

Annual Report 2015/2016 Executive Summary



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

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**If you see
something,
say
something.**

About this Document

This document is a short summary of the 2015-16 Annual Report for the City of York Safeguarding Children Board. The full report, with additional supporting information as appendices, is available on the Safeguarding Children Board website at:
<http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm>

This is my third annual report as Independent Chair of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) and covers the year ending 31 March 2016.

The work of the Board is driven by its vision:

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

The last two years have been characterised by continuous improvement and steady forward progress, coupled with growing partnership involvement, purpose, and respect. As a consequence, the Board is able confidently to set its priorities for action in 2016 and beyond.

In my first annual report I said I was struck by the commitment to continuous improvement in York and that the culture here is child-centred, open and transparent. In my second report I said that partnership working was very strong in operational practice and strategic oversight. That has continued and strengthened over the last two years.

2015-16 has been a period of significant change for the Board as we implemented a new Board structure, working arrangements and staff changes. I want to record thanks to Joe Cocker and Dee Cooley, who left during the year, for their work over a number of years; and to Juliet Burton, our new Business Manager for keeping a focus on improvement through a period of significant change.

Within this report we have set out the achievements made this last year but also identified the improvements that we must continue to address. A particular highlight has been the Board’s work, in partnership with NSPCC, to initiate and carry out a very successful campaign - ‘It’s Not Ok’ - to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and exploitation.



The Board is confident that safeguarding arrangements in York are robust - but they can always be further strengthened. The challenge will be to maintain the progress of the last three years, at a time of unprecedented pressures on public finances, and through a period of national policy changes (including to the focus and remit of safeguarding boards) without losing sight of what matters most: the safety and wellbeing of children in York. It is a challenge for which we are well equipped. On behalf of the Board I want to thank everyone, especially parents and carers for their dedication and effort in helping to make York a safer place for children and young people.

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

Simon Westwood, Independent Chair
City of York Safeguarding Children Board

The City of York Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) is a statutory body set up in accordance with the Children Act 2004, and in line with the guidance in Working Together (2015)¹. The Board is a robust partnership of enthusiastic members, dedicated to the improvement of practice which safeguards children in York.

Information about our work, and our current membership, plus advice, guidance and links to other useful websites is available on our website:

<http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/>.

This Report is an Executive Summary of our work during 2015-16. Overall, our Board believes that arrangements for safeguarding children in York during this period were robust and effective; that there is a strong commitment to safeguarding children across the York partnership; and that frontline practice continues to improve.

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 is available on our website.



¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

York is a unitary authority with a population of just over 204,000. In 2014, the number of children aged 0-19 living in York was 44,200. The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population in 2015 was 9.8% compared to 4.9% in 2001.

The city is relatively prosperous, with the level of 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.

CYSCB monitors a wide range of performance data from a variety of sources. Our full report contains many facts and figures, including an illustrative scorecard. Some of the most pertinent statistics from last year are as follows:

- 171 Early Help Assessments were recorded by the Advice Team as initiated in 2015-16;
- the number of re-referrals within 12 months to Children's Social Care dropped by half;
- up to 80% of children aged 0-4 who live in the most deprived 10% of local areas have been registered with a Children's Centre;

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- York has better school attendance than the national average;
- the percentage of referrals to Children's Social Care with neglect as a factor has risen during the year to 17.3% at year end and is higher than it was in 2014-15;

- the most recent health data (2014-15) for hospital admissions for dental caries (tooth decay) shows that York has a higher number than the national average;
- the percentage of referrals to Children's Social care with sexual abuse as a factor has remained the same as 2014-15;
- the percentage of referrals in which Child Sexual Exploitation is a concern at the point of referral has risen since last year;
- the number of children recorded as missing from home or care increased slightly;
- the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice system has risen slightly since last year, but remains low and in line with national trends;
- the rate of young people sentenced to custody continues to remain very low and has fallen over the last two years;

3,600 enquiries in 2015-16

- Children's Social Care received just over 3,600 enquiries in the whole of 2015-16;
- 191 children were receiving a service from the Child In Need teams in March 2016;
- at the end of March 2016, 135 children were subject to Child Protection Plans;
- throughout 2015-16 the average social work caseload has remained at 15 cases;
- the number of children in the care of the local authority has fallen during the year from a peak of 203 to 191 by the end of the year;
- there has been a reduction in the number of children looked after outside of York;
- 100% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of the year and 70.5% in education, employment or training (an improvement on last year);
- there has been a 13% decrease in the number of child deaths in North Yorkshire and City of York over the last 5 years.

