

Brighton & Hove LSCB: Board Briefing

September 2015

Welcome to Brighton & Hove Local Children Safeguarding Board Briefing. The Board meeting was held on 22 September 2015.

We were joined by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner who attended as an observer.

**“A child's voice,
however honest and
true, is meaningless
to those who have
forgotten how to
listen”
Albus Dumbledore**

New Social Work Model of Practice

A new Social Work Model of practice will see the re-organisation of children's social care into 16 Pods, each with a case load of 120 children across all stages of the child protection system. This is to promote a relationship based way of working with families and mitigate change of social workers at critical times of transition. Read more about this way of working [here](#). This is a major service redesign.

Social workers will be taking their current children to the new pods so initially there will be an uneven distribution of cases but it is hoped in the long term there will be equal distribution, and a family will stay in the same pod from assessment through Child in Need and Looked After Children services with the same social worker throughout. There will also be a group supervision model so social workers within the pod will know all children and be better able to support the family if their allocated worker is absent from work. The LSCB agreed the new model of practice as proposed is child centric and will reduce unnecessary disruption at times of transition.

The new model of practice is based on good practice from half a dozen authorities that have adopted this model, in particular Southwark and Essex, who went from an inadequate Ofsted judgement to good in just four years after adopting this way of working. The LSCB Lay Member asked how children, young people and their families will be informed about changes. The Executive Director of Children's Services said a strong message from children was that they were unhappy about their social workers changing so this has been at the heart of the service redesign from the start. They should not notice a difference to the service they receive, except that when their social worker is unavailable other workers of their pod will also know them.

Operation Encompass

An approach first launched in Plymouth in 2011 to make sure that information about children caught up in a domestic abuse incident is shared with schools as soon as possible, was to be trialled in schools in the autumn term in Brighton & Hove. We heard from the Executive Director of Children's Services that there had been some concerns about the preparation for this. He advised that no local authority has made this work well so far and there is some trepidation about what schools will do with, and their capacity to respond to, information. Detective Superintendent Paul Furnell is keen for schools to be supported to understand the implications and expectations upon receiving the intelligence. Progress on the development of Operation Encompass will continue to be monitored by the LSCB.

LSCB Annual Report 2014-15

Your LSCB is required to produce an annual report that outlines the progress it has made over the last year in respect to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The report covers the busy period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and briefly summarises all the activity undertaken by, and on behalf of the Board over the past year. The report was approved at Board. Read the full report [here](#). Please contact LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk with any queries.



LSCB Business Plan 2016-19

The first draft of the LSCB Business Plan for 2016-19 was presented by the LSCB Business Manager. This has developed from the discussion at the Board Development Day in June 2015. Five key outcomes through partnership were agreed:

1. Neglect - (Emotional Harm, Domestic Violence & Abuse, Parental Mental Health & Substance Misuse)
2. Early Help, Pathways, Thresholds and Assessments
3. Sexual Harm & Violence towards children (Child Sexual Abuse & Child Sexual Exploitation)
4. Performance Monitoring – Quality assurance and LSCB scrutiny
5. Participation and Engagement

Our **strategic intent** was agreed as follows:

- Strategies & action plans for the priority areas developed & implemented
 - Prevalence of priority area abuse known & understood
 - Priority areas audited as part of planned audit schedule and quality of partners engagement and interventions analysed to evidence impact and outcomes for children and young people.
 - Preventative interventions are promoted through targeted awareness raising sessions and communications on the priority areas, including to the wider community
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Early Help Conference

There is growing concern about the capacity to respond to the needs of children in need who are on the edge of care and there has been discussion around other workers who could more proactively support them, including Sure Start and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Tier 2 who may be in a position to do more Family Coach type work..

On 8 December 2015 there will an Early Help conference for decision and policy makers and strategic managers. It will be hosted by Children's Services & the LSCB. The theme of the conference is 'Early Help: How well we are doing and how do we move forward together?'

