

# **Annual Report 2014/2015 Executive Summary**



**Working with children, families  
and professionals to make our  
children's lives safer**

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## About this Document

This document is a short summary of the 2014-15 Annual Report for the City of York Safeguarding Children Board. The full report, with additional supporting information as appendices, will be available on the Safeguarding Children Board website at: [www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm)

# Foreword

This is my second annual report as Independent Chair of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) and covers the year ending on 31st March 2015.

The work of the Board is driven by its vision agreed during the year:

**“For all the children of York to grow up in safety and to always feel safe”**

A critical factor in safeguarding children is the skill, effectiveness and professionalism of people who work day to day with vulnerable children and their families. Their jobs are exceptionally hard; something generally not recognised in the media.



On behalf of the Board I want to thank all those people for their dedication and effort to support children and young people in York.

The Board has seen evidence that partnership working is very strong in York; in operational practice and strategic oversight. Individual agencies that contribute to the work of the Board are properly focussed on safeguarding. Within this report we have set out the achievements made this year but also identified the improvements that we must continue to address over the next few years.

The Board is confident that safeguarding arrangements in York are robust. Nevertheless, we are in no way complacent. There are always improvements to be made, both for our individual partners and as a Board. This year we implemented a new structure that is focused more on our priorities. We aim to build on this and strengthen

our influence on other key partnerships supporting children in York. As a Board we are going to tackle challenges and be tenacious even in the face of continuing resource pressures.

The Board will continue to encourage the public and professionals alike to raise their concerns as early as possible. We need children and young people to know that their wellbeing is at the heart of our safeguarding systems.

The Board needs the help of the community to look out for children and young people and my message to everyone is if you have concerns about the safety of a child or young person, **“Say something if you see something.”**

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read 'S Westwood'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Simon Westwood, Independent Chair, CYSCB





# Introduction

The City of York Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory body set up under the Children Act 2004, in accordance with the most recent statutory guidance Working Together (2015)<sup>1</sup>. Further information about our work, and our current membership, is available on our website: [www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/).

We work closely with York Health and Wellbeing Board and York's Children's Trust, which is known as YorOK.

York is a great place in which to grow up. Our job in the Safeguarding Children Board is to ensure that this applies to every single child and young person, whatever their circumstances. Whilst we can never eliminate entirely the risk of harm to children, the Board is satisfied that in 2014-15 the arrangements for safeguarding children were effective and appropriate.

We have reached this conclusion after a rigorous analysis of all of the evidence. We have looked at statistics, conducted formal reviews and analysis, examined each other's safeguarding arrangements, considered progress against our agreed priorities, and challenged our own performance as a Board. Most importantly of all, we have listened to what children and young people have to say.

This Executive Summary sets out brief details as to how we have reached our conclusions. It also describes our priorities for the year ahead, and the key messages we would like readers to take away. There is a great deal of further detail, and supporting evidence, in our full report, which will be made available on our website<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419595/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm)

## Some facts and figures

York is a unitary authority with a population of just over 200,000, including around 44,000 children aged 0 to 19. 9.4% of schoolchildren are from a minority ethnic group.

### 44,000 children aged 0 to 19

The number of looked after children in the city has fallen steadily in 2014-15 from 226 at the start of the year to 195 by the end. 124 children were on a formal child protection plan at the year end.

The city is relatively prosperous, with the level people claiming of out of work benefits statistically lower than regional and national averages. However, 7% of York's population (around 14,000 people - adults and children) live in areas classified as being in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Recent figures show that 11.4% of children under the age of 19 live in poverty. This is better than the England average and a fall for York of 1.4% since 2014.





# What children and young people have told us

As highlighted in our Annual Report for 2013-14, a joint Voice and Involvement Strategy has been agreed by the YorOK Board and the City of York Safeguarding Children Board. This strategy sets out a clear vision for our work in this area:

“Children and young people are at the heart of our strategic arrangements. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people have a voice in decision-making, planning, commissioning, design and delivery of services.”

The Safeguarding Children Involvement Group has now merged with the YorOK Voice and Involvement group to provide a single multi-agency, city-wide group to take forward this agenda. A detailed

report looking at work undertaken against this strategy has been produced and is available on the Children’s Trust website .

