

# LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD: ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

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<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council Education & Children Services
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<b>Papers with report</b>	LSCB Annual Report

## 1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Summary</b>	This is the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for the year 2013-14. It is for information and gives a view on effectiveness of children's safeguarding in Hillingdon. It also identifies priorities for future action and attention.
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	<b>Putting our Residents First: <i>Our People</i></b>  This report will contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy in order to ensure that Hillingdon's children and young people are kept safe.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	The LSCB is jointly funded by the Council, local CCG and other partners. There are no additional costs linked directly to this report.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Children, Young People's and Learning
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet:

- 1) Note the Annual Report and takes account of its conclusions in future planning for children's services and;
- 2) Notes the efforts being made to secure sufficient social work and other staff in order to provide an effective quality service at all stages of the children's pathway.

## **Reasons for recommendation**

To note the work of the LSCB over 2013/14.

## **Policy Overview Committee comments**

The Committee welcomed the comprehensive Annual Report which illustrated there was a strong commitment to safeguarding in Hillingdon.

Commenting on trends, the Committee were informed that there had been significant change through structural reorganisation in partner organisations which had presented challenges. However, this was being addressed by streamlining structures such as reducing the number of sub-committees from 13 to 4.

The Committee remained concerned at the numbers of children with protection plans but noted this had stabilised. Members welcomed the strong practice in many areas and noted that work in relation to domestic violence and resolving long standing neglect was at the forefront of the boards' activities. The Committee were also informed that Hillingdon CAMHS required improvement.

The Committee commented on the numbers of missing young people in Hillingdon and asked officers to review these figures i.e. single incidences or multiples of the same individual. Looking forward, it was noted that a number of improvements and enhancements were currently being made which would result in a shorter, more focused report being produced for 2015/16.

## **3. INFORMATION**

### **Supporting Information**

3.1 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. This is the fifth annual report under the new requirements and there is a requirement to publish this report by 1 April 2015 and submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The annual report will be presented to Cabinet in February and the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2015. It will also go to the Community Safety Partnership in February 2015.

3.2 The following areas are required elements of the Annual Report (based upon Government guidance from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2013'):

- A rigorous assessment of the performance and assessment of local services;
- Identification of areas of weakness and the action being taken to address them, as well as other proposals for action;
- Lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period, including Serious Case and Child Death reviews;
- Contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and details of expenditure.

### 3.3. Summary of Findings

3.3.1 Children's Services and the LSCB were both given a judgement of 'requires improvement' following an inspection carried out at the end of 2013. Many positives were noted. The Board's own work confirms that, on the whole, agencies respond quickly to act on concerns and there is evidence for sound partnership work on the ground. This is evidenced particularly in activity to prevent trafficking, where there is national recognition for the work done in Hillingdon and also to support those at risk of sexual exploitation. Activity in response to allegations of sexual exploitation resulted in a successful prosecution in late 2014 and the joint work was presented to other London boroughs at the London annual conference in December 2014. Good services are in place to support those affected by domestic violence and early intervention services have developed and more families are receiving early help assessments. Work around understanding child deaths and managing allegations is strong and there is an effective multi-agency training programme.

3.3.2 The Board has responded to the Ofsted findings by the development of an improvement plan that focuses on the seven major recommendations. These cover:

- Ensure that there is sufficient time for LSCB meetings,
- Improve communication with other strategic bodies,
- Improve the Board's scrutiny function through audit and performance monitoring,
- Ensure the Board provides effective challenge to partners,
- Ensure that children, young people and the community are appropriately engaged,
- Ensure the engagement of all partners in Signs of Safety implementation,
- Ensure that the impact and effectiveness of multi agency training is evaluated.

3.3.3 The Board has now increased the time available for meetings and is now held separately from the Adult Board, although joint work will progress through a sub group reporting to both Boards. Protocols have been developed with a range of other partnerships, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Violence Forum, Youth Offending Service and Corporate Parenting Boards. Signs of Safety are now embedded across agencies and the Board has extended its evaluation of training courses on a themed basis

3.3.4 Actions against the other recommendations are progressing, though not as swiftly as the Board would like. This depends very much on resources held by the Board and by contributions both financial and in kind by all statutory agencies. Three Serious Case Reviews will be carried out in 2014-15 and these place a huge pressure on limited resources. The Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group are the main contributors to LSCB functioning and a full breakdown can be found in the annual report.

