

Report of the Independent Chair of City of York Safeguarding Children Board

York Safeguarding Board Bi-annual Update

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the progress of City of York Safeguarding Children Board, highlighting the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and the ongoing development of the Children and Social Work Bill, which will directly impact on safeguarding children legislation.

Key Updates

Ofsted Inspection

2. In November, Ofsted undertook an inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The process was comprehensive, assessing arrangements against Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework.
3. A huge amount of work was undertaken by members of the safeguarding board and partner organisations prior to and during the inspection to ensure Ofsted got a fair representation of our work. The chair is grateful to everyone who participated.
4. Ofsted judged the board to be Outstanding. York is only the second board in the country to be judged as such. The full report can be found on Ofsted's website, following the link at the bottom of this document. The executive summary is reproduced below:

“The City of York Local Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) is outstanding. The independent chair is resolute in his leadership of the board. This has resulted in strong and highly effective multi-agency partnership working across the city. These partnerships are fundamental to the work of the CYSCB in sustaining the commitment to

safeguarding children and in ensuring a focus on the strategic priorities. Governance arrangements are strong and highly effective. Challenge by the chief executive of the strategic leads and oversight of the work of the independent chair, through the chief officer's reference and advisory group, ensures that the CYSCB is focused on its priorities and maintains an ambitious work programme.

Key to the success of the board is the explicit focus on understanding the perspectives of children and young people by asking for and listening to their views and, most importantly, acting on them. This ensures that the voice of the child is actively considered across all aspects of the board's work and leads to improvements in the quality of practice.

The priorities of the board, aligned and underpinned by the work of the sub-groups, strengthen the effectiveness of partnership working. The priorities are rightly linked to the strategic priorities of the key partnerships and have a very clear focus on improving frontline practice and developing clear policies and procedures. Consequently, the board is highly instrumental in influencing and shaping services for children in York.

The priorities are further underpinned by an extensive and comprehensive learning and development programme. This is based on a detailed needs analysis, lessons learned and the outcomes of the well-embedded performance and quality assurance processes. A specific accomplishment of the board, in collaboration with a national charity and another local authority, facilitated by the chair, has been the 'It's not OK' campaign, to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and exploitation. Performance monitoring and quality assurance arrangements are rigorous, with section 11 audits augmented by themed and multi-agency auditing programmes. In addition, the quality of performance data from the partnerships is comprehensive and is used well to reflect on outcomes and drive the work of the board, while contributing further to scrutiny and oversight.

The CYSCB annual report is an accurate and transparent overview and assessment of performance and it contains plans to progress further improvement."

5. It is a clear validation of some of the great work of partners to coordinate activity. It was pleasing that Ofsted recognised the focus of the board on continuous improvement, which we see as a strength. For that reason,

we are not complacent and will continue to look for all opportunities to improve joint working and practice.

Children and Social Work Bill

6. The Children and Social Work bill currently passing through Parliament includes changes to current safeguarding children legislation. The primary change relevant to this report is the intention to abolish the current LSCB statutory requirement and replace it with a statutory framework for local safeguarding arrangements as set out below:

“(1) The safeguarding partners for a local authority area in England must make arrangements for (a) the safeguarding partners, and (b) any relevant agencies that they consider appropriate, to work together in exercising their functions, so far as the functions are exercised for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.

(2) The arrangements must include arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area.” “safeguarding partner”, in relation to a local authority area in England, means—

- (a) the local authority;
- (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area;
- (c) the chief officer of police for a police area any part of which falls within the local authority area.”

7. The current expected timetable for the Bill is as follows:
 - a. Royal Assent to Bill likely Easter/Summer 2017
 - b. Formal consultation and publication of statutory regulations and revision of Working Together guidance by the end of 2017
 - c. Implementation - 15mths 2018-9
 - d. Full implementation April 2019

8. The following represent some key specific aspects of the Bill:
 - a. **Independent Scrutiny** - The arrangements must include arrangements for scrutiny by an independent person of the effectiveness of the arrangements.
 - b. **Annual report** - At least once in every 12-month period, the safeguarding partners must prepare and publish a report on— (a) what the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area have done as a result of the arrangements, and (b) how effective the arrangements have been in practice.”
 - c. **Serious Case Reviews** – These will be undertaken by a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel which will be appointed by the Secretary of State. It anticipates undertaking 20-30 reviews a year.
 - d. **Local child safeguarding practice reviews** - These will continue but the arrangements for decision making are yet to be published. The decision around local reviews will include national consideration.
 - e. **Devolution and shared services**- There are proposed statutory arrangements to allow for devolution of responsibilities between local authorities and between CCG’s. E.g. Authorities can continue to have joint Child Death Overview Process (CDOP) working arrangements across local authority areas as we currently have in York & North Yorkshire CC. In the Bill “child death review partners”, in relation to a local authority areas in England, means— “(a) the local authority; (b) any clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area.”
9. Key questions which will require consideration and decisions by the statutory partners include:
 - a. How do the proposed statutory safeguarding partners in York (the local authority, Chief of Police and the Vale of York CCG) intend to make decisions on new arrangements in respect of the legislation?
 - b. How will arrangements be supported and funded in future?
 - c. How can the wider engagement of other partners and relevant agencies that currently exists be sustained?

- d. Should the statutory safeguarding partners have an executive strategic leadership group with the current LSCB arrangements amended to be focused on front line delivery and implementation?
 - e. What will independent scrutiny look like in the new arrangements?
10. The following provides a summary of relevant safeguarding arrangements clauses in the bill:
- a. Clause 16 – statutory partners and local arrangements
 - b. Clause 17 – serious cases
 - c. Clause 18 – publication of arrangements and reporting
 - d. Clause 19 – requesting information, enforceable via the high court
 - e. Clause 20 – funding arrangements
 - f. Clause 21 - shared arrangements between safeguarding partners
 - g. Clause 22 – to have regard to Secretary of State guidance
 - h. Clauses 24 – 28 child death reviews

Council Plan

11. The information included in this report is linked to the Council Plan priorities of “A focus on frontline services to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged, can access reliable services and community facilities” and “A council that listens to residents to ensure it delivers the services they want and works in partnership with local communities.”

Implications

12. There are no other direct implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

13. As this report is for information only there are no specific recommendations.

Reason: To update the committee on the progress of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board over the past 6 months.

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/york/052_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20and%20review%20of%20the%20LSCB%20as%20pdf.pdf#

Abbreviations

CYSCB - The City of York Local Safeguarding Children Board

CDOP – Child Death Overview Process

CCG - Clinical Commissioning Group

LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children Board

Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills