

LGA PILOT PEER REVIEW OF WARRINGTON'S CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD – UNDERTAKEN NOVEMBER 2014

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) works with local authorities to support sector led improvement, and as part of this approach offers a number of improvement tools for councils to commission, including peer reviews.
- 1.2 Peer review is a proven tool for improvement. It is a process commissioned by a council or safeguarding board and involves a small team of local government and multi-agency peers spending time at the organisation to provide challenge and share learning.
- 1.3 With the introduction of the Ofsted single inspection framework, the LGA recognised an opportunity to provide local safeguarding children's boards (LSCBs) with an external view of their effectiveness, and wanted to provide an offer which was developed with a small number of LSCBs to ensure its appropriateness and fitness for purpose. Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) was approached by the LGA and agreed to participate in a pilot review to test out the developing methodology and also receive an external view of the WSCB's effectiveness. The WSCB peer review took place in mid-November 2014.

2 LGA'S METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The aim of the peer review methodology is to provide LSCBs with an external view of the effectiveness and impact on safeguarding and protecting children, in order to identify areas for improvement. The peer review team are on site for 3 days to look at the LSCB across the full breadth of its statutory remit.
- 2.2 The methodology focuses on five key strands of activity:
 - Review of the LSCB business plan, annual report, minutes of the LSCB and sub-committees and other formal reports of the LSCB's activity e.g. reports to scrutiny and overview committees, Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - Review of the LSCB learning and development strategy and of the LSCB training plan and programme;
 - Review of serious case reviews (SCRs), other case reviews, Child Death Overview Process annual report and audit and quality assurance work of the LSCB;
 - Review of quality assurance and performance management arrangements of the LSCB including the LSCB data set and audit programme, audit validation; and
 - Interviews of LSCB members and staff, observations of LSCB activities or multi-agency processes to explore issues raised through the review of documentation.

3 THE FINDING FROM THE LGA PILOT PEER REVIEW

- 3.1 In agreeing to participate in the pilot peer review, the WSCB asked that the review team focus on the generic lines of enquiry regarding effectiveness and impact of the Board, in terms of overall performance and outcomes and that the review team included peers from social care, education and health to ensure a multi-agency perspective was considered.
- 3.2 The LGA's letter setting out its full findings is attached overleaf together with an action plan to address the areas for development.

APPENDIX 1: LETTER FROM THE LGA



Audrey Williamson, Chair of Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board/
Steve Reddy, Executive Director, Families & Wellbeing
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
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Warrington
WA1 2NH

26th January 2015

Dear Audrey/Steve

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD DIAGNOSTIC (PILOT)

On behalf of the team I would like to thank Warrington Borough Council, partner agencies and the WSCB for commissioning the recent LSCB diagnostic pilot. Your diagnostic was one of five pilots that will inform the January 2015 roll-out of the LGA LSCB diagnostic programme.

It is important to emphasise that this was not an inspection but a critical friend diagnostic delivered by a team of peers. The aim was to provide an informed, external perspective on the quality of the LSCB, its key strengths and areas for improvement. The team interviewed key stakeholders, either individually or as part of a focus group, as well as undertaking a comprehensive review of current documentation. At your request an optional element, being a multi-agency audit validation exercise, was undertaken and Appendix 1 to this letter provides the details to this exercise.

We are grateful to Kellie Williams, Julie Kelly and their colleagues for the efforts they put into preparing for and supporting our visit and we very much appreciate the way that everybody engaged in the process. The people we met were very welcoming and demonstrated a willingness to use the peer diagnostic as an opportunity for learning. We recognise that many of these people made themselves readily available to us at short notice and we thank them for their flexibility.

This letter sets out in detail our findings which were initially presented to an invited audience at the conclusion of the diagnostic.