The Conference will be opened by the Lead Member for Children's Services, Executive Director for Children's Services and the Executive Director for Adult Services. The day will be facilitated by Graham Bartlett - Chair of both the Children and Adult Safeguarding boards.

There will be three keynote speakers whose sessions will followed by small group discussion and a question and answer plenary debate.

The focus will be on how together we can:

- Improve our systems and clarify our roles and responsibilities
 - Build an early help culture which supports our shared aspirations for children and young people
 - Address growing need but diminishing resources for family support and safeguarding services
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Baby Liam Publication

During the first seven weeks of his life Liam was injured on at least two occasions and experienced fractured ribs, a fractured femur and bilateral skull fractures. His Father was a care leaver from another area with history of volatile behaviours & substance misuse. We considered and signed off the Brighton & Hove LSCB Board Response to this serious case review and agreed the publication of the review's report – both the report and our board response can be read [here](#).

Workforce deficits

Board considered the impact of current and projected (as far as practicable) workforce deficits within agencies on the effectiveness of the safeguarding of children and young people.

Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy for Homeless Families

The Interim Head of Housing joined us to present a report on Brighton & Hove's policy for placing families in temporary accommodation. Moving vulnerable families across local authority boundaries was a risk factor identified in the Victoria Climbe case. He described how BHCC Housing work closely with Children's Services to try to minimise risks. The policy presented reflects current practice which enables a framework for decision making around which families are moved out of area. Families most in need and at risk are prioritised for placement in the city.

There are currently 1400 families in temporary accommodation. Most are in Brighton & Hove, but many are relocated to other areas. As we are seeing reductions in benefits combined with the rising cost of housing, many families are priced out of Brighton & Hove, and there is a worry that they may be priced out of the South East in future. This was recognised as a real issue in our city. There are duties placed on the local authority to find suitable accommodation for families both under the Housing Duty and the Children's Act. The Executive Director of Children's Services said that it is important to understand the level of need of families and recognise those that need to be kept close to the services that are supporting them.

Families placed in temporary accommodation are able to access the same level of health care as permanent residents. Although termed as "temporary" housing it can in fact be quite long term, and families are expected to register with local GPs, which may impact on the capacity of GP provider services.

The LSCB Lay Member asked about the right of children to consistency in education when they have to travel long distances to school. This was recognised as a challenge. BHCC try to stop, as much as possible, the "merry-go-round" that would cause repeated school moves. When families refuse the housing they are offered the number one reason is the disruption to their child's schooling. Many will choose to stay in overcrowded conditions with family or friends because of this.

Management Information Report Headlines - Table Discussion

It was discussed that one of the main factors behind children being put back on a child protection plan is that they were taken off the first plan too soon, especially if domestic violence or parental substance misuse is a factor. Members discussed that a radical option to combat repeat plans would be to have more of an open door policy where support was available for families on a longer term, for example five years after they were stepped down.

The Executive Director of children's Services assured that less children are stepped down from plans quickly now than in previous years, and the process is more robust. The Head of Safeguarding said that data indicates that children are generally on plans for longer, and staff are aware that if there is any of the toxic trio in the family they need to be extra vigilant about stepping down robustly. She explained that the numbers of children on repeat plans still looks high as they include those who came off plans within the past two years, but she expects that the figures will drop as time goes on and the effect of this change in practice is shown in the data.

It was noted that there are more younger children on plans than in previous years,. It was proposed that this should be viewed positively as it demonstrates that intervention is happening earlier to improve outcomes for children.

The number of young people in treatment for substance misuse is increasing, which is the reverse of the national picture. This could be due to increased capacity or better access rather than increased need. Service Manager BHCC Children's Services (YOS & ru-ok?) explained this could be due to better identification at earlier points.



Following feedback to the Participation & Engagement Subcommittee the Board have agreed that the minutes of the quarterly meetings will be published on the LSCB Website, www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk. This is to reflect #yourLSCB's commitment to a culture of openness, and as a reminder that **Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility**.

If you would have any questions or comments on this briefing please contact the Board's office at LSCB@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk