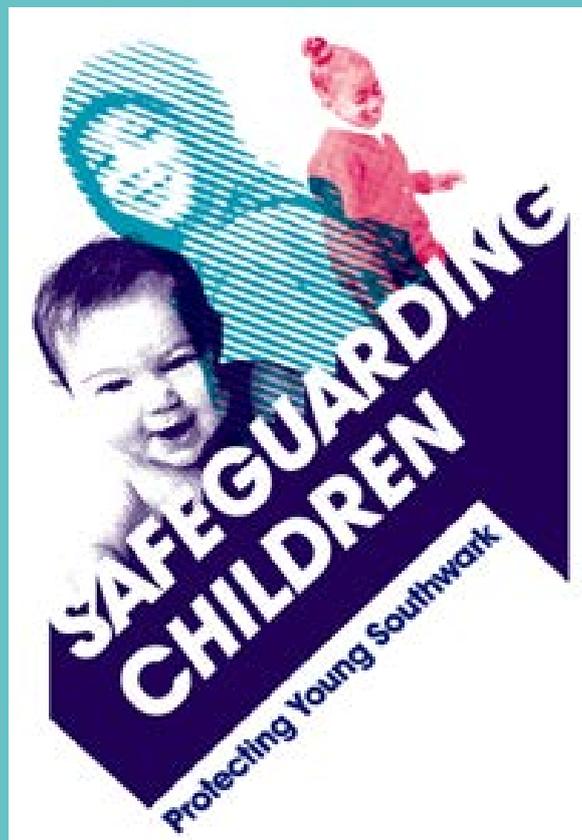


Southwark Safeguarding Children Board



Annual Report 2016-17



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Introduction and Foreword from Independent Chair of the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board



This is my fourth Annual Report as Chair of Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB). This report sets out the work that the Board has undertaken over the last year and an analysis of the partnership's performance in safeguarding the children and young people of Southwark.

This last year has been challenging one, culminating in the Board's effectiveness being rigorously inspected by Ofsted resulting in a "Good" judgement. The full inspection report is included in this report and provides a very thorough analysis of the work of the Board. It is an important and significant statement of our strengths and where we need to improve. I would like to thank all the members of the Board who have worked so hard over the year despite of the challenges of their own day to day work. The outcomes delivered by the Board come from the expertise, experience and knowledge of safeguarding work that partners bring to the Board. Good safeguarding practice requires strong and effective day to day child protection work from all partners.

I also want to acknowledge the excellent work undertaken by Changemakers over the past year in respect of internet safety and knife crime. We have also created a joined up approach with the Safeguarding Adults Board on a number of issues which concern children and adults.

The Board works very closely with all partners and especially with the Council's Social Care service. That relationship is based on positive challenge and it is no coincidence that the Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority commented on this positively. The LA was also rated as "Good" which is a significant achievement as it gives a strong foundation to improve even further.

This report reviews the last year's work and the key achievements are set out by priority and areas of work but also set out the priorities for 2017 -2019. We have agreed to have a 2 year business plan moving forward which will be reviewed next year and adjusted as necessary. This takes account of both Ofsted inspection outcomes.

Looking ahead, it will be necessary to take account of the Children & Social Work Act 2017, which removes the statutory requirement for a Safeguarding Board but requires the three key agencies, the Council, the Police and the Health service to put in place local safeguarding arrangements. The government will publish regulations in the near future which will specify how these arrangements will need to be carried out.

Lastly, I want to thank all partners for their contribution to the Board. I want to acknowledge and praise the strong working relationships across the partnership, which has given me great support to carry out my role as an independent chair. Collectively and collaboratively, we have achieved a "Good" judgement.

Michael O'Connor, Independent Chair

Vision

All children in Southwark have the right to be safe and protected from harm. We will work together to protect children and young people through high quality services that enable children to reach their full potential and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Responsibilities

The SSCB will ensure all agencies are aware of and undertake their key safeguarding responsibilities:

- All those who work with children and young people know what to do if they are concerned about possible harm.
- When concerns about a child's welfare or concerns about harm are reported, action is taken quickly and the right support is provided at the right time. This covers the spectrum from early help when issues first arise through to emergency action needed to keep children and young people safe.
- Agencies that provide services for children and young people ensure they are safe and monitor service quality and impact.

Key Strategic Questions for the SSCB

- **Is the help provided effective? How do we know our interventions are making a positive difference? How do we know all agencies are doing everything they can to ensure children and young people are safe? This includes early help.**
- **Are all partner agencies meeting their statutory responsibilities as set out in Working Together 2015 chapter 2?**
- **Do all partner agencies quality assure practice and is there evidence of learning and improving practice?**
- **Is training on early help and safeguarding monitored and evaluated and is there evidence of training impacting on practice? This includes multi-agency training.**

2016/17 SSCB Priorities

Thematic priorities

- CSE and children and young people who go missing
- Preventing extremism
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Knife crime
- Early Help and neglect
- Supporting vulnerable parents

Priority groups

- Safeguarding children with SEND
- Looked after children
- Private Fostering
- Community, faith and voluntary sector involvement

Learning & Development

- Learning and development framework
- SSCB training programme and its impact
- Embedding performance and quality framework
- Serious Case and Multi Agency Management reviews (Child U)

Governance & Review

- Core child protection review and challenge
- National safeguarding policy developments and new requirements
- Inspections of safeguarding arrangements and practice
- New local partnership arrangements

Chapter 1 – Local Safeguarding Context

1.1 Local profile of children and young people in Southwark

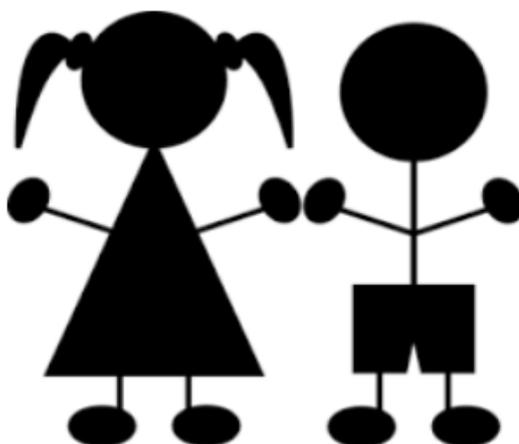
71% of children and young people in Southwark represent minority ethnic groups compared to 26% of children in the whole of the UK representing minority groups.



3,850 referrals to Children's Social Care in 2016/17; a decrease of 8% from 2015/16



366 children were subject to a Children Protection Plan in 2016/17



79 per 10,000 0-17 year olds were placed in care in 2016/17. This roughly equates to 498 children



63,000 under 18 year olds live in Southwark (20% of the population)



Almost 1 in 5 primary school children and 30% of secondary school children are entitled to free school meals in Southwark. This is a higher rate than that seen across the nation



Approximately 15,000 children are living in 'Low Income Families'

1.2 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board

Southwark has a long history of effective partnership working at all levels, strategic to operational. A strong Safeguarding Board sits at the heart of our partnership arrangements and has supported and challenged key local priorities including a new social work model to work with families at risk of neglect and a new operating model for child sexual exploitation. Our partnership arrangements remain agile and adapt to meet changing needs and new statutory requirements, for example, working jointly across children and adult safeguarding boards, in areas of common interest such

as female genital mutilation (FGM), knife crime and preventing violent extremism, as well as sharing a training and workforce development portfolio. Both boards continue to be chaired by the same Independent Chair and we have embedded the local community safety partnership arrangements into the adult safeguarding board arrangement to provide a joined up focus on adults at risk in the community such as those at risk of or experiencing mental health, exploitation and abuse; and most notably a shared concern around knife crime and knife carrying.

