

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People)

to
Cabinet
on
10 January 2017

Report prepared by: Helen M Wilson
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Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Adults 2015-16

People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillors: Cllr Courtenay & Cllr Salter
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an annual assurance assessment for the Chief Executive and elected members in respect of their responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults in Southend. This report contributes to the requirements of statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and the Care Act 2014.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the report is noted and the actions detailed in 3.9 are approved.

3. Background

3.1 For the period 2015 -16 the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), Southend Borough Council Children's Services and Southend Borough Council Adult Social Care Services have coordinated their annual reporting cycles in order to provide the chief executive and elected members an overview of the activity and effectiveness of safeguarding children and adults service in Southend.

3.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (*Working Together 2015*).

3.3 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory partnership responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements in all agencies. The LSCB works alongside the Success

for All Children Group, which is responsible for leading and coordinating improvements in services for all outcomes for children, including their safety. Both the LSCB and the Success For All Children Group work with the Health and Wellbeing Board which provides strategic leadership across all services.

3.4 Effective safeguarding children systems are those where:

- the child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- all professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- all professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's social care;
- high quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- all professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- LSCBs coordinate the work to safeguard children locally and monitor and challenge the effectiveness of local arrangements;
- when things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt; and
- local areas innovate and changes are informed by evidence and examination of the data.

3.5 The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) became a statutory partnership from April 2015, responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding adults arrangements in all agencies. The SAB works in Partnership with the LSCB and Health and Wellbeing Board to provide strategic leadership across all services. Safeguarding Adults Boards should:

- identify the role, responsibility, authority and accountability with regard to the action each agency and professional group should take to ensure the protection of adults;
- establish ways of analysing and interrogating data on safeguarding notifications that increase the SAB's understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect locally that builds up a picture over time;
- establish how it will hold partners to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of its arrangements;
- determine its arrangements for peer review and self-audit;
- establish mechanisms for developing policies and strategies for protecting adults which should be formulated, not only in collaboration and consultation with all relevant agencies but also take account of the views of adults who have needs for care and support, their families, advocates and carer representatives;

- develop preventative strategies that aim to reduce instances of abuse and neglect in its area;
- identify types of circumstances giving grounds for concern and when they should be considered as a referral to the local authority as an enquiry;
- formulate guidance about the arrangements for managing adult safeguarding, and dealing with complaints, grievances and professional and administrative malpractice in relation to safeguarding adults;
- develop strategies to deal with the impact of issues of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and gender orientation, sexual orientation, age, disadvantage and disability on abuse and neglect;
- identify mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of policy and training;
- carry out safeguarding adult reviews;
- produce a Strategic/Business Plan and an Annual Report;
- evidence how SAB members have challenged one another and held other boards to account;
- promote multi-agency training and consider any specialist training that may be required;
- consider any scope to jointly commission some training with other partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership.

3.6 This report provides an annual assurance statement of the LSCB, SAB, and Council's effectiveness in the discharge of their safeguarding responsibilities. The report contains four elements:

- The annual report from the independent chair of the LSCB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding of children, and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 1).
- A report from the Head of Children's Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's children's social care delivery (Appendix 2).
- The annual report from the independent chair of the SAB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding adults and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 3).
- A report from the Head of Adult Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's adult social care delivery (Appendix 4).

3.7 Working Together 2015 states that the LSCB Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. 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 Wellbeing Board.

The report 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 Care Act Guidance 2014 states that the SAB must publish an annual report that must clearly identify what both the SAB and its members have done to carry out and deliver the objectives and other content of its strategic/business plan.

3.8 Ofsted inspected Children's Services over a 4 week period from 26th April to 19th May 2016. The subsequent report set out the key judgements on Southend Children's Services as: "Overall, Children's Services in Southend-on-Sea require improvement to be good". Individual judgements were:

- Children who need help and protection - Requires improvement (nationally 56% rated as requires improvement)
- Children looked after & achieving permanence - Requires improvement (nationally 56% rated as requires improvement)
- Adoption performance – Good (nationally 47% rated as good)
- Experiences and progress of care leavers – Good (nationally 33% rated as good)
- Leadership, management and governance - Requires improvement (nationally 48% rated as requires improvement)
- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) was also reviewed during the inspection and deemed to require improvement.

Improvement Plans have been prepared by Children's Services and the LSCB to address the issues identified by the Inspection and Review and to meet the Council's and LSCB's aspiration of being a good/outstanding.

The LSCB's Improvement Plan was developed and agreed by the Board in September 2016 and its implementation will be monitored by the LSCB

The Children's Services Improvement Plan consists of an overarching plan detailing key actions and the priorities for completion of the actions, supported by a detailed plan containing the actions which will need to be completed to achieve the outcomes of the plan. The Improvement Plan is overseen by an Improvement Board consisting of senior Members, Officers, an experienced senior manager independent of the Council, the chair of the LSCB and key partners to ensure robust delivery. A Scrutiny Panel reporting to the People Scrutiny Committee will also provide challenge and oversee the progress of the plan. The Improvement Plan has required additional funding from Southend Borough Council.

