

# Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Wednesday 11 September 2013

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1  
2QH

## Supplemental Agenda

### List of Contents

Item No.	Title	Page No.
4.	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 9 July 2013.	1 - 10
7.	<b>Independent Children Safeguarding Board Chair - presentation</b> An early draft of the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Safeguarding Board Report 2012/13 is attached, along with a presentation from the Independent Children Safeguarding Board Chair.	11 - 26
9.	<b>Review: Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations</b> The draft review report is attached on 'Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations'.	27 - 35

### Contact

Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: [julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk)

Date: 6 September 2013



## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 9 July 2013 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

---

**PRESENT:** Councillor David Hubber (Chair)  
Councillor The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Chris Brown  
Councillor Lisa Rajan  
Councillor Rosie Shimell  
Councillor Althea Smith  
Councillor Cleo Soanes

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER  
SUPPORT:** Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning  
Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care  
Ann Flynn, Safeguarding Children Board Development Manager  
Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure  
Coral Flood, Arts Manager  
Colin Gale, Free Healthy School Meals project lead  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

### **1. APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from parent governor representatives Colin Elliott and Leticia Ojeda. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Soanes and Councillor The Right Reverend Oyewole.

**2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

2.1 There were none.

**3. MINUTES**

4.1 The minutes of last administrative year's Education, Children's Services & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee, held on 23 April 2013, were circulated , to note.

**RESOLVED**

Councillor Brown will be added to the list of attendees at the meeting.

**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

**5. UPDATE ON SOUTHWARK SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (SSCB) ANNUAL REPORT**

5.1 The chair explained that the Independent Safeguarding chair had been invited to come to the committee meeting for the annual interview , but a domestic matter prevented his attendance, however he will attend the September meeting. The chair explained that it had been anticipated that the meeting would consider the draft Annual Safeguarding Board Report (ASBR), but this will not now be ready until the autumn. The chair said unfortunately the background reasons for the delay had not been discussed in detail with scrutiny members; however a positive meeting with senior officers had been very helpful in explaining the reasons.

5.2 Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care and Ann Flynn, Safeguarding Children Board Development Manager, explained that the report was delayed because significant national policy and performance changes had taken place in

recent months that include overhauling of the Working Together Guidance, which is the key governance document of the board's work, and the Ofsted Framework for Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services, published in June, which significantly raises the bar for the board and includes an inspection judgement on its effectiveness. There have also been changes to the national data collection timetables with final figures available at the end of July rather than the previous spring timeframe. A recent board discussion concluded that the most effective use of the ASBR would be to undertake a self assessment using the board's work over the past year against the revised governance frameworks. The work on the ASBR will be taken forward over the summer, with first draft going to the November Executive Safeguarding Board.

- 5.3 The Director of Children's Social Care said that the board is now undertaking a thorough self evaluation which will inform the plan. He reported that the recent inspection found that overall Southwark's safeguarding is good and with some outstanding work. There are some challenges, for example children's progress on the Child Protection Plan and how long they remain on there. He explained there is a question about how effective the interventions are and there is an investment in lots of training. He said that the service is transparent and do not get defensive. The service is going through a major period of change following the Monroe report with refresher training and changing structures. He reported that the service is focused on the 'troubled families' agenda, tackling inter - generational worklessness, sexual exploitation, with a particularly big focus on childhood neglect.
- 5.4 The chair mentioned the concerns raised over the timetable and process of bring regular reports to the scrutiny committee and remarked that over the last few years there has been year on year slippage. The Director responded that the board are required to produce the report 'in year', but best practice is in the first quarter and he said that he thought the service should be producing the report in this period.
- 5.5 A member asked if lessons have been learned from Rochdale and Oxford child abuse investigations and the Director responded that the services do take learning from major reports and how agencies can work together. The service looks to pick up the learning and build this into its work programme.

- 5.6 The Director was then asked about the after affects on children of traumatic incidents and how the service provides after-support. The Director said that every child and family is offered support. Some will have more supportive families but others will need our support as children, and this applies particularly to children in care where Southwark is the corporate parent, and this is ongoing.
- 5.7 A member asked about the recommendation made by the last committee that the board do more to address the risk of harm from witchcraft and spirit possession in their child protection and safeguarding work, and that there is a particular need for engagement work with faith group communities and leaders. The Safeguarding Manager explained that this recommendation has been reviewed and the service is linking up with faith communities. She explained that the service is conducting a phone survey followed by a meeting, and that faith community members have been asked about witchcraft, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and also styles of discipline. A member suggested that a phone survey on these questions could result in the phone being put down and recommended building up relationships through face to face conversations. The officer explained that that the service is engaging people both via a forum and by telephone. Another member emphasised the importance of visiting churches and building up trust.
- 5.8 A member asked the Director to explain what he meant by children coming 'off a Child Protection Plan' and he explained that this meant children are being taken away from their families, which is progress, he said, because before often children would come off plans and then go back on again. He said that more children are being adopted, and numbers have increased from 20 to now 28 per year and he is expecting this to go up further through increased investment. He added there has been system change in the speed of court processes. He added that the service has written out to groups, such as faith groups, encouraging potential adopters to come forward and there has been a much more positive response. The Director said that Southwark has the highest rate of care proceedings in the country, and alongside adoptions there are guardianships, resident orders and permanent fostering.
- 5.9 A member asked if Children's Services worked with fostering agencies and he said that yes, they work with volunteer

fostering agencies locally and nationally.

- 5.10 The Director was asked how the service supports children in terms of educational support, particularly if there is a change in their home arrangement, and he explained that they have a virtual head teacher who advocates on their behalf.

## **RESOLVED**

The new Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board will be invited to attend the next committee meeting

## **6. CULTURAL STRATEGY**

- 6.1 Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure and Coral Flood, Arts Manager presented the report circulated with the agenda. There were no questions.

## **7. REVIEW : FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS**

- 7.1 Colin Gale, Free Healthy School Meal Lead presented the report and the chair invited questions.
- 7.2 A member asked how many parents were not claiming free school meals, given this could impact on both council income and schools receiving public premium Kerry Crichlow reported that there has been a government initiative to simplify the process and there is now yes now one application with no need for this to be renewed annually, which this will reduce the paperwork. Colin Gales added that he is working with schools to increase uptake and that nationally around 10% are not claiming .The chair requested more information on how Southwark is working with schools to maximise take-up.
- 7.3 A member referred to a report focused on plugging the gap between rich and poor pupils and the recent announcement by OFSTED that schools will now be judged on how they narrow he gap.

