

Bracknell Forest LSCB 2009/10 Annual Report Summary

1) Introduction

Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was established in April 2006 and is chaired by an Independent Chair; the Chair is not an employee of any of the organisations working with children or families in Bracknell Forest.

The LSCB brings together senior managers who represent a broad range of organisations that work together to promote the welfare of, or protect, children and young people; these organisations include Thames Valley Police, Children's Social Care, Schools, Health services, Probation, Early Years and Voluntary sector representatives, to name a few. The LSCB partnership agreement¹ commits member organisations to the safeguarding standards required by the LSCB.

The LSCB strives to 'ensure the effectiveness' of local services safeguarding and child protection practice and 'co-ordinate services' to respond to the best interests of children and families. The LSCB has a broad range of responsibilities, from raising awareness of child safeguarding and protection with professionals, volunteers, children, young people and the communities they live in; through to reviewing child deaths and conducting serious case reviews.

The LSCB is required in legislation² to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. This is the fourth annual report from the LSCB and focuses on:

- a) The LSCB's assessment of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements i.e. how well do organisations safeguard children in Bracknell Forest collectively and individually;
- b) Action taken in response to case reviews i.e. what did we learn, what would we want to continue and what do we want to change;
- c) Local safeguarding achievements & areas for further development;
- d) The LSCB's assessment of the discharge of its functions including the assessment of the effectiveness of policies and procedures i.e. to what extent has the LSCB fulfilled the responsibilities required of it;³
- e) Feedback to, and challenge of, the Children and Young People's (CYP) Trust i.e. what is working well locally, what changes should be made to the organisation of local services or the priorities that services are asked to work towards⁴.

Requests for the full annual report should be directed to Bracknell Forest LSCB Independent Chair.

2) LSCB's assessment of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements and action taken in response to case reviews

Bracknell Forest LSCB analysed:

¹ See <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/local-safeguarding-children-board-partnership-agreement.pdf>

² Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

³ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

⁴ Children and Young People's Plan and Commissioning priorities.

Safeguarding children together

- ❖ maintained and independent school Section 11⁵ self-assessments (phase two of a three phased Section 11 review process);
- ❖ child deaths and a local multi-agency case review (using the areas of analysis of a Serious Case Review);
- ❖ reports on specific areas of safeguarding activity i.e. domestic abuse, sexual offences, bullying, licensing, workforce strategy, etc;
- ❖ safeguarding practice in a sample of individual cases i.e. where members of the LSCB review the records of individual children to see how effective the support of the child/family has been, to identify good practice and areas of improvement that all organisations can learn from;
- ❖ safeguarding incidents;
- ❖ performance management information.

Following this analysis, the LSCB has recommended the CYP Trust ensures that:

- ✓ sufficient resources and support are available to support organisations with information sharing and safer workforce development.
(Some organisations requested additional help for their staff/volunteers to be confident to seek informed consent to share information with other organisations, or to share information without consent if there is a need, for example a child is at risk of harm. Some organisations needed more support and guidance on how to manage concerns about whether a member of staff/volunteer is suitable to work with children);
- ✓ Targeted Youth Support is reviewed, with specific reference to providing more individualised and focussed support to vulnerable young people.
(A number of staff/volunteers who work with young people work with them in groups; there are not many opportunities for young people to receive one-to-one support and that is particularly useful for young people who need particular help).
- ✓ the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Integrated Care Pathways (ICPs), and the Lead Professional role, are promoted to all sectors of the children's workforce;
(The CAF and ICP are systems that enable a number of professionals from different organisations, with different areas of expertise to consider together what support would be of most help to a child, young person or family. A Lead Professional acts as a first point of contact for a young person or family if they receive support from a number of organisations; they help to share information on behalf of the young person/family to reduce repetition or duplication.)
- ✓ safeguarding priorities highlighted in the LSCB's exception report inform the Trust's strategic planning and commissioning.
(The LSCB reviews the performance of organisations in Bracknell Forest to performance of other areas in the country. The LSCB compares the support children/families receive nationally with what they receive in the borough, to see where we are serving children well and where we could improve. The LSCB highlights particular priority areas to the CYP Trust).

⁵ Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 summarises 8 minimum standards that every organisation offering services to children, young people or families must meet.

