

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 17TH NOVEMBER 2017

SUBJECT OF REPORT: NORTH SOMERSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (NSSCB) ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: TONY OLIVER (INDEPENDENT CHAIR, NSSCB)

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

Note the publication of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB) Annual Report 2016 – 2017.

To further develop understanding of the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and how the North Somerset LSCB operates locally.

Note the developments, achievements, challenges and areas for improvement in this critical area of work.

Note the 'Next Steps' of the NSSCB.

Promote the importance of safeguarding of children and young people across all the partners and in the services they commission ensuring that safeguarding is at the heart of all that is delivered.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 requires each LSCB to produce and publish an annual report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

The report sets out the achievements and progress made during 2016/17 and identifies the challenges facing the Board in 2017/18.

The key purpose of the Annual Report is to assess the impact of the work we have undertaken in 2016/17 on service quality and on safeguarding outcomes for children and young people in North Somerset. Specifically it evaluates our performance against the priorities that we set in our Business Plan 2015/16 and against other statutory functions that the LSCB in particular must undertake.

LSCBs are statutory multi-agency bodies established under the Children Act 2004. They are independently chaired and consist of board members who are senior

representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies who have a role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

LSCB's statutory objectives are to:

- Co-ordinate local work undertaken by all agencies and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and
- Ensure the effectiveness of that work.

The Board has no service delivery functions but is required to inform (through its coordination and effectiveness responsibilities) the commissioning intentions of partner agencies, It is also required to monitor, quality assure and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the services commissioned and delivered in the local area.

The NSSCB is independently chaired by Tony Oliver.

Working Together 2015 highlights the importance of partner agencies and their role in implementing effective safeguarding practice. While LSCBs do not have the power to direct other organisations, they do have a role in making clear where improvement is needed. Each Board partner retains its own existing line of accountability for safeguarding.

In North Somerset our Board partners include:

- Local Authority
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Health
- National Probation Service
- Education (including schools)
- Voluntary sector
- CAF/CASS
- Border Agency

We also work with others such as Adult Safeguarding, Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service

The governance structure of the NSSCB includes details of the Executive and Sub-Groups (diagram below), which draw their membership from across agencies in North Somerset. Each deliver against the Business Plan priorities and objectives.

Each priority has actions, identified outcomes and as a whole forms the NSSCB Business Plan (Appendix 1 Annual Report).

The annual report gives information on the safeguarding activity for the reporting period and an update of the progress made against the NSSCB Business Priorities.

Within the report achievements, improvements, challenges, areas for improvements and next steps are detailed.

POLICY

The NSSCB is a statutory body and local authorities have a duty to ensure that the Board is enabled to operate effectively.

It is a requirement of (the statutory guidance) Working Together 2015 that the NSSCB Annual Report be reported to the Leader of the Council together with the Chief Executive of the local authority, the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

DETAILS

The Annual Report includes:

- A brief overview of the local area safeguarding context with some key context data;
- An overview of the Boards' governance and accountability arrangements;
- Analysis of performance against the key priorities in the 2016/17 Business Plan.

The NSSCB's three overarching principles are: Leadership, Challenge and Learning.

The specific priorities for the NSSCB are:

- Early Intervention
- Neglect
- Sexual Exploitation/Missing
- Domestic Abuse

The report illustrates improvements that have been secured in the delivery of safeguarding across North Somerset. It also identifies a range of improvements that are required in the future and these are reflected in the formulation of the new Business Plan 2017/18.

The report contains information from many of the partners on the Board of the work they have undertaken in the last year. It also provides information on the work of the various sub-groups which report to the Board.

Throughout the report there is information on the performance and effectiveness of local services to safeguard children and young people. There is also information on how the Board has focussed on issues which are important to children and young people, such as Child Sexual Exploitation. The Board is starting to develop its expertise and understanding of the issues behind child neglect and early help, which are two of the priorities for North Somerset.

Principles and Priorities

Identified responsibilities and principles for the Board from the Business Plan 2017-2018 underpin the future work of the Board, these are:

Leadership: Through clarification of Board members' responsibilities and commitment, clear business planning, quality assurance and performance improvement framework, to drive change and demonstrate the leadership role of the NSSCB.

Challenge: Through a multi-agency audit programme of focussed, themed audits, Section 11 audits and QA & Performance Improvement Framework, to identify areas of concern and seek improvement plans.

Learning: Through publication of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and dissemination of associated learning, development of the multi-agency training programme and integration of learning from the audit programme, to learn from, and change, practice.

In addition, to focus on scrutiny and seeking reassurance about the effectiveness of integrated working arrangements, with the emphasis on quality and impact, the following priority areas were agreed by the NSSCB in February 2017:

Early Help: To assess the effectiveness of the preventative services being provided to children and families, with an emphasis on Early Help.

Child Sexual Exploitation: To work in partnership to further the collective understanding of the profile of CSE in North Somerset in order to inform our strategies to prevent, identify and tackle CSE effectively.

Domestic Abuse: To ensure the focus of the impact of domestic violence and abuse on children and young people is enhanced and is in line with the Domestic Abuse Strategy, with emphasis on understanding and responding to underlying causes.

Neglect: To develop and assess the impact of the Neglect Strategy and use the learning from SCRs where neglect is a significant factor, identify themes and integrate that learning into the multi-agency training programme.

Serious Case Review learning: To ensure that the learning and recommendations from SCRs and other local and national reviews are identified and tracked and that action plans are followed up in order to make sure that learning has changed practice.

Partnership engagement with Children and Young People: To assure the effectiveness of partnership engagement with children and young people.

Challenges

The NSSCB has identified a number of challenges going forward which include:

- A need for clarity around the role of the different sub groups and some members of the Board
- A renewed and clear focus on discussions leading to impact for the child or young person would be helpful.
- Evaluation of training could be carried out in a way that demonstrates more impact and improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Data and quality assurance.
- Engagement with the views of children and young people.
- Improved Board visibility, both with the public and by engagement with frontline services.

Work has started to address a number of these challenges and by doing so we aim to ensure that the NSSCB is a strong partnership, focussed on challenge and improvement; and with a constant emphasis on the impact for children and young people.

NEXT STEPS

This section reviews what needs to happen next to ensure continuing improvement.

Business Planning: It is expected that the new two-year business planning approach will address identified priorities more effectively by balancing short-term and long-term priorities through a work-stream planning approach. The Business Plan 2017-19 is available in Appendix 1 and contains work streams and priorities for year 1. Priorities for the following years will be added after the annual appraisal of the Board's effectiveness.

The plan sets out the future focus of the NSSCB, providing a series of outcomes, milestones and measures which will support providing evidence of progress and impact.

Serious Case Reviews: A programme of work will be in place to implement the independent Serious Case Review (SCR) recommendations (due in December). Key learning points will be extracted from the completed SCRs and a programme of dissemination and learning events will be rolled out in 2018.

Quality Assurance: In order to fulfil its governance and accountability duties, the NSSCB relies on an effective quality assurance process to generate evidence for effective scrutiny and challenge. We need to establish a culture of partners not only sharing information from performance management systems but also being committed to collecting information in the absence of systems. This means that agencies ensure that significant data is collected for the NSSCB dataset. This is work in progress.

Performance Monitoring: All Board members must be committed to developing its performance monitoring system to operate effectively. The plan is that the Board takes a phased approach with the initial focus being on developing robust Board governance arrangements. The NSSCB has reviewed the Board infrastructure and made changes to the sub-group arrangements, to more effectively drive forward policy, practice and learning and development priorities. For example, the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group comes under the management of the NSSCB to oversee the implementation of the SE Strategy and Action Plan. The NSSCB is developing a quality assurance process model, which draws on single agencies' performance management systems.

Data and Performance Information: Children's Services key performance indicators relating to safeguarding, child protection and early help are currently monitored by the NSSCB Executive Group. The next steps are for all partners to report their data to the Board on a quarterly basis. This will enable us to challenge appropriately and satisfy ourselves in relation to the effectiveness of all services being delivered in North Somerset to support children and young people and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

The Board must begin a robust programme that will monitor, quality assure and evaluate the quality of services within North Somerset.

We need to develop a more effective multi-agency dataset which is to be used to routinely scrutinise operational partners' performance, and challenge and audit where necessary.

Our quality assurance process will aim to develop an understanding of the quality of multi-agency practice and the child's journey.

Overview and Single Agency Activity: As a board we need to analyse how effective services are in North Somerset at keeping children and young people safe and what the impact of our work has been in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people. All partner agencies will be asked to present their respective annual reports to the NSSCB.

Leadership, Challenge and Learning: We need to agree a new approach for 2017-2018 which will be more focused on our specific role and remit in ensuring the welfare of children is safeguarded and protected. Our three overarching principles will be: Leadership, Challenge and Learning.

The Board must be committed to an approach where the Independent Chair leads the safeguarding agenda, challenges the work of partner agencies and, as a board, learns lessons, embeds good practice and is continually influenced by the views of children and young people.

Partners will be asked to provide examples and evidence of work where leadership, challenge and learning has taken place and led to changes in practice and will ultimately improve outcomes. By supporting our partners in these areas we can work together to really make a difference for the children and young people of North Somerset.

Sub-Groups: There will be an appraisal of multi-agency sub-group activities in relation to the NSSCB Business Plan objectives. The appraisal will refer to aspects of NSSCB effectiveness that relate to outcome-based accountability principles; these are about providing assurance to the Board based on evidence of impact and change as a result of NSSCB activities. The information is to be provided by each sub-group chair and presented by sub-group area of responsibility.

