

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Report 2014-2015

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Commissioner Manzie

Report Author(s)

Steve Ashley, previous Independent Chair and author of Annual Report 2014-15, presented by Christine Cassell, Independent Chair of the LSCB from November 2015.

Ward(s) Affected

All wards

Summary

Since April 2010, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have been required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children in the local area. This report introduces the 2014-15 Rotherham LSCB Annual Report and offers background information to it.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Improving Lives Select Commission note the report.

List of Appendices Included

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014 - 2015

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

The report was considered by the Health and Well Being Board on 13th January 2016

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Report 2014-2015

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Improving Lives Select Commission note the report.

2. Background

The requirement for LSCBs to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children in the local area is mandated in the Children Act 2004 (S14a) as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Under revised statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (HM Government March 2015), the annual report:

- Should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the health and well-being board.
- It should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.

3. Key Issues

The LSCB publishes an annual business plan, which outlines the agreed priorities of focus for the Board and its partners which guides the activity of the Board business unit and the Sub Groups of the LSCB. The priority areas of focus for the LSCB in 2014-15 were as follows:

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation has a devastating impact on its victims. Awareness about it at a professional and a community level has increased significantly, highlighting a level of need in the borough requiring a robust commitment and response from all organisations which was, historically, not as good as it should have been.

Domestic Abuse

The impact on children of living in a household with Domestic Abuse affects all aspects of their wellbeing. There is a high correlation between the children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan and the presence of Domestic Abuse in the family. Often this is in combination with mental health and substance misuse issues.

Child Neglect

The neglect of a child's physical and emotional welfare has a corrosive effect on the wellbeing if not tackled at an early stage. Children suffering neglect is the biggest category of

those who are suffering significant harm in the borough and require a Child Protection Plan. Neglect is a multi-faceted issue and requires effective multi-agency working.

Early Help

The number of children and young people in the borough who are at risk of significant harm, are taken into care or have concerns about them referred more than once is high / increasing. Providing the right help at the right time for children and their families can and does prevent problems from escalating.

Ofsted Inspection and Improvement Actions

Following the review of the LSCB as part of OfSTED's Single Inspection Framework in September-October 2014 the previous Independent Chair of the LSCB agreed an improvement plan with LSCB partners and the Children's Social Care Commissioner which focused on the following improvement areas:

Performance, challenge and improvement
Coordination with strategic commissioning activity
Hearing and acting on the experiences of others
Learning and development

The LSCB Improvement Plan was submitted to Ofsted on the 25th February 2015.

Improvement Area 1: Performance, challenge and improvement

- The LSCB has appointed a Practice Audit Officer in order that regular auditing of multi-agency practice and outcomes for children is evaluated and the findings fed back to services.
- The LSCB has started to develop a multi-agency Performance Management Framework which will be in place by September 2015.
- The Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Groups will be combined under one chairperson in order that quantitative and qualitative information can be scrutinised and challenged more effectively.

Improvement Area 2: Coordination with strategic commissioning activity

- The LSCB Independent Chair is now a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the appointment of a new Director of Public Health will help strengthen the connectivity between child safeguarding issues and commissioning activity.
- A new local authority led Early Help Strategy is awaited and it is clear that this require a partnership approach as all agencies contribute to meeting children's additional needs and addressing vulnerabilities.

Improvement Area 3: Acting and hearing on the experiences of others

- The LSCB Independent Chair has begun engagement with a community reference group with a particular focus on listen to community views about Child Sexual Exploitation.
- The LSCB is to receive inspection reports on Rotherham Children's Residential Homes in order to evaluate outcomes for Looked After Children. The LSCB Chair is also to shadow an independent person undertaking Regulation 44 visits to these homes.
- The work of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet and Looked After Children's Council are extremely valued by the partnership and the LSCB will continue to support this work and listen to the messages for the work undertaken.

Improvement Area 4: Learning & Development

- The LSCB has reviewed its approach to measuring the impact of learning and development, and this will appear more prominently and specifically as part of the audit and quality assurance reporting by the LSCB business unit and subgroups.
- All LSCB learning materials have been updated to include an overview of the Board and its purpose, and information about the LSCB will be included in the welcome pack and induction workshop delivered by Children's Services.
- The multi-agency safeguarding children policy and procedures manual has also been refreshed to reflect changes to national guidance and legislation and this will be live on the online system from May 2015.

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