


Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
1 November 2016	
Report of: Debbie Jones, Corporate Director Children's Services	Classification: Unrestricted
Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16	

Lead Member	Councillor Rachael Saunders, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Originating Officer(s)	Monawara Bakht, Children's Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding Children Board, which is a statutory requirement under the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2015. It sets out the Board's view of the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding in Tower Hamlets, progress it has made in the last year, and its priorities for the years ahead.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the annual report from the Local Safeguarding Children Board for 2015/16.

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 its locality and 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, as it is a statutory requirement for this report to be reported to the Mayor.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The LSCB annual report sets out the context for safeguarding children in Tower Hamlets gives an overview of the progress against its priorities and board objectives, and an assessment of the quality of safeguarding activity in the local area.

- 3.2 The most significant area of work undertaken by the LSCB in the past year has focused on early help and intervention as an overarching theme. This is reflected in some of the board and partner activities such as child sexual exploitation; work with the local faith and minority community and safeguarding arrangements for high risk young people. Three areas to highlight are detailed below:

- Improvements have been made to the early identification and multi-agency response at the front-door to young people at risk or victims of child sexual exploitation. The police lead for child sexual exploitation and missing children is now embedded in the multi-agency safeguarding hub. This has led to improved coordination with children's social care and children better protected in a timely manner. There is emerging evidence of the impact of the improvements made in identification, disruption and prosecutions of child sexual exploitation cases.
- Through new DfE Innovation Funds, a team of specialist workers have been recruited to deliver preventative and reactive responses to families where there are concerns of children at risk of female genital mutilation. Community mediators and local champions have been recruited and in turn they have made a significant contribution to raising awareness with community and faith groups and school community reaching over 1000 individuals.
- Learning from Serious Case and Thematic Reviews continues to be embedded and has led to improvements in the existing local safeguarding children arrangements. Development and implementation of a harmful sexual behaviour and child sexual abuse strategies are progressing well.

They will improve the identification, assessment, intervention and therapeutic support provisions to vulnerable children and young people. The local risk management panel has now extended its remit to include younger people (aged 10 - 17) who are assessed as high risk to themselves and others. This has increased the coordination of professional expertise and provided an opportunity for LSCB partners to work effectively when supporting families facing difficulties earlier in their child's life.

3.3 The report highlights a number of issues and challenges for the LSCB and outlines the priorities going forward:

- Priority 1 – Ensure our Early Help and Early Identification Offer is robust
- Priority 2 – Improve knowledge, practice and our multi-agency response to children and young people at risk of radicalisation and extremism
- Priority 3 – Ensure there are effective arrangements and intelligence sharing in place for victims and perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing Children and those at risk of serious youth violence

3.4 The LSCB overarching Business Plan will be completed during the autumn to cover the period up to March 2018. The Business Plan will pick up the issues identified in the annual report and how these will be addressed. Annual reports will in future years evaluate progress against the business plan and priority areas.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. However, the LSCB annual report for 2015-16 shows an overspend of £166k which has to be absorbed by the Council. Whilst there are contributions being made by some partners for 2016-17 of £78k, this will not eliminate the overspend in full and the LSCB Executive Group has therefore been tasked with considering how the overspend will be addressed for 2016-17 and future years.

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 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 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. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period. The appended report complies with these requirements.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The report sets out safeguarding issues for children in Tower Hamlets and how the LSCB partners intend to address them. This is an important aspect of 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 Best Value 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 risks, mitigation and remedial actions are monitored by the LSCB Chair and Board members.
- 9.2 Risks causing concern are escalated by the LSCB Chair to the Chief Executive or senior officer of the relevant agency. The Chief Executive is also kept informed of the LSCB risk register through monthly one-to-one meetings with the LSCB Independent Chair.

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 will be kept 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 a number of implications for safeguarding and how the LSCB intends to address them.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16
- Appendix 2 – LSCB Infographic Leaflet

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A