

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES

TO:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD		
DATE:	22 January 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	Reading Local safeguarding Children Board Annual Report		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Jan Gavin	PORTFOLIO:	Children's Services
SERVICE:	Children's Services	WARDS:	Boroughwide
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Reading and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do (Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015).
- 1.2 This Annual Report is being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure Board members are informed about the achievements of the LSCB for the 2014/2015 financial year. The Annual Report has a wide distribution and is sent to key stakeholders and partners so that they can be informed about the work and use the information in planning within their own organisations to keep children and young people safe.
- 1.3 This year, one of our Young Carers groups produced a young person's version of the annual report in video form. This video can be seen on the LSCB website home page (www.readinglscb.org.uk) and will be shown at the Health and Wellbeing Board to accompany this report.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the attached annual report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 As required by Working Together 2015, the LSCB Chair is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting welfare of children in Reading.
- 3.2 In line with this statutory guidance and our protocol agreement, the report is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board for information. It has also been

presented to the Children's Trust Board and the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Partnership working is a vital ingredient for an effective LSCB and this report contains information on some of the activities and achievements which have taken place that demonstrate this. Board members both champion and lead the safeguarding agenda within their agency and bring to the LSCB issues regarding safeguarding that relate primarily to their own agency, but which have implications for the co-operation between agencies and the monitoring role of the Board.

4.2 Unlike previous years, this report focusses on the achievements and ongoing challenges for the LSCB and partners specifically against our priorities. These priorities were reviewed and revised in October 2014 and are:

Priority 1. Domestic Abuse

Priority 2. Strengthening the Child's Journey and Voice

Priority 3. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and other Particularly Vulnerable Groups

Priority 4. Neglect

Priority 5. Effectiveness and Impact of Reading LSCB

4.3 Evidencing the impact of safeguarding work is key to understanding what works and how we can improve. Throughout this report the impact of work is highlighted.

4.4 In summary, key LSCB achievements for 2014/15 are listed below. Also listed are the ongoing concerns which the LSCB will continue to challenge in 2015/16.

LSCB Achievements:

Domestic Abuse

- LSCB input and endorsement of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-18.
- Continued support for the Family Choices Programme for families affected by domestic abuse.
- Support, through Public Health, for the IRIS project to support and training GP practices in how to identify domestic abuse and make referrals.
- RBC Early Help services able to show clear improvements in families where domestic abuse is a feature.

Strengthening the Child's Journey and Voice

- Recruitment campaigns for potential adopters and foster carers has improved outcomes for children and young people needing permanency.
- The Robust Challenge process was signed off by the LSCB. It enables Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs to improve the lived experience of the child by strengthening the challenge to the Local Authority.
- Children's Action Team key workers use the My Star/Family Star to inform support plans and directly capture the child's voice in the case file.
- The Youth Cabinet carried out a domestic abuse survey which was presented to the Board and recommendations discussed and agreed.

CSE and other Particularly Vulnerable Groups

- LSCB governance and oversight of the CSE and Missing Strategic group was established, along with an operational group which focusses clearly on individual cases.
- A clear multi-agency LSCB CSE strategy is now in place with a live action plan.
- CSE training has been rolled out throughout the LSCB partners at universal, targeted and specialist levels, with attendees reporting that their knowledge had either significantly or very significantly improved.
- The CSE toolkit and screening tool has been devised and rolled out.
- There is improved knowledge of the numbers of CSE victims and their levels of risk, and perpetrators have been charged.
- A Virtual Head for Children Missing out on Education has been appointed to ensure oversight of all cases of children and young people missing education, as they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.
- An LSCB task and finish group was established to gain a better understanding of the risk of Female Genital Mutilation in Reading, establish the processes already in place and what improvements are required. This is an ongoing area for concern with further work continuing.

Neglect

- The LSCB have produced a Neglect Protocol with clear recommendations for all partners.
- RBC Early Help Services work with many cases where neglect is an underlying issue. The use of outcome measuring tools enables the service to highlight particular areas for improvement which contribute towards neglect, such as domestic abuse, mental health issues, substance misuse, worklessness in the household and housing.
- Partner agencies have carried out training on neglect with their workforce.

