



Annual Report 2013/14

Executive Summary

Working Together to Safeguard Children

This Executive Summary summarises the Brighton & Hove LSCB Annual Report covering 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It describes the Board's structure, activity and progress during 2013/14, with a focus on the priority areas as outlined in the Brighton & Hove LSCB Business Plan 2013-16.

There are approximately 49,947 children (aged under 18) living in Brighton & Hove, making up 18.3% of the city's population (Source 2011 Census). Due to the often duplicitous and secretive nature of abuse and neglect, it is not possible to know every child at risk in Brighton and Hove, but keeping children safe will always be our number one priority.

We are committed to strengthening safeguarding and child protection and to promoting early intervention and prevention to bring about better outcomes for the children living in the city.

Role of the Board

This section outlines the role and purpose of the B&H LSCB, describing how it is made up of statutory and voluntary partners, these include representatives from Health, Education, Children's Services, Police, Probation, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), Youth Offending, the Community & Voluntary Sector as well as Lay Members.

Our purpose is to make sure that all children and young people in our City are protected from abuse and neglect. Children can only be safeguarded from harm if agencies work well together, follow procedures and guidance based on best practice and are well informed and trained.

Governance & Accountability

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on every Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Government's Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as: Protecting children from maltreatment; Preventing impairment of children's health or development; Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

This is to enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully. The annual report provides an analysis of the effectiveness of the LSCB in reflecting on the best approaches to ensure constant improvement. There has been re-structuring and refocusing during 2013/14 in response to the experiences of 2012/13. This section of the report describes positive advances in the role of the LSCB in challenging partners and in the ongoing development of links across key strategic partnerships.

LSCB Business Plan 2013 – 2016: An update on #yourLSCB's key priorities

This section looks in detail at progress made in 2013/14. Full information on progress against the strategic priorities can be found on pages 31-56.

Summary of Achievements as at March 2014

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- Increased the influence of the Board by strengthening **relationships** with other **key strategic** groups, e.g. the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Adult Safeguarding Board
 - Work of the Board is informed by clear agreed **priorities** underpinned by an up to date and well-structured Business Plan
 - Improved **Monitoring & Evaluation** function with a varied multi-agency audit programme that includes operational staff and analyses and uses findings to drive improvement
 - Demonstrated a commitment to ensuring Board partner agencies are capturing the experiences of children, young people and families to inform service improvement and increased efforts to **hear the voice** of children, young people, families and practitioners in Brighton & Hove LSCB activities
 - Raised the **profile** of Brighton & Hove LSCB by developing and maintaining the LSCB website, disseminating LSCB newsletters and bulletins, board briefings, establishing a presence on Twitter and developing links and building relationships with existing parents & carers groups & forums
 - Successfully launching an **Early Help** Partnership Strategy which describes how agencies need to work together to provide Early Help in the city
 - Approved the **Threshold Document** (Interagency Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria) which provides guidance for professionals and service users to; identify and assess level of individual need; and clarify the circumstances in which to refer a child to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Early Help Hub (EHH) or to a specific agency to address an individual need
 - Progressed work in supporting the identification, assessment and safeguarding intervention of children at risk of **sexual exploitation** through the establishment of the multi-agency operational group, Red Operation Kite.
 - Developed a more effective multi-agency **data set** which is used to routinely scrutinise partners performance, and challenge and audit where necessary (ongoing improvement of the process)
 - Demonstrated that Brighton & Hove LSCB provides effective **challenge** to partners and holds partners to **account** to improve safeguarding outcomes for children and young people
 - Promoted awareness of **private fostering** which has helped ensure that more privately fostered children and young people are identified and supported
 - Provided **challenge** to Board partner agencies to provide sufficient resources to ensure they are able to take part in all aspects of child protection work, including strategy discussions and meetings, child protection conferences and quality assurance activity
 - Routinely reviewed the work of all LSCB Subcommittees to ensure this is being effectively undertaken and where applicable **influencing practice**
 - Delivered child protection **training** across the partnership, ensuring that all staff have access to good quality training, which helps support sustained improvements across all safeguarding services

LSCB Finances & Resources

All LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCB to be well organised and effective. In principle, members should share the financial responsibility for the LSCB in such a way that a disproportionate burden does not fall on one or more partner agencies. Locally, the City Council has contributed around 70% of funding. The full financial breakdown, plus the budget forecast for 2014/15 can be read in appendix 1.

Monitoring & Evaluation

This section provides some analysis of the work that has taken place in terms of developing a robust approach to performance monitoring. There are summaries of some of the key learning arising from multi-agency themed audits regarding **Child Protection** and **Children in Need Plans**, which found that practice was generally effective with children subject to a child protection plan, with good engagement from relevant agencies and plans leading to change in families and improvement in children's lives. However, with children in need plans, the picture was not so positive, with evidence of lack of focus and drift in some cases. Other work is also reported on here in terms of the LSCB's effectiveness in monitoring the safeguarding system, including **Section 11 Audits, Private Fostering, Management of Allegations of Adults working with Children and Complaints Regarding Child Protection Conferences**.