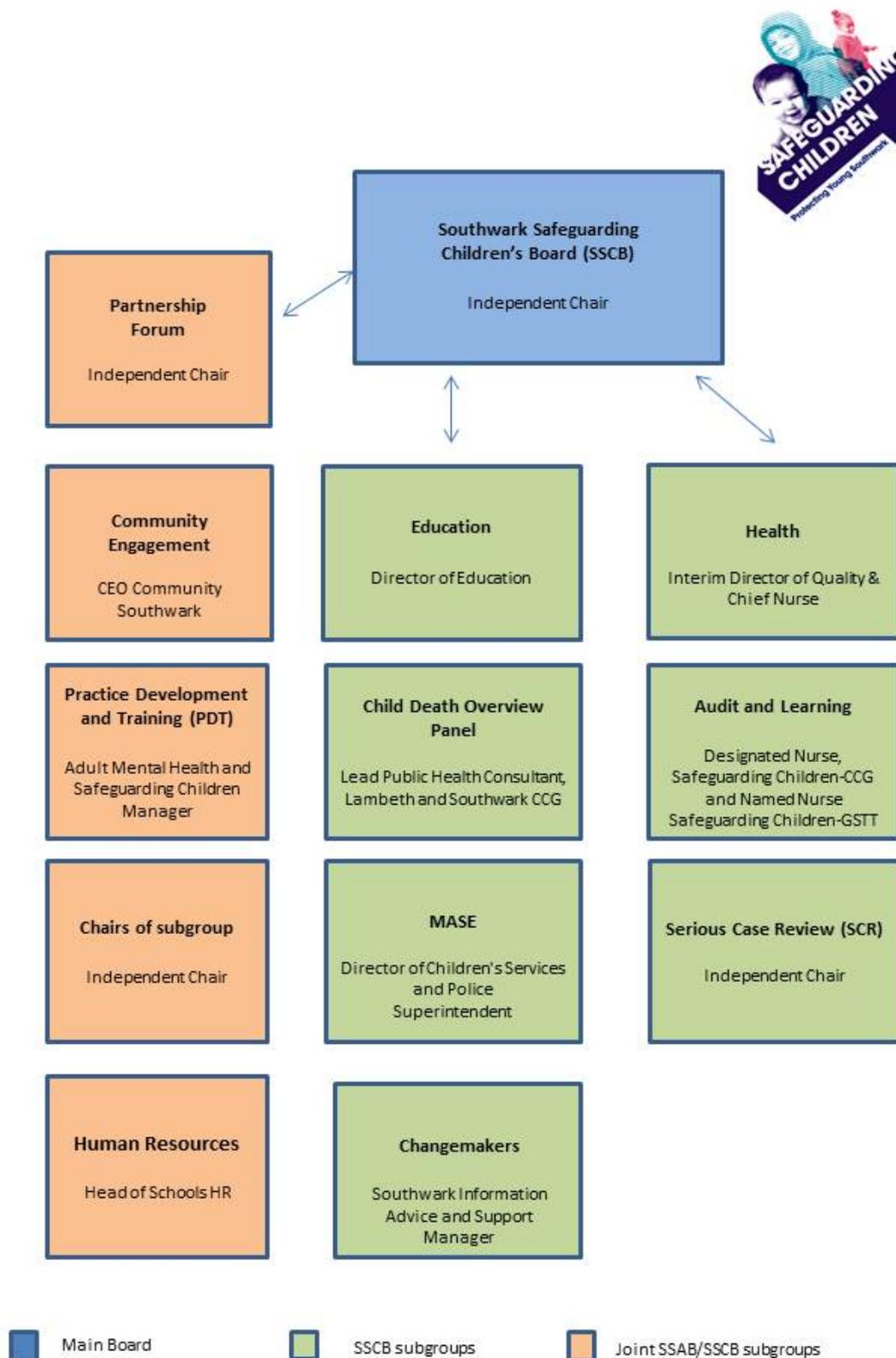
1.3 SSCB governance arrangements

The SSCB meets six times a year. Bi-annually the board meetings are joint with the Adults Safeguarding Board which has provided the opportunity for partners to look and work differently in areas of shared concern, most notably knife crime and preventing violent extremism. In addition, the Board holds themed in-depth partnership forums to explore key issues in greater detail. There is good representation from partner agencies on the Board (see appendix 1 for full list),

which is also reflected in the chairing and membership of the subgroups (see Figure 1 below). These subgroups play a vital role in taking forward the work of the Board.

The Board has strong relationships with other key strategic bodies in Southwark, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Corporate Parenting Committee and Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board, which includes the Community Safety Partnership.

Figure 1: SSCB Subgroups and Chairs



1.4 OFSTED Inspection on the review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Board

In March 2017 Southwark Safeguarding Board Children's Board (SSCB) was inspected by Ofsted and was rated as "Good". This judgement confirms the good outcomes of the work undertaken by the Board and its partners in safeguarding children and young people in the borough. The full report can be read below;

The independent chair of the LSCB provides strong leadership. Since his arrival in 2013, he has brought energy, commitment and determination. This has resulted in a strong focus on safeguarding children, a streamlined structure, clear priorities and a culture of challenge across the partnership. The impact of the LSCB's work is evident across a range of areas. There are well-established links between the LSCB, the Health and Wellbeing Board and other relevant strategic forums. These arrangements allow the Board to ensure that children's safeguarding issues remain high on everyone's agenda. Children's and adults' safeguarding arrangements have been aligned to ensure greater synergy and a focus on the family. This reduces duplication, improves efficiency and promotes a shared understanding of issues such as gangs and female genital mutilation.

The LSCB has completed an ambitious programme of audits. These, together with ongoing scrutiny of issues and information from performance data, ensure continuous and effective monitoring of frontline practice. A new performance management framework is helping to ensure greater understanding of practice. However, further work is required to embed the use of data in the Board's sub-groups.

The Board has been instrumental in developing work around key issues, such as radicalisation, female genital mutilation, gangs and child sexual exploitation. There has been an extensive training programme and media campaigns on child sexual exploitation, resulting in increased identification and more prosecutions.

The group of young people who work with the board, the 'Changemakers', is a valued and integral partner in delivering the safeguarding agenda. The group undertakes meaningful and innovative work that has impacted on partners' understanding of issues and resulted in changes to services.

There is a comprehensive LSCB learning strategy, aligned to the Board's priorities. Training is informed by learning and annual evaluation of impact. This work now needs to be built on, with closer analyses of the needs and gaps in the workforce across the partnership.

The annual business plan is not sufficiently clear and lacks measurable outcomes. Risks and concerns are not always explicit. As a result, the system for monitoring important issues and actions requires strengthening.

