

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and young people scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 1 October 2018</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Annual Report 2017/18</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Director of Children and Families</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To consider the annual report of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB), which address the work of the multi-agency partners in Herefordshire in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at risk within the county, including achievements and areas for improvement, and priorities identified for 2018/19 and assess if the report provides assurance.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **the annual report and effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Herefordshire as assessed by the board be reviewed;**
- b) **the committee determine any recommendations it wishes to make to relevant bodies to secure further improvement in safeguarding children and young people in Herefordshire.**

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative recommendations. It is a function of the committee to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised.

## **Key considerations**

2. The work of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) is a critical element of the ongoing multi-agency approach to keep children and young people safe from harm.

### **HSCB annual report 2017/18**

3. The HSCB annual report details a number of developments in 2017/18 within the priorities set for that period. Key developments, impact and continuing areas for development are detailed below.
4. Priority 1 – Childhood neglect is recognised and responded to in a timely way

The work this year has included:

- a) Developed and launched a multi-agency neglect strategy and development / action plan.
- b) Agreed the use of an evidence informed assessment tool to assist practitioners with the identification and assessment of neglect - the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP 2).
- c) Commissioned and implemented a comprehensive multi-agency training programme for the use of GCP 2, to support practitioners across the partnership in identifying and assessing concerns in relation to childhood neglect and developing interventions to reduce risk and support families. As at year end 240 professionals have attended multi-agency training and an additional tranche have attended their own single agency training sessions.
- d) Delivered a multi-agency conference as part of raising awareness of the issue of childhood neglect and promoting the use of GCP 2.
- e) Revised the HSCB Threshold document / guidance to include reference to childhood neglect and the use of GCP2.
- f) Completed a multi-agency case audit of cases involving childhood neglect in November 2017, to act as a benchmark to support evidence of progress in identifying and responding to cases of child neglect.

5. Priority 2 – To improve the recognition and response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and missing children and young people.

The work this year has included:

- a) Revised the CSE strategy and delivery plan to focus on effective governance; prevention and early identification; safeguarding children who are being exploited; pursuing and disrupting offending.
- b) Developed guidance to ensure the capture of information about children from Herefordshire placed out of authority who go missing.

- c) Promoted the involvement of young people in risk management meetings, with their views sought and taken account of.
- d) Provided raising awareness training for taxi drivers and hotel and B&B staff.
- e) Promoted the SELFIE programme in primary and secondary schools.
- f) Police delivered presentations in schools about texting and internet safety.
- g) Included resources on the HSCB website for use in schools and other settings.
- h) Developed a HSCB CSE training offer.
- i) Promoted community awareness through participation in national CSE awareness day and associated resources, including NWG's "Thunderclap" initiative.

#### 6. Priority 3 – Safeguarding vulnerable children

The work this year has included:

- a) Maintaining up to date LSCB procedures that align with regional arrangements and statutory guidance to inform the journey of the child through the child protection process
- b) Developing the focus on 'hidden harm' and the increased risk to children with disabilities within multi-agency training
- c) Using multi-agency performance data to ensure the effectiveness of local safeguarding practice, specifically the application of LSCB thresholds, and the quality of child protection plans
- d) Ensuring learning from case reviews was being appropriately used to improve the journey of the child through the child protection process
- e) Securing feedback from children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan or who are looked after, to understand the effectiveness of the local safeguarding system.
- f) Undertook a multi-agency audit that sought assurance of the effectiveness of practice in identifying, assessing and planning for the emotional and mental health of looked after children between the ages of 10 and 15.

#### 7. Priority 4 - Early Help

- a) Ensured LSCB procedures support the early help strategy and address the impact 'hidden harm' has on children and young people, for example children living with substance misuse and domestic abuse within the family.
- b) Evaluated the availability and effectiveness of early help support, particularly in relation to children living with neglect and domestic abuse, and children with disabilities.
- c) Worked with the Children and Young Person's Partnership to ensure LSCB training products promote understanding of the early help offer with practitioners, to include overhaul of Working Together training sessions, and use of evaluation process to monitor effectiveness.
- d) Sought feedback from children, young people and their parents/carers about their experience of accessing and receiving early help (including Families First).
- e) Audited to assess the impact of threshold decisions

