



Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

21st September 2015

Title	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Annual Report
Report of	Chris Miller, Independent Chair
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Barnet Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014/15
Officer Contact Details	Simon Corkill, BSCB Business Manager simon.corkill@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 4540

Summary

The BSCB Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Barnet. National guidance states that the annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action (HMG Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015). It was formally accepted by the BSCB at the Board meeting on 10 September 2015.

Recommendations

That the Committee note the annual report attached at Appendix A.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

1.1 The annual report of the BSCB and bringing it to this committee fulfils the statutory requirement under the Children Act 2004:

- To report on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services;
- Identify areas of weakness, causes of those weaknesses and action plans for improvement.

1.2 Safeguarding activity is a core element of the Council and it is in keeping with the Section 19 of the Children Act 2014 that the Lead Member of Children's Services (LMCS) has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services. They are responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed. Safeguarding plays a key role here. This committee is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are properly taken into account by the Council.

1.3 There are three statutory roles: the Lead Member of Children's Services (LMCS), the Director for Children's Services (DCS) and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Chair of the LSCB is an independent appointment charged with holding all agencies to account. The LMCS has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services. The Director for Children's Services (DCS) post has the professional responsibility for children's services. Together they are responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed, and ensuring that there are clear and effective arrangements to protect children and young people from harm.

1.4 The Board's Annual report must also be submitted to the Children's Trust Board, Health and Well Being Board and Police and Crime Commissioner.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The report provides the Committee with the opportunity of considering the safeguarding of children in Barnet and the work of the board.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 Not applicable.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The annual report provides details of the Board's priorities and challenges which will be progressed through the business arrangements during 2015/16.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The council, working with local, regional and national partners, will strive to ensure that Barnet is a place of opportunity, that people are helped to help themselves and where services are delivered effectively. The table below demonstrates how activity taking place within safeguarding contributes to these corporate priorities.

Corporate priority	
Barnet is a place of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life	Safeguarding plays a key role in ensuring that children and young people in Barnet are able to enjoy a safe childhood and reach their potential
Where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure	This report details preventative activity taking place across Family Service, which helps to ensure that children are safeguarded from harm.
Where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer	Effectively safeguarding children and young people and intervening at as early a stage as possible helps to reduce the need for higher tier, more expensive services.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The Annual Report of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has been produced as part of the work of the board and outlines the resources available to the Board to co-ordinate and manage the Board's business. The board is funded by the London Borough of Barnet and from contributions from partner organisations. The current annual budget of the BSCB is £163,100, 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 Chair of BSCB.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 The new Commissioning Director, as the statutory Director of Children's Services, is now a member of board. The Lead Member for Children's Services also attends the Board as a participating observer, in accordance with the statutory guidance for this role. This is in order to ensure that the BSCB can properly hold the Council to account and that the Lead Member can hold the independent chair to account for the effective working of the Board.

5.3.2 The Children's Act 2004 s13 requires a local authority to establish a local safeguarding children board, including prescribed statutory partner agencies. S.14A requires that at least once every 12 months, a report is prepared and published about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The Working Together 2015 guidance provides further detail on the recommended content of this report..

5.3.3 As in Annex A of the Responsibility for Functions, in the Council's Constitution, the Committee has responsibility for ensuring that the Council's safeguarding responsibilities are taken into account.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 Not receiving this report would present a risk to the Committee in that they would not be providing a mechanism for the independent chair to present the annual report to the Council.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 Equalities and Diversity considerations are a key element of safeguarding work.
- 5.5.2 Barnet's diverse population of children and young people is taken into account in the design and delivery of services to safeguard children. There are more children from all Black and Minority Ethnic groups in the 0– 9 age group, than there are White children in Barnet. Children and young people in the 10 – 19 age groups are predominantly White. The highest proportion of people from BAME groups are found in the 0-4 age group (55.4%). In terms of religious diversity, Jewish and Muslim population make up over a quarter of the total population of Barnet.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 This paper provides an opportunity for the Committee to be engaged in the direction of the Barnet Children Safeguarding Board.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 'Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Service and the Lead Member for Children's Services' Department of Education April 2013.
- 6.2 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' March 2015
- 6.3 'Safeguarding Children – A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors' LGA