Recommendations

- *Embed the performance framework into the work of the sub-groups, ensuring that relevant performance data informs analysis and evaluation of services.*
- *Undertake analysis of workforce training needs and gaps in order to ensure that training is relevant and targeted effectively.*
- *Ensure that the annual business plan is specific, measureable and time-limited and strengthen the systems for tracking actions, risks and concerns.*
- *Continue to develop a clearer understanding and more appropriate application of thresholds for referrals to children's social care across partner agencies.*

Inspection findings – the Local Safeguarding Children Board

The LSCB in Southwark has strong and effective governance arrangements to ensure that all partners are fulfilling their statutory duties to safeguard children. The chair of the LSCB provides strong and clear leadership. He is well respected and influential, and has relentlessly driven forward work to ensure improvements. This has resulted in a strong focus on safeguarding children, a streamlined structure, clear priorities and a culture of openness and healthy challenge across the partnership. The Board embraces continuous improvement, recognises areas for development and responds to ongoing emerging safeguarding issues across the local authority.

There is strong communication between the LSCB, the Health and Wellbeing Board, multi-agency forums and senior officers across the partnership. These arrangements allow the Board to ensure that children's safeguarding issues remain high on everyone's agenda. In 2015, the LSCB chair also became the chair of the adult safeguarding board. Since that time, work has taken place to bring the two boards and other strategic forums together. The community safety partnership, Safer Southwark, is now part of the adult safeguarding board. Revised sub-group arrangements mean that the two boards share relevant sub-groups, such as human resources, community engagement and practice, development and training. There is a shared partnership forum, and twice each year the boards come together to discuss priority areas of work.

While work is still taking place to finalise these arrangements, this alignment of the two safeguarding boards has resulted in greater synergy and a holistic focus on families. It reduces duplication, improves efficiency and promotes shared understanding and better joint working to address issues such as gangs and female genital mutilation. However, the governance protocol from 2014 has not yet been updated to reflect these changes.

The LSCB and the local authority hold each other to account. The LSCB chair works closely with the statutory DCS, the chief executive, cabinet members and the leader of the council. As a result, the Board is active and influential in planning and informing services.

There is a strong and engaged partnership. The LSCB includes a wide range of appropriate partners. Attendance at all meetings is high, and partners report that they attend regularly because the meetings are valuable. Board meetings frequently include more than 35 people. They are well managed and focused and include time for breakout discussions on key subjects. One partner described Southwark's approach as 'collegiate', and this is reflected in the number of different agencies chairing the 11 sub-groups and being involved in reviews and shared task and finish groups. An example of this is the current work to review the Board's oversight of children who have a disability.

The partners' commitment to the Board is apparent, not only in the time that they give to the LSCB, but also in the financial contributions made. The Board increased its budget in 2016–17, and partners have agreed additional core funding for 2017–18 in order to expand the support team for the children's and adults' safeguarding boards to include an additional analyst and two partnership officers.

The Board receives and reviews a range of relevant reports and updates that are scrutinised and challenged. An example of this is a report on private fostering arrangements. The Board's scrutiny led to awareness raising in the community and a greater understanding of how private fostering is identified. This has resulted in an increase in private fostering notifications.

While challenge and scrutiny are part of all of the Board's work, the system for tracking areas of concern and risks, through a forward plan and minutes of meetings, is not thorough enough. It does not sufficiently identify risks or those areas that the Board is concerned about.

There is a clear learning and improvement framework, and the partnership embarked on an ambitious programme of multi-agency audits in 2015. Audits have included child protection processes, parental mental health, home education, children missing education, child sexual exploitation, child protection plans for children who have a disability, adolescents, neglect and the MASH. These, together with regular reporting of single-agency audits, ensure continuous and effective monitoring of frontline practice.

The Board has introduced a performance management framework. This helps to ensure a greater understanding of practice and informs challenge. An example of this is the Board's concern about an increase in children's social care referrals. This challenge led to a MASH audit and a revision of the threshold document, and helped the local authority to identify changes to the management arrangements for early help services. While the Board routinely considers performance data, it acknowledges that more work is needed to embed data into the work of sub-groups. Education and training data requires strengthening, and the multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) panel and human resource dashboards require further work to align partners' data.

Partner agencies prioritise safeguarding. The annual section 11 audits of safeguarding arrangements, undertaken by most agencies, demonstrate this. There is good analysis and scrutiny through a multi-agency challenge panel. All partners have individual action plans, and the Board collates key themes to inform its work. The Board recognises that this process needs to be extended to schools and more voluntary and community sector groups across the local authority. A task and finish group has been set up to explore how changes can help these agencies to become more involved in the process.

The child death overview panel (CDOP) and its sub-group, the neonatal death overview panel (NDOP), are shared with another local authority area. They are effective and benefit from a broader understanding of a larger population. They demonstrate learning and impact and are integral to the Board's work.

The SCR group provides a rigorous system for consideration of serious incidents and dissemination of learning from all case reviewing activity. During the inspection, the SCR for Child U was published. It highlights improvements required in information sharing and work with gangs and knife crime. Learning events, as part of the SCR process, have taken place, and an action plan is about to be implemented.

The Board has been instrumental in developing work on key issues, such as preventing violent extremism and female genital mutilation. It has undertaken considerable work on child sexual exploitation and established a tactical MASE group at director level, which

reports to the Board. All agencies have given a pledge to tackle child sexual exploitation. There has been a large-scale training programme. The risk of child sexual exploitation is part of the school curriculum and an extensive media campaign included e-newsletters to thousands of residents. As a result, there are improved understanding and identification of child sexual exploitation, and this is evidenced by an increase in prosecutions and coordinated disruption activity across the borough.

The young people's group working with the board, the Southwark 'Changemakers', is a valued partner in delivering the safeguarding agenda. The group has representation at the chairs' sub-group, and young people regularly present their findings to the Board on the broad range of topic-based work that they are doing. Since the beginning of 2016, the group has undertaken meaningful and innovative work, which has impacted on partners' understanding of issues. A good example of this is the current work to develop a range of text messages to help girls to support peers who might be involved in child sexual exploitation. The group of 12 'changemakers' has close links to other young people's engagement groups and, as a result, is able to reach a large population of children. This is illustrated by the group's survey of 800 children to capture the issues most important to children across the borough.

There is a clear and comprehensive LSCB learning strategy, aligned to the Board's priorities. It includes all levels, from practitioners to senior managers, the Board and elected members. Partners are involved in the commissioning of training to ensure that external training reflects Southwark issues and ways of working. A four-stage evaluation process evaluates the impact of training on practice and an annual evaluation, with other learning, informs the annual training calendar. However, a more detailed needs and gap analysis of the workforce is now required to ensure that people are receiving the training that they need and to inform the number of courses required.

The LSCB annual report 2016–17 provides a rigorous and transparent overview of its work. Findings from the report inform the annual business plan, which details work in each of the six priority areas, and this underpins work plans for each of the subgroups. However, while all of the actions within the Board's control have been completed, the business plan does not include timescales or identify who is taking forward actions. This makes it difficult to ensure that work is on track.

Chapter 2 – Progress on Thematic Priorities 2016/17: The work of the subgroups

The SSCB has worked closely with partners across core thematic priority areas during 2016/17. Six priority areas were identified: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and young people who go missing, preventing violent extremism, female genital mutilation, knife crime, early help and neglect and supporting vulnerable parents. Activity undertaken by the Board in relation to these areas is driven by the subgroups. In addition, the Changemakers have worked alongside the Board and the subgroups to advise and influence on the priority topics. The impact of the work and next steps identified by the SSCB form the basis of this annual report.

