

HILLINGDON LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB)

Relevant Board Member(s)	Councillor David Simmonds CBE
Organisation	Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board
Report author	Stephen Ashley
Papers with report	Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Annual report and Executive Summary

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	<p>There is 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." However, it needs to be understood that significant work has been undertaken since March 2015 to address the situation and that the HSCB Chairman has given assurances that this would not occur again.</p> <p>A number of other improvements to the functioning of the Board have 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 needs to be noted that the Chairman of the HSCB and other key staff were new in post and had been appointed since the time frame covered by the Annual Report.</p> <p>The publication of the HSCB Annual report is expected to take place by the end of May in future years. It has been necessary to publish this year's report later than May in order to enable verification of performance data.</p>
Contribution to plans and strategies	N/A
Financial Cost	No financial cost
Ward(s) affected	N/A

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Health and Wellbeing Board:

1. notes the content of the report; and
2. passes comment on the timing and content of future annual reports.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

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

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 but is not yet in full use.

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 does not have sufficient data from the reporting year to be confident of the quality of practice.

The performance of partner organisations with regard to safeguarding provides mixed assurance for the Board. 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 a degree of stability, reducing their assessment backlogs and reducing staff turnover but now needs 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.

Taking the points above into account, the Board is cautious about an assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding across the Borough. 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.

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Financial Implications

No financial implications.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

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." However, it was acknowledged 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 contribution of the Council 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, there were no comments to note. It resolved that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The top three priorities for the LSCB be developed and provided to the Committee at a future meeting.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Hillingdon Council Corporate Finance comments

There are no direct financial implications from this report, although it does highlight the potential risks to safeguarding of reduced resources.

Hillingdon Council Legal comments

None directly from this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.