

# **Update to Children's Policy Overview Committee on the governance arrangements for safeguarding and Scrutiny**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the governance and scrutiny arrangements for safeguarding within the council and across partnerships.

## **1.2 Background and Context**

The 2004 Children Act established the legislative framework for the duty to cooperate across agencies and the establishment of Children's Trusts and Local Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB). Following the introduction of the legislation, statutory guidance was issued on the roles and responsibilities of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, Children's Trust arrangements and the roles and responsibilities of the Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Children, the Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services. Following the death of Baby Peter in Haringey Lord Lamings report set out recommendations to clarify and strengthen the relationship between the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and the Children's Trust. Legislation was introduced as part of the Apprenticeships Skills, Children and Learners Act 2009 which set out key responsibilities and accountabilities.

## **2. The role of the Children's Trust (CT)**

The Trust is the local partnership between all commissioners and current and potential providers of services for children young people and families. It exists to realise the principles of Every Child Matters, to work across professional and agency boundaries, to tackle complex problems proactively to make a real difference. In practice this means better integrated and outcome focused ways of working with children and families.

The number of relevant partners under a duty to cooperate now includes all schools, six form and FE colleges, Job Centre Plus;

### **Responsibilities of the Children's Trust**

The Children's Trust Board develops the local strategy for improving children's lives which is set out in the statutory Children and Young Peoples Plan and focuses on four key local priorities:

- Having specialist, early intervention and prevention services for all children and young people identified as having additional needs.

- Narrowing the Gap: Having a strategy in place to reduce child poverty including raising aspirations and attainment of the whole family.
- Using multi-agency teams, working through Children's Centres to address the needs of children underachieving at the Early Years Foundation.
- Developing effective joint working and commissioning, and listening to views of children, young people and families.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)**

The LSCB contributes to the wider goals of the Trust to improve the wellbeing of all children but has a particular focus on staying safe.

LSCB is responsible for:

- Challenging members of the Children's Trust on matters relating to keeping children safe
- Publishing annual report on effectiveness of arrangements locally and the contribution of each partner.
- Coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of its member organisations.
- Challenging partners ensuring lessons learnt from Serious Case Reviews and implemented
- Contributing to the wider goals of the Children's Trust and as a particular focus on staying safe
- Priority consultation during the development of the Children's Plan

### **4. Governance and accountability between the Children's Trust and the LSCB**

The LSCB should report to the Children's Trust Board and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. LSCB should provide robust challenge to the work of the Trust and its partners in order to ensure that the right systems and quality of service and practice are in place so that children are properly safeguarded. Hillingdon Safeguarding Children's Board now has an independent Chairman.

### **5. Roles of Director of Children's Services and Lead Member**

- DCS and Lead Member both have central roles, as set out in Statutory Guidance issued in July 2009
- Both should be members of CTB, DCS should be member of LSCB with LM a participant observer
- DCS has lead responsibility for improving outcomes for children
- LM provides political leadership and is politically accountable
- LM should assure themselves that effective Quality Assurance systems are in place

#### **4. Roles of Local Authority Chief Executives and Council Leaders**

In 2009 statutory guidance on the roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member were issued, the guidance also emphasised the role of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Chief Executives are responsible for satisfying themselves that the DCS is fulfilling their responsibilities including:

- Ensuring CTB and LSCB working together effectively
- Having clear responsibility assigned between partners
- Ensuring targets are reported to LSP

The LSCB Chairman's annual report will be considered by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive in their assessments of the effectiveness of partnerships.

#### **5. Overview and Scrutiny**

The Council's Constitution states the Terms of Reference, which are common to all Policy Overview Committees (POC). The Committee conducts reviews of policy, services or aspects of services according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews it also monitors the performance of the Council Services within its remit. This role ensures scrutiny and challenge to the relevant service areas of Education and Children's Services.