Our full report sets out a range of views expressed by children and young people through a variety of means. Our Board particularly noted that in the major “Stand Up for Us” Survey, overall pupils are feeling better in school than they were in 2011. In addition, in the “UMatter” survey for Looked After Children, 87% of young people felt the council provides good quality placements for children and young people in care.

The table below shows **how safe children in care** felt in different locations.

|                | Not Safe - 1 | Not Sure - 2 | Safe - 3 | Really safe - 4 |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------|-----------------|
| At home        | 2%           | 7%           | 9%       | 82%             |
| At school      | 6%           | 2%           | 30%      | 62%             |
| Area they live | 4%           | 11%          | 25%      | 60%             |

(Where any concerns were identified these were discussed and normal safeguarding procedures followed.) There is good evidence that issues previously raised with us and our partners by children and young people have been acted on.

Although we believe that the range of opportunities for young people to have a voice is very impressive, our Board is working with the Children’s Trust to improve things further.

**87% of young people felt the council provides good quality placements for children and young people in care**

<sup>3</sup> As a reminder, “Yor-OK” is the name of York’s Children’s Trust.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Voice/voice-and-involvement.htm](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Voice/voice-and-involvement.htm)

# How we are doing as a Partnership

In last year's Annual Report we identified five thematic priorities for development and a number of actions. Progress has been made on all fronts, although there is still work to do in some areas:

- Our **Early Help Sub-group** concluded that high quality multi-agency early help provision is making a difference; that the number of statutory interventions is reducing or being maintained against a backdrop of effective early help provision; that early help is now at the heart of strategic multi-agency planning and prioritisation; and that our understanding about the impact of early help arrangements continues to improve.
- **Neglect** remains a serious challenge both nationally and locally. At the end of 2014-15, 46.4% of the children subject to a Child Protection Plan in York were under the category of "neglect". This percentage has risen during the year and is higher than last year, although on a par with the years preceding that. We consider that there remains a pressing need for a coordinated response which builds on the findings of the 2012 thematic review in this area. We have therefore established a new Sub-group to ensure this remains a focus for us in the year ahead.

- We have no reason to believe that there is widespread or under-reported prevalence of **Child Sexual Exploitation** in the York community. However, we are not complacent and we recognise that more needs to be done. We have therefore been working with NSPCC on preparing an awareness campaign about of sexual abuse branded 'It's Not Ok'. The campaign will be launched in early 2015-16 and will cover prevention and education, as well as ensuring that children and their families know how to seek help. A website to complement the campaign will also be created.

**The 'It's Not Ok' campaign about sexual abuse, will be launched in early 2015-16**

- Data provided to our Board showed that by the end of 2014-15, 94% of those children reported as **missing from education** had either been found or had their cases closed. Cases involving the remaining 6% (2 children) continued to be open and active. New systems have resulted in significant improvements; however, we recognise the need to improve further the coordination of information about children who are missing, and how we jointly consider the strategic implications.



- The information provided to the Board about the increasing number and percentage of children recorded by North Yorkshire Police as present at incidents of **domestic abuse** has raised the Board's concern to the point where we have decided to form a new Sub-group specifically to focus on domestic abuse and the impact on children. The Sub-group will interrogate the data and formulate an approach and strategy in relation to children to complement the city's overall domestic abuse strategy.

We also decided in the course of the year that we needed to initiate a York perspective in a sixth area: **female genital mutilation**. We intend to produce local multi-agency guidance in 2015 based on the national guidance.

