

# HILLINGDON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor David Simmonds CBE
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council Education and Children's Services
<b>Contact</b>	Stephen Ashley, Independent Chairman of Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB)
<b>Papers with report</b>	Annual Report

## 1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Summary</b>	The annual report of the Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) is a statutory requirement. It describes the work of the partners engaged in children's safeguarding in the Borough, for the year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015. It will be published and available to view on the Board's website. Cabinet is asked to note the report.
<b>Putting our Residents First</b>	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People.</i>
<b>Financial Cost</b>	There are no direct costs applicable with the publication of this annual report.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

**That the Cabinet notes the Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2014-2015.**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

The annual report is a statutory requirement and Cabinet are asked to comment on its content given the importance of children's safeguarding. The report is a partnership document containing information specific to the work undertaken in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

None.

## **Policy Overview Committee comments**

The Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning POC thanked officers for the report provided, noting that although significant improvement was required to the functioning of the LSCB, work was already in progress to address this.

There was significant concern that the Annual Report stated that "Further work is needed by both the Board and its partners before we can be assured that children and young people are as safe as they can be across the Borough." It was acknowledged, however, that significant work had been undertaken since March 2015 to address the situation and that the LSCB Chairman had given assurances that this would not occur again. Some Committee Members expressed concerns about the contributions to the LSCB's budget as this appeared to be relatively low when compared to neighbouring boroughs. It was noted that work was ongoing to address concerns in relation to the budget.

A number of other improvements to the functioning of the Board had been made since March 2015, including improvements to auditing arrangements and the provision of a clearer assessment of the effectiveness of the Board. Work was also being undertaken to better evidence what the Board's priorities should be in the future. It was noted that the Chairman of the LSCB and other key staff were new in post and had been appointed since the time frame covered by the Annual Report.

The Committee noted that publication of the LSCB Annual report was expected to take place by the end of May in future years. It had been necessary to publish this year's report later than May in order to enable verification of performance data.

This report has been shared with the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **3. INFORMATION**

### **Supporting Information**

#### ***Background and context***

The annual report reflects activity from over one year ago, as it is for the period April 2014-March 2015. It is the report of the board Chairman and in this case it marks the final one of the previous incumbent's tenure. The new Chairman has articulated a clear strategy for how the Safeguarding Children Board will develop going forward.

Steve Ashley was appointed to the role of Independent Chairman for the Adult and Children Boards in April 2015 this year and began work in June. The Chairman has a clear brief to improve the functioning and effectiveness of both Boards and this process has started and will be accelerated over the year. The delivery will be supported by a Safeguarding Hub supporting the work of both safeguarding boards.

The new Chairman has been clear that the Board structure must be efficient and effective and is in place not only to hold partners to account, but to resolve those issues that are preventing or interfering with the effective safeguarding of children in Hillingdon. The progress of the Board will be reported at regular intervals throughout the coming year. Considerable work has been undertaken since April 2015 which is not reflected in the report. The attached annual report should be seen in the context of these changes, of the timing and the change of Chairman.

The information below provides a summary of current children safeguarding services and the work that has been undertaken this year. It fulfils the legal requirement contained in Working Together 2013 and 2015. The report is required to contain the following elements:

- 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.

### ***Report Summary***

Attached to this paper is an executive summary that provides further detail on the contents of the report. The Chairman would highlight the following detail:

#### LSCB Improvement Plan

Following a grading of "requires improvement" on Board performance by Ofsted in December 2013 an improvement plan was put in place. Progress has been made against each identified area but the Board requires further work to be graded as 'good' or 'excellent'. In particular, the Board still needs to improve its levels of auditing activity and training. A performance framework has been developed and requires broad implementation.

#### Assessment of the quality of safeguarding

To be confident of the effectiveness of the partnership the Board requires regular data, both quantitative and qualitative. Although a start has been made on this with the agreement of the Performance Web, section 11 and school audits in the forthcoming year and a multi-agency audit programme, the Board requires this to be further developed in order to have increased confidence in the quality of practice.

The information presented by partner organisations needs to be improved in order that the Board has appropriate assurance about their performance. The development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is positive, though further development is required to ensure that the contribution of all agencies is embedded.

Children's Social Care has achieved increased levels of stability, reducing their assessment backlogs and reducing staff turnover and is now aiming to consolidate this progress and increase the number of permanent, employed staff.

The Hillingdon Hospital was subject to a CQC inspection during October 2014, with the report being published in February 2015. The overall rating was that the hospital "Required Improvement". The Deputy Director of Nursing and Deputy Lead Doctor for safeguarding attended the Board in March 2015 to update on progress since the inspection. The Board was encouraged by the rapid progress at the hospital following the inspection and will continue to monitor this.

Further work by the Board and partners will provide further assurance that children and young people across the Borough are as safe as they can be.

#### Serious case reviews

No Serious Case Reviews were published in the year. One was completed and published in April 2015. This concerned a teaching assistant from a local secondary school who was convicted of sexual activity with a female pupil. The Board accepted the eleven recommendations made in this case and will oversee the implementation of these through the Learning and Improvement Framework.

### Finance

The new Chairman has committed to examining the financial status of the Board and to take recommendations forward to all agencies.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising relating to the publishing of this report.

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

### **What will be the effect of the recommendation?**

The publication of this report will not directly affect service users, though it is noted that there have been a number of developments following the time period the report references to improve the service and support provided to children and young people.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

The report contains reports from each of the agencies that form the partnership.

## **5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation that Cabinet note and comment on the content of this report. Funding arrangements for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board is under review and will be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecast.

### **Legal**

The Chairman of the HSCB must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. This is a requirement pursuant to s14A Children Act 2004. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner (i.e. the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) and the Chairman of the Health and Well-Being Board. To ensure full inclusion, this report is also submitted directly to the Cabinet.

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 specific legal implications arising from the report.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Previous Annual Reports