Following an Executive Summary our findings are set out under the following headings:

- Working Together Compliance
- Board Effectiveness
- Evidence of Challenge and Holding to Account
- Capacity, Training and Managing Resources
- Vision, Strategy & Leadership

Executive Summary

Methodology and approach:

LSCB effectiveness is measured against Working Together 2013 which placed new requirements on LSCBs, most noticeably that they should be responsible for analysing the strength and quality of safeguarding in the relevant Local Authority area, and that they should both co-ordinate activity to ensure children and young peoples' wellbeing and safeguarding, and hold partners to account for delivering safeguarding outcomes. Most importantly, analysis of OFSTED safeguarding inspections to date shows that they now focus, in their evaluation of LSCB's, almost solely in terms of the reality of current delivery of safeguarding outcomes.

The Peer Review focuses on areas of development in order to assist future planning, and as a result it means that the feedback can be skewed in the direction of areas for consideration, whilst also noting areas of good practice.

The Peer review evaluates 5 key domains and the findings in each of these areas are set out below:

Overall findings:

Warrington WSCB has commendable strengths, illustrated by a range of evidence presented to the Peer Review team, including:

- the effectiveness of the Chair of the WSCB;
- a strong sense of cohesion, commitment to, and support for the WSCB by the partnership;
- strong input from children and young people;
- demonstrable collective engagement of the partnership in the WSCB;
- the strong evidence of challenge by the Board regarding the delivery of safeguarding activity;
- the high degree of networking across the partnership;
- good quality strategies in place in key areas such as child sexual exploitation (CSE) and neglect; and
- audits undertaken by the WSCB gave a good view of the quality of local practice.

Areas for development include:

- strengthen WSCB sub-structure and further improve partnership links, including early years, the third sector and some of the minority communities in the town;
- ensure that the lay members are given focused tasks in relation to their role;
- at a strategic level keep sight of the WSCB priorities, business plan and delivery with the use of exception reporting to assist the sense of focus;
- build on the work already done to evidence impact, particularly with a systematic focus on children and young people; using the planned refresh of the business plan to include specific measurable outcomes for children and young people, which could be embedded at operational level and reported to the WSCB as part of its performance management framework; and
- strengthen the Board's approach to risk management.

Detailed Peer Review Findings

Governance and Working Together Compliance:

This domain assesses how well the LSCB complies with the requirements of Working Together.

A key strength evidenced by the review team included the strong engagement across the partnership at the Board and in the work of the Board, strong input from children and young people, and evidence of successful challenge by the WSCB on safeguarding matters.

The review team noted the Local Authority's commitment to safeguarding, underpinned by a corporate pledge to "protect the most vulnerable". This is illustrated by the engagement of the Chief Executive, particularly in relation to child sexual exploitation.

The WSCB has signed concordats in place for its relationships with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership and Children and Young People's Partnership. Given the recent governance review undertaken by the WSCB these need to be updated to reflect that the Early Help Task and Finish Group will be transferring back to the Children and Young People's Partnership.

In noting that the WSCB intended to review its membership, the review team also identified some areas where the WSCB could usefully strengthen its sub-structure and further improve partnership links, including early years, the third sector and some of the minority communities in the town.

There are currently two resourceful lay members on the Board and the review team feel they could be given some focused tasks in relation to their role. In addition, the review team support the intention to target the recruitment of a

lay member from significant minority communities, which could assist in strengthening the community links to the WSCB.

Board Effectiveness:

A key strength is the overall cohesion of the WSCB. This is underpinned by good quality strategies in key areas such as CSE and neglect.

The focus on the WSCB's priorities by taking a themed approach to Board meetings was seen by its members as effective, and audits undertaken by the WSCB gave a good view of the quality of local practice.

The WSCB had already identified the need to review membership, noting the need to balance the requirements from Working Together 2013 against a size of membership which facilitates effective working. It had also recognised the need to be smarter in terms of the volume of reports presented to the Board. Therefore the review team suggest that the WSCB need to at a strategic level keep sight of the WSCB priorities, business plan and delivery (with the use of exception reporting to assist the sense of focus).

