

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

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Cabinet Portfolio	Deputy Leader & Education and Children's Services
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Papers with report	LSCB Annual Report

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	This is the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for the year 2011-12. It is for information and gives a view on effectiveness of children's safeguarding in Hillingdon, and identifies priorities for future action and attention.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	This report will contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan in order to ensure that Hillingdon's children and young people are kept safe.
Financial Cost	The LSCB is jointly funded by LBH, NHS Hillingdon and other partners, there are no additional costs linked to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Education and Children's Services
Ward(s) affected	All – Borough wide

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet note this report and takes account of its conclusions in future planning for children's services.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee

The draft report was considered and noted by Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee on October 10th 2012.

This committee made the following comments:

"The Committee noted and welcomed that one of the priorities for assessing and improving the operational practise of the LCSB would be developing and learning from a multi-agency quality audit programme.

Reference was made to children and young people in Hillingdon who experience mental health problems at some time, in particular those exhibiting "risky behaviours" such as behaviour

problems and school exclusions and the Committee welcomed the emphasis there would be in terms of early intervention.

The Committee also noted and welcomed the positive improvements in the recruitment of staff which would further improve the provision of services to children."

1 Supporting Information

1.1 The LSCB is a statutory multi agency body, established with the overall aim of monitoring, overseeing, supporting and challenging the work of all agencies with regard to their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. It stands independently of other local bodies and its members are senior decision makers from all local agencies who work with children. LSCBs are required to produce an annual report which comments on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard children. (The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) This is the third annual report under the new requirements, and we are required to publish this report by 1 April 2013. This is the first time that this report has been presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. From 2013 this is likely to be a statutory requirement.

1.2 The following areas are required elements of the Report (Working Together 2010)

- An assessment of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, to include achievements and challenges
- An assessment of the effectiveness of policies and procedures to recruit and train frontline staff
- An assessment of progress in implementing lessons from Serious Case reviews and child death reviews
- An assessment of progress in key priority areas (e.g. child trafficking)
- A challenge to the work of local partners in driving improvements in safeguarding

2 Summary of conclusions

2.1 Overall, evidence available to the LSCB indicates that children are well safeguarded with some areas for development that are in hand. There is evidence of strong multi agency working and commitment and a large number of tasks and actions have been progressed under the auspices of the LSCB. A continuing and nationally recognised success is work that has taken place to reduce the numbers of children and young people who go missing at risk of trafficking through Heathrow Airport.

2.2 The Board uses a variety of methods, including performance information, inspections, reports from local agencies and case reports and audits, to reach its assessment. On current evidence, the assessment is that children are safe in Hillingdon. There is a strong commitment to partnership working which is evidenced by such examples as the work to prevent child trafficking, which has been held up nationally as an example of good practice. The Board has a work plan agreed across partner agencies to ensure that so far as is possible children are safeguarded. The work plan has five main priorities;

- (i) Improve LSCB functioning
- (ii) Assess and improve operational practice
- (iii) Improve outcomes for children affected by key risk issues
- (iv) Ensure a safe workforce
- (v) Learn from case reviews

2.3 The Board is continuing to develop its quality assurance mechanisms and has been able to use the audit work carried out for this purpose, within the Council and other agencies. A priority

for this year is to improve our assessment of the quality of multi agency work and how outcomes for children are improved. This will be helped and supported by the peer review due to take place in 2013.

2.4. There are however some important risks and concerns. First of these is the increased workload associated with increased numbers of children in need of protection, and the difficulties in ensuring sufficient staff and management capacity, particularly in Social Care. This increased workload puts maintenance of service standards at risk across all agencies. The Council is urged to continue to explore ways of increasing the numbers of permanent staff at the front line, particularly front line managers

2.5. Local and national evidence highlights the importance of identifying long term neglect and emotional harm, particularly in families where domestic violence, mental illness and substance misuse are features. In light of this, and reduced resources, it is critical that the early intervention services and revised pathways currently being developed in the Council are fully multi agency and target their work effectively in order to reduce those coming into the child protection system.

2.6. All agencies are experiencing sometimes quite dramatic change and financial constraints, and this puts at risk the available time and energy for safeguarding. The Coalition government is planning a dramatic reduction in statutory guidance. It is therefore vital that all agencies maintain focus on safeguarding issues and key risk factors in their work.

2.7. The LSCB is keen to work more closely with General Practitioners as providers as they are a key universal service. There will also be a requirement in the next year for the Clinical Commissioning Group to be represented on the LSCB. The Clinical Commissioning Group will be asked for a senior representative to become a member of the LSCB

2.8. A further major issue is the increasing number of children who experience neglect and emotional harm, particularly those experiencing domestic violence and adults with mental health or substance misuse problems. There is a shortage of services to support these children. It has been recognised locally that the spend on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is comparatively low, and the LSCB is keen to hear from commissioners how this problem is to be addressed

3 Financial Implications

3.1 The LSCB is jointly funded by LBH, NHS Hillingdon and other partners, there are no additional costs linked to this report.

4 Effect on Residents, Service Users & Communities

4.1 What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The remit of the LSCB is to ensure that all agencies are working together effectively to keep children safe. It does this by monitoring the effectiveness of all agencies to this end, and by making recommendations for priority action. This ensures that all agencies which have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Children Act 2004) are able to carry out their functions. The Board's work is therefore critical in ensuring that children and young people in Hillingdon are safeguarded, and that risks are minimised as much as possible.

4.2 Consultation Carried Out or Required

LSCB members and staff were consulted in preparation of the annual report. One of the continuing priorities for the LSCB is to engage better with children young people and their families, and with staff, in developing priorities and monitoring the effectiveness of services

5 Corporate Implications

5.1 Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance concur with the financial implications set out above at paragraph 3.

5.2 Legal

The statutory framework behind the establishment of Hillingdon's Safeguarding Children Board is section 13 of the Children Act 2004 and the National Guidance [Working Together 2010] and local procedures [Pan London Children Protection Procedures 2011] 4th Edition]

Pursuant to section 14 of the 2004 Act, the Safeguarding Children's Board's objective is:

- (a) to co-ordinate what is being by each person or body represented on the Board for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority by which it is established; and
- (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is being done by each such person or body for those purposes.

This report is prepared pursuant to section 14A (as inserted by section 197 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009).

Under the Council's Constitution the Cabinet has the appropriate powers to agree the recommendations proposed at the outset of this report.

There are no other significant legal implications arising out of this report to bring to Cabinet's attention.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL