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Title:	Local Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report 2014-15 (Executive Summary)
Report of:	Jean Daintith – LSCB Independent Chair
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Children's Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Children's Safeguarding
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** Local Safeguarding Children Boards have a statutory obligation to compile and publish an Annual report. This report is expected to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A report for 2014/15 has been drafted which reviews and evaluates the achievements and progress of the LSCB which covers City of Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It also identifies future priorities and an assessment of future challenges. This report provides an overview of the 2014/15 report.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1** The LSCB covering the 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. Westminster also maintains a local Partnership Group, chaired by the Director of Family Services to ensure local issues are considered and a wider range of agencies are involved in safeguarding developments. The Annual Report identifies ways in which the Partnership Group can play a more significant role in taking forward the overall Safeguarding Plan of the LSCB.

2.2 The 2014/15 Business Plan identified a number of shared priorities for the year. The annual report reviews progress with these and identifies the impact upon children, families and the multi-agency workforce. It also identifies further developments that are required and the conclusions of the LSCB about what the priorities should be in the current year.

3.0 Priorities reviewed in the Annual Report

3.1 Early help and prevention of harm

The LSCB has a statutory responsibility to assess the effectiveness of help provided to children and families including early help. This includes what interventions are made when problems start to emerge or are likely to emerge in future. The report summarises developments linked to Early Help services provided by the council and activities carried out in other agencies such as Health, Probation, Housing, schools and the voluntary sector. It details future actions to develop a more robust performance framework. There is a particular focus on what has been done to safeguard children from radicalisation which continues to have a high profile with significant input from many partners in Westminster.

3.2 Better outcomes for children subject to child protection plans and those Looked After (children in care)

Particular priority was given to ensuring child protection plans for children at risk of significant harm were relevant and promoted good outcomes. Learning from case reviews led to improved practice and services for children and families. There has been significant feedback and learning opportunities for multi-agency staff to hear about the findings of serious case reviews across the three boroughs. Finally, particular attention has been given to children who are at risk of or have experienced neglect including a significant audit of cases and the setting up of a short life working group. New tools and approaches to training have been developed for use by all agencies to better identify and respond to neglect.

3.3 Practice areas to compare, contrast and improve together

In 2014/15 this has focused on four high profile safeguarding issues which have had a high profile locally and nationally:

Improving practice in respect of children at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Responses to this issue have developed significantly over the past year with further action taking place in 2015/16. The LSCB CSE Strategy has driven much of the activity with additional developments prompted by learning from reviews of failures in other areas. There are now a range of structures in place including a monthly Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation panel chaired by police and social care, a specialist safeguarding lead for Westminster and a strategic coordinator across the three boroughs. Data regarding CSE victims

and perpetrators continues to improve and there are examples of targeted actions to disrupt CSE where it is known to occur. Awareness of staff in all agencies is improving through multi-agency training. A case audit led by the LSCB in 2014/15 noted that there had been an improvement in the framework for and quality of multi-disciplinary work with young people at risk, compared with a similar audit in 2013. Tackling CSE continues to be a high priority for the LSCB in 2015/16 with actions planned involving a wider range of council departments, work to better identify those who are vulnerable to CSE but not yet victims and further initiatives to disrupt or prosecute perpetrators.

Improving practice in respect of children at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)

Again the LSCB has overseen significant developments over the past year. A specialist adviser is in post and there has been a particular emphasis on good levels of communication between midwives and social care. A successful pilot involving both these agencies and a community organisation at St Mary's Hospital has been funded by the Department for Education enabling better multi-agency responses to women and families at risk. There has been significant awareness raising and training including in schools leading to a slight increase in the number of referrals. Work in 2015/16 will include finalising the LSCB FGM Strategy and ongoing developments to ensure information about families where there are risks of FGM is shared appropriately between relevant agencies.

Improving response to domestic violence and abuse

Following the recommendations of a short life working group, the LSCB agreed that the Tri-borough Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) partnership would take forward and coordinate future work to reduce the impact of domestic abuse. The LSCB contributed to the VAWG strategy, including through consultation with children and young people and a newly commissioned service for victims and perpetrators in 2015/16.

Developing a coordinated approach to e-safety

A short life working group led to a multi-agency preventive strategy involving training and other practice initiatives. Particular emphasis has been given to schools, providing them with training for safeguarding leads, an e-safety audit tool and information to disseminate to children and parents

3.3.1 Continuous improvement in a changing landscape

This section of the report covers developing links with other partnership boards. Of particular note, a strong working relationship has been developed with the Safeguarding Adults Board. Protocols have been developed to inform links with the Health and Wellbeing Board with alignment of respective priorities where appropriate. How the LSCB engages with children and young

people has been reviewed including surveys and consultation exercises and young people's roles in identifying future priorities.

There has been a particular priority to improve the way the LSCB communicates with a large multi-agency workforce and the wider community. This included the launch of a single shared website which is now live, along with the publication of a "Learning Review" bulletin to disseminate learning case reviews. The report also describes changes made to improve its governance including involvement of lay members, and encouraging and responding to challenge across partner agencies.

4.0 Other key activity of the LSCB

4.1 The report details the activities of the Child Death Overview Panel, which considers circumstances relating to the deaths of children as well as local and regional learning which has emerged.

4.2 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. The report described progress with the two serious case reviews started in 2014/15 as well as the impact of implementing actions taken following a historical case review. An important outcome of SCRs is to identify learning to reduce the chances of similar situations arising in the future and to ensure that this learning is well communicated to all multi-agency staff working with children and families. The learning from last year includes avoiding "compartmentalising" cases which can stifle thinking about wider needs of children as well as specific 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.

4.3 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 manages allegations made against adults working with children.
- Complaints
- Training

5.0 Conclusions of the Annual Report

5.1 The report concludes that the LSCB has a good overview of practice which protects and safeguards children and young people, has worked well to anticipate and respond to significant issues affecting their lives and has challenged members to promote the best outcomes for children and young people.

5.2 The report also highlights areas where progress is not as good and where further development is required. These areas are reflected in the 2015/16

Safeguarding Plan which informs the current activities of the LSCB. Current priorities reflect the need to continue to develop work on FGM, CSE, gangs, children who go missing and radicalisation of young people. Some very specific actions for individual or all partner agencies are identified.

- 5.3** There are recommendations to continue to improve the engagement of some agencies in the active work of the Board as well as improving communications to all staff and the community.

6. Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 6.1** The report outlines the development of links between the LSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Boards. There is alignment of the priorities of the two Boards where appropriate, as indicated in the LSCB's Safeguarding Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1** The Annual Report provides details of the LSCB budget.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Steve Bywater, Policy Manager
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