## **RESOLVED**

Officers will provide information on the application process for Free Healthy School Meals

Data will be requested from schools on:

- registration rates for free school meals & the Pupil Premium
- details on how the Pupil Premium has been spent

**8. ROTHERHITHE SCHOOL AND SOUTHWARK FREE SCHOOLS - REGULAR REPORT**

8.1 The report was noted.

**9. REVIEW : BULLYING - SCHOOL AND COUNCIL POLICY IN SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND REDUCING ABUSIVE AND POOR PEER RELATIONS**

10.1 The chair indicated that he would like to draw this review to a close and finalise the report and asked member to consider recommendations. A member remarked that Cybersmile's work with schools could be beneficial; however another member commented that their engagement work with parents could have been improved by working more closely with schools. The chair suggested that cautionary notes are added.

**RESOLVED**

A summary of the meetings deliberations and review reports will be circulated to the committee, with an invite to suggest recommendations.

**10. REVIEW : THE COUNCIL'S ROLE WITH MAINTAINED, ACADEMY AND FREE SCHOOLS**

10.1 The chair reported that he would like to invite academies to attend and give evidence on their exclusion policies. The committee agrees and further suggested looking at admissions policies and if they intended to deviate from the teachers' pay scale. Members then discussed which academies to invite and suggested Bacon's College, Harris Academy , Kingsdale School, City of London Academy, The Charter School, Globe Academy (ARK) and Walworth

Academy (ARK) and agreed that it would be better to invite the chief executive of the Academy chain, particularly when more than one school operates in Southwark .

## 11. WORK-PLAN

### RESOLVED

- Complete the scrutiny report on bullying, for submission to OSC and Cabinet
- Interview the new Independent Chair and receive the final draft report from the Safeguarding Children Board
- Review the universal free school meals programme after the end of the current school year
- Conduct the annual interview of the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Culture, Leisure and Sport
- Scrutinise the operation of the pupil premium in Southwark schools
- Monitor the provision of primary and secondary school places in the borough
- Review the council's role with maintained, academy and free schools
- Scrutinise exclusion rates in secondary schools
- Seek to obtain more comprehensive information from the secondary schools in the Borough and invite representatives from the Academy providers to meet the sub-committee

## 12. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN

- 12.1 Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning, presented the draft Children and Young People Plan (CYPP). She explained the proposed CYPP builds on previous plans. The service once more collected a1000 journeys to inform the plan's development, and there were uncomfortable messages heard. The Director emphasised that the time you can make the most difference continues up to adolescence.



She reported that the plan has been subject to extensive consultation and engagement. A short film was shown.

- 12.2 She said that the CYPP is not an action plan; rather it is a transformational plan to inform operational plans and holds the system and people to account. The plan is a framework which concentrates on values and principles. She explained that the CYPP is a local choice now rather than a statutory duty - but a plan can motivate and inspire staff. She referred to her area of responsibilities referred to the plan's family focus, which aims to intervene with families at timely stage to support parents. She said that we know that transition times are often times of crisis and this is when parents might experience difficult behaviours so the service delivers targeted interventions, such as parent groups, at these times. A member commented that when he first received the plan he did think it was quite slim, however now he understands the intention better but he still wondered where the operational detail would be found.
- 12.3 A member asked how families might hold the system and decision makers to account using this plan. Kerry Crichlow commented that this is a difficult question to answer but the plan can be scrutinised for child outcomes on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (which measures health & wellbeing outcomes like obesity) and time spent on Child Protection Plans. She said that the plan has reduced the outcomes to be measured, but have taken a basket of indicators, for example child neglect.
- 12.4 The member asked if there will be a follow on report on indicators. Kerry Crichlow said that there will be a plan and a scorecard which will be reported with a smaller number of the pithiest indicators as we want to hone down on key issues. She added that the last paragraph said that the CYPP consultation is ongoing, and she assured the member that she will take away the question on how families will know the plan working.
- 12.5 Rory Patterson said that there is a more transparent system in terms of data for adoption but it is difficult until this is published to benchmark the service. He assured members that the plan is in many ways more transparent with no less data. Kerry Crichlow commented that in developing plan it became clear that health visitors only see about half of children; however the resources are targeted at the most vulnerable which is reassuring, but this is an area we want to

focus on, by increasing visits.

- 12.6 .A member commented it would be interesting to understand how families would hold the service to account - for example only a small proportion of children with a Special Education Need (SEN) have a statement. Families often say that they have to conduct a battle to get a statement as this gets them access to services. Kerry Crichlow acknowledged that it is an adversarial system and she said that there are moves to make it fairer and more family centred. The last Children's Trust looked at a pathfinder in Brighton which started to have more honest conversations with parents. For example, there is excellent school provision in Southwark - so that is not a battle.
- 12.7 Kerry Crichlow was asked who the plan would report to and she responded that said this is a whole system plan and partners include the Health and Wellbeing Board who see this as part of their delivery plan. The plan will also influence Economic Development and the Clinical Commissioning Board. She added that by partnering the plan gains some activity and commitment.
- 12.8 The member commented that she understands the plan is going to Council Assembly and this hopefully will be an opportunity for the committee's comments to be considered. The chair reported that he and the chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a constructive discussion with the Strategic Director and pointed out that it would have been better to receive an opportunity to input earlier, particularly given some of the discussions on the CYPP in the committee meetings have been very useful and included young people.
- 12.9 A member commented that the importance of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is not made explicit. Kerry Crichlow commented that this single assessment process for whole system is now embedded and agreed that perhaps the plan needs to make that more explicit . The member commented that in her experience it is more effective to get action if a parent initiates it and she hoped that parents with an SEN Child would have an opportunity to receive support via CAF. Kerry Crichlow thanked the committee for the dialogue and promised to report back on the substantive issues raised.

## **RESOLVED**

Officers will return at a later stage with responses to the following points:

- Indicators that would enable members and families to measure and assess the impact and success of the plan.
- Clarity on the relationship to other parts the system and their delivery plans e.g. Health & Well-being Board and Children's Trust.
- A selection of the 1000 journeys recorded.
- An explanation of how the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will fit into this plan.

