



**REPORT FOR:** Harrow Health and Wellbeing Board

**DATE OF MEETING:** 19.03.14.

**SUBJECT:** New Ofsted Implications for the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board)

**AUTHOR:** Deborah Lightfoot, Harrow LSCB Independent Chair

**EXEMPT:** No

**ENCLOSURES:** none

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report outlines the expectations of Ofsted in their forthcoming inspections for LSCBs, for the Board's information. Ofsted's expectations signify a shift for Boards in terms of scrutiny of local safeguarding, including a transparent assessment of local strengths and weaknesses and a broadening to consider early help, preventive universal services. I have considered Ofsted's expectations in light of evidence of the LSCB's effectiveness since 2011.

The Board is asked to note the report.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction**

Ofsted has developed a new framework of inspection which includes a separate judgement of the effectiveness of the LSCB as they inspect each local authority's Children's Services' safeguarding and looked after children provision.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006. The revision of Working Together 2013 (DfE) brought a number of new responsibilities to LSCBs in addition to their role of scrutinising local safeguarding arrangements and holding partners to account.

New responsibilities were added to scrutinise early help arrangements, clarify threshold arrangements, and develop a local learning and improvement framework. Governance of the Board changed to the Chair being accountable to the local Chief Executive, instead of to the Director of Children's Services, thus highlighting independence. The guidance also expects the LSCB Annual Report to be a robust, "transparent" evaluation of local safeguarding, and to outline partner agency financial contributions to the Board, as funding should be shared more equably than is often the case, with the local Children's Services carrying the burden of financial support.

Boards are to develop a local learning and improvement framework to learn from local incidents and cases of concern, as well as from local good practice.

The shift in responsibility to the LSCB in each local area to consider the local landscape and with it the freedom to develop local learning, mirrors the national policy shift in child protection, placing a greater duty on local areas.

Ofsted will be seeking evidence through scrutiny of cases, interviews with multi agency practitioners, the Chair and Board members, that the LSCB provides evidence of being a highly influential strategic arrangement that directly influences and improves performance in the care and protection of children. The Chair and Board will be expected to have a thorough knowledge of local arrangements, strengths and areas for development.

The LSCB should be able to provide evidence that it coordinates the work of statutory partners in helping, protecting and caring for children in its local area, and that there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements.

Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is provided by the Board and will be evaluated by Ofsted that it is effective and evaluated regularly itself for impact on management and practice. The LSCB will be required to check that policies and procedures in respect of thresholds for intervention are understood and operate effectively, and identifies where there are areas for improvement.

Challenge of practice between partners and casework auditing will be expected to be rigorous and used to identify where improvements can be made in front-line performance and management oversight across all statutory and voluntary safeguarding, and early help sectors.

The Board is responsible for local Serious Case Reviews, (SCRs) management reviews and reviews of child deaths (Child Death Overview Panel), which should be used by partners as opportunities for learning and feedback that drive improvement. This work should lead to the LSCB providing robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance, which influence and inform the planning and delivery of high-quality services.

## **Conclusion**

Harrow LSCB is continuing to develop a structure for local learning and improvement, and has used a range of methodology. In the January 2014 Ofsted thematic inspection of early help, it was noted that our dissemination of local learning from case reviews was "noteworthy" as a Board, as learning had reached frontline practice.

In relation to independence, I would consider our last Annual Report to have been transparent and to have given a good picture of local safeguarding. As a Board, we have further to go in securing more equitable local funding from statutory partners, as our resources are stretched, and to establish our scrutiny of early help. We are developing and revising our quality assurance programme for local agencies, ranging from schools, early years, to Housing to Adults and Children's Services, Libraries and leisure Services, Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance, and encouraging those agencies to scrutinise their own practice through Section 11 (2004 Children Act) self-evaluations, and multi agency audit work. We expect sectors to supply the LSCB with the results of external and internal safeguarding audit work.

The development of an agreed multi agency threshold of case and support in January 2013 has led to closer partnership working and helped the strengthening of the local multi agency MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). There are been a rise in child protection investigations, child protection planning, legal proceedings, and children being accommodated in foster care in the intervening period.

The Board was at a low ebb in terms of efficacy and partnership working when I inherited it in December 2011. This was noted in the Ofsted inspections in May 2012, which recommended that the Board consider its role of scrutiny and challenge, and develop more focus. Since then it has strengthened, and we regularly seek to scrutinise ourselves, asking as Members "so what?" questions. Recent CQC and Ofsted inspections in January 2014 have highlighted some LSCB progress, speaking of mature partnership dialogue, appropriate health involvement in the Board and its subgroups, good strategic understanding of the local landscape and any gaps in provision, and flexibility to respond to different needs and a changing demographic.

Our Business Plan for the next financial year will outline in the light of this year's Annual Report, our next steps.

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