3.3.5 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, as well as multi-agency audits. Improving and acting on quality assurance mechanisms remains a priority, along with better identification and action in respect of long term neglect, those affected by domestic violence and more effective engagement with children and young people.

3.3.6. There are, however, some important risks and concerns. The level of permanent staffing in children's social care continued to cause concern in respect of both service quality and management oversight. The inspection raised issues of assessment and care planning and the

increased number of cases coming to the attention of the LSCB we take as an indicator of these issues. The Council responded in summer 2014 by bringing in a managed service to support front line child protection work. At the time of writing this has led to improvements in timeliness of assessments and size of caseloads, although it is too early to assess the impact on quality of work.

3.3.7. It is important that the developing work carried out on the thresholds and early help assessment is backed up by the availability of appropriate early intervention services. Of particular note here is the identification of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. Although recent multi-agency work has resulted in a successful prosecution, there is evidence that all agencies should be better attuned to the early warning signs of vulnerability. We hope that the development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub ( MASH) at last reaches full fruition in 2014-15 with full multi-agency input as this has been shown to be an effective mechanism for ensuring that families receive a service appropriate for their needs.

3.3.8 In previous annual reports the LSCB has expressed concerns about the availability of services to support the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. The evidence from the local needs assessment indicates higher than average numbers of young people are being reported to A&E because of self harm and alcohol misuse. At the same time lower than average referral acceptances by CAMHS was noted. A recent report by Healthwatch, and the Board's own more limited work with young people, demonstrates this is an area of huge concern for them, as well as being reflected in case reviews. The CCG as commissioners of the service have instigated a review but, in the view of the LSCB, progress has been frustratingly slow and the LSCB is keen to see more services in place by spring 2015 as well as plans to enhance support at tier 2.

3.3.9 Partnership with Health agencies is strong on the whole, but further work is needed with GPs as providers and with NHS England who so far has not been represented on the LSCB.

3.3.10 There are other areas too that require attention. One is the relationship of the LSCB with schools. Many schools in the Borough have retained strong links with the LSCB but a current Serious Case Review evidences the risk inherent in the schools becoming more independent of local authorities, alongside a reduction in central support services. This remains an area of development for the LSCB and for schools.

3.3.11. The Youth Offending Service and The UK Border agency remain strong partners of the LSCB. However, the Board wishes to further to develop this work in order to assess the risk of some key issues such as gang involvement, and female genital mutilation. The Board does not know enough as yet to assess the impact of these.

3.3.12. Finally, there is risk to the work of the LSCB in the future due to lack of resource. The current financial allocation does not cover the increasing demand for multi-agency training and there is no contingency for serious and other case reviews. The Council is the lead contributor including financial and in kind contributions. Negotiations will be taking place with existing and potential funders, such as schools, to try and improve this position. In addition, an independent review currently underway of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board will look at possible synergies and efficiencies across the two.

## **Financial Implications**

The LSCB is jointly funded by LBH, Hillingdon CCG and other partners and there is a risk to its effective functioning due to lack of resource. This will be addressed by negotiation with partners.

The LSCB was funded in 2013/2014 as follows:

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
LB Hillingdon	84,900
NHS Hillingdon CCG	60,000
Metropolitan Police	5,000
CAFCASS	500
London Probation Services	2,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>152,400</b>

The total expenditure for the year was £170,723, therefore the total overspend was £18,323.

#### **4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

##### **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.

##### **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**

##### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms the 2013/14 outturn position outlined above, noting that the reported pressure of £18k was managed within the Council's broader revenue budget position. As stated within the financial implications section above, the level of on-going financial support from partner organisations for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board is to be negotiated in order to ensure the board can continue to function effectively.

##### **Legal**

The statutory framework behind the establishment of Safeguarding Children Board is section 13 of the Children Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act"), which was enacted in response to the report of the inquiry chaired by Lord Laming into the death of Victoria Climbié.

By 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.

Cabinet are being asked to note Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for the year 2013-14. This report is prepared pursuant to section 14A of the 2004 Act (as inserted by section 197 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009). The report refers to good practice in services provided to vulnerable children and areas that need improvement.

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.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL