Open Agenda

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

Tuesday 11 March 2014
7.00 pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Vacancy
Reverend Nicholas Elder
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer
Lynn Charlton
Abdul Raheem Musa

Reserves

Councillor Michael Bukola
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Graham Neale

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Contact Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting
Eleanor Kelly
Chief Executive
Date: 3 March 2014

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

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

Tuesday 11 March 2014
7.00 pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
1.	**APOLOGIES**	
2.	**NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT** In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS** Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	**MINUTES** To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on	
5.	**ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD REPORT 2012/13** Michael O'Connor, the independent Safeguarding Children Board Chair, will present the report and talk about plans for the forthcoming year.	1 - 21
6.	**SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR POLICIES**	
7.	**REGULAR UPDATE ON FREE SCHOOLS**	
8.	**WORK-PLAN**	

Item No.	Title	Page No.

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

Date: 3 March 2014

Agenda Item 5

Southwark
Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Safeguarding Board Report
2012/13

"The London Borough of Southwark, health organisations and other key partners have continued to make solid and continuous progress in identifying, driving and monitoring key improvements in targeted services for children and young people."

OFSTED, 2012

Contents

Foreword 1

National Developments 2

Local Safeguarding Context 3

Leadership and Management 5

Multi-agency practice 10

Developments since April 2013 15

Appendix 1 – SSCB work programme 2013/14 17

Foreword

I am pleased to present this report on the 2012/13 year on behalf of the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board. Having extended my original three-year term by 6 months, I handed over to a new independent chair at the end of May, 2013. Southwark has been fortunate to recruit Michael O'Connor to succeed me, with all the experience and insight which he brings to this vital leadership role. It falls to him to take forward the important and unending work programme which is set out in the report, and I wish him very well with it.

There are just three features of this last year that I would want to highlight. First, our recruitment, for the first time, of two excellent lay members, who have already added a significant dimension to our dialogue. Second that the major efforts which we initiated and led to reduce the incidence (and especially repeated incidents) of Domestic Violence appear to be having positive results. And third that we have moved to a new way of using and interpreting evidence which will focus much more closely on the experiences of children and young people, and the outcomes we achieve for, and with them by our interventions.

It has been a privilege to play a role in safeguarding children in this fine and vibrant London Borough. It faces many challenges, with high mobility in the population, and pockets of real poverty and deprivation. Some of those challenges are being exacerbated by the economic troubles the country faces, and the actions being taken by government to address them. Too many people, children among them, are exposed to violence or the threat of it, especially in domestic settings.

But Southwark also has strong and resilient communities, and it is served by high-quality professionals who really care and have a real passion. They in turn are well-led by senior managers, and supported through local democratic accountability. So I am confident that the lives and experiences of children and young people in Southwark will continue to improve, and that the SSCB will continue to play a lively and essential part in that.

Finally, my thanks, in particular, to Malcolm Ward, Ann Flynn, Tina Hawkins, Nina Scott, Romi Bowen, and Rory Patterson, for their invaluable and highly-professional support to my work. But also to all those from Children's Social care, Southwark Council corporately, the NHS, the schools, the Police Service, other partner agencies, and the voluntary sector. Their willingness to take on leadership roles, on top of heavy workloads, has been outstanding.

Chris Davies
Independent Chair of Southwark Safeguarding Children Board

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 development, the issues or new responsibilities underlying these concerns or developments, and the actions being taken to address them. 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 (appendix 1 page 15 for work programme)
- Development since April 2013

1. 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 holistic approach to assessments with a 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, Education Act, 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 protection. 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.

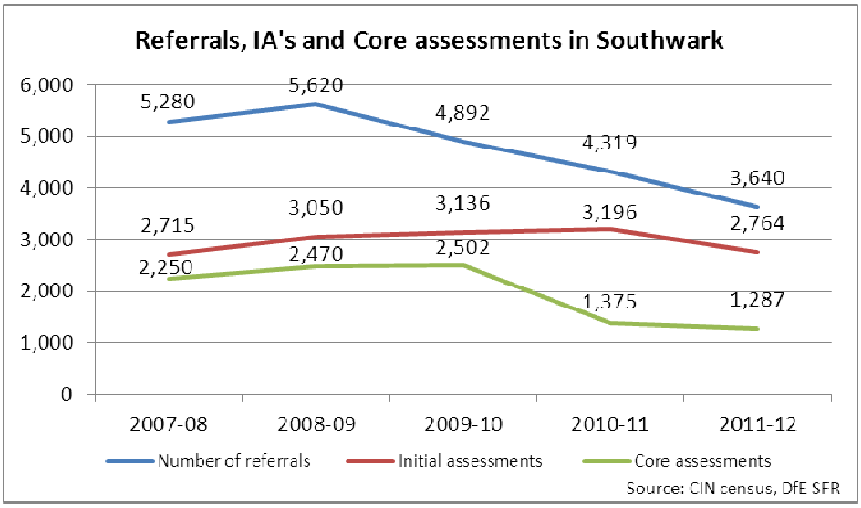
Wider changes including the introduction of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and statutory partnerships such as the health and wellbeing board, with relaxed duties around children's trust arrangements, will also have a major impact on how the SSCB delivers its statutory functions.