# **Southwark Safeguarding Children Board**

**Annual Safeguarding Board Report  
2012/13**

DRAFT SEP 2013

## 1. Introduction

The Annual Safeguarding Board Report (ASBR) published by the independent chair of the board considers how well the board has fulfilled its responsibilities by analysing the board activity over the past 12 months (April 2012 to March 2013). The report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It also identifies areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action to, for example, meet new duties and statutory responsibilities. The report includes lessons from reviews undertaken in the reporting period and provides an outline work programme for the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) for the coming 12 months to March 2014. The ASBR covers the following areas:

- National and local safeguarding context
- Review of leadership and management strengths, areas for development and work programme for 2013/14
- Review of multi-agency practice strengths, areas for development and work programme for 2013/14

## 2. National developments

The publication of Professor Eileen Munro's final report on child protection *A child centred system* in May 2011 marked the start of significant changes to the statutory safeguarding and public policy landscape. Since then, there has been a range of new and strengthened duties and requirements on local safeguarding children boards and partner agencies. For example, the revised Working Together Guidance 2013 places increased responsibilities on the board to deliver a stronger leadership role around local safeguarding practice and directly influence multi-agency strategic commissioning choices. The guidance introduces more demanding multi- and single-agency requirements as well as requiring the establishment of a single assessment approach and supporting framework. The revised regulatory framework also includes a judgment on the effectiveness of local safeguarding boards, with a focus on assessing the impact of the board's activities on frontline practice and the positive difference made to children and local communities.

These changes are in the context of other legislation, including the Children and Families Bill, and a more robust inspection regime which raises the bar around the delivery of services for vulnerable children and those in need of earlier help and intervention. In addition, the revised London Child Protection Procedures, due to be published in the autumn, will include changes to procedures and policy in areas such as trafficking and private fostering, while the children's commissioner continues to drive local action to address child sexual exploitation. New initiatives such as Troubled Families are also challenging the system to think differently about how it works with its most challenging families.

Wider changes including the introduction of statutory partnerships such as health and wellbeing boards and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), with relaxed duties around children's trust arrangements, will also have a major impact on how the SSCB delivers its statutory functions. In addition, the board and partner agencies continue to respond to an unprecedented environment with continuing harsh economic conditions alongside

changes to the statutory landscape. The challenge to the SSCB is therefore considerable, however with good performance locally and evidence of a compliant system, there is much solid foundations to build on.

### **3. Local safeguarding context**

The profile of safeguarding in Southwark shows high levels of need, coupled with a range of complexities arising from the local environment, such as child trafficking and families with no recourse to public funds.

Nationally, there are approximately 382,000 children in need (CiN), of which 3,737 reside in Southwark, representing a 20% increase against figures for 2009. This is the fifth-highest figure in London with Haringey, Lambeth, Newham and Croydon only slightly higher. Our overall CiN population shows 'family in acute distress' as the most common category, although for those that come into public care, 'abuse and neglect' remains the most prevalent category, followed by 'family dysfunction' and 'family in acute stress'.

Southwark continues to have high rates of child protection referrals, with some 5,000 a year. Of these, around 3,000 progress to an initial assessment for cases of suspected harm. There is a year-on-year increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan (CPP) with 400-450 children subject to a plan throughout a year, and at any given time there are around 330 children subject to a plan.

The number of children in care in Southwark is generally above that of statistical neighbours although the trend for the past few years has been of decline. Figures rose slightly over the past 12 months with an end-of-year figure standing at 565, which mirrors national trends. Nearly half of all looked after children enter care on a full care order and although there has been an increase in interim care orders, the number of voluntary agreements with parents (section 20) has fallen from 32.6% to 23.7%.

Levels of complexity and need in Southwark continue to remain high. Vulnerable families, where children are taken into care or subject to a CPP, often have multiple and inter-connected problems. Families often have repeated involvement with children's social care because of safeguarding or caring concerns, and local police and housing officers due to nuisance, criminal behaviour or domestic abuse. They are also often known to local health and vulnerable adult services, due to a learning disability, mental health concerns or substance misuse.

In a high proportion of cases, family members will be unemployed and have little experience of life outside the benefits system. The local Troubled Families' approach is presenting further insight into these issues and providing a new opportunity to rethink how we work as a partnership with our most complex families. The prevalence of chronic neglect continues to be an issue and we are increasingly aware of the risk of child sexual exploitation in the borough. The board will be giving attention to both those issues over the next year.

## 4. Leadership and management

The SSCB has continued to provide strong, system-wide leadership which has ensured safeguarding remains paramount in a climate of large-scale budget cuts and fast-moving changes to the local governance and policy landscape. In May 2012, Southwark's system was recognised by Ofsted as being good with outstanding features, with inspectors finding strong, focused and improving services to protect vulnerable children. Local performance is good and overall shows stable or improved outcomes in all key areas. There have been no serious case reviews during the year, and none over the past three years. Section 11 reporting also provides evidence of excellent partner compliance with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

There is effective engagement of partners in safeguarding leadership and practice at all levels. The board has overseen a robust range of evidence through its meetings and work of sub-groups that both tests and ensures ongoing development of local safeguarding practice. The board continues to take a leadership role in ensuring the needs of vulnerable children are considered in the development of key local priorities and developments, for example through the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) this year.

The priorities within the new CYPP are underpinned by extensive evidence and consultation with children and families, including those who are vulnerable and in receipt of statutory services. Analysis of a range of evidence from across the system included performance, the joint strategic needs assessment with public health and engagement with over 1,300 children, young people, parents, carers and professionals to understand their experience. This comprehensive evidence base was developed throughout 2012 and provides vital insight into where the local system needs to change to make the biggest difference to children and families in the borough.

It has resulted in three transformation priorities for children, young people and their families. The refreshed CYPP, which takes the form of a partnership plan for the transformation of local services from 2013 to 2016, provides shared ambition and commitment to continue to strengthen services for the most vulnerable including those suffering neglect or in need of a permanent home. A key priority is "Safety and Stability", which provides the strategic commitment to transforming safeguarding and looked after children outcomes, as well as overall partnership-wide commitments to early help and preventative provision, vulnerable and troubled families and children.

In the coming year, the SSCB will continue to lead the local response to implementing the Working Together Guidance and London Child Protection procedures, as well as the overhaul of key regulatory frameworks for safeguarding and looked after children and children's centres. The board will also continue to work to ensure that safeguarding remains at the heart of national and local developments including changes to the health infrastructure, the introduction of new statutory partnerships such as the health and wellbeing board, and continued political leadership through the borough's Council Plan.

