

Committee: General Purposes Committee	Date: 15 th November 2007	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No:	Agenda Item:
Report of: Local Safeguarding Children's Board Originating officer(s) Kevan Collins Kamini Rambellas		Title: Recommendations from the Review and Evaluation of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Wards Affected: (All)		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory requirement established through the Children Act (2004). Safeguarding is a broader concept than that of Child Protection.
- 1.2 The core objective of the LSCB is set out in section 14 (1) of the Children Act (2004) is as follows:

'To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority:

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to, note the outcome of the review undertaken and the recommendations arising out of that review with respect to the future functioning of the LSCB.

Local Government Act, 2000 (Section 97) List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of "back ground papers"	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
Children Act (1989) Children Act (2004) Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)	Kamini Rambellas – Service Head, Children's Social Care Tel: 020 7364 2213

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2006 a paper entitled, '*Establishing a Local Safeguarding Children Board in Tower Hamlets*', was presented to Cabinet recommending that a Local Safeguarding Children Board be established in Tower Hamlets with effect from April 2006.
- 3.2 The report outlined the proposed structure, governance, and chairing arrangements, and the proposed scrutiny arrangement of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.3 In March 2006 the Director of Research in Practice (RiP) facilitated the first meeting of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.4.1 During its year of inception the Board in line with the work plan has familiarized itself and is satisfied with the current safeguarding systems and structures in place this was achieved by way of report submissions and a presentation.
- 3.4.2 Below is a list of reports and a presentation submitted to the Board between June 2006 – September 2007: The structure and format of all reports included an introduction, a discussion on issues/information, an analysis of information and data collected, a conclusion and suggested recommendations. This format allowed interaction and discussion to take place between the presenting author/s and members of the board.

- **Co-ordinate local work to safeguard and protect children**

Three reports were presented to the board:

1. A review of arrangements for resolving differences of opinion among professional / A report on procedures and arrangements (June 06)
2. A review of training and workforce development strategies of agencies, multi-agency training and take up by relevant staff (September 06)
3. An audit of staff awareness of safeguarding issues (November 06)

- **Ensure recruitment and supervision arrangements provide for safe recruitment for suitable staff**

One report was submitted under this heading:

1. A report on practice across agencies – to ensure safe recruitment and supervision of staff working with children (June 06)

- **Scrutinize practice by considering thresholds operating for response to allegations of abuse or neglect, thresholds for inclusion on the child protection register, thresholds operation when accessing family support or children in need services.**

Five reports and one presentation focusing on thresholds with regards to specific service areas were presented in January 2007:

1. Report on thresholds for inclusion on the Child Protection register
2. Report on the support available to children and families living with Domestic Violence and comment on interagency working / Report on Housing support to families facing Domestic Violence
3. Report on planning groups working on strategies to respond to Domestic Violence
4. Report on response to A&E Departments to young people who self harm
5. Report on Children at risk living with a parent with a mental health problem
6. In addition the Board received an early intervention presentation(July07)

- **Scrutinize practice in relation to vulnerable groups of children in need of protection**

Five reports were presented to the Board with regards to practice in relation to children in need of protection:

1. Ensure services address the ECM 5 outcomes when working with children/ Report on the outcomes for vulnerable children (March 07)
2. Report on the outcomes and safeguards in place for looked after children (March 07)
3. Review support to Privately fostered children / CSCI report (June 06)
4. Review on protocols for joined up working with services for adults with disability or mental health needs. (March 07)
5. Report on support and safeguards to children in custody (November 06)

- **Scrutinize practice in relation to safeguarding all children in relation to targeted groups**

Four reports were submitted to the Board:

1. Report on action to help children keep safe and feel safe – Report on Bullying (June 06)
2. Report on activities in local communities to help children keep safe on estates and on routes to school (September 06)
3. Report on MAPPA arrangements and activities (September 06)
4. Report on management of young offenders who pose a risk to children (September 06)

- **Contribute to planning by scrutinizing work of other local planning groups to promote and safeguard protection of children**

A review of the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) was undertaken to address the above (June 06)

- **Scrutinise arrangements for families who move between Authorities**

Three reports were submitted to the Board:

1. Report on arrangements across agencies for children including those on the CP register (September 06)
2. Report on arrangements and activity for children missing from school (September 06)
3. Report on arrangements for children missing from Care (September 06)

- **Put in place arrangements to receive information about child deaths in the area. Consider how unexpected deaths can be reduced**

Two reports were presented:

1. Report on child deaths and analysis of contributory factors (May 07)
2. Report on the role of the LSCB with regards to Serious Case Reviews (SCR) (May 07)
3. In addition, LSCB heard presentations on two SCR overview reports (July 07)

- **Consider the views of children and families and the public about safeguarding and protection issues in the Borough**

Two reports were presented:

1. A report on current activities regarding public awareness of safeguarding and protection issues (September 06)
2. Report on views of children and families currently available and proposals for extending consultation (September 06)

- **Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the LSCB**

An external evaluation and review of the Tower Hamlets Local Children Safeguarding Board was carried in March 2007. The Conclusion and recommendations form part of this report.

In addition the minutes of the LSCB have been submitted as part of the APA 2007/8 evidence dataset.

- 3.5 In March 2007 Research in Practice (RiP) was commissioned by Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Board to undertake a review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Board following its first year of operation.
- 3.6 This paper highlights the review process; the findings and seven recommendations put forward by RiP. This paper will advise LSCB members of changes to take place in light of the review.

4. BODY OF REPORT

4.1 The Review Process:

4.2 Consultation took place in the form of a series of meetings between January 2007 and March 2007. It was agreed that the method of evaluation take the form of a paper review within a five day framework.

