


<p>Cabinet</p> <p>28 November 2017</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Debbie Jones, Corporate Director for Children's Services</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibb, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Originating Officer(s)	Monawara Bakht, Safeguarding Children Strategy and Governance Manager
Wards affected	All Wards
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Safe and Cohesive Community

Executive Summary

This report and its appendix set out the annual report of Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), which is a statutory requirement under the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2015. The annual report sets out the Board's governance arrangement, key safeguarding information and response to the Ofsted Review of LSCB undertaken in February 2017.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the annual report from the Local Safeguarding Children Board for 2016-17

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding arrangements and promoting the welfare of children in its locality, ensure the annual report is available within the professional and public domain. The LSCB annual report, which fulfils this responsibility, is appended to this paper.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no alternative options. It is a statutory requirement for the LSCB to report to the leader of the council (Mayor) along with the Chief Executive, the Borough Commander, the Crime and Policing Commissioner and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Ofsted undertook a review of the LSCB in February 2017 and found it be 'inadequate' as it is was 'not discharging all of its statutory functions'. It was described to have a number of shortfalls including the LSCB Performance Dataset, which did not sufficiently focus on core business and its priorities, or able to monitor the quality of front line practice.
- 3.2 The LSCB has accepted Ofsted's judgement and findings and as a result, the annual report is limited in its ability to reflect the full range of activities undertaken by the board and partner members and demonstrate it has been able to keep all children safe from harm.
- 3.3 The 2016-17 annual report is a departure from previous years in that it is not able to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements. The condensed annual report excludes analysis of its performance in 2016-17. It focuses on explaining how the LSCB will respond to the findings of the Ofsted Review and its future direction.
- 3.4 The content of the annual report includes its current governance information, local borough profile including key safeguarding information and setting out the national context for LSCBs in the near future.
- 3.5 The LSCB will ensure next year's report provides a full and detailed account of the areas of improvement and demonstrate it is able to challenge and hold its partners to account.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 In response to Ofsted's findings and recommendations, Tower Hamlets LSCB may experience increased costs in 2017-18 as part of its efforts to implement the recommendations and the potential increase in the numbers of serious case reviews.
- 4.2 The 2017-18 cost is unquantified at this stage but is likely to be significantly higher than the circa. £86K incurred in 2016-17. Whilst the cost of running the LSCB is shared with partners, LBTH remains the highest contributor towards these costs.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's functions in relation to children include an obligation under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 5.2 The Council has established the LSCB in accordance with its current obligation under section 13 of the Children Act 2004. The LSCB carries out the following functions as prescribed in the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 –
- (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Tower Hamlets;
 - (b) communicating to persons and bodies in Tower Hamlets 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; and
 - (e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.
- 5.3 Section 14A of the Children Act 2004 requires the LSCB Chair to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' published in March 2015 and updated on 16 February 2017 sets out 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, Mayor, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 5.4 The annual report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. It is therefore appropriate that the report addresses the concerns raised in respect of the LSCB in the Ofsted Review and action plan to improve child safeguarding practice. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period. The appended report complies with these requirements.

- 5.5 Please note that when Chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 comes into force, this will make changes to the arrangements for local child safeguarding partnerships and the serious case review process, including provision for a central Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel for cases of national importance. The commencement date for these sections has not yet been published.
- 5.6 In particular, section 16 of the Act will introduce a new section to the Children Act 2004, setting out revised arrangements for local multi-agency safeguarding partnerships to replace the previous model of local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs). Under the new provisions, safeguarding partners for a local authority area (named as the local authority, clinical commissioning group and police) are required to make arrangements for themselves and relevant agencies to work together in exercising their functions for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The report sets out safeguarding issues for children in Tower Hamlets and how the LSCB intends to address them, ensuring that, all children are appropriately safeguarded at all times and are able to achieve a good level of wellbeing.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no implications

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 There are no implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The LSCB maintains a Risk and Issues Register, capturing risks as identified by a member agency or the LSCB Independent Chair. The LSCB chair and Executive Board members monitor the risks, mitigation and remedial actions.
- 9.2 The LSCB chair escalates risks causing significant partnership concern or difficulties to the chief executive or senior officer of the relevant agency. The LSCB chair updates the council's chief executive of the LSCB risk register at quarterly one-to-one meetings.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Safeguarding has an important interface with crime and disorder. Effective safeguarding means that children and young people are safe from harm caused by crime, for example abuse and exploitation. The report sets out how the work of the LSCB links with that of the Community Safety Partnership.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This report sets out implications for safeguarding children following the Ofsted Review of the LSCB and how the LSCB intends to address them.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A