

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>B&amp;NES HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>21/01/2015</b>
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>An open public item</b>

<b><u>Report summary table</u></b>	
<b>Report title</b>	A briefing regarding the work of the B&NES Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
<b>Report author</b>	Reg Pengelly – Independent Chair
<b>List of attachments</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers</b>	None
<b>Summary</b>	This is a briefing on the work and future scrutiny of the LSCB
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Board is asked to note this report and make any recommendations for additional scrutiny
<b>Rationale for recommendations</b>	The work of the LSCB contributes to the safety and wellbeing of all children in Bath & North East Somerset
<b>Resource implications</b>	None for this Board
<b>Statutory considerations and basis for proposal</b>	The Local Authority has statutory responsibility for establishing a LSCB and a number of partner organisations are under a legal duty to support and contribute to its work and function
<b>Consultation</b>	N/A
<b>Risk management</b>	A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance

## THE REPORT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides a brief summary of the work of the Bath and North East Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

1.2 The Statutory Guidance issued under the Children Act 2004, (Working Together 2013) provides for the establishment of LSCB's. The primary purpose of the LSCB may be summarised as: to monitor and coordinate the activities of a number of partner organisations so that children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

The guidance makes it clear that:

- a) The Local Authority is responsible for establishing a LSCB
- b) The LSCB should be independent. It should not be subordinate to, nor subsumed within, other local structures
- c) The Chief Executive, drawing on other LSCB partners and, where appropriate, the Lead Member will hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB
- d) The Chair's Annual Report is the key mechanism for demonstrating accountability

1.3 In determining the effectiveness of arrangements, Ofsted's inspection framework, in its description of 'good', refers to:

*"The governance arrangements enable LSCB partners (including the Health and Well-Being Board and the Children's Trust) to assess whether they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to help (including early help), protect and care for children and young people."*

### 2. GOVERNANCE, RELATIONSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1 As a multi-agency partnership, each of the agencies subject to the duty to cooperate with the LSCB is responsible for the effectiveness of the LSCB; the Independent Chair is held accountable by the CEO of the Local Authority. The relationship between the LSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust, is therefore one of mutual challenge and holding to account. It should not be, or be perceived to be, one of linear accountability. The purpose of this report is therefore to brief members of the B&NES Health & Wellbeing Board on the work of the LSCB and to confirm the relationship as one of mutual challenge. So far as the Children's Trust Board is concerned, specific challenges are tabled each year and it is proposed that a similar arrangement should be in put in place for the Health and Wellbeing Board from 2015.

2.1 The accountability of the Independent Chair and of the LSCB has been subject to a recent review and it has been agreed that this will take place in two stages:

- 1) An annual Scrutiny Panel will be established from senior members of the participating agencies including the Lead Member. The Panel will review the Annual Report and report their view of the effectiveness of the LSCB and the quality of the report to the B&NES Chief Executive
- 2) 360 degree appraisal process to triangulate information about the performance of the Chair by way of a "360 degree" appraisal process

By this means a rich assessment of the performance of the LSCB and the Chair will be available to inform continuous improvement. This process will commence in 2015.

### **3. THE WORK OF THE LSCB**

- 3.1 2014 has been a busy and productive year for B&NES LSCB. In particular, a great deal of work has taken place to strengthen the ability of partners to hold each other to account and this has led to the restructure of our meetings so that at least half of the available time is occupied by a thematic review. The first such meeting took place in December, at which multi – agency processes for child protection were reviewed in considerable depth. About 330 referrals about safeguarding concerns are received by the Local Authority each year and at any one time approximately 120 Child Protection Plans are “live”. These numbers are consistent with, or slightly lower than the national average and less than those of statistical neighbours. Outcomes from this meeting included a commitment from members to strengthen robust assurance within their organisations and the need for clearer categorisation of cases. Both outcomes can be reasonably expected to improve protection for children and to provide clarity for their families.
- 3.2 Local Health Services and the Police have been subject to inspections of their safeguarding children arrangements during the past year. Whilst opportunities for improvement have inevitably been identified, both services have received overall favourable judgments of their competence. Safeguarding inspections by Ofsted of the Local Authority and LSCB are anticipated within the next few months.
- 3.3 Nationally, there has been significant interest in the field of safeguarding children following further revelations arising from the Jimmy Savile investigation and the apparent failings of several Local Authorities to protect children from sexual exploitation, notably in Rotheram. This has led to the development of a local Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, which is coordinated with similar arrangements across the Avon and Somerset Police area. In particular, recent revelations arising from the police “Operation Brooke” trials, serve to remind us all that this particular risk to the young and vulnerable, is not exclusively confined to inner cities.
- 3.4 A Communications Group was established with a view to improving the promotion of safeguarding and the work of the LSCB to families and the workforce. One very important aspect of this work is engagement with children and young people and several useful references have been undertaken during the year. The Communication Group was also responsible for holding a highly successful and well-attended Stakeholder Event in November, on the topic of Early Help.

### **4. COLLABORATION**

- 4.1 Throughout the past year, the Independent Chair of the LSCB has been meeting with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) with a view to exploring opportunities for collaboration between the two Boards. This has led to a specific proposal for collaboration across particular areas of business and for a Joint Development Day to be held in early 2015 to determine how to take this proposal forward. The LSCB Chair has since been appointed as the Independent Chair of the SAB with effect from the stepping down of the current Chair in June 2015. This promises for an exciting year of exploration and further development across both Boards.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 As the Independent Chair, I am pleased to report my view that the B&NES LSCB is an

effective and vibrant partnership of committed agencies, which continues to achieve many positive outcomes for children. Moreover the LSCB is equally committed to improve, as evidenced by a ready embrace of our new thematic meeting arrangements.

5.2 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to note this report. I will be pleased to present my Annual Report that will provide a more detailed assessment of the performance of the LSCB, later this year. My last report for 2013/14 including information about the current work programme may be found at the [Bathnes.co.uk](http://Bathnes.co.uk), Local Safeguarding Children Board website.

Reg Pengelly  
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Bath & NE Somerset LSCB

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