What children and young people have told us

As highlighted in our Annual Report for 2014-15, a joint Voice and Involvement Strategy has been agreed by the YorOK Board² and the City of York Safeguarding Children Board. A detailed report looking at work undertaken against this strategy has been produced and is available on the Children's Trust website³.

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, according to the latest U-Matter Survey of children who are looked after:

- 87% of young people felt the council provides good quality placements for children and young people in care;
- most young people (86%) were happy with foster carers.

The Board also noted the extent to which children and young people in York are able to help shape major strategies such as the new Children and Young People's Plan. During consultation on this document, safeguarding was highlighted a number of times as a key priority.

Generally, young people, parents and carers feel that York is a safe place and a good place to live and grow up.

Even though there is much to commend, there are still improvements to be made:

- voice at different tiers of need: so that every child whether receiving support at any level has an opportunity to express a view;
- voice in assessments: every child who participates in an assessment should be able to contribute to that assessment;
- pre-verbal or non-verbal "voice": those children and young people who are unable to express their wishes and feeling verbally because they are too young or because they communicate in a different way, will be heard;
- voice and change: children and young people will be consulted and heard when changes are made to services which affect their lives.

...young people in York are able to help shape major strategies...

² As a reminder, "YorOK" is the name of York's Children's Trust.

³ See www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Voice/voice-and-involvement.htm



The Board has reviewed progress against the thematic priorities for development that we set ourselves last year:

- The primary focus of the **Early Help** Group has been the project for remodelling the provision of prevention and early help services across the city. This will see the formation of three local area multi-disciplinary teams working together to ensure a seamless service and robust systems for information sharing. The Board hopes to see that a greater number of situations will be addressed through early working alongside families and communities: we look forward to further updates and to full initiation of the new service in late 2016. The Early Help Group will oversee a full revision of the Board's Threshold Guidance in 2016.
- The **Neglect** Sub-group was set up with the aim of responding to the apparently high levels of neglect cases reaching the threshold for statutory intervention. The Sub-group has developed a city-wide Neglect Strategy, to be finalised later in 2016. In addition, the Sub-group has worked with the local authority and public health services to initiate training on the Graded Care Profile which will see practitioners use a common language and common assessment approach to cases of neglect.
- The **Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation/Missing from Home and Care** Sub-group has been active in supporting the joint CYSCB/NSPCC 'It's Not Ok' campaign addressing child sexual abuse and exploitation and raising awareness. Around 2000 Year 7 children have seen the play and taken part in the workshop; to date there have been more than 4,500 hits on the 'It's Not Ok' website. The campaign has been a successful collaboration between a range of agencies and organisations; interest has been expressed by other local authorities wishing to use the model.
- A child or young person who goes **missing from home** can be vulnerable to abuse including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. In 2015-16 there were 657 reports of children or young people missing from home or care. However, many of these were the same individual on more than one occasion. The Board is assured that those individuals who appear to be of particular concern are discussed at a multi-agency meeting so that support can be provided. Every child or young person who has been reported as missing during 2015-16 has been found.
- Children **missing from education** can also be vulnerable. During 2015-16, 124 children were reported as not at the school they were registered at in York. The vast majority were found at other schools or found to have moved elsewhere. For those few not immediately located, consultation takes place with Children's Social care to ascertain whether there is any reason to be concerned.

- The **Domestic Abuse** Sub-group was set up to look at the impact of Domestic Abuse on children in York. Data indicates an increasing percentage of reports of incidents to North Yorkshire Police in which children were present. This does not necessarily mean that more children are witnessing domestic abuse; it may suggest that police officers are getting better at recording this. However, CYSCB has been keen to understand the prevalence of domestic abuse and the perspective of children and young people in York. This understanding can then inform and support the overall Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- CYSCB has worked with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board to raise awareness of **Female Genital Mutilation** (FGM) across the workforce and to provide local guidance. This has included FGM briefings to practitioners and access to e-training. Although the number of suspected FGM cases in York is not high, there has been a rise in the number reported to Children's Social Care as awareness has increased.

...raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) across the workforce and to provide local guidance.

The Board has also assessed **Article 11** work with children and young people, particularly those who are vulnerable:

- Children's Social Care received just over 3600 **contacts** in the whole of 2015-16, 645 met the threshold for referral (i.e. were the subject of further assessment and intervention by CSC). Both these numbers are lower than in previous years. The percentage of repeat referrals has also dropped since the beginning of the year which suggests that cases are being closed or stepped down with a more lasting outcome.
- At the end of March 2016, 135 children were subject to a **child protection plan** with 100% reviewed within timescales. This equates to a rate of 37 children per 10000 population. Over half the child protection plans were listed under the category of neglect. York had 27.3% of children subject to a child protection plan for the second time, more than double the percentage at the same time the previous year. CYSCB understands that this variation was subject to robust scrutiny by Children's Social Care and is assured that no issues of concern were identified.
- The number of **children and young people in the care of the local authority** at the end of March 2016 was 191 (53 per 10,000). There has been a year on year decrease since 2012-13 when the number was 243 (68 per 10,000).
- 100% of York's **care leavers** are living in appropriate accommodation. 6 care leavers are at University.
- Sixty four percent of children waited less than 20 months between entering care and being **adopted**.

- In 2015-16 there were 86 full-time equivalent **Social Workers** in employment working directly with children and families, suggesting an average of 15 cases per Social Worker.
- In 2015-16, 231 families with multiple and complex needs entered the 'Family Focus' programme (known nationally as 'Troubled Families').
- 2015-16 saw 477 new entrants to the youth justice system. The figure has fluctuated over the last 4 years and is on a par with 2013-14. However the percentage of reoffending has dropped since previous years.
- In 2015-16, 90% of final Education, Health and Care Plans were issued within statutory time limits and 90.6% of Year 11 Leavers with special needs were still in learning 3 months after they finished Year 11. We are satisfied that the majority of our disabled children are well supported in their education and aspirations.
- We have also been following with interest the roll out of the School Cluster Pilot to strengthen the emotional and mental health support arrangements for children and young people in universal school settings.
- There has been very positive engagement with schools in 2015-16.

The Board also invited the individual **Annex 1** 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 have been 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 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 2015-16 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. As usual, in 2015-16 CYSCB worked with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board on the Section 11 Audit as several partner agencies work across York and North Yorkshire. All key partners who deliver (or commission) services for York responded. There were no significant multi-agency safeguarding concerns across the agencies identified. Some recurring themes were identified, especially around information sharing: these have been followed up.
- Multi-agency Case File Audits: In April 2016 the former Case File Audit Group became the Partnership Practice Scrutiny and Review Group (PPSRG). This multi-professional group met on 6 occasions during 2015-16, looking in particular at processes around child protection, Child In Need Plans, and children in care long term under Section 20 of the Children Act (i.e. with parents’ consent). Findings from all of these audits were shared with CYSCB. Relevant agencies were asked for assurance that findings were noted and actions taken. For example, assurance was given to the board that all Section 20 arrangements now have recorded signed consent from parents.

There were no cases which merited Serious Case Review (SCR) during 2015-16. The Case Review Group has nevertheless reviewed the action plans of earlier Learning Lessons Reviews from previous years, to ensure all actions have been followed up. At year end 2015-16, one Learning Lessons Review is under way in regard to a neglect case. The action plan from this Review will be followed up and monitored in due course.

CYSCB shares the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board in order to review the death of every child (up to the age of 18 years). In 2015-16 there were 11 child deaths in York. A Rapid Response audit was completed by the CDOP Coordinator for all unexpected child deaths that occurred between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. The audit gave assurance that there are effective systems in place; however, it did highlight significant cross-boundary issues and a lack of bereavement support; this being addressed by services across the city and county.

