

Cabinet	
31 October 2018	
Report of: Debbie Jones, Corporate Director for Children's Services	Classification: Unrestricted
Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017-18	

Lead Member	Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People
Originating Officer(s)	Monawara Bakht, Safeguarding Children Strategy and Governance Manager
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	24 September 2018
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential

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 2018.

The annual report sets out the Board's current governance arrangement, key safeguarding information, progress made following Ofsted's Inspection of Children's Social Care and the separate Review of the LSCB in February 2017 and examples of partnership work and achievements.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note content of the LSCB Annual Report 2017-18
2. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1

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, to 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.
- 1.2 The content of the Annual Report has been developed and agreed by the Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

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. Although the content and format of the Annual Report can be revised in line with feedback

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018 requires LSCBs to ensure that local children are safe, and that agencies work together to promote children's welfare:
- 3.2 *"The chair of the LSBC must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year*

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 who should note its findings and inform the Independent LSCB Chair of actions they intend to take in relation to the findings and priorities"

- 3.3 Since the Ofsted inspection, there has been a focus on improvement with a view to a much improved position within Children's Social Care at the time of the next inspection. There has been a strong focus on improvements to the front door and recent Ofsted monitoring visits have confirmed that the process in these areas are much safer and more effective. Subsequent Ofsted visits have focused on the response to the most vulnerable children as well as those in our care.
- 3.4 Performance management arrangements have been significantly improved. A significant data cleansing exercise was undertaken by Children's Services which has enabled access to real time, child level data. This data is also much more reliable which ensures that it is used to manage performance and address any deterioration or interagency working difficulties as quickly as possible.

- 3.5 The content of this report is structured as follows:
- 3.6 Executive Summary consolidates the borough profile, performance information and priorities.
- 3.7 A description of the current legislative and local governance framework of Tower Hamlets LSCB is set out in section 1.
- 3.8 Local statistical and safeguarding information providing context for safeguarding work in the borough is contained in section 2.
- 3.9 Section 3 sets out the improvements and progress made by the LSCB and Children's Social Care in response to the Ofsted Inspection and Review. Some of the key improvements are in relation to the development and launch of an early help strategic sub-group which will be a crucial in supporting the development and implementation of the new Early Help Strategy. Another key development has been the launch of the multi-agency Exploitation Team, which brings together staff from Children's Social Care and the Police to provide a coordinated response to children who are at risk of all forms of exploitation.
- 3.10 Priorities for 2018-19 are set out in section 4 and they continue to be linked to the improvement journey of Tower Hamlets Children's Social Care and the LSCB. The four priorities are:
- Learning through an enhanced quality assurance framework that identifies our safeguarding areas for improvement (continuing priority)
 - Sustain situational awareness during LSCB transition to a new multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangement (continuing priority)
 - An improved early help service is available to children and young people and results in positive outcomes
 - Vulnerable children who go missing or who are at risk of child sexual, criminal, ideological exploitation and serious youth violence are protected by effective multi-agency arrangements.
- 3.11 The LSCB is in its penultimate year. In June 2019, the LSCB is required to publish its new safeguarding arrangements setting out how the tri-partnership (LA, Police and CCG) will:
- Work together as a strategic body to safeguard children
 - Work with other relevant agencies a
 - Share joint responsibility for resourcing the local arrangements
- 3.12 As per the 2018 update of Working Together, Local Safeguarding Children Boards will cease to exist and be replaced by alternative safeguarding partners arrangements. The partners (Local Authority, Police and CCG) must make arrangements to work with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area. An external consultant has been commissioned to undertake a review and support with the decision as to the model to replace the current LSCB.

3.13 The LSCB must publish their agreed arrangements by the 29th June 2019 and go live by the 29th September 2019.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The LSCB Priorities are designed to ensure that all children have access to early help support and statutory intervention when required to keep them safe from harm, at home and in the community, and to tackle the challenges they face individually or as a family unit to help them grow in to healthy adults.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

5.2 Safeguarding

5.3 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, violence, radicalisation and exploitation. The report sets out the partnership links with that of the Community Safety Partnership through the vulnerable young people and exploitation work strand.

5.4 Risk Management

The LSCB maintains a Risk and Issues Register, capturing risks identified by a partner agency or the LSCB Independent Chair. The LSCB chair and Executive Board members monitor the risks, mitigation and remedial actions.

5.5 The LSCB chair escalates risks causing serious partnership concern or interagency working 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.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The 'inadequate' rating of Children Services by Ofsted meant LSCB partner agencies worked towards an improvement plan which resulted in cost increases from the previous year. The total expenditure in 2016-17 was circa. £99K whilst in 2017-18, it was £167K.
- 6.2 By June 2019, LSCB will cease to exist and will be replaced by 'Safeguarding Partners'. Joint resourcing responsibilities of the new partnership will fall on Tower Hamlets Council (LBTH), Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (THCCG), and the Police.
- 6.3 Funding discussion between the three organisations should happen prior to June 2019. Currently, LBTH is the largest financial contributor responsible for about ninety percent of LSCB's annual budget.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has established the LSCB in accordance with its current obligation under section 13 of the Children Act 2004. 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 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 comes into force in June 2019. This will make replace the LSCB with a Safeguarding Partnership, comprised of the Council, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group. By 29 June 2019, the Safeguarding Partners must agree and publish their local multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements, which must then be implemented within 3 months. The work to be carried out to prepare for this transition is set out in the body of the report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017-18

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

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

- N/A