

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: January 2015	Meeting Name: Education, Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
Report title:		Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Annual report 2013 - 4	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Rory Patterson, Director, Specialist Children's Services and Michael O' Connor Independent Chair, Southwark Safeguarding Children Board	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub Committee notes the Annual Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Report at Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The SSCB Annual Report 2013/14 is presented to the Scrutiny Sub Committee annually.
3. The Annual Report was agreed by the SSCB in September 2014. The report has been formally presented to the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council, Chief Executives of the Health Trusts providing services to Southwark residents, the Police Commissioner and Chair of the Health and Well Being Board as advised by *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)*
4. Statutory guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children: (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.
5. 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.
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

1. This is the SSCB Chair's first SSCB Annual Report. The report provides information on the effectiveness of partnership working in Southwark and evidence of a busy and productive year.
2. The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) issued by the government late in the financial year enabled a refresh of many areas of partnership working including single assessment, threshold document and a learning and improvement framework
3. The 2014/15 priorities of the Board have included the prevention and response to neglect, early help, and child sexual exploitation.
1. There have also been significant changes within the partnership including the development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and implementation of Social Work Matters which has transformed the service and implemented systemic approaches to working with children and families. There is emerging evidence to suggest these developments are improving services for vulnerable children and families through a strong multi agency approach.
2. Alongside these changes there is positive feedback within the report on the work of Early Help Locality teams and the continued embedding of Signs of Safety as a framework and strengths based approach to child protection practice. The report also positively highlights reduction in the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans for more than two years. Quality Assurance Audits indicate that this is due to more effective interventions with families and a clearer pathway to step-down services provided by Early Help locality teams.
3. This report offers development areas for improvement for the Board to take forward in the 2013/4 work plan. This includes:
 - a. Improving timeliness of assessments and effectiveness of multi-agency interventions.
 - b. Understanding the reasons for the rate of children looked after (CLA) remaining high and developing new approaches to supporting children within their families and communities.
 - c. Improve placement stability to ensure better outcomes for children in care..
 - d. Developing and implementing a multi agency Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy.
 - e. Implementing and embedding a multi agency approach to single assessment to ensure that children get the right help at the right time.
 - f. Building on early help enhancing multi agency engagement and pathways to reduce the high rate of unnecessary contacts and referrals to social care.
 - g. Continuing to raise awareness on private fostering and increase the rate of notification and support to children in these arrangements.
4. The Board has taken its responsibility to reflect and learn seriously. The learning and improvement framework developed sets out a clear methodology for formal Serious Case reviews and other management reviews it may need to consider. In March 2014 the Board considered a serious incident affecting a

young person and this is currently subject to a Serious Case Review. The review is using the locally agreed systems methodology from the Welsh guidance for arrangements for multiagency child practice reviews. The review is due to be completed in April 2015. This is the first Serious Case Review the Board has commissioned since 2011.

5. The Board held a well received conference focusing on neglect. The event was attended by 200 partners with strong engagement from health, children social care and education and supported the strategic and operational conversations about Southwark's response to neglect
6. The Lambeth and Southwark Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) was reviewed and new processes to improve communication and learning are in place. Meetings are now more focussed and strategies for disseminating learning have been sharpened, with notable successes, for example in the provision of defibrillators in schools
7. For the remainder of this financial year, the SSCB will maintain its focus on the key areas of Family Matters as a response to early help and neglect help and child sexual exploitation. This is in addition to the continued focus on the core business of the Board - child protection and the safety of looked after children
8. During 2013/4 The Board has also reviewed governance arrangements to ensure closer and more direct attention is paid to the voices of children and young people in the work of the Board. The plan to develop an child and young peoples engagement group with the Board has been taken forward in this years work programme
9. Arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the 2014/5 Annual Report will be produced and circulated earlier.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

10. This report will be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the purposes of information and challenge.
11. 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

12. The work of the LSCB particularly affects vulnerable children, young people and their families. It is a statutory framework to ensure effective safeguarding of Southwark's children and ensure all partner agencies are held to account.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13. The report details the council's resource contributions to the work of the Safeguarding Children Board. No changes were made to the council's financial contribution for the financial year in question (£50,000). However the Council also contribute support through the Organisational Development team and payment of staff supporting the Board work. This report evidences the need for

dedicated support to the Board to ensure effectiveness of delivery and scrutiny of partnership arrangements

CONSULTATION

14. 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 Papers	Held At	Contact
Working together to safeguard children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children	Ann Flynn SSCB Development Manager
Protecting children in Wales: Guidance for arrangements for multi agency child practice reviews	http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/wales/child-practice-reviews/	Ann Flynn SSCB Development Manager

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013/4

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Children's Services	
Report Author	Ann Flynn, Development Manager Safeguarding Board	
Version	Final report	
Dated	September 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
List other officers here		

Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team		08 01 2015