptions into care (with alternative, more appropriate, options being rigorously explored) and improved permanency planning enabling more to leave.
- Although the number and make-up of the cohort of children and young people who are subject to child protection plans requires further investigation and improvements are required in the effectiveness of plans, it is notable that the LSCB audit confirmed the Ofsted findings of 2011 that children and young people are not being left in unsafe situations.
- Concerns remain about the high rate of re-referral to Children's Social Work Services with the implication that some children and young people may not be receiving a timely and effective response. Nevertheless, the introduction of the new Duty and Advice Team has impacted positively on these figures and the trend is expected to continue in 2013/14 as the new arrangements bed in.
- Considerable audit and review activity is being undertaken to better understand the working of the safeguarding system as a whole and the performance of its component parts.

5.6 Challenges for 2013/14:

The LSCB, in response to changes in guidance (Working Together 2013), will need to evidence it has increased the rigour of its challenge to partners and more explicitly driven (and understood) improvements in outcomes for C&YP.

At the same time it needs to seek to work more collaboratively with the Safeguarding Adult Board and the Community Safety Partnership to identify things we can do better together and support each other with.

Challenges accepted by the CTB for 2012/13 include the following:

- To continue to progress the 'rebalancing' of the safeguarding system in Leeds in order to promote a more preventative approach (C&YP receiving 'the right service at the right time') and reduce the need for statutory intervention. Key components of this approach are:

To reduce the number of C&YP who need to be 'looked after.'

To support more effective multi-agency engagement in the oversight and implementation of child protection plans.

To develop and extend the comprehensive, multi-agency, Early Help offer, supported and facilitated by a common approach to assessment.

- To ensure that during this period of transition within the system, risk is managed appropriately and safely in individual cases.
- To ensure that the rebalancing of the system is supported by the development of a partnership approach to shared professional values, attitudes and behaviours and common principles of supervision.
- To continue to promote a restorative approach to working with C&YP and their families that will more consistently result in 'the voice of the child' being included in all interventions and which promotes the principles established by the CTB:

The default behaviour of Children's Trust and Local Government partners in all their dealings with local citizens/partners/organisations should be a restorative one - high support with high challenge.

Children's Trust and Local Government partners should ensure that families, whose children might otherwise be removed from their homes, are supported to meet and develop a safe alternative plan before such action is taken.

For all other families where a plan or decision needs to be made to help safeguard and promote the welfare of a child or children the family should be supported to help decide what needs to happen. Children's Trust and Local Government partners must create the conditions where families can be helped to help themselves - this would represent a fundamental renegotiation of the relationship between Local Government and local citizens - from doing things to and for families to doing things with them.

Children's Trust and Local government partners must see all local schools as community assets and have a clear role in holding those institutions - no matter what the governance arrangements - to account for the contribution they make to the well-being of the local population.

- To work with partners who commission services for C&YP to:
 - Build into their commissioning processes a requirement of compliance with s(11) of the Children Act 2004 / s(175) Education Act 2002
 - Establish a common performance management framework which is compatible with the LSCB framework.

- To review access and availability of services for families who have suffered a child / young person bereavement.
- In the light of work being undertaken by the LSCB, LSAB & SL, to review the provision of services to address situations where C&YP are living in the context of compromised parenting (domestic violence, parental substance mis-use, parental mental ill health).
- As a better understanding of the scale of CSE is established, to review the provision of services to (i) reduce the number of Young People at risk / suffering from sexual exploitation and (ii) respond to young people who have become victims.
- To develop and co-ordinate improved services for vulnerable 16 – 21 year olds.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Report shows that overall the Board is working effectively and that we are now largely able to monitor the effectiveness of the system in Leeds for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare but it also shows clearly how much more there is to do. It is clear that one of the areas of need identified that requires much more proactive development in 2013/14 is the provision of services to support adults to parent their children well as well as the redevelopment of the 'Think Family Protocol' and associated care pathways. The same applies to services to meet the needs of young adults age 14-25. Finally the provision of integrated early help services at a point when families are first needing some support (as well as early start services to under two's) is a key area of focus for the future. The priorities set by the HWB will positively assist in delivering these developments.