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 against statutory duties, there is much solid foundations to build on.

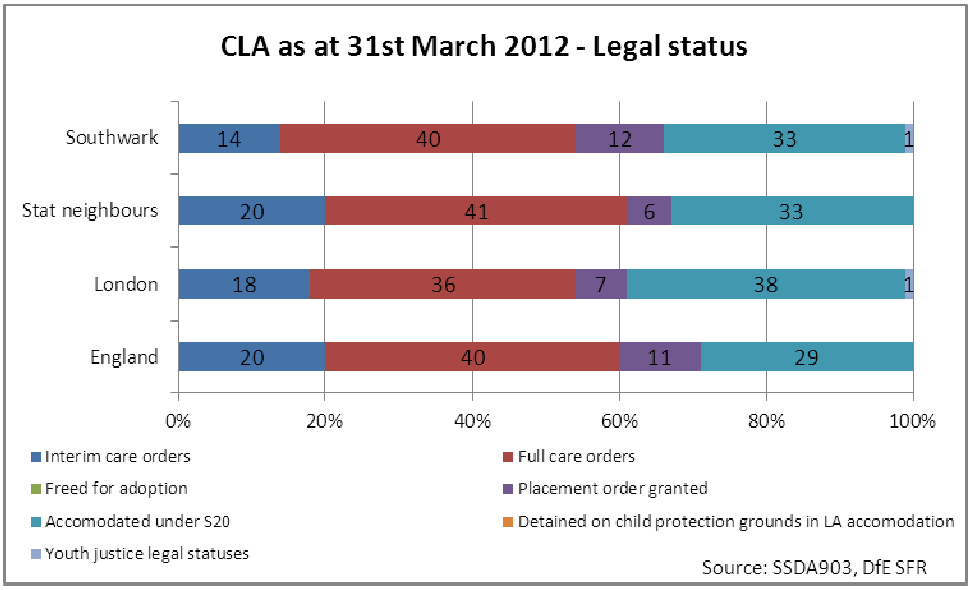
2. Local safeguarding context

The profile of safeguarding in Southwark shows high levels of need, coupled with a range of complexities arising from the local environment. Nationally, there are approximately 369,400,000 children in need (CiN) at 31st March, of which 3,010 reside in Southwark, representing a 10% decrease against figures for 2011. This is the fifth highest figure in London, with Haringey, Lambeth, Greenwich 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'.

Rates of child protection referrals in Southwark have fallen by 16% in volume from 2011 to 3,640. Of these, 2,764 progress to an initial assessment for cases of suspected harm. There is a year-on-year decrease in the number of children subject to a child protection plan (CPP) as with 273 children subject to a plan at 31st March, a 6% decrease in volume from 2011.



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 over the past 12 months with an end-of-year figure standing at 552, which mirrors national trends. In 2012, 40% of children looked after as at 31 March 2012 were on full care orders, which has remained relatively stable over the past four years. 14% of children were on interim care orders, decreasing from last year, and 12% had a placement order granted, showing an increase from last year.



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 these issues over the next year and will provide strategic leadership around the implementation of a single assessment and developing our local multi-agency operating model to tackle child sexual exploitation.

3. 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[1] safeguarding 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 information, the joint strategic needs assessment and engagement with over 1,300 children, young people, parents, carers and professionals to understand their experience, with all directly influencing the plan's priorities. This comprehensive evidence base was developed throughout 2012 and provides a vital insight into where the local system needs to change to make the biggest difference to children and families.

This work 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. "Safety and Stability", one of the key transformation areas in the plan, 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. Children's social care has begun implementing a systematic and whole-system organisational framework to transform social work in Southwark. Called Social Work Matters, this programme has a clear vision to transform the practice system locally over the next five years to ensure better experience and outcomes for local children and families, and practitioners working with them.

In the coming year, the SSCB will continue to lead the local response to implementing the revised Working Together guidance.