### Strengths

- Good with outstanding features leadership and management of safeguarding services, as recognised by Ofsted

## Southwark Annual Safeguarding Board Report 2012/13

- Clearer and stronger interface between early help and statutory agencies
- Evidence of excellent agency compliance through section 11 reporting
- Strengthening performance management framework with closer alignment to practice improvement
- Effective safer recruitment practice and embedding of new vetting and barring scheme, and strengthening of local authority designated officer role
- Good engagement of partners through sub-groups which support the priorities and work plan of the SSCB
- Excellent membership and engagement of key senior officers, recruitment of lay members and engagement of community networks

Areas of development and/or work programme 2013/14

- Further development of quality assurance and audit functions to focus on impact, progress and service user experience
- Overseeing compliance with new statutory and regulatory frameworks including Working Together 2013 and revised inspection frameworks, including the development of a single multi-agency assessment and early help offer
- Further development and embedding of the community in leadership and management of safeguarding locally
- Building on mature and well-established partnerships to develop key governance relationships such as with the borough's health and wellbeing board and CCG

Ofsted recognised Southwark's good leadership and management with outstanding capacity to improve in its inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in May 2012. Inspectors identified many areas of strong practice and praised the council and partners for continuing to provide effective, focused and improving services to protect vulnerable children across the borough. Ofsted also commended the strong local authority and partner agency support for the safeguarding and protection agenda for all children. Following the inspection, the board undertook an effective assurance role of the multi-agency action plan to address Ofsted's recommendations. A proactive and energetic response by all partners ensured actions were completed in a timely way.

Over the past 12 months, there has continued to be good engagement of partners in the leadership of the local safeguarding system. The board is regularly attended by key senior officers, and was strengthened last year with the appointment of two lay members. Work is underway with the community to further develop local capacity to support its leadership role in the local safeguarding system. Dialogues with key stakeholders continue, including ongoing dialogue with Speakerbox, the local children in care council, and Southwark Youth Council, which provide a basis for children and young people to raise their safeguarding concerns with the board.

Building community capacity will remain a priority over the coming year, in order to ensure continuing engagement on key community issues. For example, following performance scrutiny by the board regarding the fall in the number of private fostering notifications, work with the community has helped to understand why this has occurred and underpinned a revitalised awareness campaign, particularly among professionals in key frontline services. This campaign has involved distributing leaflets and promotional material to a range of community settings, revising information to professionals through



## Southwark Annual Safeguarding Board Report 2012/13

the existing training offer, and highlighting the issue as part of the SSCB's contribution to the council's induction programme for over 300 new members of staff. In addition, a theatre group presented several private fostering scenarios throughout the annual safeguarding board conference to approximately 170 professionals, thus broadening the awareness of potential private fostering circumstances.

As a result, there was an increase of 25% in notifications of private fostering arrangements during 2012/13 and a follow-up survey of professionals highlighted increased confidence in the system in spotting and reporting private fostering in the borough. A refreshed steering group supported by the leadership of the board has been created to review practice arrangements going forward, in line with new guidance. It will report into the main board highlighting further opportunities for systemic improvement to private fostering provision during 2013/14.

Systematic review of partners' compliance with safeguarding duties has been central to the board's work programme. A 100% compliance of section 11 reporting throughout 2012/13 demonstrates continuing excellent commitment to safeguarding across the system – including in agencies which have not traditionally seen themselves as having a safeguarding role such as housing, planning and environment services. Partner engagement in the board's sub-group infrastructure and activity is well developed and provides significant capacity for the board to deliver its statutory duties, work programme and priorities, as well as a vital part of the board's governance. For example, the human resources sub-group continues to ensure safe employment practice across the partnership and this year led the coordinated implementation of the vetting and barring scheme across the system. In addition, the child death overview panel (CDOP) continued to review all child deaths in line with statutory responsibilities and has streamlined its data collection processes, which has reduced the backlog of cases and provided more reflective space for panel members. The group's chair this year will lead a review of how the outcomes and learning from the CDOP can better support learning and development in local safeguarding practice.

Over the course of the year, work has also been undertaken to further strengthen the board's performance management and quality assurance arrangements, as recommended by the independent chair's task and finish group. This provides a basis for how the board will work in future to ensure it addresses the increasing duties and requirements, both new and existing. Key tools used by the board to facilitate this approach include reviews of national policy developments, monitoring of performance improvements and declines, practice issues as identified through audit and routine reporting from key evidence areas such as independent reviewing officers, child protection chairs, LADO, serious case reviews and CDOP.

As a result, the board has been able to better respond to key governance and performance issues. For example, the inspection highlighted lower than anticipated levels of LADO notifications received from the police, health and the voluntary sector. The SSCB scrutinised the delivery and multi-agency awareness of the LADO and as a result strengthened governance arrangements into the HR sub-group and duty arrangements with child protection chairs to ensure appropriate consultation availability for professionals with concerns. The responsibility of the role also moved to the quality assurance unit service manager to align it with child protection and quality assurance activity. As a result there has been an appropriate increase in notifications to the LADO from across the whole system including police, health and the voluntary sectors and a

much stronger link with child protection activity. The serious case review sub-group also continued to ensure lessons learnt from previous serious case reviews are disseminated, as well as learning from any local management reviews.

The task and finish group's recommendations seek to further embed multi-agency performance management and compliance responsibilities into the work programme of the board and recognise the need to ensure there is space for scrutiny of safeguarding at both governance and practice levels. Its recommendations will also ensure that the executive and main board's structure enables them to take a greater focus on systemic, persistent priorities with supporting sub-groups which will continue to monitor and assure compliance across the system. The main board will focus on systemic, strategic reviews of elements of the child's journey placing a particular emphasis on persistent and cross-cutting themes, including early help, intervention, and complex safeguarding needs. These reviews will include consideration of a range of information and intelligence from across the system to provide insight into the area of focus and will be led by an expert speaker who will provide challenge and scrutiny to recommendations.

In addition a small set of key indicators which reflect local priorities and quality of practice will be developed to sit alongside the broader statutory measures within the performance management framework. The measures will be dynamic and respond to new and emerging priorities as the board's work develops, so for example responding to practice improvement recommendations falling out of the main board's activity around early help or neglect. The wider performance management framework will be monitored outside of the main board activity by the board's secretariat, with performance issues reported by exception into the executive as appropriate. Developing a more robust qualitative angle to the performance management framework will also be a priority for the board through spotlight audits, user voice and expanding frontline practice learning.

In response to the significant changes to the national safeguarding landscape, the board will also undertake a rigorous, partnership-wide self assessment against this backdrop to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the new world. The self assessment will form the basis for work programme and review for the year 2013/14.

## 5. Multi-agency practice

Ensuring that the local system has high-quality and effective multi-agency practice that safeguards children is at the core of the board's work. Building on a strong and mature partnership, the board is well placed to respond to the raised regulatory bar and national and local 'spotlight' issues such as child sexual exploitation, neglect and adoption.

Ofsted recognised our effective local practice across all agencies and noted recent improvements in more assertive action for the most vulnerable children. The SSCB and partner agencies continue to effectively translate board priorities into clear practice principles which are successfully embedded across local service delivery. For example, following an increase in the number of children with a CPP for two years or more, there has been extensive work across staff in partner agencies, quality assurance and social work teams to review and challenge practice in this area.