### Persistent absence and total absence has continued to fall in both primary and secondary schools

The Board has also looked at a range of evidence relating to all aspects of a child's potential "journey". Some key points include:

- Persistent **absence** and total absence has continued to fall in both primary and secondary schools;
- 81% of children aged 0-4 who live in the most deprived 10% of local areas are registered with a **Children's Centre**;
- In 2014-15, York had 3,899 **contacts**, and 798 **referrals**, to Children's Social Care<sup>5</sup>. York has a statistically lower rate of referrals than the averages for its statistical neighbours;
- As of 31st March 2015, there were 124 children subject to **Child Protection Plans**, similar to the previous year. This equates to 34 per 10,000 below that of statistical neighbours;
- The number of **looked after children** in the city has fallen steadily in 2014-15 from 220 at the start of the year to 197 by the end. At a rate of 55 per 10,000 population, this is lower than national and regional averages;
- **Health and dental checks of looked after children** remain a challenge: although figures improved at year end, with 66% having up to date health checks and 74.1% up to date dental checks, these are below the England average and below the figures for 2013-14. Health and Social Care colleagues continue to work on ways of improving these figures;
- 62.22% of **adopted children** waited less than 20 months between entering care and moving in with a new family;
- There has been an increase in notifications of **private fostering arrangements** during the year: there were six such arrangements;
- In 2014-15, 306 families meeting the '**Troubled Families**' criteria had their lives successfully turned around by interventions supported by the Family Focus Team;

<sup>5</sup> A 'contact' or 'enquiry' to Children's Social Care refers to a call/email/letter/referral form to the Referral and Assessment teams. A 'referral' is defined as a contact which is accepted for assessment or investigation

- From April 2014 to March 2015, 219 young people age 16 to 25 attended **counselling** appointments. 32 clients aged 16-19 had issues relating to **self-harm**; 33 clients aged 16 to 19 experienced **suicidal thinking**. Fewer than ten young people made suicide attempts;
- The number of first time entrants to the **youth justice system** has reduced by 50% since 2011-12;
- The rate of **teenage pregnancies** has continued to reduce and is at the lowest level since monitoring began in 1998;
- In January 2015, 10% of the mainstream school population (Primary and Secondary) were identified as having **special educational needs**;
- The latest 2011 census shows that 313 children and young people aged 0-15 and 997 young people aged 16-25 were identified as **young carers**. York Carers Centre provides a variety of different kinds of support and all young carers are now entitled to an assessment of their needs from the Local Authority.

Our Board examines such data on a regular basis. In 2014-15, we created a new “scorecard” to enable us to monitor trends and developments, particularly in relation to our agreed priorities. In addition the Board accesses data from a range of other sources. These will be published alongside our full report.









# Formal Audits and Reviews

Our Board also undertakes a series of more formal audits and reviews in order to provide assurance that safeguarding arrangements are in place, and to serve as a prompt for any improvements that can be made. In 2014-15 we conducted two types of formal audit.

## The “Section 11” Audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key agencies and bodies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is the Board’s primary audit to examine local safeguarding arrangements and provides us with assurance that agencies are doing all they can to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people.

In 2014-15, the City of York Safeguarding Children Board collaborated with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board on the development of a Section 11 audit tool and a joint Section 11 Peer Learning Event. All agencies reported clear improvement across all areas measured against last year’s audit. There were no significant multi-agency safeguarding concerns across all agencies as a whole, although some issues and challenges have been identified for individual agencies. In addition, some general areas of development were identified, especially in relation to recognising additional vulnerabilities and barriers in relation to equality, consideration of communicating information in different languages, and the management of complaints.

## Multi-agency Case File Audits

During 2014-15 our Multi-agency Case File Audit Group met on nine occasions and examined, in depth, elements of 13 case files. As a result, a range of actions have been agreed:

- 2015 was made the ‘Year of Assessment’, with multi-agency training delivered by the Advice Team, remodelled to meet audited need;
- The introduction of a new ‘Single Assessment’ to ensure a holistic approach to assessment and collaboration from all involved with the child and family;
- A strong recommendation from the Board to all partners that therapeutic support should always be sought for victims of sexual abuse;
- Child Sexual Abuse training identified as a priority by our Learning and Development Sub-group and included in the training plan;
- A comprehensive action plan developed by the Head of Safeguarding at York Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to address awareness of, and training in, Female Genital Mutilation for all midwives.

From April 2015 our Multi-agency Case File Audit Group will become the new **Partnership Practice Scrutiny & Review Sub-group** with revised terms of reference, a new chair person, and a fresh programme of thematic audits.



## Other audits and reviews

We are pleased to report that no cases have merited **Serious Case Review** during 2014-15. At year end, one case for a possible **Learning Lessons Review** is under consideration by the Serious Cases Panel.