The WSCB recognised the need to build on the work already done to evidence impact, particularly with a systematic focus on children and young people. The review team suggests that this could be included in the planned refresh of the business plan to include specific measurable outcomes for children and young people, which could be embedded at operational level and reported to the WSCB as part of its performance management framework.

Challenge and Accountability:

The Board demonstrated effective challenge, with a number of examples of effective challenge were provided to the review team. To build on this strength, the Board has developed its performance management framework learning from good practice elsewhere, and once implemented this will enhance the shared understanding of delivery across all the key areas of the partnership and facilitate further collective challenge, within the overall spirit of partnership of the WSCB. The way that information is presented to the WSCB could assist this, ensuring reports are focused on key data, analysis, conclusions, recommendations and "smart" action plans.

Capacity, Training and Resources:

The WSCB is well supported by the Council. In respect of capacity, frontline resources for safeguarding have been protected at the Council, and the WSCB is well resourced and supported, with strong input from the partnership. Cross learning from the Cheshire network of safeguarding boards is a strength. Examples of innovative use of resources to achieve cost effective outcomes for children were given to the peer team. There is a strong and well regarded training programme of the WSCB. The review team feel that the Partnerships are strong and able to address capacity issues if they should arise.

Vision Strategy and Leadership:

The WSCB chair is well networked with the top leadership of the Council, and the WSCB has a strong profile within key partner agencies such as Health. The WSCB has an energetic and committed group of strongly engaged managers and thus good capacity to effect change, led by the Director for Children's Services.

At a strategic level it is acknowledged that the WSCB is developing a stronger sense of setting its work within the overall vision for safeguarding, "telling the Warrington story", with focused meetings on neglect, children in care, Warrington's communities for example. This will be strengthened by a refresh of the business plan to include specific measurable outcomes for children and young people. It is also suggested that the Board's approach to risk management be strengthened.

Through this letter we have sought to outline the strengths of the Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB), along with areas for consideration and improvement. You and your colleagues will no doubt now wish to reflect on the team's findings and then consider how they might inform your future plans and activities.

For further improvement support you can contact the LGA's Principal Adviser for the North West Region, Gill Taylor who can be contacted via gill.taylor@local.gov.uk or on 07789 512173. In addition, you can contact Edwina Grant, LGA Children's Improvement Adviser covering the North West Region for specialist support. Edwina can be contacted via edwina.grant@gmail.com or on 07904 111646.

Once again, thank you for participating in the pilot phase of the LGA LSCB diagnostic and please pass on our gratitude to everyone involved. Please also thank Ann McCormack and Kellie Williams for their attendance at the learning event for the 5 pilots on 21st January 2015 in order to further shape the offer.

Yours sincerely



Peter Rentell
Programme Manager (Children's Services) Local
Government Association

On behalf of the peer diagnostic team

APPENDIX 2: WSCB PILOT PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board: LGA Peer Review Response 26 January 2015 – Action Plan

	Area for Development	Lead	By When	Progress – Update February 2015	Status
1	To strengthen WSCB sub- group structure and further improve partnership links, including early years, the third sector and some of the minority communities in the town				
1.1	Review membership of WSCB and its sub groups	Chair of WSCB and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	January 2015	<p>A review of WSCB membership and sub-group has been undertaken. It has been agreed that the Early Help Sub Group will no longer report to WSCB but reports to the Children’s and Young Peoples’ Partnership. WSCB will continue to scrutinise outcomes and impact of the sub group.</p> <p>It has also been agreed that the Children in Care Sub Group no longer reports to WSCB but reports to the Corporate Parenting Panel. WSCB will continue to scrutinise outcomes and impact</p>	●
1.2	Improve partnership links with early years sector	Chair of WSCB and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	January 2015	<p>The Board member for the Warrington Association of Primary Head teachers also represents the early years’ maintained sector on the WSCB Board.</p> <p>The Board member, Operational Director the represents the Warrington Early Years Strategy Group which includes representatives from the private, voluntary and independent sectors.</p>	●
1.3	Improve partnership links with third sector by completing a review of Board and sub-group members to ensure good links with the third sector	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	March 2015	To be completed in March.	⊙
1.4	Improve partnership links with some of the minority communities in the town by developing the role of the WSCB Faith and Community group with support of lay members	Chair of WSCB and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	January 2015	The WSCB Faith and Community Group has been operational since September 2014 and is supported by WSCB lay members. The Group operates as a Reference Group to the Board. The Faith and Community Group invited Board Manager and lay member to Council of Faiths meeting in January	●