This has resulted in new ways of working with the application of the Signs of Safety methodology and acting as a key driver for the local transformation programme – Social Work Matters. As outlined above, the borough's refreshed Children and Young People's Plan also embeds this commitment, through the "Safety and Stability" priority (see Appendix 2)

### Strengths

- Overall good-quality and timely support that safeguards and makes a difference to the lives of vulnerable and at-risk children
- Effective embedding of the common assessment framework and early help infrastructure, including triage and implementation of the multi-agency safeguarding hub arrangements
- Better engagement and satisfaction of children and parents through the roll-out of the Signs of Safety practice methodology
- Comprehensive and highly regarded partnership training and development offer

### Areas of development and/or work programme for 2013/14

- Continue to develop further local systems for evidencing impact of safeguarding practice on outcomes for children and young people
- Review and challenge local practice on emerging priority areas, both national and local, such as child sexual exploitation and neglect, and using learning from the journey of the child to further develop early help and local intervention choices
- Increase the number of children in stable homes, including increases in those being adopted
- Further develop ways of evidencing impact of training and development on frontline practice

The May 2012 Ofsted inspection recognised that agencies provide effective services which safeguard and protect children from harm and key performance indicators show safeguarding practice is timely and of good quality. The multi-agency performance management framework is effective in ensuring performance concerns are quickly responded to by the SSCB and partners. For example in response to higher than

## Southwark Annual Safeguarding Board Report 2012/13

national average numbers of children on the CPP for two years or more and an increase in the number of children on a CPP for a second or subsequent time, the quality assurance unit led a review of practice. This included greater consultation, support and challenge of children and families with long-term needs, as well as ensuring earlier consideration of alternative action, tighter written agreements and the testing of legal threshold for interventions. As a result, since June 2012 there has been a significant reduction in the number of second or subsequent plans and there continues to be a downward trend from 24 children during the first quarter of 2012 to 4 children in the final quarter of the year. There has also been an increase in the number of children and families where care proceedings have been initiated.

The SSCB continues to provide proactive and visible leadership around key partnership-wide practice development areas. For example during 2011/12, the activity of the board focused on a system-wide rollout of the common assessment framework (CAF) and implementing the early help triage process. A clear message from the SSCB in terms of agencies' responsibilities in using the CAF supported a system-wide move to embedding it as a referral and assessment tool. This quickly resulted in a significant increase in the number of CAFs generated across the borough.

Throughout 2012/13, the SSCB continued to support the embedding of the CAF including commissioning information material for parents, children and professionals and offering CAF and lead professional training. The number and quality of CAF referrals and assessments have continued to improve across the whole system. Audit shows familiarity of CAF and the process is embedded across all universal, early help and specialist services as well as across the voluntary and community sector. User surveys show increasing levels of satisfaction, with, to date, 92% of respondents reporting they are very satisfied with their experience, 66% saying they have seen improvements in the issues identified in the CAF, and all describing improved knowledge of services and ability to access appropriate help.

The Ofsted inspection also noted significantly increased confidence in the system which is resulting in greatly reduced levels of inappropriate referrals to social care and more children receiving an offer of early help. Further improvements however in this area will require ongoing development and review in line with national developments, including new inspection frameworks for safeguarding and children's centres and the implementation of multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) arrangements.

Key performance issues planned for review over the coming year by the board include the increase this year of referrals to children's social care resulting in no further action and further consideration of the role of early help in addressing the issue of neglect. The board will also focus this year on reviewing multi-agency practice and improvements needed in the areas of child sexual exploitation and looked after children in response to both national and local priorities.

The good and targeted use of audit continues, with systematic review and insight into areas of practice improvement as identified through the board's performance management framework. For example, an audit of cases in April 2012 with insufficient progress of the CPP highlighted that although there was good attendance of agencies and parents at conferences, their contribution to the risk assessment and planning could be strengthened in some cases. As a result the Signs of Safety conference model was adopted from October 2012, with the aim of producing a more effective and collaborative

process of risk assessment, and securing better agency and user engagement. This includes a stronger focus on the safety and outcomes for the child, more engagement from parents, agencies and young people in the conference and the development of more focused and effective plans which result in greater progress and earlier action where the plan is not progressing. Initial evaluation shows an overwhelmingly positive response from professionals, who praise the improved transparency and note how the new approach puts the parents and child at the centre of decision making. Children report that they feel they can say what is important to them, and parents like the way it is less formal, easier to talk and feels more relaxed. In addition there has been a considerable increase in engagement and attendance at conferences, and the enhanced practice further supports the partnership commitment to improve the journey of the child.

Ensuring staff are equipped with the right skills remains a key priority for the board. Ofsted noted the qualified and experienced workforce which benefits from manageable workloads and sufficient managerial span of control. The SSCB continues to provide a well-received and valued training offer around core competencies and priority areas. A review of the SSCB local training offer by the practice, training and development sub-group highlighted a quality and sufficient training programme that meets the needs of the local workforce. Feedback from participants continues to show high levels of satisfaction from delegates and a consistent improvement in knowledge base after delegates have attended the course. A successful recommissioning exercise to amalgamate and update several courses was undertaken during 2012/13, ensuring that the Children's Workforce Development Council training grant is fully utilised including joint training with the Southwark Safeguarding Adult Board to support consistency across the children and adult's workforce.

A key aspect of staff development is ensuring system-wide learning from local practice. The audit and learning sub-group continues to provide insight and intelligence which underpin key messages communicated to professionals and test impact of new ways of working as recommended by the board. For example, in January the sub-group undertook an audit on domestic abuse cases subject to multi-agency risk assessment conference, in order to revisit the impact of new services, tools and processes. The audit demonstrated a marked improvement in multi-agency communication and more consistent use of the Barnardo's risk assessment tool. In particular, the audit showed that consolidation of provision to a single provider has clarified and strengthened referral pathways, and there were many examples of effective joint working with agencies.

A range of forums are provided for staff and partners to support understanding of key practice issues and developments. This has included multi-agency briefing sessions, lead professional training days, child protection update seminars and two SSCB-hosted conferences related to child sexual exploitation and safeguarding looked after children. In addition the 'designated' roles, which are vital to an effective local SCB, were strengthened through recognition in job descriptions and formalised arrangements for undertaking the duties of the role. Delegate days were also delivered, looking at national and local learning. These focused on audit and case review on topics such as neglect and domestic abuse, and promoting new local initiatives for example Signs of Safety.

