

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

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek the views of the Health & Wellbeing Board on the Gateshead Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 Action Plan for the 2014-2017 Business Plan. Both reports are provided as appendices to this report.

Background

2. The Children Act 2004 requires all local authorities to have in place a LSCB. The LSCB is the principal 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 those arrangements.
3. There is a statutory requirement for LSCBs under section 14A of the Children Act 2004 and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. *Working Together (2015)* also sets out that 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”.
4. In addition to Gateshead Council and Northumbria Police, member organisations of Gateshead LSCB include Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (GHNFT), Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust (STFT). The CCG also provide an established link between the LSCB and North East Ambulance Service.
5. The following officers in health-related roles are currently members of Gateshead LSCB:
 - Designated Doctor, Safeguarding Children
 - Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children
 - Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Quality, GHNFT
 - Executive Director of Nursing, Patient Safety and Quality, Newcastle Gateshead CCG
 - Group Medical Director – Specialist Care, NTW
 - Public Health Programme Lead (representing the Director of Public Health)
 - STFT representative to be confirmed following the departure of the Strategic Lead for Safer Care

6. A number of officers from health-related agencies are also members of Gateshead LSCB sub groups. The LSCB sub groups drive forward the work of the Board and ensure that the LSCB discharges its functions as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* and more detail is provided in the annual report.
7. The LSCB Annual Report 2015-2016 sets out the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Gateshead and assessment of those arrangements and of how the LSCB discharges its functions as set out in *Working Together (2015)*. The report details developments for the Board and its sub groups in the last financial year, including:
 - The LSCB continued to review and strengthen its own governance arrangements and make progress against its priorities of leadership, challenge and learning
 - The Board was inspected by Ofsted (at the same time as the inspection of the local authority). Whilst the inspection found that the LSCB requires improvement to be good, a number of positives were noted including strong partnership arrangements in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Ofsted recommended that work was required to develop appropriate pathways to increase the LSCB's contribution to and influence on the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the experiences of children and young people are given appropriate consideration in all activity. A protocol has since been developed (provided as an appendix to this report)
 - Three lay members were appointed to the LSCB and SAB to strengthen links with local communities and also between the two Boards
 - The LSCB engaged with local young people to determine whether they thought that Gateshead was a safe place to live and go to school and what they wanted to change.
8. There were also a number of developments in 2015-2016 for LSCB partner agencies in relation to safeguarding children. These included:
 - As referenced above, Gateshead Council was inspected by Ofsted. The outcome of the inspection was very positive and inspectors found that children were safe in Gateshead. Other partner agencies were also inspected by the relevant inspectorates and on the whole arrangements were judged to be very effective
 - Processes were strengthened between NTW and Children's Social Care to improve information sharing and understanding of risk
 - Work was undertaken to receive and support 53 Syrian refugees, 17 of which were children and young people of school age.
 - A Complex Pupils Meeting was established to support some of our most vulnerable young people who are not accessing full time education
 - Named professionals in a health organisation challenged professionals within adult-facing departments to consider the needs of children within the family when an adult attends with a high risk presentation

- Partner agencies were able to reassure the LSCB via the annual Section 11 audit that suitable arrangements were in place to safeguard children and appropriate consideration was given to statutory requirements
9. The annual report also contains multi-agency and single agency performance data for 2015-2016. Key issues to note include:
- An increase in the number of children made subject to a child protection plan than in previous years – a 5% increase at year end and this rise has continued into the current financial year
 - A large increase (38%) in formal child protection enquiries and also an increase in full child in need assessments. Despite this, compliance with timescales remains high
 - Continuing high numbers of unborn babies subject to child protection plans compared to the rest of the country – this is as a result of early referral and multi-agency risk assessment when concerns are identified whereas other areas wait until much later in the pregnancy before carrying out pre-birth assessments
 - Low re-referral rates to Children’s Social Care, which would suggest that families are receiving the correct level of service
 - Higher than expected numbers of young people being admitted to hospital for self-harm
 - A large increase in the number of permanent exclusions from our schools

| Gateshead LSCB in numbers in 2015-2016 | | | |
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| There are 40,100 children living in Gateshead (20% of the total population) | 20.5% of our children live in poverty (slightly less than last year but higher than the national average) | 8.62% of school age children are from an ethnic minority 6.2% of our children speak a language other than English as their first language | 23,848 children attend schools in Gateshead (not including Emmanuel College or the Jewish schools) |
| 4846 children in Gateshead receive free school meals (22% of all children, which is an increase) | 68.1 children per 10,000 are currently subject to child protection plans | We’ve seen a 5.8% increase in the number of CP plans this year – we’re still higher than the national and regional averages | 61.9% of our child protection plans were due to neglect (169 cases) |
| During the course of the year, 66 unborn babies were made subject to child protection plans due to concerns about their pregnant mother or family | Children’s Social Care received 8943 “contacts” contacts from people worried about a child in Gateshead | We carried out 669 s47s – an increase of 187 from last year 99.7% were completed within timescale | 85.8 children per 10,000 are currently looked after by Gateshead Council |