A review of the activity reports submitted by the chair of each sub-group will provide evidence that they have operated effectively; objectives were delivered as planned.

Development of new processes to increase the efficiency of support to the NSSCB. This will ensure that work is carried out more effectively and efficiently resulting in clearer Sub-Group reports presented to the Board and clearly defining where there are gaps that need to be challenged.

Learning and Improvement: A key part of the work of the NSSCB is to ensure that its activities are making an impact on safeguarding practice. This commitment to development and improvement is to be clearly set out in its learning and improvement framework which will drive and monitor improvement. We will continue to develop case audits, reviews, learning and training evaluations and data analysis. Measuring the impact of learning and development activities such as training

courses, workshops and courses is one of the key areas the NSSCB will be working on. The updated learning and improvement framework to detail the mechanisms for measuring impact of learning.

The NSSCB to scrutinise and challenge the level of safeguarding training provision across agencies. This will also be supported by the findings of the Section 11 audits.

New guidance to be developed on the safeguarding training levels and learning outcomes that can be expected from each level of training.

Working with the Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that cross-cutting themes such as domestic abuse and mental health are dealt with holistically i.e. as a whole family approach.

Further work is needed in relation to feedback processes from children and young people and understanding the views of professionals of what practice is like on the front-line.

Engagement with and Participation of Children and Young People: For the Business Plan going forward, the NSSCB wishes to develop a broader understanding of what local young people and children are saying about feeling safe in North Somerset, and their experience of services.

A key role for the NSSCB is to maintain an understanding and have oversight of how children and young people are involved in the decisions that affect their lives. The Board will begin to identify lines of enquiry and forge links to other boards and sub-groups.

As a priority, the NSSCB will seek to secure the necessary evidence to assure itself of the quality and effectiveness of participation and engagement of children and young people in planning, reviews and decision making. The NSSCB will play a key role in challenging all partners in their delivery of strategies to strengthen voice and influence, and it will promote voice and influence as central element for safeguarding children and young people.

Wood Review and Children and Social Work Act 2017: The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, led by Alan Wood – the national ‘Wood Review’. The Government’s response to the Wood Review indicates a change in thinking regarding the future of LSCBs and proposes new arrangements. The anticipated changes in arrangements will be linked to the provisions of the Children and Social Work Bill enacted through legislation 2017. Those changes are:

- A new statutory framework, which will set out clear requirements, but give local partners the freedom to decide how they operate to improve outcomes for children;
- The 3 key partners (local authorities, the police and the health) will be required to make and publish plans showing how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area;
- All local organisations involved in the protection of children will be expected to cooperate with the new multi-agency arrangements;

- LSCBs will lose their statutory status and local areas will be able to choose whether they retain their LSCB, or a version of it, to deliver the requirements of the statutory framework.

The review has also advocated the discontinuation of complex serious case reviews in favour of an independent body at national level to oversee a new national learning framework for inquiries into child deaths and cases where children have experienced serious harm. Local learning reviews are still being advocated.

Legislation and statutory guidance will be published to underpin the new framework. Publication of the revised version of the statutory guidance 'Working Together' is awaited. It is currently available for consultation up until December 2017 with a view to publication early in 2018. It will then be possible for discussions to take place about the requirements of the statutory framework and the most appropriate way for these requirements to be delivered locally, to include a debate about whether North Somerset retains its safeguarding children board or moves towards an alternative model.

CONSULTATION

The NSSCB works with Safer and Stronger Communities across North Somerset since there is a range of areas of shared interest. Domestic Abuse, for example, features as a key priority in the NSSCB Business Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The safeguarding boards have a budget built through the contributions of partner agencies. The total budget for the NSSCB is £94k which includes a contribution from North Somerset Council of £44k.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No formal equalities impact assessment is carried out on the Business Plan. However, performance data being collected by the Board will include reference to gender, race/ethnicity, disability and other protected characteristics to ensure that the profile of safeguarding data is tested and any related issues identified and acted upon.

How and in what ways we safeguard children must reflect the differing cultural values and norms within communities. Although the legal framework is universal how we ensure children and parents understand recognise and respond to potential safeguarding issues varies and is reflected for example in our work to reach out to faith communities and voluntary sectors.

AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Attached NSSCB Annual Report 2016/17 and Business Plan.

**NORTH SOMERSET
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN'S BOARD
(NSSSCB)**
Meets four times a year.
Scrutinises and challenges
the work of organisations in
respect of their safeguarding
responsibilities.

**NORTH SOMERSET
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN'S BOARD
EXECUTIVE GROUP**
Meets four times a year.
Progresses the Board's work