[1] Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 places a duty on all local agencies to ensure their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

For example, in refreshing the threshold document and developing a learning and improvement framework, 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 statutory partnerships such as the health and wellbeing board, and continued political leadership through the borough's Council Plan.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of safeguarding services judged by Ofsted in May 2012 to be good with outstanding features
- Clearer and stronger interface between early help and statutory agencies
- Evidence of excellent agency compliance through section 11 safeguarding reporting with recognised good safeguarding practice standards
- Strengthening performance management framework with closer alignment to practice improvement
- Effective safer recruitment practice and embedding of new disclosure 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
- Further system improvements around private fostering

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
- Strengthening the system's ability to respond earlier through establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to support a transformed approach to early help and child protection referrals
- Thematic focus on key cohorts of vulnerable children in the safeguarding system, such as neglectful families, those at risk of exploitation, and those in need of early help or protection

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 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 a private fostering scenario through 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 baring 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 includes review of national policy developments, monitoring of performance improvement and decline, practice issues as identified through audit and routine reporting from key evidence areas such as independent reviewing officers, child protection chairs, Local Authority Designated Officer (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 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.

LADO and CP role coming together to strengthen awareness and identification in the multi-agency of allegations against professionals and volunteers.

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.

Case Study: Local Authority Designated Officer

Mrs A* has phoned her child's school as she is concerned that her 12 year old son M* was 'hit on the back and squeezed' by Mr J*, an escort on the bus which takes M to and from his school. M has support needs and is on the autistic spectrum, attending a Southwark school for children with Special Educational Needs.

The school's head teacher contacted the manager for school transport section who referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer the same day. An initial discussion agreed that Mr J would remain at home for 3 days whilst an investigation was planned. A strategy meeting of professionals was held two days after the referral. This was chaired by a Southwark Child Protection Coordinator and involved a member of the police child abuse investigation team, the head teacher for the school, the manager of the transport firm, the school's safeguarding coordinator and a social worker from the referral and assessment service.

The meeting heard that the child had no injuries and a witness, another teacher at the school had seen a scuffle and that M was shouting and distressed on getting off the bus. The police agreed that at this point there was insufficient evidence for a criminal investigation. The social worker was asked to speak to the child, with mother's agreement.

Due to his special needs, M was unable to give a clear account of what had happened but said that he was 'cross' with Mr J. It was agreed that the transport company would follow up with an internal investigation and Mr J was interviewed with a union representative.

After bringing together all the information, it was apparent that Mr J had been dealing with a very difficult situation in which several young people were messing about on the transport and M tried to run off the bus and into the road. Mr J attempted to restrain M but agreed he had done this clumsily. There have not been any previous concerns about Mr J who has been employed in this role for over 3 years. The allegations of physical abuse were therefore unsubstantiated.

Mr J was reinstated following this investigation but offered additional training on safe restraint and the transport firm agreed to review their policies and procedures and to offer further training in restraint.

Mrs A was kept updated as to both the school and the LADO's decision making in the process in order she could understand and be reassured as to any actions taken and how her son would continue to be safeguarded as he attended school.

** Names changed to ensure confidentiality*

4. 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 www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200165/southwarks_children_and_families_trust/1484/children_and_young_peoples_plan/3

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 and otherwise permanently placed
- Further developing 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 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 four 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 growth 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 which brings a range of key agencies together to share information to ensure early identification of potential harm and trigger support to reduce risk to children.

Key performance issues planned for review over the coming year by the board include 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 improved 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 continue to provide a well-received and valued training offer around core competencies and priority areas which is put through a rigorous quality assurance programme to ensure consistency in message and promotion of local priorities. 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 Adult Safeguarding 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. Continuing to embed the learning from audit across the workforce will be a key priority for the audit and learning subgroup going forward.

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 sharing lessons arising from audit and case review and 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 May 2013.

Case Study: Signs of Safety

A* aged 10 years and B* aged 5 years live with their parents Mr and Mrs Z*. The children and their older siblings were previously on child protection plans due to the risk of sexual abuse from an extended family member. There have also been concerns about the parent's neglectful care of the children.

The children's school re-referred B back to children's social care due to his behaviour, concern about delay in his speech and language development. Concerns were also raised about A's tooth decay. A child protection conference was held and the children were made the subjects of a child protection plan for the second time.

The parents found it hard to accept what the professionals were saying especially about concern of neglect. In the conference Mr Z continually interrupted and Mrs Z left the conference before the end. There was concern that court action might be necessary as the parents were resistant to working with the plan.

After the introduction of the Signs of Safety model, the style of work with the family changed. The social worker and the parents worked collaboratively through focusing on how life is day-to-day for the children. The social worker worked directly with the children using special 'three houses' method to encourage the children to write or draw what they saw as good in their lives, what worried them and how they would want their lives to change. In one session A drew her pets (in the house of good things), her mouth (in the house of worries) as children at school were teasing her. These pictures were shown and discussed with the parents who could see and feel very directly how their daughter felt and the impact of their care on her.