**No cases have merited Serious Case Review during 2014-15**

Our Board reviews the death of every child (up to the age of 18 years) in the York area via a **Child Death Overview Panel** in order to learn any lessons that may help other children and families in the future. In 2014-14 there were 9 child deaths in York. This brings the average to 11 over the last 5 years and shows a year-on-year decrease of approximately 10%.



There were a total of 45 allegations against professionals received by the **Local Authority Designated Officer** in 2014-15. This represents four fewer than in 2013-14, although the numbers are in line with previous years' figures.

## Individual Partner Assessments

The Board also invited the individual agencies who make up our partnership to submit an up-to-date assessment of the state of safeguarding in their organisation. This enables us to share best practice and, where necessary, to challenge each other. These assessments will be published within our full report: they contain a wide range of innovations and improvements to local safeguarding arrangements. Any general learning points that have emerged have been taken into account in determining our priorities for the year ahead.



# Our performance as a Board

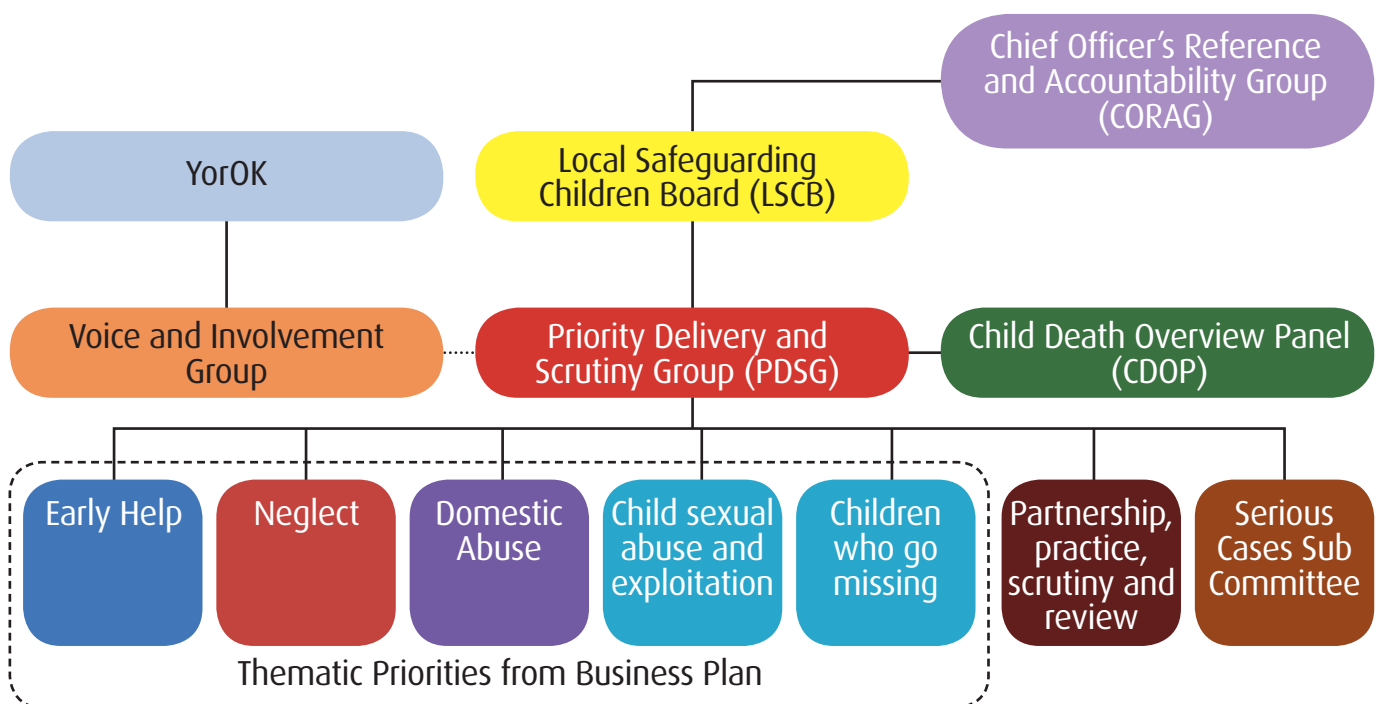
City of York Safeguarding Children Board meetings, which take place quarterly, are always well attended by members, both statutory and non-statutory, and by advisors. Minutes of our meetings are available on our website. We have a key strategic relationship with York's Children's Trust (YorOK): the Chair of our Board is a Member of the Trust and reports regularly to it; equally, we review and challenge Trust information on a regular basis.