Effectiveness and Impact of Reading LSCB

- LSCB structure was re-structured to ensure decision making and accountability rested with the LSCB Board. Board members have been instructed to be more openly challenging in meetings.
- A risk and concern log has been established which is reviewed at each Board meeting to ensure any concerns are kept live until resolved.
- LSCB Sub Groups have been restructured to ensure a local focus on quality assurance and performance. Performance data and auditing outcomes are expected at every Board meeting.
- The LSCB training offer has been discussed at Board level to ensure all Board members had oversight of this vital element of the LSCB.
- The thresholds for access to children's services has been reviewed and revised by the LSCB and is now a multi-agency owned document.
- A new LSCB website has been established which contains a wealth of information and support for professionals, families, children and young people.
- Partner's financial contribution to the LSCB has been challenged with some success but there is still great disparity between the Local Authority contribution and that of partners.

Key Ongoing Challenges identified and captured in the Risk/Concern Log :

- Multi-agency and community informed approach to Female Genital Mutilation is required.
- The numbers of known privately fostered children remains extremely low.

- Children’s Social Care staffing concerns remain.
- Significant progress is required to address the issue of neglect.
- Young people’s involvement with the Board needs to be strengthened.
- LSCB communication needs to be improved to ensure the right safeguarding information gets to the right people.
- Partner contribution to the LSCB both financially and engagement in meetings and auditing.
- Clear and meaningful data, with commentary, is required to ensure effective review and challenge.

4.5 The Annual Report relates specifically to the 2014/15 year, however there have been a number of developments since March. These include:

- CSE strategy and Screening Tools launch event in June to a hundred managers across the partnership.
- CSE Champions are established in a range of agencies, providing support for front line workers and the CSE Coordinator is now in place, providing a central strategic support to progress the CSE action plan.
- CSE Training pathway has been agreed by the Board and workshops for the CSE Screening Tool are currently being organised.
- 11 sessions of the Chelsea’s Choice theatre production are being organised and offered to schools.
- CSE awareness business cards have being produced and shared with all partner agencies, including taxi drivers, schools, GPs.
- Return home interviews are now taking place through the RBC Youth Service and have been well received. Reports are now regularly being reported to the CSE and Missing Sub Group and the LSCB Board.
- Key CSE documentation is available on the website, along with a progress report from the CSE Coordinator: <http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/information-professionals/child-sexual-exploitation/>
- The review of the thresholds has been completed and signed off by the Board. A guidance booklet has been produced to accompany the existing thresholds poster. Workshops in October and November 2015 launched the revised thresholds and guidance and clearly showed how they link to the new Early Help Hub and pathway and the Troubled Families Programme (phase 2). Hundreds of front line staff from across the partnership attended. Documentation from the workshops and the guidance can be found on the website: <http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/information-professionals/threshold-criteria/>
- A virtual communications sub group is being established and time has been secured from a National Management Trainee to work on improving LSCB communications. Work is being undertaken with Reading Football Club, including the use of a safeguarding video to be shown before matches.
- Our Lay Member organised a successful event with local BME groups to raise awareness of safeguarding issues in the BME community.
- Private Fostering workshops have been organised with agencies with improved take up following discussions at the LSCB Board meetings.
- The issue of Female Genital Mutilation is high on the list of key issues to address, with a new task and finish group being established to progress work. RBC, with partners, have already produced an action plan which has been shared across the West of Berkshire. The voluntary sector are very involved with this work, and are key in progressing the community awareness raising aspects.
- The LSCB dataset has been reviewed to ensure the right information is being received. A new format for reporting on data has been agreed which should

allow for a more coherent and comprehensive data report to come to Board meetings. New Chair of the QA & P group has taken post and is driving forward the required progress.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The work of the LSCB aligns with the Council strategic aim of Narrowing the Gap and two of its service priorities:
- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable and;
 - Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 This report has been written with contributions from all LSCB partners and circulated to the Board. It will be disseminated to all partners, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Trust Board.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out for this report however, equality and diversity continues to be a key theme for the LSCB.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications with this report. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 requires that the LSCB to produce an annual report and that it be submitted to the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Reading LSCB Annual Report 2014/15