
Meeting	Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	23 October 2013
Subject	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012/13
Report of	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families
Summary	This report provides an overview of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Barnet including an assessment of the performance of the Local Authority and partners in delivering outcomes for children. It reviews progress during the last year and identifies challenges and priorities for the year ahead

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Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A– Annual Report of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

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1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee note the work of the Safeguarding Children Board;**
- 1.2 That the Committee note the progress made and the specific challenges in the forthcoming year, including continued financial support;**
- 1.3 That the Committee endorse the objective that safeguarding across the council and its partners continues to be strengthened through the full engagement of all providers of health services, including through the Health and Well Being Board, and also dialogue with the Clinical Commissioning Group.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12 December 2012 – Decision Item 10: Members' Visits to Barnet's Children's Homes and Young People's Hostels – Options Paper
- 2.2 Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10 September 2012 – Decision item 9: Barnet 's Barnet's Independent Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2011/12

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. Safeguarding is a key priority across the council and partners and is reflected in strategic partnership goals, including the Corporate Plan 2013-14, Health and Well-being Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy and Commissioning Strategy. The Corporate Plan includes the strategic objective 'To create better life chances for children and young people across the borough' with an emphasis on early intervention and support and a further objective is: 'to promote family and community well-being' with a commitment to 'strengthen our approach to safeguarding'.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 A failure to keep children safe represents not only a significant risk to residents but also to the reputation of the Council and partners. The role of the Safeguarding Board is to monitor and challenge the performance of all partner agencies in Barnet to ensure that they are meeting requirements and carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. A well-functioning Safeguarding Board is essential to reducing the risk of harm to children and young people in Barnet.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 The Public Sector Equalities Duty (s149 Equalities Act 2010) consists of a general equality duty which came into force on 5 April 2011. The legislation refers to the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

- 5.3 The implications of the application of the general equality duty in the context of safeguarding children is to ensure that all children and young people from protected groups e.g. those with a disability; lesbian/ gay/transgender young people; those from all religions and beliefs, are safeguarded as well as all other children and young people.
- 5.4 Ensuring that all children and young people are safeguarded, particularly those that are vulnerable (e.g. with a disability, or children in care), is a key role of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board. The Faith and Cultural task group and other sub groups of the board work closely with faith, cultural and community groups within Barnet to ensure that safeguarding is embedded and that any children at risk are identified and appropriately supported. Youth Shield, who won the prestigious London Safeguarding Children Award in 2013 are giving young people a strong voice in the work of safeguarding in Barnet.
- 5.2 The BSCB, in exercising its scrutiny function, has regard for the public sector equality duty in reviewing partnership data

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1. The Annual Report of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has been produced as part of the work of the board. The board is funded by the London Borough of Barnet and from contributions from partner organisations. The current annual budget of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is £155,390, which includes the contributions made by partner agencies, of which the local authority contribution is £98,000. Most of the budget covers staffing requirements including the Independent Chairs of the BSCB and the Serious Case Review Panel. Priorities identified for 2013/2014 will be contained within existing approved budgets which partners have agreed to maintain.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 The functions of a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) are set out in primary legislation (Sections 13, 14 and 14 A of the Children Act 2004) and regulations (Local Safeguarding Children Regulations 2006, SI 2006/90). The core objectives of the LSCB are as follows:
- a) to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority; and
- b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person.

7.2 These functions are more fully explained in Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Regulations which states:

The functions of an LSCB in relation to its objective (as defined in section 14(1) of the Act are as follows:

- a) Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to-
 - I the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare including thresholds for intervention
 - II training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
 - III recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children
 - IV investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children
 - V safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
 - VI co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;
- (b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so;
- (c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and advising them on ways to improve;
- (d) participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority;
- (e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

7.3 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 introduced a requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

8.1 The scope of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Constitution.

8.2 The terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Committees are in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution). The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee has within its terms of reference the following responsibilities:

- To scrutinise Barnet's Safeguarding Children Board and any relevant Sub-Groups, including policies, procedures, and performance through consideration of the Board's Annual Report.

- To scrutinise the Council and its partners in the discharge of statutory duties in relation to safeguarding.
- To scrutinise the provision of the education (children and adults), special education needs provision, and the protection and welfare of children. To scrutinise the Council's procedures in relation to the protection and welfare of children

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board is tasked with monitoring and challenging the performance of all organisations in Barnet to ensure that children and young people are kept safe. Working Together 2013 sets out a requirement for the Board to produce an annual report outlining the activities it has undertaken over the past year. This is attached as Appendix 1. The Munro review has given further emphasis to the independence of LSCBs in being able to exercise their scrutiny role effectively.
- 9.2 As outlined in the body of the report, there are a number of key initiatives and opportunities to consolidate partnership working in relation to safeguarding children. This has included the establishment of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to improve access to information at the first point of contact and risk assessment tools to support timely provision of help.
- 9.3 The report identifies a key challenge and risk being the continued prioritisation and capacity to deliver safeguarding at a time of budgetary restraint and change across a range of partners, particularly the local authority, Probation, Cafcass, Health and community sector partners.
- 9.4. A further development has been the agreement to appoint a single Chair for both the Adult and the Children's Boards which will be implemented in the coming year.
- 9.5. The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board has a key role as a vehicle of learning and improvement and has spearheaded the new approach to learning from reviews in accordance with the recommendation of the Government.
- 9.6. A focused audit for partner agencies to comply with safeguarding duties has been completed and has highlighted much positive work taking place as well as areas for action in the coming year.
- 9.7. A Sexual Exploitation Task & Finish group chaired by the police has been established in order to focus attention on young people at risk through exploitation, and to promote further training on this issue.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Working together to safeguard children March 2013](http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/contents.html)
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/contents.html>

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