2.1 Child sexual exploitation and young people who go missing

Following the SSCB undertaking a multi-agency wide stocktake to better understand CSE locally in 2015/16, at the start of 2016/17, CSE governance was streamlined; both strategically and operationally to make sure the right partners were involved at the right level for most impact. This included bringing together working arrangements regarding victims and perpetrators, to provide a

more tactical response to the issue locally and the establishment of a new Director level Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) group. The MASE developed a work programme which identified the priority activity for the year and the expected outcomes. These consisted of four key work streams to improve effective use of intelligence and joint working, which are summarised below:

Priority 1 - Improving CSE intelligence across the partnership

During 2016/17 the use of intelligence sources have been maximised and information sharing improved to support operational and tactical action through the development of a CSE intelligence infrastructure. Key recent developments in this approach include the Partnership Tasking Group, (co-chaired by the police and local authority) and Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit now including CSE as a standing item. This is leading to the sharing of information and use of the local CCTV camera network being trialled in the development of intelligence and exploring

targeting and identified high risk nominals, and those young women who have been in custody and are vulnerable to becoming victims of CSE. Work within the community engagement priority will support the development of community intelligence infrastructures including across community, health, voluntary and community sector and education provision to maximise the information gathered across the partnership. We have recently appointed a full time CSE, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Missing analyst to support this work further.

Priority 2 - Establishing consistency across CSE training

A deep dive was undertaken by the SSCB Practice, Training and Development (PDT) subgroup which led to a minimum standard of training and awareness around CSE being established for all appropriate professionals in Southwark, as well as the development of bespoke training for key professionals such as those in Pupil Referral Units or the care service. CSE is now incorporated in all

SSCB multi agency training and the scope includes identification of risk factors and strengthening professional's understanding of appropriate communication and recording of intelligence around perpetrators in order to successfully intervene and disrupt behaviours, risk assessment and identifying risk in relation to grooming, bullying and exploitation.

Priority 3 – Partnership work on prevention, community engagement and early help

The appointment of a dedicated CSE prevention co-ordinator with a specific community engagement remit has enabled work to be undertaken with tenants groups, voluntary sector groups (including sports and youth clubs), and faith groups to increase awareness and knowledge of preventing child sexual exploitation. Mechanisms have been developed to

enable consultation with young people and the community and there has been significant activity to raise voluntary sector and community awareness around the identification and reporting of CSE. In addition, key groups who have low engagement have been identified and will be the focus for future activity in 2017/18.

Priority 4 – Single oversight of missing

A review of local approaches to missing was completed which identified several areas of good practice, but also identified a need to align work and understanding within different services to work towards a single oversight of missing. Key multi-agency partners, particularly the police

and social care, reviewed current pathways, their impact and how local responses could be configured to reduce risk of missing, such as use of key tools i.e. strategy meetings and commissioned services, including the reconfiguration of return home interviews.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ Senior Leadership attendance at the MASE group has provided the commitment to ensure that CSE remains a key priority across the partnership and in turn directs the work of the operational group.
- ✓ Wider intelligence gathering processes through the use of frontline resources has led to a more developed local CSE profile and support towards wider disruption activity.
- ✓ A dedicated CSE prevention co-ordinator with a specific community engagement remit has enabled work to be undertaken at the grass root level to raise awareness on CSE and encourage reporting.

2.2 Preventing Violent Extremism

During 2016-17, the SSCB has continued to positively drive forward the development of Southwark's multi-agency approach to preventing violent extremism in relation to safeguarding children, young people and families. The multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting cases, as exemplified through the Channel panel process, continues to draw on expertise from partners including local-authority social care, the police, the NHS, and youth offending service. Accredited training continues to be undertaken across the partnership to ensure that frontline practitioners are able to spot the signs of concern and make appropriate referrals, with additional work being undertaken to produce bespoke training for high-priority frontline staff (such as Social Workers) which incorporate case studies and opportunities for the development of

reflective practice. Southwark continues to participate fully in pan-London and national groups around Prevent practice, to ensure that the borough continues to draw from, and contribute to, the development of best-practice in relation to this important area.

The Board will continue to drive forward a robust and responsive safeguarding led approach to preventing radicalisation and violent extremism in the year ahead by finalising the refreshed Local Delivery Plan in summer 2017. The Board will ensure that partnership priorities are agreed and appropriate monitoring is in place to evaluate progress and continue to promote the Prevent duty across the partnership, signposting examples of good-practice safeguarding where identified.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ An effective, multi-agency Channel process continues to accept referrals and offer appropriate support to a range of cases involving vulnerable children and adults, including both instances of far-right and Islamist extremism.
- ✓ Case-by-case guidance is offered to schools and other education partners to support their ongoing compliance with the duty, whilst additional capacity for the delivery of training is put in place to ensure that in-school Prevent training will be available for all Southwark schools going forward.
- ✓ More than 90% of Southwark CCG staff have undertaken Prevent training, and training rates continue to increase across all NHS Trusts.
- ✓ Comprehensive partnership Prevent Delivery Plan reviewed by both Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards in March 2017, and consultation with key stakeholders undertaken to determine priorities.

2.3 Female Genital Mutilation

The SSCB is leading the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) agenda via strong partnership working, shared values and a shared commitment to ensure that early help and intervention is provided to enable and support vulnerable female children and reduce the prevalence of female genital mutilation. Based on national research there are populations at risk of FGM and under-reporting, so during 2016/17 work commenced to develop a local community profile, to ensure that the protected characteristics of those concerned were very well understood and responded to effectively in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way. Health partners have been key to providing vital support to women with FGM and intervening to prevent girls and women at risk of FGM from being harmed; therefore, the training of health professionals has been prioritised and referral and information pathways in acute hospitals have been developed.

Education providers have integrated teaching on FGM into the curriculum with it being included in school's Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) & Wellbeing curriculum offer. It is now one of the areas covered in the three yearly whole school safeguarding INSET days

and in the twice yearly schools Designated and Deputy Designated safeguarding leads training.

A number of community events and initiatives have been delivered over the course of 2016/17 with the ultimate purpose being the eradication of FGM. In June 2016 there was an open forum and luncheon event inviting women, young people and parents to attend. The forum provided reassurance to these females about the mandatory reporting now required by professionals. There was a half day safeguarding conference for voluntary sector organisations in October 2016 which focused on raising awareness about FGM, together with a range of other events across the year. This included information stalls at local events such as the Camberwell Fair and multi agency cross borough events on FGM zero tolerance day in February 2017. Going forward, the Board will continue to strengthen the understanding of FGM across the partnership, including developing and implementing a comprehensive FGM training offer and continuing to build on the community profile by including data from non statutory source.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ FGM multi agency guidance document, including the intervention framework for identifying, assessing and responding to FGM has been updated and widened to include adults.
- ✓ We have developed stronger multi-agency working around FGM, including being one of the first local authorities to use court orders to act against concerns over FGM.
- ✓ Both Health and Education have worked collectively to establish a FGM clinic within a local primary school enabling increased access to support services. There are plans to develop this model in other schools across the borough.
- ✓ All health professionals within relevant services such as Primary Care, Sexual Health and Maternity within Kings College Hospital Trust and Guys and St Thomas' Hospital Trust now use the DoH FGM risk assessment tool, ensuring a consistent and robust approach.
- ✓ 15 families referred to Children Social Care during 2016/17 for preventative interventions.

