

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report and Business Plan

**REPORT OF:** Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

---

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has a statutory requirement to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. The findings of the annual report are then used to determine safeguarding priorities for the LSCB and partner agencies for the following financial year.

The report and priorities are considered each year at OSC to inform the committee of arrangements in place to safeguard children in Gateshead.

---

## **Background**

1. The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to have in place a LSCB. The LSCB is the principle mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in the local area will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area and for ensuring the effectiveness of the arrangements. Gateshead has had a LSCB since 2005. It publishes an annual report and business plan which is reviewed and updated annually. The report contains details of the work undertaken by the Board, information on child protection activity and the priorities for the coming year.
2. Gateshead LSCB is independently chaired by Sir Paul Ennals.
3. The Government have introduced new legislation is preparing new statutory guidance that will end the requirement for local authorities to ensure that there is a LSCB and sets out requirements for a new strategic partnership made up of the local authority, police and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). These new arrangements are expected to be in place by April 2018 and work is underway in Gateshead to prepare for this.

## **Performance and activity in 2016-2017**

4. The full annual report for 2016-2017 is provided as an appendix to this report.
5. In 2016-2017:
  - The Board made progress against its own priorities of **Leadership**, **Challenge**, and **Learning**. This included strengthening links with local communities and other partnerships, understanding the audit activity of

our partners and what difference it made, understanding how effective we are as a Board and what needs to happen to make us more effective and work to understand why we've seen higher than expected rates of permanent exclusion and self-harm in previous years.

- The LSCB did not initiate or publish a formal Serious Case Review (SCR). The Board and partners continued to learn from high profile cases in other areas and cases within Gateshead where the threshold for a statutory SCR were not met but there were lessons to be learned
  - The LSCB Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Group (MSET) discussed the cases of 47 children and young people who were reported missing from home/care and/or were at risk from CSE. Multi-agency actions were set and diversion plans established to try to reduce the risks
  - The Gateshead Local Child Death Review Sub Group was notified of the deaths of 16 children in 2016-2017. The sub group reviews the death of every child resident in Gateshead at the time of their death and disseminates any relevant learning. The sub group works closely with similar groups in Sunderland and South Tyneside and feeds into the South of Tyne and Wearside Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) to review all child deaths in the sub region and establish whether there are any overall lessons to learn. The CDOP provides an annual report to each LSCB
  - The LSCB continued to offer a number of interactive on-line e-learning modules to complement the existing face-to-face training package. 1253 professionals attended a face-to-face session and 473 completed an e-learning module. All LSCB training is available to access free of charge (in line with the charging policy) and covers areas such as basic child protection, the impact of domestic abuse, self-harm and CSE. Members are welcome to access the modules via the LSCB website to strengthen their knowledge base
6. The annual report also details partner agency performance in relation to safeguarding. A number of partner agencies underwent reorganisations and restructures in 2016-2017 and the Board challenged areas where there were concerns about the impact on safeguarding. A number of LSCB partner agencies were inspected in 2016-2017 and on the whole findings were very positive. LSCB members are asked to share the findings of any inspection linked to safeguarding with the Board. Northumbria Police and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust were subject to very positive inspections throughout the reporting period and Newcastle Gateshead CCG was subject to a positive NHS England Assurance Visit. The Board continues to receive updates on the progress made in South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust since their inspection in the previous year. A number of Gateshead schools were inspected by Ofsted in 2016-2017 and, whilst some were judged to be inadequate overall, no safeguarding concerns were identified. Overall 38.3% of Gateshead schools are outstanding (higher than the national average of 19%).
7. Board members were also asked to provide evidence of how they and their agency/service demonstrated **leadership**, **challenge** and **learning** and a summary is set out in the annual report.