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| <p>99.4% of our LAC reviews and 100% of our Review Child Protection Conferences were held within timescales</p> | <p>87.8% of our schools are judged to be good or outstanding</p> | <p>100% of schools are now signed up to Operation Encompass – a new project to support children who witness domestic abuse at home</p> | <p>Police shared information with schools via Operation Encompass regarding 1,101 children to ensure that appropriate support was in place</p> |
| <p>90% of our GPs practices were represented at “level 3” child protection training (28 out of 31 practices)</p> | <p>Over 700 taxi drivers attended training delivered by the LSCB and Police on CSE to help them understand how to keep vulnerable passengers safe</p> | <p>There were 928 episodes where a young person from Gateshead was reported missing from home or care to the police. 71% of them were “in care”</p> | <p>The cases of 43 young people were discussed at the LSCB’s Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Sub Group (MSET) due to concerns about them</p> |
| <p>We didn’t publish any Serious Case Reviews or initiate any new ones this year. We have looked at a few cases in more detail to try and improve practice though</p> | <p>1151 practitioners attended a LSCB training event – this is an increase on last year</p> | <p>Gateshead’s under 18 conceptions have decreased by 40% since 1998</p> | <p>Gateshead College delivered a Counter Extremism and Radicalisation tutorial to 1,795 young people and a British Values tutorial to 1,746 young people</p> |

10. The annual report will also be shared with chief officers of the LSCB’s partner agencies and both documents will be published on the LSCB website (www.gateshead.gov.uk/LSCB) alongside other reports on local activity.
11. A summary version of the annual report, entitled “How safe are children in Gateshead?” has been written with young people in mind and will be shared with all school councils in Gateshead and other key groups of young people in addition to chief officers and other professionals.
12. Previously, the LSCB produced a business plan on an annual basis with annual local priority areas. However, the LSCB has now agreed a new approach for 2014-2017 with a three year plan to align with Children Gateshead, the plan for children, young people and Families in Gateshead.
13. The Gateshead LSCB Business Plan 2014-2017 sets the strategic direction for the LSCB and reinforces the specific role of the LSCB to lead, challenge and support learning. The plan identifies specific priorities for action and is clear about roles and responsibilities. The business plan is based on two strategic outcomes (protecting vulnerable children and preventing harm and promoting welfare) and three strategic principles (leadership, challenge and learning).
14. In each year of the LSCB’s three year business plan, some specific actions will be established around the three strategic priorities. The LSCB uses data, Serious Case Reviews and consultation with frontline practitioners and children/young people to identify these.
15. The 2016-2017 action plan sets out how the Board will work towards its priorities of leadership, challenge and learning and the strategic outcomes of protecting vulnerable children and preventing harm.

Proposal

16. It is proposed that the LSCB addresses a number of specific issues, which the Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to note in 2016-2017. Partnership working around child wellbeing and safeguarding remains very strong in Gateshead. The move to a more specific and clearly defined role for the LSCB in 2014-2017 has been developed with partners to enhance the collective role of the Board rather than being designed to address any specific weaknesses.
17. Highlights to note include:
 - Continuing to strengthen links with local communities
 - Receiving reports on the redesign of Early Help Services in the borough
 - Continuing to strengthen links with other partnerships and improve the LSCB's visibility
 - Continuing to improve engagement with young people and learn from what they tell our
 - Developing an Effectiveness Framework to understand areas of strength and areas for development
 - Obtaining a better understanding of the impact of our training offer
 - Undertaking task and finish work to understand our increased levels of self-harm and permanent exclusions and improve the response to these issues
18. As part of the processes of ensuring links between the LSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Board, members may wish to suggest additional ways of strengthening links or additional information they would find useful.

Recommendations

19. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the content of the Gateshead LSCB Annual Report 2015-2016 and updated action plan for the Business Plan 2014-2017 for the following reasons:
 - (i) To enable the LSCB to deliver the Business Plan
 - (ii) To enable Health and Wellbeing Board to be aware of key issues in relation to safeguarding children in Gateshead
 - (iii) To strengthen links between the LSCB and Health and Wellbeing Board
 - (iv) To ensure that safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people remains a high priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board and its members
20. The Health and Wellbeing Board is also asked to consider, in light of Ofsted's recommendation, whether any additional actions are required to increase the LSCB's contribution to and influence on the work of the Board.
21. The Health and Wellbeing Board is also asked to consider whether any additional actions are required to ensure that LSCB are reassured that children and young people are given appropriate consideration in all activity.

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