


<p>London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p>CHILDREN AND EDUCATION POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE</p> <p>23 November 2015</p>	
<p>LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16</p>	
<p>Report of the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board</p>	
<p>Open Report</p>	
<p>Classification: For Information and Review Key Decision: No</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce members of the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee to the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Annual Report provides a detailed overview of the work of the LSCB in 2014/15 including progress with the priorities identified in its Business Plan. It includes an assessment of the impact made by the Board's activity and the priorities it needs to pursue in 2015/16 and beyond where further progress is required.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to review and comment upon the contents of this report and the LSCB Annual Report which is included as an appendix.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. LSCBs have a statutory obligation to compile and publish an annual report. The 2014/15 Annual Report provides an assessment of the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It summarises progress that has been made by the LSCB covering the areas of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster. The report illustrates the extent to which the functions of the LSCB, as set out in Working Together 2015, are being effectively discharged.

- 3.2. The LSCB covering three boroughs has been in place since 2012. The full Board meets at least four times a year and there is an established structure of multi-agency sub-groups leading on specific issues. Hammersmith & Fulham maintains a local Partnership Group, chaired by the Safeguarding Service Manager to ensure local issues are considered and a wide range of agencies are involved in developments relating to safeguarding. The Annual Report identifies ways in which the Partnership Group can play a more significant role in taking forward the LSCB's Safeguarding Plan going forward.
- 3.3. Safeguarding children requires all agencies working with children and their families to work together by identifying children who may be at risk of harm, by pooling information to ensure that the clearest possible picture of family functioning and risk to children is obtained, by providing services to reduce the risk of harm to children and by monitoring children to ensure that the risks are reducing. The LSCB key function has been to ensure that the work of these agencies is coordinated and effective.

4. THE ANNUAL REPORT

- 4.1. The Annual Report has particularly focused on the priorities identified in its 2014/15 Business Plan reviewing progress made, identifying impact on children, families and the multi-agency workforce. It also confirms areas for ongoing development in the current year and beyond. The report includes a summary of the local child population, including those who are vulnerable and a review of the core functions of the LSCB.
- 4.2. Ongoing safeguarding issues such as early help and prevention of harm and delivering better outcomes for children subject to child protection plans and those looked after are reviewed in the report. In addition the report considers progress made with particular issues which have developed a higher profile in recent years including the radicalisation of children and young people, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation (CSE), children who go missing and e-safety.
- 4.3. In the last year the Board has also prioritised a number of areas to ensure continuous improvement at a time of significant change. This includes the development of stronger working relationships with the Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Wellbeing Board. How the LSCB engages with children and young people has been reviewed including progress made through a range of surveys and consultation exercises.
- 4.4. There has been a particular priority to improve the way the LSCB communicates with the large multi-agency workforce and the wider community. This has included the organisation of a number of events, the publication of bulletins or newsletters and the finalisation of a shared LSCB website.
- 4.5. Another key activity covered by the report is the Child Death Overview Panel which considers circumstances relating to the deaths of children as well as any local or regional learning which has emerged from this overview.

- 4.6. The LSCB commissions and oversees Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and the child has died or has been seriously harmed and there is a cause for concern for how agencies have worked together to safeguard the child. The report describes progress with two SCRs which commenced in the three boroughs as well as actions taken in relation to a SCR which concluded. An important aspect of SCRs is to identify learning to reduce the chances of similar situations arising in future and to ensure that this learning is well communicated to staff in all agencies and has an impact on practice. The Annual Report summarises learning from SCRs and other reviews from the past year which includes the need to avoid “compartmentalising” cases which can stifle thinking about the wider needs of children. There has also been learning in relation to working with mobile families, children in need, adoptive families and other “permanency” arrangements, emotional attachment disorders, concealed pregnancies and how schools can best respond to drug use amongst pupils.
- 4.7. The report also provides an overview of other key functions of the LSCB including Quality Assurance, the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who provides a coordinated and consistent approach to the management of allegations made against adults working with children, complaints and training.

5. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Annual Report describes actions to improve safeguarding for a number of groups within local communities, many of which comprise significant numbers of people with protected characteristics. This is particularly the case for the protected characteristics of sex and race. Where relevant, it describes services which have been developed to engage and specifically meet the needs of such groups.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that should be represented on LSCBs. The LSCB has a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. The Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area (this is a statutory requirement under section 14A of the 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 and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board.

7. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

None.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - LSCB Annual Report 2014/15