In order to ensure staff learning reflects the move towards understanding impact and journey of service users, the SSCB has effectively developed and piloted the Social Care Institute for Excellence practice learning methodology. This evidence-based approach is judged to be an effective way of involving frontline practitioners and

managers directly in assessing the effectiveness of their work and planning with families. A core group applied the model to a case featuring long-term neglect which has been known to statutory and partner agencies for a sustained period of time. The group recognised practice improvements in the past 12 months around working with the family and highlighted many examples of more assertive practice in line with inspection recommendations in this area. The outcomes of the audit will feed into the focus on neglect in main board meeting in June 2013.

DRAFT SEPT 2013

**Southwark Safeguarding Children Board outline work plan 2013/14**Standard agenda items for the Executive

- Minutes and matters arising
- Horizon scanning and policy implications
- Performance Management Framework exception reporting
- Governance and compliance reports (e.g. MARAC, MAPPA, IRO, CP chairs, LADO, Missing Children)
- Sub group exception reporting

<b>March</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>January 2014</b>
<b>Executive</b>	<b>Main</b>	<b>Executive</b>	<b>Main</b>	<b>Executive</b>	<b>Main</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Standard items</li> <li>-Review of compliance reports from 12/13</li> <li>-Strategic planning of year including focus and information to be available at the themed main board meeting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Long term support and complex safeguarding –a focus on neglect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Standard items</li> <li>-Implications of Working Together</li> <li>-Recommendations from the main board focus on neglect</li> </ul>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Intervention and assessment – a focus on child sexual exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Standard items</li> <li>-Single assessment recommendations</li> <li>-Governance review Recommendations from the main board focus on Child sexual exploitation</li> <li>-CLA stock check</li> </ul>	<p>Early help to referral – a focus on early help role in neglect and stemming the flow to statutory provision</p>

# **Southwark Safeguarding Children Board**

**Draft Annual Safeguarding Board  
Report 2012/13**



# A changing landscape

- Nationally, radically altering national landscape:
  - Working Together 2013 guidance and revised Ofsted frameworks raising bar in terms of responsibilities of and requirements on safeguarding children board
  - National spotlight on areas such as child trafficking, private fostering and child sexual exploitation
  - New initiatives such as Troubled Families challenging system to work differently with its most vulnerable families
- Continuing high levels of local need and complexity:
  - Multiple and interconnected problems of most vulnerable families, including mental health, domestic abuse, disability, worklessness, criminal behaviour and substance misuse
  - Repeated involvement evident across statutory agencies

# Strong, visible local leadership

- Strengths:
  - Services for vulnerable children recognised by Ofsted as good with outstanding features in May 2012 inspection
  - Stronger interface between early help and statutory services
  - Compliant system and strengthening performance management
  - Good partner engagement, including through sub-groups
- Areas for development in 2013/14:
  - Further develop quality assurance and audit functions to focus on impact, progress and service user experience
  - Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory frameworks, including development of single assessment and early help offer
  - Further embed the community in leadership of safeguarding locally
  - Build on mature partnerships to embed new relationships, such as with health and wellbeing board and CCG

# Effective oversight of multi-agency practice

- Strengths:
  - Overall good-quality and timely support that safeguards and makes a difference
  - Effective embedding of CAF and early help infrastructure, including triage and MASH arrangements
  - Better engagement and satisfaction of children and parents through the roll-out of Signs of Safety approach
  - Comprehensive and highly regarded partnership training and development offer
- Areas for development in 2013/14:
  - Develop further local systems to evidence impact of practice on outcomes for children and young people
  - Review and challenge local practice on emerging priority areas, including further developing early help and intervention choices
  - Increase number of children in stable homes

# Agenda Item 9

<b>Item No:</b> 9	<b>Classification</b> OPEN	<b>Date:</b> 11 September 2013	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report Title:</b>		Draft review report : Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations	
<b>Ward(s) or Group affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Scrutiny project manager	

## Introduction

Committee resolved at the meeting of 10 July 2012 to conduct a review on bullying, considering both school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations.

The committee continued its recent focus on the role of parents and families in supporting young people and resolved to particularly look at young people who are more likely to experience bullying because of social exclusion or disadvantage: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT), children in care and girls at risk of gang involvement.

Two themes emerged as the review progressed: Cyber-bullying and young people at risk of involvement in gangs/serious offending.

## Evidence

1. Council officers provided overview reports on:
  - Local Authority context and work to combat bullying in school - which included an update on a previous scrutiny report on Bullying produced in 2006/7
  - Local Authority work undertaken with gangs and parents by the Specialist Family Focus Team (SFFT)
2. Government publication on Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies.
3. Southwark Youth Council gave verbal evidence on the theme and a presentation on Quality Youth standards.
4. Sue Sanders from Schools OUT - a national organisation, based in Southwark, working towards equality, safety and visibility in education for the LGBT community.
5. Elena Noel from Empowering People for Excellence. A local organisation focused is on cohesion & community engagement working predominantly with young people and families where there is a risk of exclusion.
6. Jennifer Blake from Safe 'N' Sound. A local organisation based in Peckham that provides support to young people and parents covering a wider range of issues such as challenging behaviour, anti- social behaviour , gangs, drugs, low self esteem &

housing.

7. Research report on 'The impact of cyber-bullying on young people's mental health' November 2010: PEAR and Anglia Ruskin University.
8. Kidscape : a national Anti-Bullying Child Protection Charity.
9. The Cybersmile Foundation - a national charity committed to tackling cyber-bullying and online hate campaigns , which works with children's, young people and adult.

## Background

The 2006/07 children's services and education scrutiny committee decided to review the bullying of children and young people in Southwark. The committee were interested in finding out the extent that bullying is seen as a problem and what is being done to combat it.

The committee reviewed the recommendations and asked officers for an update:

Recommendation	Response
We recommend that a council officer be identified and tasked with the responsibility of coordinating termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe.	The Safer Schools Steering Group which meets half-termly to discuss these issues. The nucleus group consists of the following roles: Partnership and Criminal Justice Police Superintendent Safer Neighbourhood Chief Inspector Southwark H/Ts Representative YOS Rep Southwark Community Safety Police Sergeant, Youth Engagement Team Southwark early Help Team
We recommend the council takes active steps to facilitate the sharing of information about bullying strategies amongst schools and other key agencies. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organising a two yearly bullying conference</li> <li>• collating school anti-bullying policies and circulating good practice examples to head teachers and chairs of governors as an aid to other schools when reviewing their anti-bullying policies</li> <li>• becoming involved with the Anti-Bullying Alliance.</li> </ul>	An Anti-bullying toolkit was produced for schools and the youth services. Schools were supported to take part in national anti-bullying week each November Case studies on activities were shared with schools
We recommend the council coordinates a mediation service on a trial basis to resolve any disputes between parents and schools, including disputes that relate to incidents of bullying. We think that schools	Officers worked with the Southwark Mediation Service (SMS) to develop resources for schools. SMS have provided training for peer mentors in many of our schools.

should pay for this service on a case-by-case basis, but the council should organise the provision.	
We have also identified two specific areas we think officers need to research further and report back to executive on: We recommend officers look into whether schools want more training around bullying. If so, the LEA should support this either by actively promoting the council and Southwark-wide services available, or by directly organising training days.	The PSHE team arranged regular training events for all schools and bespoke training to individual schools - plus multi agency training for our partner organisations
We recommend that executive tasks an officer to look into what extent gambling is a problem amongst children and young people in Southwark.	Officers found no evidence that that gambling was a particular problem in Southwark schools. As a precautionary measure all secondary schools were provided with a nationally developed resource to help schools recognise and deal with any issues related to gambling.