2.4 Knife Crime

Knife crime has been increasing steadily across London over the last few years. Not all knife crime is gang related or committed by young people; however young people are disproportionately affected, specifically young black men. For the last five years Southwark has had higher than the London average level of knife crime. The offences of knife crime with injury and knife possession have also been above the capital's average. Statistics and anecdotal evidence suggest that knife carrying by young people (10 to 24 years) is now more prevalent.

During 2016/17 the SSCB and the SSAB jointly developed a Multi-Agency Knife Crime Action Plan, which is driven by the

Safer Communities subgroup. The starting point for this piece of work was the scoping of a local crime profile to map the local context of knife crime and for the board to gain a better understanding of why young people carry knives.

A workshop was held in early 2017 with a wide variety of stakeholders including young people to look at how knife crime could be tackled and to start the process of developing a plan to outline how knife crime and knife carrying would be addressed in Southwark. The themes that emerged from the workshop and subsequent engagement with stakeholders, to be reflected in the action plan are listed below;

- **Consultation and engagement** – with stakeholders, the wider community and young people is essential in understanding the causes and impacts of knife crime and knife carrying and how to deal with it.
- **Information sharing and intelligence development** – between partners and with the community is essential to ensure the multi-agency response to knife crime and knife carrying is effective.
- **Communication of key messages and awareness raising** – including clear signposting of where to go for help.
- **Building resilience** – young people, parents and carers developing the resilience and skills to avoid knife crime as victim and/or perpetrator including work with schools across Southwark.
- **Prevention and early intervention** – working to increase the feeling of safety of young people, diverting people from becoming involved in knife crime and knife carrying and targeted support to those at risk.
- **Enforcement against perpetrators** – using a wide range of enforcement options across the partnership to disrupt and prosecute knife carrying criminals.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ The development of a local profile and interactive workshop with partner agencies has enabled us to gain a better understanding of why young people carry knives which in turn ensures that we remain focused on the root causes.
- ✓ Consultation and engagement with both the Changemakers and Youth Council in the development of the Action Plan this will continue, with both groups being involved in co-delivery.
- ✓ Initial engagement with Schools and the Community and Voluntary Sector along with the wider partnership through the safeguarding agenda has led to agreement that everybody has a responsibility to tackle knife crime and knife carrying in order to keep our young people safe.

2.5 Early Help and Neglect

During 2016/17 our current offer on tackling signs and symptoms of early neglect and supporting partners was refocused to more effectively meet emerging needs in early help services where children do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. The SSCB's ambition to improve our early help offer is being developed within a new Family Early Help and Youth Justice service with Assistant Director leadership to implement the 'mandate for change' agreed by partners. Joining up the Council's service within locality teams with social work practice has improved the quality of whole

family work to ensure 'step down and step up' processes are effective.

Consultation with partner agencies has identified the need to clarify pathways to additional support and recognised the variety of services that have been developed to respond to emerging problems within families. Engagement with Primary and Secondary School leaders has improved mutual understanding of the challenges faced within the education and social care systems. This has enabled a more collaborative approach to seeking solutions for children and families.

Southwark Children's Centre hubs are developing a strong programme of support that is crucial in engaging early with parents who need extra support. Over the last year the drive has been to coordinate this provision to ensure consistency in the core offer and that infrastructures are in place to support ongoing development. Engagement with health services as well as targeted programmes such as the Family Nurse Partnership and Parental Mental Health Team are ensuring this universal provision benefits the right families.

Internal processes within Children's Social Care have been reviewed and child protection referrals separated from those requests for early help. This has ensured the MASH works more efficiently and effectively with the volume of referrals received. Partner agencies have committed to an approach which recognises the broad scope of early help and to develop clear pathways to support which will ensure there is a 'no wrong door' relationship with families who need additional help.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ Improved the quality of whole family work and ensured 'step down and step up' processes are effective as a result of aligning locality and family focus teams with social work practice.
- ✓ Agreement for the separation of the referral forms for Early Help and MASH has allowed for all partner agencies to confidently consider the service need for the family from the outset.
- ✓ Raised awareness across partner agencies of the additional services being provided within the universal offer and the shared responsibility for providing help early in the emergence of a problem
- ✓ Improved collaborative working with schools to enable a more robust approach to problem solving together
- ✓ Improved coordination of provision with Children's Centre hubs and better connection with specialist programmes, statutory services and Family Early Help to enable the right families to get support in the early years

2.6 Supporting Vulnerable Parents

Supporting Vulnerable Parents has been a key thematic priority for the Board for 2016/17. The focus has been on parents with complex needs, and throughout the year we have specifically looked at those experiencing either domestic abuse and / or substance misuse. Due to the nature of these issues, including their prevalence in families where harm to children has

occurred, domestic abuse and substance misuse have been reviewed independently. However, supporting vulnerable parents will be a continuing priority for 2017/18, where the board will be looking at domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health and the interface between individual services and children services.

Domestic Abuse

Through the preparation work undertaken as part of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection, (JTAI) Domestic Abuse, (DA) theme, data showed a cohort of survivors who had children on child protection plan's and/or whose cases were repeatedly heard at the DA MARAC, (high risk multi-agency conferencing) and who for a variety of reasons did not engage with existing support provision. Many of the survivors were women with multiple needs and would require more intense bespoke support to encourage and maintain engagement. Due to very high demand and the increase in referrals to the main commissioned DA service this type of support presented a challenge. As a result of this, a new bespoke approach is being developed to effectively engage with this cohort. This will supplement the existing universal DA provision and will form part of the protocol between children services and the main commissioned DA service.

The Domestic Abuse MARAC is a forum where information relating to high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared

between local agencies to minimise risk. By bringing relevant agencies together at the MARAC, a risk-focused, co-ordinated safety plan is drawn up to support the victim. In Southwark the MARAC meets monthly and is chaired by the Detective Inspector of the local Community Safety Unit. As a partnership we have seen an increase in MARAC referrals over the last three years. During 2016/17 the total number of referral stood at 517 (compared to 458 in 2015/16). Of the 517 referrals, 333 (64%) of them involved victims with children. The increase in referrals is a pan-London trend across MARAC's and is currently being reviewed as to possible causation. This also needs to be reviewed against the backdrop of police data which currently illustrates that London is experiencing the lowest Domestic Homicide rate since 2006/07, thus demonstrating that risk minimisation through the process of MARAC is effective and having some degree of impact. The MARAC's effectiveness is scheduled to be audited through the SSCB Audit & Learning sub group in early 2017/18.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ Stronger referral pathway between children's social care and commissioned substance misuse services and domestic abuse providers.
- ✓ Continuation of a co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) in MASH resulting in increase consultations.
- ✓ Increase in referrals to domestic abuse commissioned services, (During 17/18 there were 1755 service users – 1191 referrals where the victim had children/s or was pregnant) with all clients with children, (1542 in total). All received advice on how best to keep children safe.

Parental Substance Misuse

Following the re-commissioning of the adult community specialist drug and alcohol treatment system in 2015/16, a key priority in 2016/17 was the implementation of the new service offer which included the development of effective partnership working arrangements between substance misuse treatment services and Children's Social Care services.

In August 2016, the Drug & Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) undertook an audit with Lifeline Southwark and Blenheim Insight Young People's Substance Misuse Service which focused upon the requirements set out within the SSCB Joint Working Protocol to meet the needs of children and unborn children whose parents & carers have substance misuse problems. Feedback was issued to both providers identifying actions for further work with Lifeline Southwark utilising this report to inform an internal safeguarding review, including a detailed case file audit. As a result, a specialised parental

assessment was developed and is utilised to assess hidden harms for all new treatment entrants who have children with all cases added to a tracker to ensure appropriate monitoring and management of risk. All parental service users are also offered access to the family service worker with group provision available as well as outreach provision in a number of locations in the borough.

