

**Subject:** Effectiveness of Safeguarding practice  
**Date of Meeting:** 19 January 2009  
**Report of:** Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Steve Barton Tel: 29-6105  
E-mail: Steve.barton@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

In line with S 100B(4b)The Local Government (Access to Information) Act, as amended, this is to be considered as a late report as the work required by the Secretary of State in December 2008 has only recently been undertaken.

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The CYPT Board received a background report setting out the context for this paper, that following events in the London Borough of Haringey (the Baby P. case) all Local Authorities and NHS organisations are required to take stock of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in their areas.
- 1.2 The purpose of this second report is to enable the Board to be part of that stocktake. The report sets out:
  - A summary of safeguarding arrangements in Brighton and Hove across the Children and Young People's Trust Partnership, including the PCT and the local health economy, and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board
  - A summary of the assurance provided by external inspection that safeguarding practice in Brighton and Hove is effective
  - The further action taken in light of events following Haringey to assess and where necessary to improve local practice

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the summary and baseline assessment of safeguarding practice in Brighton and Hove.
- 2.2 Agree the proposals for further assessment and action set out in paragraph 3.4.
- 2.3 Note the proposal to update the recruitment and retention strategy set out in paragraph 3.6.

- 2.4 Agree to receive a further report on the outcomes of the assessment and action programme, including any additional requirements, which may emerge from the DCSF, Ofsted or the Healthcare Commission.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 Arrangements to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in Brighton and Hove are set out in Appendix 1. These arrangements ensure compliance with legislation and statutory guidance including the Children Act 2004, Working Together 2006 and the new Children's Trust Guidance on Interagency Cooperation 2008. The arrangements also ensure compliance with external inspection regimes and national standards including Ofsted's Annual Performance Assessment and Standards for Better Health (Core Standard 2). In summary the arrangements are:

- Appointment by the local authority of a Director of Children's Services and designation of a Lead Member for children's services (Children Act 2004)
- Creation by the local authority of a Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2006)
- Establishment of a Children and Young People's Trust to ensure planning and commissioning of services takes account of the need to safeguard and promote children's welfare (Statutory Guidance 2008)
- A Quality and Performance Branch in the CYPT to provide offline assurance for Trust services including safeguarding and child protection. And to provide management support to the LSCB and host the designated professionals for child protection who provide assurance for the local health economy.
- Area and city wide safeguarding and child protection services, which include management and assurance process to ensure effective delivery.
- An integrated Safeguarding Children Training and Development Strategy and Workforce Development Strategy

3.2 Safeguarding and child protection services provided or commissioned by the CYPT were judged to be adequate by the Joint Area Review in 2006 and improved to good in Ofsted's Annual Performance Assessment (APA) in 2007 and 2008. For 2007/8 all NHS Trusts in Brighton and Hove reported themselves to be compliant with Core Standard 2 Safeguarding Children (see Appendix 2).

3.3 In order to take stock of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice, and in the absence of guidance from the DCSF or the Healthcare Commission, the CYPT's senior management team (DMT) developed an interim assessment framework with assistance from the Children's Service Advisor at the Government Office for the South East GOSE). Appendix 3 sets out the framework, which includes:

- The main findings of the Joint Area Review of children's services in Haringey
- Preliminary issues identified by the Healthcare Commission

- An early draft Children's Social Care Performance Framework and LSCB Quality Assurance checklist developed by GOSE
- A Social Care Governance Exercise completed by CYPT Area Managers (7<sup>th</sup> January 2008)

3.4 Using the assessment framework DMT has identified the following issues which require further attention and has put in a place an assessment programme to review:

- Compliance with the recommendations of the Climbie Inquiry (2005)
- The structure and content of the CYPT's Monthly Monitoring Reports of social care and safeguarding data
- The operation of the CYPT Area Panels for complex, high risk cases
- Compliance with the CYPT Supervision Policy with particular reference to safeguarding and child protection
- Standards of record keeping on case files with particular reference to safeguarding and child protection and to consulting with and recording the wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Thresholds, or access criteria for targeted and specialist safeguarding and child protection services commissioned or provided by the CYPT
- The effectiveness of CYPT safeguarding and child protection audit programmes and, following discussion with the its new Executive Group, the multi-agency file audit undertaken by the LSCB

3.5 The results of the assessment, and of the review of safeguarding services required by the Healthcare Commission will be reported to the CYPT Board, the PCT Integrated Governance Board and to the LSCB. This will include evidence to provide further assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice and any remedial action or further assessment that is required.

3.6 In addition DMT is updating the CYPT's Recruitment and Retention strategy to take account of the impact locally of events in Haringey in respect of social work practitioners, support staff and managers. A range of initiatives are being considered. Initial costings are in the region of £90,000, for which resources have yet to be identified.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 This report has been jointly developed by senior managers in the CYPT and in the PCT. A parallel report will be taken to the PCT Integrated Governance Committee.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 The cost of the assessment programme (paragraph 3.4) will be met from within existing CYPT revenue budgets. Any recommendations made as a result of this programme may have financial implications. These will need to be assessed at the time and funding identified from within the CYPT budget. It is currently estimated that the recruitment and retention strategy (paragraph 3.6) will cost approximately £90k per annum. This figure may change depending on the final package of measures adopted. Resources to fund this on an ongoing basis will need to be identified from within the CYPT budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates

Date: 19/01/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 This report sets out the context for reviewing safeguarding practice as required by the Secretary of State following events in the London Borough of Haringey.

The report concludes that the CYPT 's safeguarding arrangements are compliant with both the Children Act 2004 and statutory guidance and sets out the proposals for the further action to be taken, following the findings which have arisen from the Joint Area Review in Haringey.

Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Priestley

Date: 19/01/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Statutory Guidance (Working Together 2006) and local procedures (Pan Sussex Child Protection Procedures) take full account of the equalities issues in ensuring the safeguarding of all children, especially those from vulnerable or marginalized groups.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no immediate Crime & Disorder implications.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Effective management of risk is a central feature of safeguarding children and is at the heart of this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Events in the London Borough of Haringey following the Joint Area Review of children's services demonstrate that the effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements have very significant implications for the city council and all of its partners.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The timescales for this review precluded alternative options, for example taking an initial report to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board before discussion at the CYPT Board.

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 All Local Authorities and NHS organisations are required to take stock of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in their areas including a review of assurance arrangements at Board level.