

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 16 March 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Jayne James, SLSCB Business Manager
For all enquiries: (01753 690924)

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

OFSTED – REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Inspection date: 24 November 2015 - 17 December 2015

Report published: 17 February 2016

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Education And Children's Services (ECS) Scrutiny Panel on Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board (SLSCB)'s Ofsted Inspection held between November and December 2015 and the LSCB's intended actions to address all recommendations.

SLSCB coordinates the safeguarding work of the individual agencies and monitors and challenges agencies' progress on improving child protection.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The ECS Scrutiny Panel is recommended to take the following actions:

- a) That the Panel discusses the report and note the intentions of SLSCB to agree and implement a plan for improvement which will achieve the Ofsted recommendations.
- b) During the summer, SLSCB will produce an Annual Report for 2015-16 and it is suggested that this is discussed at a scrutiny panel meeting during Autumn 2016, when the Panel could also receive a report on the progress of SLSCB at that time.
- c) Panel members to receive a copy of the agreed SLSCB Business Plan for 2016 -17 outside of the Panel meetings and respond individually to the Chair of SLSCB as appropriate.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection and SLSCB's intended actions indirectly impact across several priorities of the Slough Wellbeing Strategy, however; they particularly challenge and contribute to the 'Health' and 'Safer Communities' priorities.

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The SLSCB work supports specific delivery and challenges the Wellbeing Board's progress against the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley
- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

Whilst there are no financial implications for the Panel, the Ofsted report highlights the lack of a robust financial arrangement for funding SLSCB. Similar comments have been made by Ofsted during recent inspections of other LSCBs in Berkshire. The partnership needs to develop a more consistent method of partner financial contribution to ensure its effectiveness in the long term.

(b) Risk Management

An effective LSCB provides oversight, support and challenge for services of the Council, its providers and partners. If effective, it is therefore a way of controlling risks that Council services might be insufficiently effective for local children and families.

As LSCBs are partnership bodies, there is a reputational risk for all statutory members of the partnership in having an ineffective LSCB. This is most significant for Slough Borough Council (SBC) as it is the organisation charged with establishing the LSCB and the inspection report for the Board is embedded within the SBC Children's Services Ofsted Inspection report.

The SLSCB Business Plan (2016-17) is being structured to meet the specific risks that have been identified from the recent Ofsted Inspection. By this means it is anticipated that the above risks will be reduced.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications of proposed action although the work of the Board contributes to a number of Human Rights such as the right to family life.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EIA attached to the proposed action, however the Panel should note the recommendation of Ofsted regarding lay membership of the Board (see below).

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Ofsted reviewed the effectiveness of the Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board between 24 November 2015 - 17 December 2015. Its findings, which are incorporated in the SBC Children's Services Ofsted report published on 17 February 2016 (page 38 onwards) and the overall finding was 'Inadequate'.

5.2 Ofsted summarised its findings as:

"The LSCB has not made sufficient progress against the recommendations from the previous inspection in 2013. The independent chair has brought increased focus and challenge to work of the Board. However, the LSCB has not been sufficiently effective in scrutinising or challenging the significant weaknesses in the delivery of front-line services to children in need of help, protection and care. The poor engagement of some partners has been a barrier to progress. The LSCB has failed to strengthen the review of practice through case audits, has not ensured that thresholds are regularly reviewed and has not developed arrangements to evaluate and report on the experiences of children missing from care, home and education.

The threshold document is no longer compliant with statutory guidance and, significantly, does not reflect the current arrangements in place across the partnership. The Board has not reviewed the quality or effectiveness of threshold decision making.

Although some progress has been made by the LSCB in recent months in developing more effective arrangements to oversee and scrutinise data and audit front-line practice, it is yet to provide rigorous evaluation and analysis of local practice and performance.

The strategic child sexual exploitation subgroup has overseen some proactive work such as awareness raising with local businesses. However, overall, the Board has not been effective in reviewing front-line practice in response to children missing and those at risk of sexual exploitation. As a result, it has not assured itself that these children are effectively safeguarded.