We consider that we work well as a Board, in a spirit of robust challenge and support. However, we could always improve further, and we have therefore agreed a new structure from April 2015. This will see the addition of task groups focused on domestic abuse and neglect; the co-ordination of information

about, and strategies for, children and young people missing from home and care into the Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Sub-group; the Early Help group (formerly Integrated Working Implementation Group) as a Sub-group of our Board and the YorOK Board jointly; and performance and safeguarding training as overall themes for all groups. The Serious Case Review Sub-committee and Panel will in future be known as the Case Review Group.

This restructure will improve our Board's effectiveness so that we, and our Sub-groups, are even better able to interrogate data and information, as well as to recommend, support and challenge safeguarding activity across all partners.

The new structure is illustrated below. The latest membership is available on our website.



# Training and development

The Board has continued to provide a programme of learning and development opportunities throughout 2014-15. Courses are linked to Board priorities, core knowledge requirements and emerging issues and lessons. Quality and content is overseen by our Learning and Development Sub-group. The latest Training Brochure, which conveys the richness and range of our offering, is available on our website<sup>6</sup>.

Attendance at our multi-agency training events is usually good, with numbers at, or close to, the preferred target for each course. Courses are not run unless registration rates are viable. There are often waiting lists for some courses. A total of 628 delegates attended multi-agency training from April 2014 – March 2015.

In addition to multi-agency courses, other events, short courses, team inputs or information sessions for staff, linked to the Board's objectives, have been delivered. Around 400 learners/participants received an input in this way during this period. Finally, a number of commissioned and/or bespoke events took place, reaching almost 200 learners.

Post-course feedback on content, presentation, venue and whether the course met expectations is sought from all delegates at the end of the event. Feedback is consistently excellent and good, with only one or two exceptions (e.g. because the delegate did not feel that the course was relevant to their role, or they expected something different).

**Around 600 learners participated in training courses and events in 2014/15**

Equality and diversity principles run through all the training we offer. For example, we challenge agency delegates as to whether they make their services accessible to all, including those with physical disabilities or learning difficulties who may require specific tools, aids or language. Our safeguarding training also addresses issues of cultural norms and whether practitioners understand the difference between a safeguarding matter and a cultural matter.



<sup>6</sup> [www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/learning-and-development.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/learning-and-development.htm)

# The priorities and challenges for next year

Our view is that the existing five priorities identified in last year's Report remain valid – but that some of their component elements may need to change:

- Early help provision forms the foundation for prevention of the escalation of cases and the need for statutory intervention. The Board continues to see this as a priority area and has identified a number of key priorities for the year ahead:
  - further narrowing the attainment gap for pupils in receipt of free school meals, pupil premium groups, and children with special educational needs and disabilities;
  - delivering an integrated and cohesive local child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) offer for children and young people in York;
  - responding to increased reporting of self-harm amongst younger people;
  - continuing to improve not in employment, education or training (NEET) rates for vulnerable groups;
  - tackling child obesity, alcohol consumption and the effects of child and parental consumption on health and wellbeing outcomes for children;
  - developing a shared focus on, and response to, the needs of adult parents and how these impact on children;
  - improving our strategic commissioning to enhance provision and outcomes in areas that span children's and adults services.
- Neglect remains a priority for the Board. The overall purpose of the new Neglect Sub-group will be to improve early identification and the effectiveness of the professional response (at all tiers of need) to child neglect. During 2015-16 we will:
  - identify the barriers to translating the lessons of the thematic review into practice and identify strategies to overcome these;
  - develop the thematic review's findings into specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives;
  - develop practice guidance and learning opportunities to further improved identification and more effective interventions;
  - identify a range of indicators to identify the prevalence of neglect in York and to measure progress in tackling this;
  - develop and implement systems and practices which improve the early identification and the effectiveness of the professional response to child neglect.
- Child sexual abuse and exploitation also remains a key issue for the Board. Via the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Sub-group, the Board will continue to:
  - establish an understanding of the known prevalence and nature of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the city;