Immediate actions taken by Children's Services to address issues identified in the inspection are as follows:

- The findings of the inspection were shared with practitioners and managers at Director led briefings on the day of the publication of the report. This enabled teams to begin to discuss what immediate steps they would take to improve the experience of children, young people and families;
- Consultation events with managers and practitioners across children's services took place during August. The consultation has informed the improvement plan and means that we all know what we need to focus on to make improvements for children, young people and families.
- Social Workers and managers have been clearly advised of expectations relating to how long it should take to conduct a section 47 enquiry. This means children do not have to wait for a multi-agency child protection plan to be put

in place to meet their need for protection once it has been decided this is what is needed;

- External audits have been commissioned of contacts which are deemed No Further Action (NFA). The learning from the audits is supporting improvements in the consistency of decision making for children, young people and families who are in need of help and protection;
- Additional temporary management capacity has been put in place to support consistency of decision making at the point the public and partners make contact with children's social care. This means children and families receive a consistent, timely, response from children's services when they are in need of help and protection.
- In addition to the immediate focus on constituency of decision making and timescales for Section 47 enquiries we have focused on the statutory home visits being undertaken on time. This will mean children, young people and families will find it easier to build and maintain trusting relationships with their social workers and the plans in place to meet their need for help or protection will progress.
- The step-down process from children's social care to Early Help and Family Support has been clarified. The access point into children's social care is now co-located with that of early help services. This means there is no wrong 'front door' for anyone who thinks a child, young person or family needs additional help, support or protection to access. It supports consistent decision making and intervention from the right team at the right time.
- An additional Practice Lead has been employed, who will help social workers and managers to improve their practice across all the areas identified in the inspection. This will improve the experience for children, young people and families;
- We have increased the capacity within the participation and engagement service which will mean we can support children and young people to design how services are delivered.
- We have decided that the work of children's services will be underpinned by a shared set of principles and ways of working. This Southend Way for Children and Families will mean that families will work with confident practitioners who will support them to identify and achieve their goals.
- 6 additional Social Workers have been appointed to deal with additional demand.

3.9 As Deputy Chief Executive, I have responsibility for improving outcomes for all children, young people and adults with additional care and support needs in Southend, and to ensure that all appropriate local authority services engage effectively with the LSCB and SAB. The lead members and I have met with the Chief Executive and the Council Leader with this report in order that they can satisfy themselves that I am fulfilling my responsibilities. The actions from that meeting are detailed below:

3.9.1 In respect of Safeguarding Children:

- a) The challenge following the Ofsted Inspection outcome and the increase of demand was noted
- b) Further action is taken to ensure that the Children's Improvement plan actions are delivered at pace

- c) Action is taken to ensure that the recommendations for SBC Public Health from the CQC's Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection of the health economy are delivered at pace
- d) The current resources and capacity to deliver the above are reviewed and addressed.
- e) Further work is undertaken on bringing forward the strategic analysis on the extent of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Southend
- f) Ensure the planned development of a revised Performance Framework is progressed to ensure that we are delivering good outcomes for children
- g) The areas for development in the LSCB Annual Report (appendix 1) are noted

3.9.2 In respect of Safeguarding Adults:

- a) That the continuing good performance in achieving positive safeguarding outcomes for adults at risk is noted
- b) To keep under review the increasingly pressurized health and social care system and particularly in respect of
 - A growing cohort of vulnerable young adults transitioning from child to adult services.
 - An increase in rough sleepers and their vulnerabilities.
 - The continual increase of older people requiring support
 - Leading to potential risk of increasing safeguarding issues
- c) The areas for development in the SAB Annual Report (appendix 3) are noted

4. Other Options

None

5. Reasons for Recommendations

To keep the Council informed of the position in respect of safeguarding children and adults in Southend.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The work of partners and the Council in safeguarding children and adults directly contributes to the Council's priority to look after and safeguard our children and vulnerable adults.

6.2 Financial Implications

Spending on Safeguarding Children Services
Spending on Safeguarding Adults Services

6.3 Legal Implications

This report supports the Council, The Leader, the Chief Executive Director and Lead Member to discharge their statutory duties under the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014.

6.4 People Implications

None

6.5 Property Implications
None

6.6 Consultation

The LSCB and SAB are inclusive organisations which involve statutory and voluntary agencies. The LSCB community lay member and the youth lay members represent the interests of the community on the Board and its sub groups, in line with statutory guidance. Consultation with children and families, which influences the way in which services are delivered, is a key strategic priority for the LSCB.

The new SAB lay members, service user organisation member, and Healthwatch member represent the interests of the community on the SAB in line with statutory guidance.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The Council, the LSCB and the SAB have the responsibility to ensure that all children and adults with additional care and support needs have their safety and welfare needs addressed. The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Procedures for both Child Protection and Safeguarding Adults addresses the “recognition of additional vulnerability” and covers the considerations which must be taken into account when meeting the needs of particular groups. All the LSCB and SAB sub groups address equality matters, with a standing item on all agendas.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Risk logs are maintained for the LSCB and SAB and within the Department for People. There is a standing item on the LSCB and SAB Executive agendas identifying risks to the efficacy of safeguarding services identified by partners, and agreeing mitigating actions to address these.

6.9 Value for Money

Fulfilling our responsibility to safeguard children and adults and promote their welfare is a statutory requirement. The Council works in partnership with other organisations and local authorities to ensure we fulfil those responsibilities in the most cost effective way. LSCB and SAB members ensure that all functions are undertaken on value for money principles. Since July 2013 the business management resource of the LSCB has been shared with the SAB, with some additional administration resource and a Performance and Quality Assurance Officer shared between both Boards. There continue to be savings to the LSCB in staffing costs, which the Board has reinvested into its safeguarding children priorities.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

LSCB & SAB arrangements support the safety for our most vulnerable members of society across the localities and partnerships. The LSCB and SAB oversee work on road safety, e safety, violence against women and girls, modern slavery, sexual

exploitation, bullying and hate crime as it relates to children and adults, and monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of the domestic abuse strategy

7. Background Papers

Many are core documents and are the same as identified in previous reports

- The Children Act 2004 Every Child Matters: Change for Children
- Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Care Act Guidance (2014)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1- Southend LSCB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children in Southend 2015/16

Appendix 2- SBC Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children 2015/16

Appendix 3- Southend SAB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Adults in Southend 2015/16

Appendix 4- SBC Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Adults 2015/16