### Context

In March 2012, the Department for Education issued revised guidance for “Preventing and tackling bullying” which shifted responsibilities to schools. The guidance made only one reference to a local authority having a role –that when a bullying incident is so severe it is should be addressed as a child protection issue under Children Act 1989.

Officer emphasised that responsibilities had moved to schools and oversight rested primarily with OFSTED, however the council did retain responsibility under the council safeguarding duties and a ‘moral duty’.

Officers and committee members, particularly the education representatives commended the previous good work, particularly the Anti Bully Toolkit and officers said that this laid a foundation for schools to build on. Officer said that there are now a variety of providers, from the voluntary and private sector, who offer services that schools can buy in.

Just under a third of Southwark schools have been reported on under the arrangements of the current OFSTED framework since January 2012. Inspectors judged that in those schools visited:

- Pupils/students’ awareness of types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racist and homophobic abuse, was well developed and that they knew how to keep themselves safe.
- In over 70% bullying is very rare and pupils/students and the wider school community have confidence that incidents are resolved effectively and quickly.
- In 29% pupils/students reported that they had not experienced bullying and that the community did not tolerate it any form

### Guidance on talking bullying in schools

Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies made the following recommendations:

- involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;
- involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers;
- implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable;
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language are unacceptable;
- use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and / or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying;
- provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disability (SEND) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) pupils;
- Work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that are happening outside school;
- make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination; and
- celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

### **Cyber - bullying**

Cyber-bullying was a concern raised by young people giving evidence and members who were concerned about reports of its damaging effects.

The committee took evidence from two national organisations working particularly on Cyber-bullying: Kidscape and Cybermile. A range of social media providers were contacted to give evidence, including Twitter, Facebook, Blackberry, Formspring, however none responded.

A research report entitled the "The impact of cyber-bullying on young people's mental health" was also considered. The report was published in 2010 by PEAR and Anglia Ruskin University. The PEAR group is a public health reference group of young people supported by the NCB (National Children's Bureau) Research Centre. Young people took a lead role in devising the research with professional support.

PEAR found 18.4% of young people in the research said that they had been cyber-bullied and more of these were girls (69%). The study found that many more girls than boys said they had experienced cyber-bullying in some way and that of those who said they had been affected by cyber-bullying the most common effect was to their confidence, self-esteem and mental and emotional well-being. More than a quarter of those who had been cyber-bullied said that they had stayed away from school and over a third said that they had stopped socialising outside school because of it. Of those who had been cyber-bullied, over half had sought support mainly from parents and friends. Most young people thought that cyber-bullying was as harmful as traditional bullying but some felt that it did not exist and was down to the victim's ability to cope with it. The main reason given by young people for why bullies may choose this method is that 'they think they will not get caught'.

The report's practical and policy recommendations were:

- Develop educational programmes around awareness for young people, parents/carers and schools.
- Deliver education that brings together young people and their families to enhance communication in relation to online media.
- Educate young people about what constitutes acceptable behaviour on line.
- Implement the advice provided by young people in this project.
- Support young people to report incidents of cyber-bullying through other young people who could help change attitudes and provide a source of support to young people.
- Develop policies that stress the importance of developing values of care and kindness amongst young people.

Kidscape work on all types of bullying and provided an overview of bullying and its impact on both targets and perpetrators. They said that interventions with targets can be particularly successful through behaviour work to become more assertive, as well as encouraging more emotional intelligence in children of the consequences of behaviour. Kidscape provide support in E Safety, bullying intervention, and teacher training

Cybersmile is a service for children, young people and adults provided through a website, a helpline, counselling and workshops in schools. Cybersmile explained that when they go to schools they tackle emotional detachment, by making children aware of the emotional damage that they can cause online. They emphasised the importance of school's first recognising the problem and then having effective policies that they implemented.

Kidscape and Cybersmile both also advised and that it was very important to engage with families and parents, particularly as some parents are unfamiliar with social media and can struggle to support children effectively by helping children get privacy settings correct and supportively guiding children with online interactions. Cybersmile reported some difficulties recruiting parents and the committee suggested developing closer relationships with schools to facilitate this. Both organisations are building their capacity to work with schools in Southwark. Kidscape announced they had received funding to work in 9 boroughs, including Southwark to do 'Bullying Intervention Training' by providing teacher training, classroom & school support, starting in September 2013.



### **Young people at risk of involvement in gangs / serious offending**

Elena Noel from Empowering People for Excellence and Jennifer Blake from Safe 'N' Sound particularly focused on young people at risk of exclusion and involvement in serious offending or gangs. Both work with young people and their families, in schools and in the community. They gave similar evidence that bullying is pervasive in schools and both raised concerns that some schools will not be aware of the extent of the problem, or will not want to label the problem. Jennifer Blake pointed out that young people who are involved in gangs are also involved in types of bullying, whether as victims or perpetrators or both. Gang's members / serious offenders were reported to using sex with as intimidation and particular concerns were raised about vulnerable girls at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people on the periphery may be hassled for money or pressurised into hiding knives.

Evidence was given about the importance of knowing and looking for signs such as drug trading activity and ensuring that absences from school are explained. It is particularly important to look out for more vulnerable young people, and young women who may be affiliated, and do follow up work. Elena reported that gang members often have a high status in schools and referred to a boy on an attempted murder charge who was still in school and put on a pedestal by other children. She explained that these children are often referred to as 'generals' and are often not the disruptive children. She said that frequently teachers were not aware of the children with gang affiliations.

The importance of working with parents was emphasised Elena commented that many of the parents left school early and are often uncomfortable visiting schools. She recommended encouraging parents to visit in the good times and that parents are often frightened and agitated and a visit to their homes can help.