	Area for Development	Lead	By When	Progress – Update February 2015	Status
				2015. At this meeting an invitation was made to the WSCB Chair and WSCB Manager to meet with Imams and to deliver safeguarding training to the local mosques.	
1.5	Develop the Board's understanding of the local communities in Warrington	Chair of WSCB and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	January 2015	WSCB is working with the "Changing Warrington Strategic Task and Finish Group" -to gain full understanding of demographic changes in Warrington to inform the work of WSCB. WSCB held a Workshop on 26 th January 2015 to enhance Board Members understanding of Warrington's local communities	🟢
1.6	Deliver the action plan from the WSCB "Understanding Our Communities" workshop.	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	April 2015	Action plan drafted.	🟢
2	Ensure that lay members are given focused tasks in relation to their role.				
2.1	Recruit 2 lay members, one from Warrington's minority community, ensuring that the Board has a total of 3 lay members.	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	January 2015 April 2015	One additional lay member has been recruited and joined the Board in January 2015. Work is underway to recruit a lay member from Warrington's Polish Community.	🟢
2.2	Agree lead roles for lay members to undertake to support the work of the Board.	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	February 2015	It has been agreed that one lay member is to: champion private fostering for the Board; and join the quality assurance and performance sub-group. One Lay Member is a member of the WSCB Faith and Communities Reference Group and will be joining the Missing and child sexual exploitation sub-group.. Once recruited the third lay member's role will be confirmed.	🟢

	Area for Development	Lead	By When	Progress – Update February 2015	Status
3	At a strategic level keep sight of the WSCB priorities, business plan and delivery with the use of exception reporting to assist the sense of focus				
3.1	Review the WSCB Business Plan to ensure that in 2015 it sets out the Boards current priorities.	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	February 2015	Following a WSCB workshop in December 2014 the 2013-2014 Annual Report has been reviewed and a report is on the WSCB Website. The Business Plan has been reviewed and will provide the basis for the 2014- 2015 Annual Report.	●
3.2	Report by exception to the Board on the delivery of its priorities throughout 2015-2016, ensuring that the Executive manage the delivery of the business plan.	Chair of the Executive and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	On-going throughout 2015-16	To begin from the start of the new financial year.	○
4	Build on the work already done to evidence impact, particularly with a systematic focus on children and young people, using the planned refresh of the business plan to include specific measureable outcomes for children and young people, which could be embedded at operational level and reported to the WSBC as part of its performance management framework.				
4.1	Review the WSCB Business Plan to include specific and measurable outcomes that demonstrate impact on children and young people and which are embedded in operational practice.	WSCB & Partnerships Manager	February 2015	The Business Plan has been reviewed and updated to include specific and measurable outcomes that demonstrate the impact on children. These measures are contained within the WSCB performance dashboard.	●
4.2	Ensure that the voice of the child and their lived experience is reported to the Board as part of the learning from multi-agency audits.	Chair of the Case Review sub-group	In-line with audit programme	The next multi-agency audit will take place in March 2015.	◎
5	Strengthen the Board's approach to risk management				
5.1	Identify operational and strategic changes for partner agencies which may impact of the effectiveness of services to safeguard children, when monitoring the business plan, reporting by exception to the Board.	Chair of the Executive and WSCB & Partnerships Manager	From April 2015 onwards	To begin from the start of the new financial year.	○