



HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Subject Heading:

LCSB Highlight Report

Board Lead:

Report Author and contact details:

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- Priority 1: Early help for vulnerable people
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- Priority 6: Better integrated care for vulnerable children
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SUMMARY

The LSCB is required to have established links with the Health and Well Being Board and to report on a regular basis and raise issues as appropriate in respect of matters relating to the safeguarding of children in Havering. The annual report of the LSCB and the summary update is therefore presented for information and for discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is noted by the Board and that consideration is given to future reporting requirements.

REPORT DETAIL

Priority 1: Ensure that the partnership provides an effective child protection service to all children ensuring that all statutory functions are completed to the highest standards.

Havering Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The review into the effectiveness of the implementation, operation and development of the MASH is complete. This was a review already planned but was also recommended by the OFSTED inspectors (February 2013), and drew upon the views of professionals working inside or outside the MASH, as well as available data. The review is currently with the Group Director for Children, Adults and Housing and will be released to partners shortly. The review has reached predominantly positive conclusions, although there is a range of recommendations for further improvement.

A risk to MASH continues to be the high level of referral received that do not meet threshold for statutory intervention. A significant portion of these referrals can be attributable to police MERLIN notifications made to children services whenever a child comes to notice of police. This is being addressed by police as a priority in order to identify how better to screen their work to reduce sharing information unnecessarily with agencies.

Child Protection Processes

The HLSCB Quality and Effectiveness working group has continued to scrutinise the whole area of child protection planning, moving beyond reporting on the indicators to include regular reports on trends and audit findings. This has included looking in detail at the step up, step down processes when moving from child protection to child in need and out of the statutory services arena. This work has identified some good multi agency working and also identified areas for further scrutiny. Children Social Care has responded to emerging themes and has implemented a coordinated and focussed audit programme to look in more detail at cases that remain on a child protection plan for only three months. Findings from this work will be reported to the Quality and Effectiveness working group for scrutiny and challenge.

LSCB leads have agreed for their agency practitioners to be involved in an on line survey to establish the views of practitioners when working within child protection processes. The purpose of this will be to understand whether, when in conferences and core groups, practitioners feel able to provide their expert opinion and give their views. This will assist the partners to understand whether the processes facilitate an environment that encourages challenge or whether the process is led and managed by predominantly one agency. The survey will be sent out in October with findings reported to the Quality and Effectiveness group December 2013.

Looked After Children

The Board has continued to scrutinise the implementation of the Looked After Children Improvement Plan. The number of children with three or more placements remains higher than statistical neighbours although there continues to be an improvement within this area and placement stability has improved. A priority for the partner agencies is to secure long term stability for Havering's most vulnerable children. Performance information reported to the Board has confirmed that the borough continues to make good progress in moving Looked After Children towards permanence and adoptive placements.

Serious Case Reviews

Havering LSCB has not initiated a serious case review during this financial year. Working Together 2013 sets out the requirement for LSCBs to undertake reviews of cases that fall below the threshold for a serious case review but may provide valuable learning for the way in which services worked together to safeguard children. Havering has initiated three learning reviews all using a systems approach methodology. A highlight report following each review will be presented to Havering LSCB.

Priority 2: Monitor the development and implementation of a multi agency early offer of help to children and families living in Havering.

Priority 4: Coordinate an approach to domestic violence, mental health and drug and alcohol abuse across the children and adults' partnership to ensure that families affected receive the right support at the right time

A robust early help process is fundamental to ensuring that children and young people receive the correct support in timely manner to reduce the risk of unnecessary escalation of need. Effective early help is reliant on each partner agency to understand what is required of their service and deliver this within the agency ensuring that there is appropriate information sharing and a coordinated and targeted multi agency approach to early need.

The LSCB agreed an approach to early help in July 2013 and ratified the toolkit developed to support all practitioners to embed a consistent process. The expectation placed on each partner is to champion the approach and ensure all practitioners understand their core responsibility to initiate early assessment processes when need is identified.

The quality assurance processes to monitor the impact of single agency activity in relation to early help processes will be reported to the LSCB Quality and Effectiveness group for scrutiny and challenge. The group will report to LSCB in January 2014 on whether the early offer of help strategy is resulting in improved measurable outcomes and will also identify areas for development and further scrutiny.

Priority 3: Monitor the alignment and effectiveness of the partnership when working across the child's journey between universal, targeted and specialist safeguarding

The Ofsted inspection undertaken in March 2013 identified a weakness in the effectiveness of the HLSCB partnership to provide scrutiny and challenge to child protection and early help processes.

The LSCB Quality and Effectiveness group has received regular performance data specific to child protection processes and also undertaken audit work to further scrutinised the impact of service delivery on improved outcomes for children and young people. The LSCB performance dataset has also been further improved although there is still work to do with one priority being to understand how each partner agency quality assures its work and how this can be reported into the quality and Effectiveness group for scrutiny and challenge. This will be further explored at the LSCB development day and then progressed within agencies with oversight from the working group.

Havering LSCB

Priority 5: Ensure that Havering Safeguarding Children Board communicates effectively with partners, children, young people and their families, communities and residents

Child death Overview Panel (CDOP)

CDOP has been notified of five child death in Havering since April 2013. Three of the deaths were expected and two unexpected. None of the deaths were identified to have been a result of abuse or neglect.

Havering LSCB has yet to receive the CDOP annual report 2012 – 2013. This is an area of concern for the board and is being addressed by the Havering LSCB Independent Chair.

THE CDOP has identified an apparent increase in neonatal deaths since CDOP was established in 2008 and in response to this will review anti natal record information of mothers in this category specifically scrutinising birth weight and gestation. This will continue throughout the coming year and be reported within the annual report.

A further area of work being progressed by CDOP is the development of an information guide / Business plan for 'Care of Next Infant' (CONI) for expectant families that had previously suffered bereavement. This process will be discussed at relevant health boards with a request that the processes be reinstated in Havering.

Working Together 2013 compliance

Havering LSCB's Independent Chair Sue Dunstall relinquished her Chairing responsibilities in July 2013. In response to this Havering council advertised for an independent chair to chair both the Children and Adult safeguarding Boards. The successful applicant Brian Boxall was interviewed by the Chief Executive of the council, which is in compliance with the statutory guidance set out within Working Together 2013.

Havering LSCB has a responsibility to ensure that thresholds are set appropriately and fully understood. The current threshold document was developed by Children Social Care and ratified by Havering LSCB with inspection finding that practitioners understood thresholds and were confident in its application.

In response to Working Together 2013 the London Safeguarding Board is developing a threshold document in consultation with all London Boroughs with the expectation that the threshold document will be adopted by Havering LSCB in early 2014. In addition to this, the London Board is in the process of reviewing the London Child Protection Procedures to ensure compliance with Working Together

2013. The 5th Edition of the London Procedures will be published in December 2013 with an expectation that all London Boards will adopt the procedures by early 2014.

Havering LSCB is in the process of undertaking an audit of section 11 compliance across LSCB partners. The LSCB will receive a report on agency compliance in January 2014

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Legal implications and risks:

Human Resources implications and risks:

Equalities implications and risks:

BACKGROUND PAPERS