There were a total of 50 contacts received by the Local Authority Designated Officer in 2015-2016. This figure has increased marginally since 2014-2015. Out of the 50 contacts, 30 were referrals and 20 were consultations. The largest single category of concern was sexual abuse (48%), followed by physical abuse (28%), neglect (14%) and emotional abuse (4%).

Finally, all agencies and schools are required to give assurance to CYSCB about their safer recruitment practice through the Section 11 audit and an audit of schools’ safeguarding arrangements. The Board is satisfied that partner organisations and schools operate according to safer recruitment guidance.

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, as is an up-to-date list of Members. 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 therefore agreed a new structure from April 2015. Within the new structure, there is greater input of other agencies

rather than an over-focus on Children's Social Care. The new structure is working well: the Board and the Sub-groups make good use of available data and information. There has been a full revision of the CYSCB Learning and Improvement Framework to reflect changes in the Board's structure and the ways in which it carries out its work. A copy of this is available on our website⁴.

During 2016 we are revising and refreshing our Business Plan. The Business Plan enables us to see progress against agreed priorities and to understand where further progress needs to be made. Our Business Plan relates to our priorities, with the 'voice of the child' and 'children with disabilities' running throughout.



⁴ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/cyscb-ways-of-working.htm>



The Board has continued to provide a programme of learning and development opportunities throughout 2015-16.

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 ⁵.

Attendance at our multi-agency training events is usually good, with numbers at, or close to, the preferred target for each course. The Children's Advice Team have delivered a wide range of Early Help training to delegates throughout 2015-2016; in total, 129 professionals attended this training.

The Team also delivered 8 bespoke training sessions at primary schools across York. IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Services) delivered training to a total of 29 delegates from various agencies in relation to domestic abuse and managing risk and supporting families.

During 2015-2016, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) briefing was delivered to professionals to give an understanding of the practice. The Safeguarding Advisor (Education) has continued to deliver whole school safeguarding training to staff in York schools during 2015-16: this training now incorporates important information around FGM and the Prevent duty.

A new learning and development needs assessment will be undertaken in 2016 to ascertain multi-agency training needs across the workforce. This will include scoping the safeguarding training within single agencies in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that CYSCB meets its remit to monitor safeguarding training.

The principles of equality and diversity are at the heart of the all the training we offer. We challenge agency delegates as to whether they make their services accessible to all, including those with physical disabilities or learning difficulties that may require specific tools, aids or language. Our safeguarding training also addresses the issues of cultural norms and whether practitioners understand the difference between a safeguarding matter and a cultural matter. As York's population changes, we will keep these issues under review.

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⁵ www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/learning-and-development.htm

The priorities and challenges for next year

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

- CYSCB has learnt that while robust and effective systems for early help exist already, there are improvements to be made in terms of the rising number of enquiries to Children's Social Care (CSC) which may possibly indicate a lack of confidence amongst early help practitioners. The Board is therefore interested to see the new operating model for Early Help which will be developed during 2016 and which will launch in early 2017. The Board has requested an update on the planning and initiation of the project and hopes to see increased whole-family working, with agencies and organisations collaborating to prevent issues and problems escalating to crisis level such that there is a requirement for statutory intervention.
- The number of referrals and enquiries to Children's Social Care and the percentage of Child Protection Plans under the category of 'neglect' has remained a concern to CYSCB. 2016 will see the launch of the new City of York Neglect Strategy. The Board will then face the challenge of testing the understanding of practitioners in terms of assessing and addressing neglect and of measuring outcomes. CYSCB will stage a Neglect Event later in 2016 in order to raise awareness. The Board will also want to monitor the impact of the new Graded Care Profile on standardisation of assessment of neglect and in improved outcomes for children and young people.
- 2015-16 saw the rollout of the 'It's Not Ok' campaign. In terms of the number of children, young people, practitioners, teachers, parents, carers and members of the public that the campaign reached, it was deemed to be very successful. The challenge for the Board, and partners such as NSPCC, will be to ensure that this good work becomes embedded via the use of tools and information packs in schools.
- CYSCB continues to work with partners on ensuring that the processes for identifying and protecting children who go missing from home and care are improved. CYSCB will monitor and challenge the work of Children's Social Care and North Yorkshire Police in ensuring that information about children who go missing, particularly at night and at the weekend, is shared and that return interviews are carried out in order to understand why and where children are going.
- Whilst a significant amount is now known about the numbers of children witnessing domestic abuse and the percentage of children who are present at reported incidents, the Board is keen to ensure that the plight of, and impact on, children witnessing domestic abuse remains a key priority for strategic leaders in York and North Yorkshire.