- take an overview of the range of provision, services and interventions available to children and families across all tiers of need that are contributing, or could contribute, to the prevention of abuse and/or exploitation;
- identify learning and development needs across agencies and identify or commission training to address those needs;
- prevent abuse or exploitation by identifying opportunities for raising awareness among young people, parents, carers and potential perpetrators ;
- update an action plan in line with key agreed priorities.

2015 will see the launch of a succession of workshops and seminars for frontline practitioners and for service leaders, linked to the 'It's Not Ok' campaign.

- Missing children, whether from home, from care or from education, are potentially vulnerable to harm. A new joint protocol (York and North Yorkshire) about 'Children Who Go Missing from Home or from Care' goes live in April 2015. The Board will continue to require information about the scale of the issue in York and, the action being taken to protect those most vulnerable children. Mindful of the links between missing children, vulnerabilities and exploitation, the 'missing children' priority will become incorporated into the focus of our Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Sub-group. The Board will need to give consideration to the national 'Prevent' agenda and guidance designed to address the issue of young people becoming involved in violent extremism of any kind. The

Modern Slavery Act 2015, is designed to tackle slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery. This will also require the attention of the Board and an understanding of the implications for York.

- Domestic abuse remains a significant priority for the Board's attention. The impact on children who live with domestic abuse either as part of a household, or living elsewhere but part of the family, can be profound. Children experiencing domestic abuse may go missing from home or be vulnerable to exploitation. There is an increasing awareness of domestic abuse perpetrated within adolescent relationships. The new Sub-group will interrogate the known data and information about children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse and the effectiveness of arrangements to support them.

Above all, the Board will want assurance that safeguarding remains a priority at all stages of the child's journey, from early help through to statutory services, notwithstanding the challenge of reducing public funds and significant organisational change. Multi-agency planning, strategy and delivery will be reinforced by strong links between our Board, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the YorOK Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.



# Key messages for readers

## For children and young people

- Your wellbeing is at the heart of our child protection systems. Your voices are the most important of all. This Board plans to develop better ways of listening to you.
- Tell us how we can improve services to improve your well-being, to prevent you being harmed, and to protect you.

## For the community

- You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them.
- 'If you see something, say something'.
- We all share responsibility for protecting children. If you are worried about a child, contact the Children's Front Door (contact details below).

## For practitioners:

- Ensure you are booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses and learning events required for your role.
- Be familiar with, and use when necessary, the multi-agency tools designed for you: e.g. our 'Threshold Guidance'<sup>7</sup> and the online safeguarding procedures<sup>8</sup>.

## For City of York Safeguarding Children Board partners and organisations

- Keep the protection of children at the forefront of your mind. Consider how any plans will affect children and young people.
- You are required to assure this Board that you are discharging your safeguarding duties effectively and ensuring that services are commissioned for the most vulnerable children.
- Ensure that the voices of all children and young people are informing service development.
- Ensure that the voices of vulnerable children are taken notice of, particularly in relation to listening and responding when children disclose abuse.
- Use your representative on our Board to make sure the voices of children and young people and front line practitioners are heard.
- Ensure your workforce is able to contribute to the provision of safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events.

<sup>7</sup> [www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Concerned%20about%20a%20child/childrens-front-door.htm](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Concerned%20about%20a%20child/childrens-front-door.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/child-protection-procedures.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/child-protection-procedures.htm)

**If you  
see  
something,  
say  
something**



Contact details for the Safeguarding Children Board  
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Tel 01904 555695

**[www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/contact-us.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/contact-us.htm)**  
How to report concerns about a child or young person

If you have a concern that a child is vulnerable or at risk of significant harm please  
contact the Children's Front Door:  
Phone for advice: **01904 551900**  
or, using a referral form:  
Email: **[childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk)**

Post: The Children's Front Door, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA  
More information and a referral form are available at:  
[www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm)