4.3 It was agreed that RiP would review and evaluate:

- Tower Hamlets' LSCB outputs to date
- The structure of the Tower Hamlets' LSCB
- The LSCB fitness for purpose in light of DfES guidance on roles and responsibilities
- Produce a report to include recommendations on the structure and areas for further developments and future evaluations.

4.4. Analysis of information/data (taken from the RiP evaluation report)

The LSCB should consider reviewing the Terms of Reference (TOR). LSCB should set out the TOR together with a vision statement or values and principles together with the structure and work plan

- 4.5 Further clarity is needed about the ways in which the LSCB links with and works with Tower Hamlets Partnership and there needs to be clearer evidence of the link between the CYPP and the activities of the LSCB
- 4.6 The Board should consider whether they should have representative from Adult Social Care / Adult Drug and Alcohol Services, Schools and Service for Children with Disabilities.
- 4.7 The LSCB has been defined as both strategic and operational, therefore it is appropriate for the Strategic Board to have an operational group to coordinate the operational day to day business of the Board and consideration should be given to establish an Executive group.

- 4.8 Attention needs to be paid to the administrative support for the main LSCB meetings. The minutes of the meetings need to show clearly the decisions that have been made, any action agreed on and the details of who is responsible for carrying out the actions and any date for further review of the issue
- 4.9 It would be helpful if the work plan were to set out clearly stating the objectives, key activities person/group responsible, timescale and desired outcomes. Clearly measurable outcomes would assist the LSCB in the task of conducting an annual evaluation. It would be helpful if the subgroups had similar work plans which were clearly linked to the overall work plan of the LSCB
- 4.10 The review identified the need to develop a communication strategy. The development of a web based resource about the Tower Hamlets LSCB and Safeguarding and promoting welfare would be useful to the public and practitioners/professionals.

5. **Recommendations/Summary (taken from the RiP evaluation report)**

- 5.1 **Constitution** – to consider adopting a constitution that provides greater clarity around the roles, responsibility and accountability of the LSCB.
- 5.2 **Structure** – to review the structure of the Board and establish an executive board with the Chairs of all Sub Groups reporting to it.
- 5.3 Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board has agreed to form a local Overview Child Death Panel which will be operating by April 2008.
- 5.4 **Membership** – to review whether there are sufficient link with adult social care and adult health services (especially substance misuse, mental health and learning difficulties), schools and groups working with disabled children

6. **Strategic Plan**

- 6.1 **Work plan** – to review the structure and content of the work plan to provide greater clarity about the work to be done and what has been achieved. More attention is needed to specifying objectives/actions, lead officer/sub group date of completion and successful outcomes
- 6.2 **Admin support, finance and other arrangements** – to review the administrative support and other arrangements for the Board and its sub-group so that (a) there is sufficient administrative capacity, (b) minutes of meetings record more clearly the decisions taken, the action agreed, the person responsible for agreed actions and the timescale for agreeing the action and (c)

there is greater congruence between the minutes, the schedule of reports submitted to the Board and the Board work plans.

- 6.3 **Communication** – To increase understanding of the role and work of the Board and how the work relates to its overall objectives. To make that information easily accessible on the website for the benefit of the public, Board members and relevant agencies
- 6.4 **Management Information** – To consider using a recording and management information system that would enable all agencies working with children and families to adopt a similar approach to considering and recording information on the needs of the children and families they are working with, realistic outcomes to be achieved in light of the needs identified and available resources to meet them; and the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved. To link this work with the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and the development of a performance management framework by the Performance and Quality committee.
- 6.5 **Access to Services** – to widen the Board’s objectives of ensuring children are safe from significant harm. To do this by monitoring whether families can access preventative and early intervention support as well as services for higher levels of need, with a view to ensuring that support is available at the earliest possible stage.
- 6.6 **Action**

On 20th March 2007 LSCB members agreed with the recommendations presented and concluded that the tangible aspects arising from the event should be consulted on and developed.

7. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 7.1 This report requests the committee to the recommendations and areas of future development of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board.

In 2007-08 the Directorate is in receipt of the Children’s Services Grant, a specific formula grant utilised to fund additional statutory activities under the Every Child Matters agenda and part of which is earmarked for the further development of the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and to support the establishment of new child death review processes.

From 2008-09, this grant is be delivered via the Revenue Support Grant and the Directorate has requested growth in the 2008-09 Budget preparation process to continue developing the role of THSCB as set out in the recommendations.

8. **CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)**

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is a Statutory Board required to be established by the Children's Services Authority, pursuant to section 13 (1) of the Children Act (2004).

A Local safeguarding Children Board shall have as its objective

- a) To Coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the area of the authority by which it is established; and*
- b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for these purposes*

A Local safeguarding Children Board shall have such functions in carrying out its objectives as the secretary of state may by regulations prescribe. These functions have been set out at regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding children's Boards Regulation (2006).

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board was established by the Children's Services Authority, to operate from April 2006. Having established the Safeguarding Children's Board the Children's services Authority is required pursuant to Section 13(7) Children Act (2004) to co-operate with each of their board partners in the operation of the Board.

Local Authority elected members retain no operational control over the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Their role, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children; through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the LA or as scrutiny committee or a governance board, is to hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the LSCB.

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board, having commissioned a review of their procedures has considered and accepted the recommendations of that review, as set out in the report. Those recommendations are in accord with the functions and objectives of the Safeguarding Children's Board as set out above.

It is appropriate that the committee be aware of these recommendations.

9. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None

10. **ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

None

11. **SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

None

12. **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

None