The female genital mutilation task and finish subgroup has made good progress, for example in understanding prevalence, developing a draft strategy and pathways and undertaking an audit of cases.

The Board's training programme has not been formulated based on a needs analysis. Although there is good take-up of training, the Board has not evaluated impact or assured itself that training leads to improvements in practice and service delivery.

There are no lay members on the LSCB currently and therefore it is not duly constituted.

The chair is actively seeking a sufficient multi-agency funding arrangement for the work of the Board, but to date a funding formula has not been agreed. This is required in order to ensure that the Board is able to deliver its core functions. “

- 5.3 In addition to its criticism, Ofsted recognised the good work the Board has achieved, particularly in reviewing the deaths of children and its progress on the risks of children being subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This shows that partnership work for Slough can work effectively and that it is possible to work with neighbouring areas to achieve improvement.
- 5.4 The report makes six recommendations for improvement which are set out below. In order to prioritise the recommendations in its work, the Board has agreed to use the six recommendations as the themes around which the 2016-17 SLSCB Business Plan is being structured. The detailed actions and draft timescales are being discussed at the Board on 17 March 2016 for finalisation but key activities are set out below against each theme .
- 5.5 At the SLSCB meeting there will also be a facilitated development discussion to identify new ways for Board members to work to achieve stronger outcomes. This will include ensuring that activity between meetings is more dynamic. Such a discussion is key to the Board moving forward so that its members have a culture of challenge and improvement which will impact on all aspects of its work, not merely the Ofsted findings. As the draft plan has yet to be agreed it is not provided to the Panel on 16 March 2016, but once agreed it can be circulated to members for their consideration. Any comments or feedback from Panel members at that time will be fully considered by the Board.

The key themes and actions of the SLSCB draft plan are as follows:

- 5.6 ***Revise and implement multi-agency threshold guidance and scrutinise the application of thresholds at all levels.***

Actions:

- SLSCB is already revising its Threshold Document to reflect the requirements of statutory guidance.
- The document will be disseminated to all professionals to ensure it is used within their daily practice.
- The LSCB will request a monitoring report to establish the extent to which the Threshold Document is being appropriately applied and respond to any weaknesses identified within the report(s).
- The LSCB will carry out a multi agency audit of cases, examining referrals and initial response to test practice against the agreed approach.

5.7 ***Establish a programme of effective monitoring and quality assurance of multi-agency safeguarding practice. This should include analysis of performance information, section 11 audits and internal partner agency audits, as well as multi-agency auditing led by the LSCB.***

(Section 11 of the Children's Act sets out standards for all statutory partners to achieve if they are to be effective at safeguarding)

Actions:

The Quality Audit Group of SLSCB was already undertaking a multi-agency audit of domestic abuse cases at the time of the Ofsted visit. The report from this audit together with draft actions to improve any areas of weakness in partners work should be received by the Board on 17 March 2016. The SLSCB Admin Unit are putting in place a tracking system to ensure that actions from audits are delivered and any delays are addressed. The 2016-17 Business Plan will include a draft plan for future multi-agency audits.

The Executive of the Board is receiving basic performance information from partners and discussing it. Once the Children's Trust has embedded its own performance management framework, the Trust's Chief Executive has agreed to provide analyst time to SLSCB so that its performance framework can be improved.

SLSCB already works with other Pan-Berkshire Boards to receive Section 11 self-assessments from organisations which provide services across more than one local authority and to discuss them in a Pan Berkshire panel. However, the inspectors identified that this process was not followed up by discussion of any improvement plans in SLSCB meetings and therefore some partners were not aware of the issues. In future the Pan-Berkshire work will be brought to SLSCB meetings.

The inspectors were critical of the Council for not carrying out a self-assessment against Section 11 standards. This had already been addressed by the Board before the inspection and SBC had started a self-assessment of its services. It is anticipated that the results of this will be discussed by the Board in June 2016. The Council has been asked to establish a process for requiring organisations it commissions to also provide regular assurance against the standards.