8. The annual report also contains multi-agency and single agency performance data. Key issues to note include:
- An increase in the number of children made subject to Child Protection Plans than in previous years (78.7 per 10,000 children at year end, which is higher than the North East rate and almost double the England rate)
  - The most common category for a Child Protection Plan remains as neglect (67.8% of all plans)
  - The number of Child Protection Plans lasting over 2 years remains low however there was an increase in the numbers of children made subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
  - An increase in the number of children Looked After by Gateshead Council – at year end there were 376 children in the case of the local authority, which is a 9.6% increase from the previous year and higher than both the England and North East rate. However, data indicates good placement stability and timely performance planning
  - An increase in the number of Child Concern Notifications and “contacts” to Children’s Social Care. However, the number of referrals decreased
  - A comparable number of Child in Need (CIN Assessments) with the previous year. However, there was a decrease in CIN assessments being authorised in timescale
  - A large increase in Section 47 investigations (formal child protection investigations) and a higher percentage progressing to an Initial Child Protection Conference
  - High numbers of assessments undertaken by Children’s Social Care which identified mental health (38.7%) and domestic abuse (37.5%) as a factor. Other common factors included drug misuse, socially unacceptable behaviour, neglect and emotional abuse
  - Continuing high numbers of Permanent Exclusions from Gateshead schools
  - Continuing high rates of admission to hospital for self-harm (544.9 per 10,000 of the population aged 10-24)
9. Our data reinforces the increasing demands on statutory services. Workloads across the system as a whole continue to increase, often against a backdrop of cuts to budgets and reduced capacity. OSC members will be aware that Early Help arrangements and mental health services for young people in the borough are being reviewed and the LSCB will scrutinise and challenge these arrangements where necessary. Effective preventative and Early Help services across the system as a whole are vital to keep children and young people safe and to enable them to reach their full potential. Effective early intervention will enable agencies in Gateshead to tackle problems for our children and families before they become more difficult to reverse.
10. As part of the annual report, the LSCB Independent Chair is expected to comment on how safe children are in Gateshead and he says the following:
- “It is never possible to say categorically that all children are safe. However, external scrutiny of our services within Gateshead suggests that our services are at least as good as most areas, and in many cases better. This is no mean*

*achievement since the authority scores highly on most deprivation indices, and public services have faced very severe reductions in public funding”.*

## **Priorities for 2017-2018 and beyond**

11. Gateshead LSCB agreed a new approach in 2014 and developed a three year Business Plan for 2014-2017 which focused on the specific role and remit of the LSCB in ensuring that the welfare of children is safeguarded and protected. The Business Plan emphasised the role of the LSCB in leading the safeguarding agenda, in challenging the work of partner organisations and in committing to an approach which learns lessons, embeds good practice and which is continually influenced by the views of children and young people.
12. The LSCB has agreed a one year Business Plan for 2017-2018 in light of the planned changes to the LSCB's arrangements for 2018 and beyond. The Business Plan is again based on three strategic business priorities (**leadership, challenge, and learning**). There will also be a focus on five thematic priority areas identified at our annual Development Day and from our data and discussions with partners. The five thematic priorities for 2017-2018 will be:
  - **Voice of the child**
  - **Improving relationships and the interface with schools**
  - **Early Help**
  - **Mental health**
  - **Safeguarding disabled children**
13. The 2017-2018 Business Plan is provided as an appendix to this document.
14. In 2017-2018, in relation to **leadership** we work to ensure that our future arrangements are fit for purpose and enable the new body which will be established to oversee strategic safeguarding arrangements in Gateshead to build on the work of the LSCB and strengthen the position further
15. In relation to **challenge** we will continue to build on our links with other partnerships (e.g. the Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Wellbeing Board) and influence their agenda via our own work plan and membership.
16. And, in relation to **learning**, we will continue to review cases where there are lessons to be learned. We will also implement and embed the findings of any relevant inspections of the Board and partner agencies and cascade the learning across partner agencies.
17. In relation to the **voice of the child** we will ensure that our work plan helps us to improve the way that we hear and respond to the voice of the child as a Board
18. In relation to **improving the relationships and interface with schools** we will establish a reference group with Head Teachers. The aim of the group will be to secure a two-way dialogue on issues for the Board and partners that may impact on schools and relevant lessons from frontline practice across the education landscape.

19. In relation to **Early Help** we will challenge progress on the development and implementation of the new Early Help Strategy for Gateshead. We will receive assurances on the impact of the strategy on safeguarding children.
20. In relation to **mental health** we will receive assurances on the implementation of the new model for delivering mental health services for children and young people. We will seek assurances that services are adequate in terms of safeguarding. We will also seek assurances that mental health services commissioned and delivered to adults in Gateshead pay due regard to safeguarding any relevant children and operate with a “think family” approach.
21. And, in relation to **safeguarding disabled children** we will receive assurances from the relevant agencies and services that the learning from the recent SEND inspection has been embedded. We will also seek assurances that relevant actions from the 2017 report from the National Working Group on Safeguarding Disabled Children have been taken forward.

### **Recommendation**

22. It is recommended that the Families OSC note LSCB and partner agency performance for 2016-2017 and note and endorse the proposed priorities and agree to participate in future consultation around safeguarding priorities. It is also recommended that Families OSC agree to receive updates in relation forthcoming changes to the LSCB and safeguarding arrangements as a result of new legislation and Government guidance.

**CONTACT:** Louise Gill,

Extension: 8010