

REPORT TO:	Health and Wellbeing Board (Croydon) 11 September 2014
AGENDA ITEM:	7
SUBJECT:	Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2013-2014
BOARD SPONSOR:	Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director, Children, Families & Learning, Croydon Council

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

The Children's Safeguarding Board is a statutorily required body in each local authority. It is independently chaired. Its key role is to enable agencies to hold each other to account to secure effective safeguarding arrangements for children in the local authority area. It is a Regulatory requirement that the chair of the Board reports annually to the Council regarding issues of safeguarding children.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

N/A

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: This is not a key decision

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 to inform the Health and Wellbeing Board of the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, and to hold to account the Health and Wellbeing Board for its role in relation to safeguarding children in health services.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The annual report details the activity and effectiveness of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) between April 2013 and March 2014. The report is submitted by the independent chair of the Safeguarding Board, which ensures that the Council and other agencies are given objective feedback on the effectiveness of local arrangements for safeguarding children. The report has been prepared by Paul Fallon, who was chair of the Board up to 31st July 2014. A new chair, Catherine Doran, has been appointed and has now taken up the role. The report identifies how relevant organisations involved in safeguarding children have discharged their responsibilities both individually and as a group, how the CSCB functions in holding agencies to account for safeguarding children in Croydon. The report also includes the CSCB Business Plan for 2014 /15. This report sets out the key priorities for the Board for the current year. The report is provided as an e-copy please use this link to access the report from the Council's website.

3. DETAIL

3.1 The CSCB was created in order to be compliant with the requirements of the Children Act 2004, which established Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. These Boards have the statutory functions of co-ordinating the work of local agencies in relation to safeguarding, promoting the welfare of children in the area and ensuring the effectiveness of agencies in this respect. Further guidance on the responsibilities of Safeguarding Boards is set out in '*Working Together 2013*', which is the key Government Guidance on multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children. Croydon's Local Safeguarding Board is independently chaired, and the independent chair is accountable to the Council Chief Executive. These arrangements are set out in *Working Together*. The Council hosts the support functions of the board.

3.2 In November 2013, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards became subject to inspection by Ofsted as part of their single Inspection of Children in Need of Protection and Looked After Children. Inspections take place on a three year cycle.

3.3 The CSCB must ensure that all agencies continue to offer and develop services to safeguard children. It does so through a number of sub-groups which in turn report to the main Board.

3.4 Developments

There were a number of significant developments in services to safeguard children during 2013-14:

- The board's structure was completely realigned and refocused to maximise efficiency and achieve a concentration on the key issues.
- The 'Strengthening Families' approach to Child Protection case conferences was fully embedded to positive effect, as identified through external review.
- Good progress has been achieved in relation to the quantity and quality of performance information available to the board.
- The quality of data has improved following the implementation of a new Children's Recording System (CRS) in October 2013 in Children's Social Care and Family Support.
- We continued to develop practice in tracing and protecting missing children and children who are sexually exploited by working closely with colleagues from Police, Health, Education and Voluntary agencies.
- We have clarified the relationships between the various governance structures and Boards that cover this area of work. Relationships between the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safer Croydon Partnership and Community Safety have been strengthened.
- The last year has seen a very extensive training programme designed to ensure that the relevant practice lessons from Serious Case Reviews are learned.

- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was established, to provide a single point of assessment and pathway into early help or statutory services.
- We continued to focus on domestic violence in the borough and relevant training has been delivered to staff across agencies.
- The CSCB website is now live, which is improving our ability to communicate the board's key messages across the partnership and with the public.

3.5 **Areas for Development**

The CSCB also has to look forward and plan for future developments. The Business Plan for 2014-15 is attached to the Annual Report for 2013-14. The areas for future developments are:

- Embed the growing strengths in quality assurance and ensure it drives further improvements in safeguarding practice.
- In the light of the summer 2014 needs assessment, to keep under review agencies' responses to a growing, and more deprived, population and greater demand, in the context of public finance restraint, and to ensure any required mitigating actions are in place.
- Embed growing strengths in learning, training and development, and lessons from Serious Case Reviews.
- Further strengthen partnerships and a whole system approach in early help.
- Further embed improvements in missing children and children who have been sexually exploited.
- Review the partnership's approach to safeguarding children under the age of one.
- Develop a strategy for addressing female genital mutilation.
- Further strengthen 'think family' approaches, particularly in relation to children who have mental health problems, domestic violence and substance misuse issues.
- Strengthen the engagement with local communities and develop the use of feedback from children and parents.

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APPENDIX: Annual Report (available online:
<http://egeprapwv01lc.lbcbau.croydon.net/akscroydon/images/att4149.docx>)

BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None