

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 21 October 2014	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Southwark Safeguarding Children Board: Annual Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Keeping our children and young people safe remains at the top of this council's agenda. This report from the Independent Chair of the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) represents an opportunity to review the safeguarding activity that is taking place across multiple local agencies that are working together to ensure the best possible outcomes for Southwark's children.

In the light of the recent Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham this council welcomes the continued focus of the SSCB on tackling child sexual exploitation. The SSCB is currently finalising a multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation strategy and I am recommending that the latest draft of the strategy is reviewed by cabinet at the forthcoming November cabinet meeting. Whilst the key to ensuring the best possible prevention and intervention will be working with our partner agencies I am also asking that a cabinet report on Child Sexual Exploitation is also brought to the November meeting.

This report summarises the SSCB's activity during 2013/14 and offers an analysis of safeguarding performance. Big improvements have been made such as the establishment of a multi-agency function to receive and process referrals (the MASH) and the reduction in the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans for two years or more. Partners from health also report a year of improvements despite significant organisational upheaval. However the report also highlights the rate of children looked after (CLA) remains high in Southwark and draws attention to ongoing issues of placement stability, which are of concern to the corporate parent committee. The corporate parenting committee will continue to review this area in 2014/15.

For the remainder of this financial year, the SSCB will maintain its focus on three key areas: tackling child sexual exploitation, understanding and addressing neglect, and reconfiguring services to ensure early help is provided to families at the earliest opportunity so that problems are prevented as soon as they are identified.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet receives this report from the Independent Chair of Southwark Safeguarding Children Board, notes its scope and provides comment.
2. That the latest draft of the SSCB's multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation strategy is reviewed by cabinet at the forthcoming November cabinet meeting alongside a full cabinet report on Child Sexual Exploitation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Statutory guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children: March 2013* requires that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) be independent and not subordinate to other local structures. As such, LSCBs are required to have an independent chair which can hold all agencies to account.
4. Section 14A of the Children Act 2004 and paragraph 16 of Chapter 3, *Working Together* require that independent Chair of the LSCB publishes an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area.
5. The report is also submitted to the Chief Executive, Mayor of London (as Police and Crime Commissioner) and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
6. The report is one of the ways in which the LSCB enables challenge and transparency across the multi-agency partnership for protecting children in Southwark. This report relates to the work of the Board and its partner agencies in the financial year 2013-14.
7. Agencies represented on the Safeguarding Children Board have contributed to the development of this annual report.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The report notes the success achieved by partner organisations over the year. These include:
 - The establishment of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a means of effective information sharing when a concern is raised about a child
 - The development of the *Social Work Matters* change programme within Children's Services
 - A reduction in the number of children on a Child Protection Plan for 2 years or more
 - Multi-agency deep dive on need and performance in neglect cases
9. Key areas for improvement across the safeguarding partnership are identified in the report as:
 - Improving the timeliness of assessments and child protection conferences
 - Improving performance in services for Looked After Children
 - Enhancing multi-agency working at the Early Help stage
 - Further detailed work on Private Fostering, including analysis and awareness raising, to address falling numbers of notifications
 - Strengthen local arrangements to understand and tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Southwark, including the embedding of the Metropolitan Police's Pan London Protocol.
10. A particular area of focus for the remainder of 2014 and 2015 will be the sharpening of local procedures to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE), building on existing the multi-agency sexual exploitation panel. The Safeguarding Children Board has a subgroup dedicated to this issue.

11. The three areas of priority for the Board for the remainder of this financial year, alongside **child sexual exploitation**, will be **neglect** and **early help**. These workstreams have been carried forward from 2013-14.

Policy implications

12. This report will be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the purposes of information and challenge.
13. The work of the Safeguard Board is consistent with the Council’s priorities for securing the *Best start in life*, as articulated in the four-year Council Plan.

Community impact statement

14. The work of the LSCB particularly affects vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Resource implications

15. The report details the council’s resource contributions to the work of the Safeguarding Children’s Board. No changes were made to the council’s financial contribution for the financial year in question (£50,000).

Consultation

16. All agencies represented on the Board have contributed to the writing of this report, and an opportunity for comment on the final draft was provided.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background documents	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013-14

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	
Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care Michael O'Connor, Independent Chair, Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Report	
Report Author	Jane Shuttleworth, Interim Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance, Children's and Adult's Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	9 October 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	9 October 2014	