Management Information Report

Performance management has been a key priority for 2013/14. The full Board and the Monitoring and Evaluation Sub Committee have throughout the year reviewed child protection activity and performance data. The Brighton & Hove LSCB has tried to establish a more multi agency dataset to give the Board a complete and assured picture of whether our work is making a difference to children and to adequately alert the Board of any risks in the system. Whilst progress has been made, this remains an area of improvement for the LSCB.

This section provides a general analysis of current data around safeguarding children. Data in this section relates to: **Referrals, Single Assessments, Section 47s Enquiries Initial Child Protection Conferences, Children in Need, Looked After Children and Children with a Child Protection Plan**.

Learning & Development

Brighton & Hove LSCB has a responsibility to develop policies and procedures in relation to: "... training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children ... to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children". (Working Together, 2013). This section looks at the work of the LSCB's Learning & Development Sub Committee.

We now have realistic information on the true cost of the training programme, which previously had been hidden in the council's safeguarding budget, and must now make sure that all the courses represent value for money.

Child Death Overview Panel

This part of the report contains a summary of the work of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) during 2013/14. Brighton & Hove CDOP review the deaths of all children normally resident in Brighton & Hove. During 2013/14 16 children died in our area. The panel looks to identify any issues that could require a Serious Case Review (SCR); any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children in the area; or any wider public health or safety concerns arising from a particular death or from a pattern of deaths in the area; and will make specific recommendation to the LSCB.

Summary of Challenges for 2014/15

This section discusses how safeguarding activity is progressing well but outlines a number of challenges, these include:

-  Whilst we have tried to promote the direct **participation** and input of **children** and **young people** in the work of Brighton & Hove LSCB at a strategic and operational level this remains an area of challenge for the Board.
-  We need to improve the breadth of our lay membership to ensure that the Board and agencies receive challenge from a representative section of our communities. We are undertaking a recruitment exercise which will see a Lay Member Sub Group reporting in to and represented on the board.
-  Performance management and analysis needs further development within the Board. We are working to improve our **multi-agency data set** so that it drives an embedded culture of rigorous performance management, which transforms the standards of practice.
-  The LSCB **multi-agency training programme** was an area that needed attention previously. Throughout 2013/14 urgent action was taken to reinvigorate the Training, now the Learning & Development Subcommittee. A new chair implemented Terms of Reference, which ensures regular and well-engaged meetings and that the group has a clear work plan linked with the LSCB's priorities. This needs to be driven forward
-  We are looking to consider our capacity to deliver more regular and focused SCIE Learning Together training appropriate to different levels and **engagements in SCRs**, for example, training for the 'Case Group,' not just training for Lead Reviewers.
-  The development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and local approach to Early Help were implemented on 1 September 2014. We will be making sure certain arrangements are communicated effectively, understood, and consistently implemented across the partnership to **promote appropriate referrals** and support safeguarding of children and young people.
-  LSCB newsletters and the adoption of the SCIE Learning Together approach to Serious Case Reviews, has helped to raise the profile of Brighton & Hove LSCB with frontline staff and raise awareness of what is being done locally. However, we need to continue to strive to raise the Board's profile with members of the public and we need to consider how we can better **engage the public in safeguarding children**.
-  The **economic** situation and **organisational** change affecting public services continues to be a **challenge** for the Board and we must ensure the safety of children is not compromised.
-  We need to strengthen our approach to **online safety** as the advancements in social media technology have created new opportunities for children and young people to be harmed.
-  We need to better understand the reach and impact of our training, learning from case reviews and outcome of audit so as to be assured they are improving the lives of children

Messages for Readers

Board Members

Identify and act on child protection concerns

Work effectively to share information appropriately

Collectively make decisions about how best to intervene in children's lives where their welfare is being compromised, and collectively monitor the effectiveness of those arrangements.

Staff working in Board partner agencies

Book onto LSCB Multi agency training and learning events pertinent to your role

Be familiar with the Pan Sussex Safeguarding Procedures

Be familiar with the Threshold document to ensure an appropriate response to children and families

Use your agency representative (you can see who this is on page 102) to make sure the voices of the workforce, children and young people are heard

Chief Executives & Directors

Show Brighton & Hove LSCB that your agency is committed to a culture of safeguarding

Ensure your workforce contributes to the provision of LSCB multi agency safeguarding training

To have an open dialogue about any barriers that may impact on your organisations ability to safeguard children and young people

The Community

You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to report any of your concerns

Safeguarding children and keeping them free from harm is everyone's responsibility, if you are worried about a child or young person please follow the steps on Brighton & Hove LSCB's website:

www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk

Local Politicians

Help Brighton & Hove LSCB respond to the voices of vulnerable children and families in your ward. For 2013/14 Councillor Sue Shanks was lead member for children and families, making sure their voices are heard by the LSCB

Keep the protection of children and young people at the forefront of thinking when scrutinising and challenging any plans for Brighton & Hove

Commissioners

Scrutinise and challenge governance and planning arrangements by your providers for children, young people and their families in Brighton & Hove

Discharge safeguarding responsibilities fully to ensure services are commissioned for the most vulnerable children

Monitor how information is shared across and between your providers

Children and Young People

You are at the heart of the child protection system.

We want to make sure that your voices are heard and that we know how you are experiencing the services in our Board partner agencies. If you would like to know more about how you can influence the work of Brighton & Hove LSCB please contact us at www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/contact



Safeguarding Children is Everyone's Responsibility



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