SLSCB will ensure it provides feedback and challenge to organisations in response to pertinent Section 11 audits.

SLSCB is specifying that all auditing and evaluation reports from partners include analysis of how children are 'heard' in the cases they examine and how this is improving service delivery and outcomes for children.

5.8 ***Take action to strengthen the LSCB's oversight and scrutiny of the effectiveness of the local multi-agency response to children at risk of sexual exploitation and children who go missing.***

This recommendation is closely aligned to the comments in the Children's Services part of the Ofsted report. The Board's role is to oversee progress on Sexual Exploitation and missing Children effectively.

Actions:

At its February 2016 SLSCB Executive meeting, partners agreed to establish a joint operational team to address sexual exploitation and missing cases, similar to the 'Operation Kingfisher' team which exists in Buckinghamshire.

SLCSB is requesting clear and relevant data to assure it that strategic coordination of responses to missing children and those at risk of CSE are effective.

An updated CSE and Missing Strategy and Action Plan have been drafted and is to be discussed at the SLSCB Board.

The LSCB Quality Assurance Sub Committee will audit the impact of CSE training and performance in a selection of operational cases during the year.

Slough LSCB is committed to the recently established Pan Berkshire CSE Sub Committee and ensuring appropriate representation.

5.9 ***Develop and implement a funding agreement to ensure that the LSCB has sufficient resources to undertake its core business.***

Actions:

Slough LSCB Executive members have discussed partner contributions and are awaiting the National Review of LSCBs which is considering whether there should be a national formula for funding LSCBs. Subject to the outcome of that review, the LSCB will look to establish a longer term funding proposal for the future.

5.10 ***Undertake a training needs analysis and regularly evaluate the quality and impact of training (including e-learning).***

Actions:

The Board is working with other Boards to ensure a suitable Training Needs Analysis (TNA) format is available and supporting partner organisations' to complete the return.

In response to the training needs analysis, a review of the provision of multi-agency training will take place so that future programmes can fulfil those needs. This will include a review of the current approach to e-learning.

SLSCB will ensure the evaluation of training delivery and its impact takes place and is routinely embedded within training practice.

SLSCB will receive relevant reports summarising course evaluation; data analysis and outcomes of related audits to inform future development of the training programme.

5.11 ***Engage the wider community in the work of the LSCB by ensuring that the Board has lay member representation and thorough engagement with local faith groups.***

Actions:

The Board ran with one rather than two lay members for over a year. A recruitment process for the second lay member was put in place during the summer of 2015 and interviews were arranged for October. The existing lay member resigned shortly before the interviews took place and therefore we were seeking to recruit two new lay members. This would have brought us up to the level expected by Ofsted. Unfortunately none of the candidates successfully completed the interview process and therefore, when Ofsted visited, the Board had no serving lay members. Understandably they commented on this in their report.

The Board has discussed alternative ways of finding new lay members and has agreed to second one member from local faith communities and a second from the student community of the local college. We are also expecting an interim report of the National Review of Safeguarding Children's Boards this month which may change the expectations of lay members in Safeguarding Boards. The Board will be taking that into account as we go forward.

SLSCB will revise its website to reflect current work and initiatives which are available to access by all members of the community.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

To date, this report has not been presented to any other committee.

7. **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Ofsted grading of 'Inadequate' for the Board is disappointing but a fair reflection on the year leading up to December 2015 when Ofsted visited. The year was a very challenging one for the Board. However, since Slough Children's Services Trust started in October, partners are much clearer about how services will be delivered and there is new enthusiasm from all Board members to improve its work.

The longer term development of the Board is likely to be affected by the national work fundamentally reviewing the role of LSCBs which is due to report in late March. In improving its competency the Board needs to be prepared to seize any opportunities which that review may bring.

8. **Appendices Attached**

Please refer to Appendix 1 for agenda item 4, agenda pages 52 - 57.

9. **Background Papers**

None