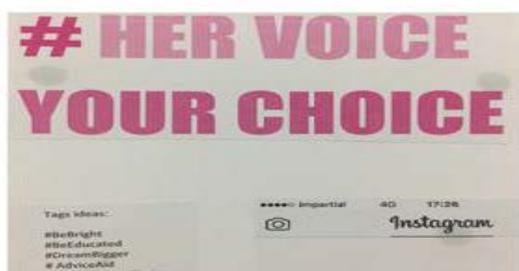
In the latter part of 2016/17, Lifeline Southwark undertook a review focused on barriers to treatment for female service users, including parents, which identified two key factors influencing female parental user engagement; these included fear of children's services and difficulties with childcare. Additionally, a dual diagnosis, (substance misuse and mental health) working group was formed between Lifeline Southwark and SLaM to consider the pathway as well as to undertake an audit to establish localised prevalence rates for service users with substance misuse and mental health needs.

What difference has it made?

- ✓ The screening of all service users at treatment entry for contact with children, the development of a specialised parental assessment, built capacity to deliver home visits for parental users and access to specialised family support increases the likelihood of identifying issues at an earlier point and enables risk to be monitored more effectively.
- ✓ Family service outreach provision to health services including hospitals, primary care, sexual health and the Chaucer Clinic Specialist Family Focus Team serve to increase the reach of the drug and alcohol treatment system to vulnerable parents who may or may not be engaged in treatment and offers a pathway into specialised care through improving access.
- ✓ Increased awareness of treatment barriers for female parental service users provides services with a starting point to review and revise the service offer in order to overcome issues that restrict access to and engagement with treatment.
- ✓ The dual diagnosis working group review was only recently undertaken, but has informed a dual diagnosis information collection project which will commence in 2017/18 and which will provide accurate information on prevalence and pathways to inform service development to meet needs and improve outcomes.

2.7 Voice of the service user - Changemakers

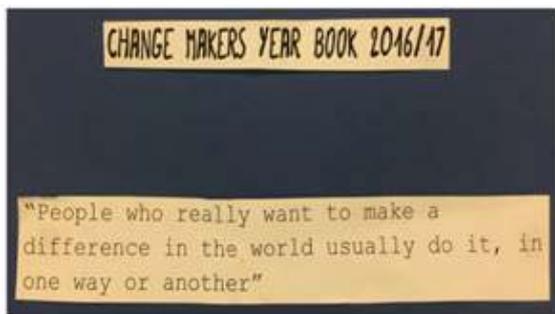
Changemakers are a group of young people who work alongside the safeguarding board to advise and influence on topical matters relating to keeping children and young people safe. It is a valued and integral partner in delivering the safeguarding agenda, undertaking meaningful and innovative work that has impacted on partners understanding of issues and resulted in changes to services.



This year the Changemakers have been working on a range of very important issues that affect the everyday lives of the young people in Southwark and are linked to the SSCB's work and priorities. These have included knife crime, online safety, CSE and dealing with stress. The Changemakers have used a variety of creative media such as producing an animation for young people illustrating possible challenges and where they can go for help, developing a range of text messages to assist girls and young women to support peers who might be involved or at risk of CSE and delivering presentations to the safeguarding board.

During 2016/17 the Changemakers captured all of their work in a year book, providing a visual record of all of their contributions. They report that they feel their work is valued by the Board and that they can present questions and challenge to partner agencies.

Many of our young people have benefited from this experience and have been able to reflect this experience in their own future plans. To view their year book or to find out more about the views and work of the Changemakers you can contact them via sias@southwark.gov.uk



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Chapter 3 – SSCB accountability

3.1 Core Child Protection Review and Challenge

At the heart of the board's work is the regular review of core child protection activity by agencies. This makes up a significant aspect of the board's agenda and sub group activity and takes shape in many forms including challenge and review of key performance data around local child protection activity and ensuring compliance with key statutory requirements, such as through the Serious Case Review and Human Resources and Safeguarding subgroups. The board requires that partners bring core activity for review and challenge by partners such as the Annual Child Protection Chair and Independent Reviewing Officers Reports, the Designated Doctor's Looked After Children Health Report and the LADO

annual report. This is further supported through the performance framework, which is reviewed quarterly by the Board, and informs its priorities, work programme and audit programme.

Good safeguarding practice requires strong and effective day to day child protection work from all partners, which is strongly evidenced in the Children's Services Ofsted inspection. Strengths include the continual strive for improvement, developing innovative services which are informed by children's participation and involvement. The recommendations from this inspection will be translated into an action plan which the SSCB will monitor, with Looked After Children (LAC) being a priority group.

3.2 Quality assurance and improvement

The SSCB's clear vision and priorities for safeguarding children in Southwark is underpinned by a well established multi agency infrastructure that enables the Board to assure the work and practice of its partners, in line with its responsibilities and priorities. Partner agencies own review of safeguarding practices, alongside board led multi-agency audits, serious case reviews, section 11 assurance and sub-group work programmes are all key processes used by the Board to oversee and challenge partnership work.

Data and performance monitoring is a key component of this infrastructure, providing a basis for challenge and analysis of where things are getting better and where more multi agency effort is needed to bring about improvements in practice and outcomes for children and families. In the past year, the Board has been working to extend and strengthen its data and performance reporting across partner agencies and moving forward will embed the performance framework into the work of the sub groups to ensure that relevant performance data informs analysis and evaluation of services.

The range of safeguarding performance data has been reviewed by the Board and is used to better support the challenge approach by the board using data and intelligence. This has resulted in a streamlined approach to managing multi-agency performance against statutory safeguarding responsibilities and setting priorities through performance led practice improvement areas. The board has used this approach to bring together information and experiences across performance, quality and interagency governance arrangements to undertake, for example, a review of the early help offer. This holistic approach is leading to in-depth dives into local practice that support social care improvements as well as strengthening the evidence base for challenge and dialogue with partners around practice improvements. This will be further developed over the forthcoming year, with other priorities which will benefit from being reviewed in this way, such as the board's work around thresholds and vulnerable parents.

In accordance with section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and duties under chapter 2 of Working Together to Safeguard Children, SSCB partner agencies are required to self-assess the effectiveness of their arrangements for safeguarding children. Historically, the SSCB has adopted the pan London Section 11 template to evaluate the extent to which partners are fulfilling these statutory functions. There is good analysis and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements through a multi agency

challenge panel, which uses peer scrutiny to ensure strong agency leadership and engagement. Although a range of services and agencies have previously taken part in the challenge panels, following a Board evaluation of the S11 process, it was recognised that the process should be extended to schools, GPs and more voluntary and community sector groups across the borough. To enable wider engagement, a task and finish group has been established to review the current template and explore how changes can support agencies to become involved in the process.

The SSCB has led partners in a programme of multi-agency audits. During 2016/17, three multi-agency audits were undertaken (MASH effectiveness, Adolescents at Risk and Neglect) and learning identified is being embedded to improve in safeguarding practice. The Effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) multi agency audit showed evidence of effective and timely information sharing with strong multiagency membership resulting in appropriate identification of need and protective factors resulting in robust decision making. Other common themes emerging are the need for a more transparent transfer mechanism across services, the need to measure the impact and effectiveness of the various interventions that aim to improve families and developing training to ensure key processes, such as team around the child, are further embedded in agencies.