3) Local safeguarding achievements and challenges

Bracknell Forest LSCB achieved a lot in 2009/10. Several areas of its work were noted as regional or national examples of good practice and the LSCB was invited to present some of its activity at regional meetings and at a national conference. The LSCB's Annual Conference in June 2009 on the theme of 'targeting services to safeguard vulnerable children' was well attended and featured a presentation from Kids Company focussing on the impact of trauma on brain development and behaviour. The LSCB's sub-groups had a range of achievements including:

- ❖ raising the children's workforce's and public's awareness of local issues i.e. sexual offences, bullying, e-safety;
- ❖ establishing that none of the child deaths in the borough could have been prevented;
- ❖ developing and organising new training to respond to requests for information or support from professionals/volunteers;
- ❖ ensuring that policies and procedures that impact on safeguarding children are updated or amended as we learn together how to support children most effectively.

The LSCB also notified the CYP Trust of a number of challenges that it needed to be aware of including:

- the number of children experiencing bullying in the borough;
- the need to identify and support children/young people who may be at risk of being, or have been, a victim of a sexual offence;
- the need to redesign safeguarding training in light of learning from up and down the country and offer a new range of training programmes;

In particular, the LSCB recommended to the CYP Trust that:

- ✓ the Child Poverty Strategy considers the need to reduce social and health inequalities for disadvantaged children, in the context of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis;
(Children born into, or living in, some circumstances (e.g. overcrowded houses, families with low incomes, households with a parent/carer that has significant health problems, etc) have a proportionately higher chance of suffering from ill health, shorter life expectancy, achieving less at school, amongst other things when compared to children living in less challenging circumstances. Whilst 'disadvantaged' children do not automatically experience inequalities in their quality of life and prospects for their future, the challenges they face are often greater.
- ✓ the CYP Trust gives specific attention to the LSCB's concerns about whether reductions in resource (i.e. public service budgetary pressures) may reduce the workforce's capacity to identify safeguarding needs, contribute to assessments and monitor/support families. In particular the LSCB recommends that the workforce's potential capacity to safeguard children is risk assessed when services are planned or commissioned and embedded in service specification requirements.
(If there are less professionals working with children, the partnership's opportunities for identifying families/young people that need more support may be reduced and the time available to provide support to those families/young people that have been receiving help may also be reduced. The LSCB is concerned that this could impact on our ability to safeguard and protect children).

4) LSCB's assessment of the discharge of its functions

Bracknell Forest LSCB works with neighbouring LSCBs in Berkshire to ensure that the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures and other relevant policies are regularly reviewed, in the context of local and national learning, and updated. Following the analysis of safer workforce self-assessments the LSCB introduced a safer workforce training programme that has been attended by in the region of 300 managers. New training needs identified through the training needs analysis include e-safety and sexual offences training.

The LSCB has also introduced a new whistle-blowing policy to enable any member of the children's workforce to approach the LSCB Independent Chair directly to raise concerns if:

- a member of the workforce has raised a concern that has an impact of safeguarding in their organisation that has not been resolved to their satisfaction;
- a member of the workforce believes that their Employer's ability to safeguard children is compromised.

5) Feedback to and challenge of the Children and Young People's Trust

In summary Bracknell Forest LSCB's feedback to the CYP Trust was as follows:

Area of consideration	Action requested
Section 11 development areas ⁵	To ensure that sufficient support/ resources are made available and promoted to support organisations with development needs in information sharing and safer workforce processes
Commissioning priorities - Multi-Agency review of a child death	<p>That the CYP Trust reviews Targeted Youth Support with specific reference to providing more individualised and focussed support to vulnerable young people;</p> <p>That the CYP Trust actively promotes the use of CAF and ICP, and the Lead Professional role, by all sectors of the children's workforce,</p> <p>That the CYP Trust seeks to ensure that parenting course are actively promoted and advertised to the workforce.</p>
Child Death Overview Panel	That the Child Poverty Strategy considers the need to reduce social and health inequalities for disadvantaged children, in the context of

⁵ Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 summarises 8 minimum standards that every organisation offering services to children, young people or families must meet.

	the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis.
Sexual Offences	That the CYP Trust notes that Bracknell Forest has a slightly higher than expected rate of sexual offences against young people and takes this into account in decisions re: commissioning and de-commissioning of services. The recommendations from the sexual offences analysis work will be shared with the CYP Trust to inform a local preventative approach.
Performance Management	That the CYP Trust note the safeguarding priorities identified in LSCB exception reports and take this into account in strategic planning and commissioning.
Challenges	That the CYP Trust gives specific attention to the LSCB's concerns about whether reductions in resource (i.e. public service budgetary pressures) may reduce the workforce's capacity to identify safeguarding needs, contribute to assessments and monitor/support families. In particular the LSCB recommends that the workforce's potential capacity to safeguard children is risk assessed when services are planned or commissioned and embedded in service specification requirements.

The LSCB awaits a report from the CYP Trust in March 2011 on the Trust's progress with responding to LSCB recommendations.