The committee's former parental engagement review was referred to and the striking evidence that it is parents, and often fathers, whose positive role most influences their children's educational performance and behaviour. Evidence was heard that many children at risk did not have a positive male role model; often fathers were not around and many mothers did not have the time. It was reported that social issues were very prevalent and increasing with austerity

Elena commented that often young people lack emotional intelligence and that giving time to young people can make a difference, she said that recognising the signs that something is going awry and giving young people home truths is effective. She explained that she worked with young people looking at role play and through this the young people discovered that they did not like being disruptive. Jennifer explained that the project works with schoolchildren on a one to one basis, often with young people not going school.

It was reported that Southwark schools often have a large number of black children, but a predominantly white staff who often feel unable to tackle racist bullying.

The committee was advised that young people should be involved in developing a Gang Prevention Policy and that it is important that the policy is enacted. Work to prevent gangs needs complementary work on developing good safeguarding policy and practice. One of the key recommendations was to encourage professionals to come together to share information. Safe 'N' Sound reported that it works closely with Southwark police, and would like to replicate this close working relationship with the council. Elena advocated training with people who are credible and knowledgeable. She cautioned that some people offering training are still caught up in their social / criminal networks.

## **Best practice in Schools**

Young people, voluntary groups and the PEAR research report all emphasised the importance of nurturing the values of kindness and care, as well as developing emotional intelligence by raising awareness of the different types of bullying; emotional, psychological, physical and sexual and its impact. One school had a 'Kindness week', that the young people praised, and there is a Cyber-bullying awareness rising day every 21 June.

Young people emphasised the subtle effects of peer pressure and group dynamics, and how this could make people feel. Mentoring of children by other children and the training of staff to tackle bullying was praised, as was the counselling programme a Place2B.

Facilitating methods of reporting for all types of bullying was also commonly cited. This could be more traditional bullying as well as cyber-bullying or bullying that took place out of school, such as on the bus. Some schools had a drop box which allowed children to raise concerns, and this was viewed as very effective.

The positive role of School Councils in tackling bullying was cited, and in the youth focus groups put young people's involvement in decision making as the second most important priority, behind safety.

Crown Lane Primary School, in Lambeth, was praised for their very good practice in tackling bullying.

## **LGBT**

Schools Out gave a presentation on their work to tackle bullying, and working towards equality, safety and visibility in education for the LGBT community. The presentation highlighted children and young people's experiences:

- Young people identifying themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) worry more about going to school than those who identify themselves as heterosexual
- 36% of LGB young people reported being bullied at or near school, compared with 15% of heterosexual young people
- A quarter of LGB young people reported experiencing cyber bullying at least once a month compared with less than 10% of heterosexual young people

The presentation spoke about the importance of the whole school approach and said the solutions focused on Language; Law; Role Models and Culture. The presentation highlighted the resources available for work in school.

Schools OUT identified that support for young LGBT people is vital and social networks can help this. The best networks that exist for young people are Greenwich Metro and a network in Manchester that organises trips, arts activities. These networks create a supportive space where young people are able to come out in a safety. Sue reported that children can find it hard to access information about these networks online at schools as the software stopped access to the websites that used terms such as 'lesbian'. Southwark has an excellent network for adults - but no network for young people

## **Safer Schools Steering Group**

The previous committee recommended termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information

and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe. This group is now called the Safer Schools Steering Group. Evidence received by the committee highlighted that bullying on transport is still a problem and the 381 bus route was given as an example of poor behaviour. Young people suggested that somebody went on the route to combat bullying.

The Safer Schools partnership could be a forum that it used to encourage professionals to come together to share best practice on Gang Prevention Policy and share information.

### **Draft recommendations**

1. Cascade information to schools on the work of Kidscape and The Cybersmile Foundation on tackling bullying and cyber-bullying.
2. Deliver training that brings together teachers, young people and their families to enhance communication and knowledge in relation to online media and cyber-bullying.
3. Encourage initiatives such as Kindness weeks and the cyber-bullying awareness day, which promote the values of care and kindness .Initiatives such as these can also help develop emotional intelligence and an awareness of what constitutes acceptable behaviour on line.
4. Encourage the use of role play in schools to develop emotional literacy.
5. Promote schemes that support bullied children to build self esteem and develop assertiveness skills.
6. Support counselling services such as Place2B.
7. Empower school children to raise issues and extend the box scheme and other schemes so that children, young people and the public can raise concerns easily , particularly with school bus routes.
8. Consider placing wardens and transport police on problematic routes, such as the 381.
9. Promote training to teachers on bullying and involvement with gangs/ serious offending so they are more able to work effectively with young people at risk. Ensure the training is done by people who are credible and knowledgeable.
10. Provide a forum for teachers to share concerns and information on young people involved, or at risk of involvement, with gangs/serious offending.
11. Encourage and provide support for schools to develop Gang Prevention Strategies.
12. Invite groups such as Safe 'N' Sound and Empowering People for Excellence to join the Safer Schools Steering Group.
13. Provide more accessible information on local LGBT networks for young people and consider developing a network for Southwark young people, possibly with the support of Southwark's LGBT forum.
14. Consult with Speakerbox , the Looked After Children Panel and the Children Safeguarding Board on anti-bullying work with children receiving care



This page is intentionally blank.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013-14**

**AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**

**NOTE:** Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Julie Timbrell Tel: 020 7525 0514

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
<b>Sub-Committee Members</b>		<b>Council Officers</b>	
Councillor David Hubber (Chair)	1	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services and Adult Services	1
Councillor Right Rev E Oyewole	1	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure	1
Councillor Chris Brown	1	Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure	1
Councillor Lisa Rajan	1	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	1
Councillor Rose Shimell	1	Sarah Feasey, Head of Safeguarding & Community Services	1
Councillor Althea Smith	1	Eleanor Parkin, Policy Officer, DCS Affairs	1
Councillor Cleo Soanes	1	Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care	1
<b>Reserves</b>		Kerry Crichlow, Director, Strategy & Commissioning	1
Councillor Michael Bikola	1	Elaine Allegretti, Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance	1
Councillor Sunil Chopra	1	Merrill Haeusler, Director of Education Children's and Adults' Services - Education	1
Councillor Lorraine Lauder	1	Yolanda Houston, Headteachers Executive business Manager	1
Councillor Darren Merrill	1	Tania Robinson, Executive Assistant	1
Councillor Graham Neale	1	Chris Page, Head of Cabinet Office	1
<b>Education Representatives</b>		William Summers, Political Assistant to Liberal Democrat Group	1
Revd Nicholas Elder	1	Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Team SPARES	10
Colin Elliott	1		
Leticia Ojeda	1		
Lynn Charlton	1		
<b>Other Members</b>			
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	1		
Councillor Catherine Bowman	1		
Councillor Veronica Ward	1		
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>43</b>
		<b>Dated:</b> August 2013	