3.3 Learning and development

The SSCB is committed to ensuring that everyone working with children, young people and families in our community, has the right skills and knowledge, to provide the right support and interventions to protect them from harm.

Led by the Practice, Development and Training (PDT) subgroup, the SSCB launched its multi-agency learning and development (L&D) strategy in 2015 and has built on this each year. The strategy underpins the SSCB's learning and development framework which together provide a clear and transparent framework for workforce development standards so that all multi-agency organisations in our community have employees and volunteers with the right skills and knowledge to be confident to safeguard children, young people and their families. The SSCB delegates L&D to the SSCB Practice, Development and Training (PDT) sub group. This meeting is well represented by the partnership, and takes

a practical as well as a strategic approach. Collectively, they oversee multi agency safeguarding training to ensure key priorities are met. This year's offer has included core safeguarding practice and training on key priority areas including child sexual exploitation, neglect, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation.

The SSCB has adopted the London model for evaluation. The administration of this has been a heavily paper-based process, and an on-line system has been implemented to carry out evaluation quickly and efficiently for the second half of 2016/17. This will be further improved in 2017/18 with a new learning management system.

The effectiveness of multi-agency training continues to be reviewed, including how it complements single agency training. Our position as a board is that we work better together and a partnership approach to safeguarding training is our preferred option.

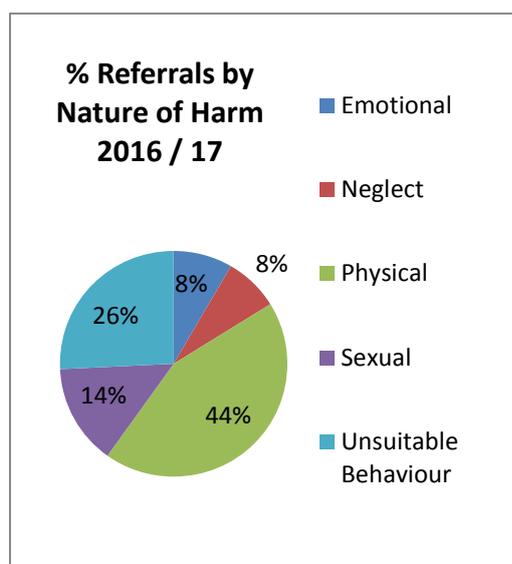
3.4 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

LADO responsibilities are set out in Working Together Chapter 2, the London Child Protection Procedures Chapter 7 and Keeping Children Safe in Education¹. The work of the LADO is carried out by one of the two Quality Assurance Managers who liaise with other relevant agencies and departments such as Education, Early Years and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team.

The LADO responsibilities, together with number and type of referrals, including referring agencies is all monitored on a quarterly basis by the HR and Safeguarding subgroup.

¹ <http://www.londoncp.co.uk>

Considering the period from April 2016 to March 2017 there has been a significant increase in referrals compared to the previous year; in 2015/16 there were 99 referrals in total and 2016/17 it was 168. The hypothesis is that since January 2016 we have had a permanent LADO and administrative support which has enabled the LADO to promote awareness of allegations work through training and presentations. We have also been able to form ongoing working relationships with other organisations, particularly head teachers and nursery managers. Dedicated administrative support has also helped to provide a more consistent and robust recording and tracking process.



It is encouraging to see that not only do we have Head Teachers and Nursery Managers making referrals and calling for

advice but a wide range of agencies are also contacting the LADO. Stronger links have been developed with Leisure Services and Parks, Community Engagement, various commissioning teams, the Travel Assistance team and Children with Disabilities. The Fostering and Care Teams have also increased contact and regularly call not just to make referrals but also to discuss cases where it is unclear if the matter would fall under care standards or allegations. This process has been made easier by the new London wide agreement that each LADO will manage all allegations against their own local authority fosters carers irrespective of where in London they live.

The LADO completed investigations into all referrals within a timely manner. Looking at referrals between October 2016 and March 2017 73.5% of referrals were completed within a month and 84% within 3 months.

The Southwark LADO hosts and chairs the quarterly London LADO meeting and had input into the revised London Child Protection Procedures. Guests are regularly invited to attend these meetings, and during 2016/17 the Football Association, Disclosure and Barring Service, NSPCC, Manager of the London Safeguarding Children's Board and Faith Organisations all attended, which helped build links and provide a more consistent approach London wide.

3.5 Financial arrangements

The SSCB receives financial contributions from a number of agencies and other forms of in-kind support. Money received in 2016-17 is detailed below;

Contribution	Total
Police (MOPAC)	£5,000
Southwark CCG	£15,000
SLAM	£5,000
London Fire Brigade	£1,000
LB Southwark – Children’s Services budget	£126,000
LB Southwark training	£50,000
Sub-total contributions	£202,000
LB Southwark - contribution for admin costs of joint CDOP panels	-£5,000
Total from contributions	£197,000

Chapter 4 – what happens when a child dies or is seriously harmed?

4.1 Child death review

The SSCB has continued to work with Southwark Child Death Overview Panel to ensure that safeguarding issues are fully addressed and learning is used to prevent future deaths. The Southwark Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is joint between Southwark and Lambeth and it reviews all deaths in children and young people up to the age of 18 years who are normally resident in the borough. The CDOP also provide a rapid response to unexpected deaths. The process aims to identify if deaths were potentially modifiable, and to use learning from the process to prevent future deaths.

Since 2012, Lambeth and Southwark CDOP have run two panels in parallel: a Neonatal Death Overview Panel (NDOP), which reviews deaths in children up to 28 days of age and a CDOP, which reviews deaths in children aged over 28 days. These parallel panels were established as sadly the majority of deaths are in children aged under one year and within this group over half are under 28 days, however deaths involving older children typically involve a wider range of professionals and the board's composition was established to reflect this.

Sadly over the course of the year 17 new deaths were reported comprising of 11 neonates and 6 children. Southwark reviewed 8 deaths, where the classifications were 2 (25%) Neonatal deaths, 2 (25%) Known life limiting condition, 1 (12.5%) Sudden unexpected death in infancy and 3 (37.5) were from other classifications. Two (25%) cases had modifiable factors.

Two main recommendations were made for action this year. First, a haemoglobinopathy (sickle cell) needs assessment is underway to further develop services and improve quality of care. Secondly, to implement the NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidance in sepsis this is being taken forward by local hospitals, which will improve recognition, diagnosis and early management of sepsis.

Other work this year has been to recruit a new coordinator and administrator who are now in place, and to identify capacity to reduce the backlog of cases which has started.

4.2 Serious Case Reviews

The SSCB undertakes reviews of 'serious cases' where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and the child has died, is seriously harmed and there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to protect the child. Southwark uses the Welsh care review model, which is systems based and

utilises a strengths-based approach. Colleagues have been actively engaged through this process which promotes reflection, debate and challenge.

During 2016/17 we concluded and published a serious case review, Child U. Key learning points included:

- Developing a multi agency action plan to reduce the risk of knife crime and knife carrying in the borough
- Developing a separate referral form for children and young people with level 2 needs
- Improving clarity and understanding of referral pathways and the different services available to families
- All agencies should consistently perform regular audits of their data management systems to ensure children are linked to siblings to enable a whole family approach.