The Board has identified the following additional priorities and challenges:

- The national review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards being undertaken in 2016 on behalf of the government - the Wood review⁶ - will result in changes to the way that LSCBs function. CYSCB is prepared for possible changes and confident that it will continue to operate as a strong partnership.
- During 2016, CYSCB will strengthen its relationship with other strategic Boards. A protocol is already in place with the YorOk (Children's Trust) Board and with the Health and Wellbeing Board but CYSCB will seek to extend this to include the Safer York Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- CYSCB will be challenging partners to assure the Board that we are doing everything possible to support and improve young people's emotional and mental health.
- CYSCB is committed to refining its capacity to understand outcomes and impact. The revised Business Plan will mean that the objectives set in the Plan are reviewed regularly (formally at least annually but also at more frequent intervals). In addition to scrutinising the data pertinent to their area and

highlighting and responding to issues and exceptions, each Sub-group will look for assurance that outcomes for children and young people in York have been improved.

- During 2016 CYSCB will undertake further work on understanding and analysing multi-agency training needs.
- During the year ahead we will seek advice to ensure the Board is fully up to speed with the current and projected nature of York's population, and any challenges this might pose for our safeguarding work - as well as the opportunity to reach out to new community-based groups.

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526329/Alan_Wood_review.pdf



This year, the Board would like to convey the following key messages. Many of these messages are the same messages as last year but this is because they still matter:

For children and young people

- We are still listening and your voices are the most important of all voices. We think we are getting better at listening to you but we are continuing to work on new ways of hearing you.
- Your wellbeing remains at the heart of our child protection systems.
- We want to hear from you about how services can be improved to ensure your wellbeing, to prevent you being harmed, and to protect you.

For the community

- You are in the best place to know what is happening to children and young people and to report your concerns if you think something are happening.
- Protecting children is everybody's business. If you are worried about a child, contact the Children's Front Door (contact details below).

For City of York Safeguarding Children Board partners and organisations

- The protection of children is paramount. How do decisions that your agency makes 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.

- Are you making sure that the voices of all children and young people are informing the development of services?
- Take notice of the voices of vulnerable children. Listen and respond, particularly if they disclose abuse.
- Children and young children may not always verbalise their feelings. Be aware of other non-verbal ways they may indicate to you that they are distressed or worried.
- 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.
- Know the priorities of the Board and take these into account. Share responsibility in the delivery of the Board's work.
- Be prepared to evidence your agency's safeguarding processes via the annual Section 11 audit and event and via assurance reports to the Board.
- This Board needs to understand the impact of any organisational changes on your capacity to safeguard children and young people.



⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526329/Alan_Wood_review.pdf

For schools

- Make sure that you are compliant with the processes which all schools, in the maintained, non-maintained or independent sector, must follow to safeguard their pupils.
- In particular ensure that you are familiar and compliant with 'Safeguarding Children in Education' guidance and the new guidance which will be implemented in September 2016.
- Be aware of and compliant with safer recruitment processes.

For practitioners

- Make sure that you attend safeguarding courses and learning events required for your role and that you are constantly up to date with changes in safeguarding practice, guidance and legislation. These change all the time.
- Be familiar with, and use, the multi-agency tools designed for you: e.g. our 'Threshold Guidance' and the online safeguarding procedures .
- Resist complacency. Just because certain issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation and other similar problems are rare in our community, does not mean that they are not present. Indeed, they may be even harder to spot.
- Be 'professionally curious' with other practitioners and when working with children and young people.

For everyone

'If you see something, say something'



**If you
see
something,
say
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www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/

Contact details for the Safeguarding Children Board
CYSCB Chair: Simon Westwood
CYSCB Manager: Juliet Burton

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West Office, Station Rise,
York,
YO1 6GA
Tel 01904 555695

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**

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