#### 8. Priority 5 – Strong Leadership, Strong Partnership

Whilst there has been evidence of engagement and some very good involvement between partner agencies, such as through the CSE and Neglect strategies, agencies are experiencing resource issues and constraints on capacity. There have been periods of poor attendance at subgroups, and changes have been made to try and improve this such as extending the period between meetings. There have also been examples of agencies not being available to be involved in practice learning reviews or case audits

### **Priorities for 2018/19**

9. Reflecting on the achievements of the board through 2017-2018, and using a range of sources of information, which has included inspections, self-assessments, learning from reviews and consultation with our partners in Herefordshire, highlighting areas where development is required, the board has set four priorities for 2018/19. The safeguarding board pays due regard to the equality duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions, specifically that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work. This is particularly evident for example within the HSCB in that there is a particular emphasis on ensuring that the child and parent(s) have the appropriate opportunity to express their views within child protection conferences, so their needs can be fully considered within the decision making.
10. The priorities for 2018/19 are:
  - a. Priority 1: Neglect.
  - b. Priority 2: Child exploitation (including children who go missing).
  - c. Priority 3: Safeguarding vulnerable children.
  - d. Priority 4: Early help.

Further information on the priorities and how these are to be achieved is provided within the HSCB Business Plan 2017/19; attached at appendix 2.

### **Community impact**

11. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. The council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review. The council must ensure that those making decisions and delivering services are accountable for them. Reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, supports effective accountability.
12. The partners represented on the board have statutory responsibilities for services in Herefordshire that safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The board has a statutory duty to scrutinise, challenge and support this work. The HSCB is key mechanism for challenge, supporting and promoting improvement of these services within the council. The annual report and priorities going forward not only identify areas of safeguarding that require sustained focus and improvement, but also complement and support the work of the other partnerships in Herefordshire such as the Children and Young People's Partnership's focus on early help, neglect and safeguarding, and the Community Safety Partnership's focus on domestic abuse.

### **Equality duty**

13. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The safeguarding board pays due regard to The Equality Duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions, specifically that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work. This is particularly evident for example within the HSCB in that there is a particular emphasis on ensuring that the child and parent(s) have the appropriate opportunity to express their views within child protection conferences, so their needs can be fully considered within the decision making.

## Resource implications

14. None associated with the recommendations. Any resource implications associated with recommendations made by the committee will inform a response from the relevant body to the recommendations.

15. The HSCB receives contributions from partner agencies to fund its organisation and work. A budget is set out and reviewed throughout the year and any risks identified.

## Legal implications

16. There should be a clear framework to allow the HSCB to monitor the effectiveness of local services.

17. Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local council (authority) area to establish a safeguarding board and specifies who should be represented on the board.

18. The statutory objectives and functions of the HSCB, as set out in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are:

- To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

19. Regulation 5 of the LSCB Regs 2006 sets out the functions of the safeguarding board in relation to the above objectives.

20. Under statutory guidance, the safeguarding board has a duty to produce an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children in the area. The reports should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local

services. It should also identify weaknesses, causes of these and action to be taken to address them.

## **Risk management**

21. None associated with the recommendations.
22. There are a number of identifiable risks associated with a reduction in the effectiveness of the safeguarding board. The board has a statutory responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements within Herefordshire. Ineffective safeguarding arrangements directly increase risk to the most vulnerable members of our community, this risk, being both high in probability and the impact on individuals, is evident from previous high profile cases in other areas, which in turn carries legal, political, reputational and financial risks to the partner agencies involved.
23. The current identifiable risks to the effectiveness of the board continue to be financial, as the need for contributing partners to identify savings continues, and organisational as the uncertainty of future board structure remains. The financial risk is currently mitigated by the boards holding modest reserves, combined with recent efficiency savings being identified, and the organisational risk comes from the amended statutory guidance being expected towards the end of 2017, which may have a significant impact on safeguarding children boards.
24. The HSCB, together with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership, run a joint risk register in order to monitor and manage these risks where appropriate, and this is subject to regular review.

## **Consultees**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - HSCB Annual Report

Appendix 2 – HSCB Business Plan 2017/19

## **Background papers**

None