The SSCB ensures key learning from case reviews is shared and understood by key partners and cascaded across individual agencies. An extensive learning event to share key messages from the current serious case review took place earlier in the year, chaired by the Independent Chair of the SSCB and widely attended by key partners and stakeholders. The

learning event provided a holistic picture of the case from a multi-agency perspective and strengthened the learning experience. An action plan of the current serious case review has been developed and is overseen by the Serious Case Review sub-group, who will ensure that recommendations are implemented and learning is cascaded.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Statement of Sufficiency

On the basis of the work undertaken by Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board over the past year, as presented by the information in this annual report, the Board is assured that overall partners continue to work together to protect children in a committed and effective way and fulfils its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Local

Safeguarding Board Regulations 2006. This report demonstrates that the Board has coordinated and monitored the effectiveness of the work of partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Southwark and has challenged agencies to improve coordination and learn from reviews and audits.

Looking forward to 2017/18

Our partnership arrangements remain flexible and adapt to meet changing needs. We continue to strengthen our links with the adults safeguarding board and community safety agenda to provide a joined up focus on vulnerable adults in the community such as those at risk or experiencing mental health, exploitation and abuse and most notably a shared concern around knife crime and knife carrying. Our priorities for 2017/18 sit within this context and include recommendations for improvement made by Ofsted. The SSCB will continue to respond to local and national challenges considering ways in which multi-agency partners can better work together to tackle shared areas of work and concern. Our thematic priorities for 2017/18 are:

Priority 1 - CSE and young people who go missing

During 2017-18, the SSCB will be building on these strong foundations laid in 2016-17 and will focus on:

- Strengthening the CSE and missing performance framework, including the addition of community engagement measures and placement locations of looked after children who are missing (in borough and out of borough) so we are better able to distinguish local impact and out of borough issues;
- Re-commissioning the support services for children at risk of and victims of sexual exploitation and return home interviews for missing children, ensuring the service provision is linked into Southwark's operational and multi-agency work to address CSE and missing.
- Ensure there is a joined-up approach to CSE, which will include a mix of targeted, assertive outreach as well as other provisions, such as a new public health service focusing on risky behaviours, including sexual health.
- A revised communications campaign.
- Targeting of specific hard to reach or non engagement groups.

Priority 2 - Adolescents at Risk, including knife crime (joint priority with SSAB)

In July 2017, the two year action plan will be formally signed off by both the Safeguarding Children's Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board. This was a key recommendation from the Serious Case Review of Child U. The learning from this review has also been embedded in the action plan.

The Knife Crime Action Plan will reflect the London wide prioritisation of knife crime as seen in the Mayors Office Knife Crime Action Plan 2017 – 2021, MPS Control Strategy, Southwark Council Plan, and Southwark Community Safety Partnership Plan. The plan is supported legislatively by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsequent amendments) through the work of the Community Safety Partnership for which the statutory responsibility is held by the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board. The plan is also supported by safeguarding legislation.

In summary, during 2017/18 we will;

- Be delivering the knife crime action plan in collaboration with young people, and closely monitoring progress to ensure we are making a difference.
- Launching a communications campaign with a set of key messages that will be embedded within wider civic activity.
- Providing a particular focus, working with young people, schools, parents and carers to enable them to access information and appropriate support.

Priority 3 - Early Help and Neglect

Moving in to 2017/18 we will continue to strengthen our offer on tackling the signs and symptoms of early neglect and work towards reducing risks and the need for future statutory intervention. We will do this in a range of ways, including;

- Developing a separate referral form with partners where identified needs of a family can be effectively matched to our early help provision.
- Providing clarity over referral pathways and the different services available to families within the community, universal and specialist services.
- Coordinating and communicating our early help offer and developing tools to monitor its impact.
- Embedding a more collaborative way of working across universal, targeted and statutory services to improve consistency in our whole family approach.
- Promoting the new ways of working across the partnership and shared accountability for our early help offer.
- Building on the improved collaboration with schools, promote and disseminate their best practice, to ensure that young people and families' access to early intervention is consistent and fair across the borough
- Continuing to improve the quality of direct work with families delivered by Family Early Help Services in the council, through robust management oversight of casework and processes that ensure timely and persistent engagement with families

- Developing a more comprehensive and well disseminated parenting offer across the borough which provides evidence based parenting programmes (1:1 and group) to address specific needs and includes the evaluation of impact on children as well as parents

Priority 4 - Supporting vulnerable parents

Going forward, the Board will work on strengthening supporting vulnerable parents, especially those who are hard to engage and where children are at risk of neglect, or where parents have substance misuse issues or suffering domestic abuse.

In summary the focus for 17/18 will be;

- Implementing a new model within our current DA commissioned service for females who have children on Child Protection Plans who are hardest to reach. This will involve a bespoke dedicated support which places high emphasis on researching, planning and resourcing tailored engagement.
- Undertaking a multi agency audit as to the effectiveness of the DA MARAC
- Commencing the dual diagnosis information collection project with a view to increasing awareness of dual diagnosis issues within the substance misuse treatment population.
- Continuing to improve drug and alcohol treatment access for female parental service users with continuous review in formal contract monitoring.
- Undertaking a multi agency audit as to the effectiveness of referral pathways when working with parents with substance misuse issues.
- Further work across domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health agenda in order to strengthen service provision for vulnerable parents and their children.

Priority 5 – Ofsted recommendations

The SSCB has a statutory requirement to ensure the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promote the welfare of children in the borough. It is therefore essential that the recommendations from the safeguarding inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers are also prioritised in the forthcoming year. In summary, these are;

- Ensuring that prompt decisions are made to safeguard children affected by long-term, cumulative neglect, so that they are not left in adverse home circumstances for long periods.
- Working with partner agencies to ensure that referrals contain sufficient information and that parental consent has been obtained if necessary, so that management decisions on the required action are timely and families receive help quickly.
- Ensuring that strategy discussions and strategy meetings involve all relevant agencies so that multi-agency information informs assessment of risks.

- Ensuring that return home interviews with children missing from home and care are completed consistently and effectively so that the intelligence gained reduces the recurrence of further missing episodes.
- Strengthening management oversight of social workers in the children looked after and care leavers' services.
- Ensuring that the sufficiency strategy, supported by effective commissioning, provides a better supply of high-quality placements for children looked after, particularly for adolescents who display challenging behaviours.
- Ensuring that children's care plans are effectively and regularly reviewed to confirm whether their needs are being met through their placements, and establish alternative plans where necessary.
- Ensuring that children looked after who live outside of the local authority area are not disadvantaged through slower access to essential services, particularly child and adolescent mental health services, education support and regular health assessments.
- Ensuring that children looked after are supported to build strong and enduring attachments to their carers through more timely permanence decisions for long-term foster family arrangements. Ensure timely life story work, which is kept up to date.
- Ensuring that all social workers and personal advisers working with young people leaving care have a clear knowledge of their current circumstances. This aim should be supported through consistently effective pathway planning, to ensure that young people understand and receive all their entitlements and that their identified needs are met.
- Ensuring that children are aware of how to complain about services provided to them and that more advocacy support is provided for children on child protection plans and for those who are looked after. Ensure good access to independent visitors for children looked after.

The partnership will continue to work together to improve the outcomes for children and young people in the borough and the SSCB Business Plan 2017-19 details how this will be achieved.

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