
Meeting	Health and Well-Being Board
Date	26 July 2012
Subject	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board
Report of	Acting Director of Children's Service
Summary of item and decision being sought	This draft 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.

Officer Contributors	Tim Beach - Independent Chair, Safeguarding Children Board Helen Elliott - Safeguarding Children Board Development Manager
Reason for Report	The report (as set out in appendix A) is being prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009 for LSCBs to provide an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.
Partnership flexibility being exercised	None specifically arising from this report.
Wards Affected All	All

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1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the content of the report and comment on progress and key priorities in relation to safeguarding responsibilities**
- 1.2 That the Annual Report of the BSCB continues to be submitted to the Health and Well-Being Board**
- 1.3 That safeguarding across the council and partners continues to be strengthened through the full engagement of all providers of health services, including through the Health and Wellbeing Board**
- 1.4 That dialogue is established with the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure safeguarding is reflected in commissioned services and embedded in the new arrangements**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS AND WHERE HELD

- 2.1 N/A

3. LINK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP-WIDE GOALS (SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY; HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY STRATEGY; COMMISSIONING STRATEGIES)

- 3.1 Safeguarding is a key priority across the council and partners and is reflected in strategic partnership goals, including the Corporate Plan 2012-13, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy and Commissioning Strategy.

4 NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in decision-making in the council pursuant to the Equality Act 2010. This means the council and all other organisations acting on its behalf must have due regard to the equality duties when exercising a public function. The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality and good relations into day to day business requiring equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services and for these to be kept under review.
- 4.2 The BSCB, in exercising its scrutiny function, has regard for equality considerations in reviewing partnership data

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 A failure to keep children safe represents not only a significant risk to residents but also to the reputation of the Council and it's partners. Failure to keep children safe is identified as a key risk in the Children's Service, and is also embedded within the Community Safety Team risk register. Although safeguarding must be the concern of all agencies working with children and vulnerable adults, the local authority is the lead agency for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. As such, both members and senior officers carry a level of accountability for safeguarding practice in Barnet. Governance structures are in place to ensure that other lead stakeholders, including health and the police, are represented to ensure that practice across the partnership meets safeguarding requirements.

- 5.2 There are a number of strategic boards with oversight of safeguarding. Links between these boards have been strengthened in recent years to support joined-up working. Furthermore, a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Safeguarding has been introduced to help to provide Councillors with greater oversight of safeguarding issues across the Council. There remain ongoing challenges to ensure that learning related to safeguarding is effectively coordinated and disseminated across service areas and partner agencies and that safeguarding remains a priority in the changing landscape of public services and local restructuring.
- 5.3 The Secretary of State for Education has the power to intervene if he considers that local the authority is failing in its safeguarding duties toward children. This is considered to be a low risk in Barnet. The recent Ofsted and CQC inspection of safeguarding and looked after children judged safeguarding services and outcomes for looked after children as good overall in Barnet. Nevertheless, a risk remains should insufficient regard be paid to the council's statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Parts 3, 4 and 5 of the Children Act 1989 (CA 1989) together with statutory guidance place various statutory duties upon local authorities including the general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children within their area who are in need. In cases where children are found to be at risk of significant harm as defined in the CA 1989, the local authority has a clear legal duty to take steps to protect them by invoking the powers contained in Part 4 of the CA 1989. When care proceedings are issued the Court may make a care order (committing the child to the care of the local authority) or a supervision order (putting the child under the supervision of a social worker).
- 6.2 The Children Act 2004 (CA 2004) provides the legislative framework for integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services and for lines of accountability through the appointment of directors of all Children's Services. Section 11 of the CA 2004 imposes a statutory duty on Children's Services as well as other agencies specified in the Act (including amongst various others the NHS, the police authority, the youth offending team) to carry out their functions having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to guidance provided by the Secretary of State. The duty continues to apply where services are contracted out. The CA 2004 also requires Local Authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards for their area and it has been a requirement for local authorities to have a board since 2006.
- 6.3 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
- 6.4 S.10 CA 2004 places a duty on Local Authorities and other specific agencies to co-operate and improve the well being of children. Barnet has chosen to keep a Children's Trust Board and to publish a Children and Young People Plan each year in support of this duty.
- 6.5 Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the CA 2004. The Consultation Draft (Working Together 2012) was issued in June 2012 and the deadline for responses is early September 2012. In the meantime, the 2010 guidance

remains in force. This has a strong focus on the LSCB role in learning and improvement including the review of serious cases based on systems methodology.

7. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- FINANCE, STAFFING, IT ETC

- 7.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 7.2 The increasing demographic pressures on Children's Services has been recognised as a pressure over the next three years, with £750,000 allocated. In 2011/12, the Children's Service also invested £1m in early intervention and prevention services, providing earlier support to reduce the number of children and families experiencing complex problems. Pressures across the partnership will continue to be actively monitored
- 7.3 Please refer to the report, as set out in appendix A, for details of the current annual budget of the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) currently £98,000, most of which covers the staffing requirements including the Independent Chairs of the BSCB and the Serious Case Review Panel. This budget includes the contributions made by partner agencies which have agreed to maintain the current level of contribution over the year ahead.

8. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 8.1 Please see report for details of the BSCB work with young people through the Youth Shield and other initiatives including Strengthening Families to ensure the voice of the child and family is reflected in practice.

9. ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT WITH PROVIDERS

- 9.1 The engagement with providers and their contribution to the work of the BSCB is set out in Appendix A.

10. DETAILS

- 10.1 A set out in appendix A.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

Legal – HP
CFO – JH