

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 November 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Independent Chair, Halton Safeguarding Children Board

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Halton Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Executive Board with Halton LSCB Annual Report 2016-17 for information.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board note the contents of the report and associated Annual Report (Appendix 1) for information.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Keeping children and young people safe and promoting their welfare continues to be a high priority for the Council and partner agencies. The Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families attends the LSCB Main Board as a participant observer, and the LSCB Chair meets with the Lead Member, Chief Executive and Strategic Director on a quarterly basis to ensure there is an effective working relationship between the Children's Trust and LSCB, and that the LSCB is working effectively.

3.2 The LSCB Annual Report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address as well as other proposals for action. The report includes lessons from learning and improvement activity within the reporting period including: Serious Case Reviews, Practice Learning Reviews, Child Death Reviews and audits. The report also lists the contributions made to the LSCB by partners and details the LSCB's expenditure.

3.3 From November 2013 LSCBs became subject to the review of their effectiveness and in November/December 2014 the LSCB was reviewed by Ofsted alongside the inspection of services for children

in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The report provides an update on progress against areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report of the review. The LSCB Annual Report is a grade descriptor within the inspection framework. It is published in the public domain.

3.4 In terms of the report's content:-

- The **Chair's Introduction** references the impending legislative changes and future structure and governance of the local safeguarding partnership as new statutory guidance emerges.
- The **HSCB Structure** which shows the efficiencies provided by bringing together sub groups under the Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards and on a Pan Cheshire basis where appropriate.
- The **Demographics of Halton**
- The **Key Priorities 2016-17** identified from the activity of case reviews, audit and performance reporting.
- **Safeguarding Activity** includes data across the safeguarding continuum from Early Help to Child Protection, Children in Care, including Children in the Care of Other Local Authorities living in Halton and Adoption; alongside data on key vulnerable groups: Private Fostering, Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation;
- **Work of the Sub Groups** section outlines progress and forthcoming priorities of the Sub Groups – Scrutiny & Performance, Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficked Children, Health, Safer Workforce & Development, Policy and Procedures and Child Death Overview Panel.
- **Training Activity** summarises multi-agency training and impact on outcomes for children and families;
- The **Local Authority Designated Officer** provides information on allegations management;
- **Learning and Improvement Activity** includes Serious Case Reviews, Practice Learning Reviews and Audit;
- **HSCB Challenge** includes challenge to all partners to meet requirements in terms of attendance and submission of reports to Child Protection Conferences; response times to calls to the Children's Social Care Contact Centre; CiCOLA notifications; and Private Fostering Awareness in relation to prisons;
- **Update from Ofsted Review of the Effectiveness of the Board 2014** provides an update on how the Board addressed areas for improvement;
- **Key Priorities 2017-18 and Business Plan** outlines the LSCB's achievements in addressing its strategic priorities for the Business Plan 2015-17; and the key priorities identified for 2017-18 which will inform the 2017-19 Business Plan;
- The **Budget** reports on the financial viability of the Board.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Section 13 of the Children Act 2014 requires each local authority to establish an LSCB and specifies the organisations and individuals that should be represented on the LSCB. The Local Authority is a statutory partner of the LSCB. The Chair must publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. (Section 14A of the Children Act 2004.) The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The LSCB is currently funded via contributions from the Council, Cheshire Constabulary, NHS Halton CCG, Schools, the Probation Services (NPS and CRC) and Cafcass. The budget has reduced over the past 6 years with the LSCB losing contributions from Connexions, the Child Death Grant and year on year reductions from the Schools Forum. With the exception of Cheshire Constabulary, partners have been unable to commit to a sustained uplift in financial contributions or an increase of in kind contributions. The LSCB has agreed to maintain the current levels of financial contributions for the period 2017-19. Capacity within the HSCB Support Team has reduced over time due to the fall in financial contributions, with shared arrangements in place with Cheshire West and Chester LSCB. The current financial contributions cover staffing, but leave little additional resources to support the Board in undertaking its objectives and functions.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The LSCB and Children's Trust have a formal protocol in place that sets out the accountability arrangements between the two. The Safeguarding Children Board is a formal consultee of the Children & Young People's Plan.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The LSCB has statutory functions regarding training, supervision and safer recruitment to support a skilled, competent and confident workforce across the partners working in the borough with children & young people, families and adults who may be parents/carers.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The safeguarding of children is fundamental to their health and well-being. The LSCB is expected to influence the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment by ensuring it takes into account safeguarding children priorities. The LSCB's Health Sub Group which provides focus upon safeguarding children across the health sector now jointly reports to the Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards. This includes a focus

upon transitions.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

The effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements is fundamental to making Halton a safe place of residence for children and young people. The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people has been a priority area of focus for the HSCB. The HSCB has supported Halton Domestic Abuse Forum with training delivery for staff and Operation Encompass which has rolled out across Halton and Cheshire began as a pilot championed by the LSCBs.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

The LSCB Annual Report is expected to provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This includes identifying areas of weakness which impact on outcomes for children in the borough, and is a focus for Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority. The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) is undertaken on a multi-agency basis. Therefore all partners need to be prepared to evidence the effectiveness of the work they have undertaken to safeguard children and young people.

7.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has abolished LSCBs from 2019. There is an expectation that the key safeguarding partners – the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group – establish multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding children processes and practice in the local area. The LSCB had begun to prepare for the changes by streamlining its structure. During any period of change from an established structure to a new one, there are risks. Statutory guidance is expected to be published for consultation towards the end of November. During this time of uncertainty all organisations need to continue to engage with the LSCB in its work as it continues to be the statutory strategic partnership.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Children Act 2004	Gov.UK Website	Tracey Holyhead
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)	Gov.UK Website	Tracey Holyhead