Both parents were involved with the social worker in devising their own plan to keep the children safe within the family, increasing their awareness of their responsibility for this.

The gradual development of a relationship of greater trust with the social worker allowed the mother to start to talk about her mental health problems and fear of leaving the home. This helped the social worker understand why it has been so difficult for her to take the children to appointments in the past.

Over the year significant improvements in the children's care were seen and identified by all attending, including the parents. In addition the parents were now working well with the school, keeping health appointments and mother was engaging well with adult mental health services.

** Names changed to ensure confidentiality*

5. Developments since April 2013

From April this year, the SSCB has been responding with vigour to the challenges set by the national policy framework and local needs. A new independent chair was appointed in May, and following a review of the board has implemented a number of significant changes including a review of the sub-groups' roles, and establishing new sub-groups to take forward work programmes addressing safeguarding practice within faith and community, health, education and child sexual exploitation.
The executive and main boards have been refocused to address key priorities, including neglect, child sexual exploitation and new responsibilities for early help and intervention. Work so far has included an in-depth look at each of the areas using a multi-agency approach to review local casework and best practice, resulting in bespoke work programmes in each of the three areas. Activity includes developing a shared outcomes framework to underpin the reconfiguration of multi-agency pathways and provision for children suffering and at risk of neglect, joint work with the police to develop the local operational model for tackling child sexual exploitation, and progressing new practice approaches such as single assessment, learning and improvement framework and transformation of the local social work model.

Reflecting on the year, the safeguarding children board has had opportunity to consider the key issues for the partnership and considered the impact of different agencies on a given theme. The focus on high levels of child protection activity have allowed partners to consider how their service influences outcomes for children and how they may work differently to work to transform the local approach to addressing children's needs. The partnership focus on this work is enabling an increasingly collaborative and integrated approach to assessing children. In the coming year the work on single assessment and thresholds, the development of MASH and Troubled Families' work, will enable the partnership to consider the complex range of interventions required to ensure robust safeguarding from early intervention through to children requiring high need support and statutory intervention.

Please see overleaf for the SSCB work programme 2013/14

Appendix 1: Southwark Safeguarding Children Board outline work programme 2013/14

January 2013	March	May	June	September	November	January 2014
Executive	**Executive**	**Main**	**Executive**	**Main**	**Executive**	**Main**
Strategic management	**Strategic Management**		**Strategic management**		**Strategic Management**	
Standing items -Horizon scanning -PMF exception reporting -Governance tracking - S11 tracking; budget; progress and issues arising from annual safeguarding report SCR & LMR; inspection outcomes	Standing items -Horizon scanning -PMF exception reporting -Governance tracking - S11 tracking; budget; progress and issues arising from annual safeguarding report SCR & LMR; inspection outcomes -Report back from SCR and CDOP sub group Human resources -Practice development and training; CSE	Summary of key issues from Executive Board Meeting	Standing items -Horizon scanning -PMF exception reporting -Governance tracking - S11 tracking; budget; progress and issues arising from annual safeguarding report SCR & LMR; inspection outcomes -Report back from SCR and CDOP sub group Human resources -Practice development and training; CSE	Summary of key issues from Executive Board Meeting	Standing items- Horizon scanning -PMF exception reporting -Governance tracking - S11 tracking; budget; progress and issues arising from annual safeguarding report SCR & LMR; inspection outcomes -Report back from SCR and CDOP sub group Human resources -Practice development and training; CSE	Summary of key issues from Executive Board Meeting
		Themed section		**Themed section**		**Themed section**
		Long term support and complex safeguarding: Neglect		Intervention and assessment: Child sexual exploitation -Report back from		Early help to referral: Early help and intervention

January 2013	March	May	June	September	November	January 2014
Executive	**Executive**	**Main**	**Executive**	**Main**	**Executive**	**Main**
		-Report back from audit activity on long term neglect & other relevant intelligence -Supporting Dashboard		audit activity on domestic violence & other relevant intelligence -Supporting Dashboard		-Report back from audit activity on early help and social care thresholds and interface & other relevant intelligence -Supporting Dashboard

Standard agenda items for the Executive Board
-Minutes and matters arising
-Horizon scanning (upcoming policy development national and local) and policy implications
-Performance Management Framework exception reporting on local data
-Governance and compliance reports (e.g. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Independent Reviewing Officers , Child Protection chairs, Local Authority Designated Officer, Missing children from home and care)
-Sub group exception reporting
-S11 safeguarding report

Standard agenda items for the Main Board
-Minutes and matters arising
-Dashboard – (a key document setting out the national/local data, research, service user and professional feedback)

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

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Councillor Catherine Bowman	1		
Councillor Veronica Ward	1		