

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL	ITEM No.
REPORT OF: Children's Safeguarding Overview Project Group CONTACT OFFICER: Julie Gallagher Principal Democratic Services Officer	
TITLE: PROGRESS REPORT – April 2018	

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the work of the Children's Safeguarding Overview Project Group over the last Municipal year.

2.0 BACKGROUND

As part of its work programme for 2014/15 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that an Overview Project Group be established to review and consider the issue of Children's Safeguarding.

The Membership of the Group comprised of Councillor Susan Southworth (Chair), Councillors R Caserta, M Hankey, D Jones, S Kerrison, A McKay and M Whitby.

Interim reports were presented to the Committee in March 2015, March 2016 and June 2017 setting out the findings and recommendations of the Group, one of which was for the Group to remain and continue its work as an ongoing Sub Committee.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Group has met on the following occasions:-

26th April 2017
20th September 2017
6th December 2017
7th February 2018

Members have also arranged a visit to the Multi agency safeguarding hub scheduled to take place in April 2018.

Members were supported in their work by Martyn Burrell Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Bart Popelier Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

During this municipal year the Group agreed that the focus of the Project Group (OPG) for 2017/18 should include the following:

Phoenix Team and Child Sexual Exploitation – Receive briefing on the work of the team across Greater Manchester with focus on the awareness raising work undertaken and areas of concern within the Borough.

Healthy young minds and SEND update – Karen Whitehead attended the meeting to provide an update on the healthy young minds safeguarding processes

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Mark Gay the LADO attended the meeting to share with members a presentation on the role and responsibility of the LADO.

Performance Monitoring - Continue to receive quarterly monitoring reports in relation to safeguarding children

Children with disabilities – Examination of the support and early intervention provide by the team.

Placements with Children and their Relatives – Lisa Highton and Sue Harris attended the meeting to provide members with an update on the numbers and frequency of placements of looked after children with their relatives.

Missing from Home- Susan French, attended the meeting to provide an update on the work being undertaken to address those children reported as Missing from Home.

4.0 WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE GROUP

4.1 Phoenix Team and Child Sexual Exploitation

Susan French attended the meeting to provide Members of the group with an update in respect of the work undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation and the proposed development of a complex safeguarding team.

The CSE Team Manager provided an update with regards to staffing issues within the team; interviews have now been completed for the position of Assistant Manager. Other staff within the team including those from the

police remain stable. Work load and the number of referrals into the service has reduced over the summer.

The main focus for the CSE team going forward will be a review of the training provided as well as its operating principles.

Martyn Burrell, Strategic Lead, Safeguarding informed the Group of the proposals to expand the complex safeguarding team. Susan French will oversee this work. The Strategic Lead reported that it has been recognised that other services would benefit from taking a similar approach to those adopted by the CSE team in particular improved links with the police and more effective information sharing.

Complex safeguarding will tackle issues such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), organised crime and modern slavery. Work ongoing at Greater Manchester will facilitate the development of a hub and spoke model, enabling the development of specialist teams to share experience and knowledge.

4.2 Healthy Young Minds and SEND Update

Karen Whitehead, Strategic Lead, Children/Families Health Issues submitted a Briefing note in relation to Healthy Young Minds (HYM) – Safeguarding processes. In Bury, Safeguarding is an integral part of the work of the team's work with young people and their families. All clinical staff, secondary care and outreach staff have completed level 3 safeguarding training and schools receive early intervention support in relation to children's social and emotional health alongside their physical well-being.

The Team also hold quarterly Twilight sessions, this holistic approach includes regular discussions with statutory and non - statutory stakeholders on the implications of social and emotional well-being of children and young people and their families in Bury. The support services offer open access over 7 days a week with direct follow-up in A & E. This also includes triaging appointments with Bury MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) which offers flexibility in assessments.

4.3 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Mark Gay, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) met with members to discuss the role and responsibility of the LADO. The members discussed a breakdown of what would constitute an allegation, what would lead to a referral to LADO and any subsequent investigation. As well as, what defines an allegation in terms of intent, deceit and neglect and the initial steps of the LADO investigation following receipt of allegation (most allegations are unfounded but the LADO must gather the facts to and decipher each case); What happens during Disciplinary Investigations and the outcomes of an investigation all investigations must be concluded.

Members discussed the definition of relevant conduct and unsuitability and a brief synopsis of some case studies in Bury over the last 3 years. Members discussed the large rise in the number of allegations in Bury schools over the last couple of years – these mainly related to social media/mobile phones/inappropriate physical handling of children.

4.4 Performance Monitoring - Key Performance Indicators

A large part of the work of the Group has continued to be around monitoring and examining performance data. Regular updates have been received in respect of key performance indicators for children's safeguarding. The Group have had the opportunity to monitor and examine performance data relating to the following areas:

- Referral/Conversion rate
- Contacts and Conversion to Referrals
- Contact Outcomes Breakdown
- Conversion rate of Referral to Assessments
- Re-referrals
- Assessment Timescales
- Section 47 Enquiries
- Child Protection Plans Data
- Numbers of Looked after Children

Quarterly updates will continue to be received at meetings of the Group. Members of the Group have asked that the formula for presenting the reports be revised to enable Members to better understand the demographics and also the personal stories of those accessing the service.

4.5 Children with disabilities

Clive Groves, Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Service submitted a Briefing note in relation to the Children with disabilities team. The report provided an outline of the current position in relation to provision of assessment and care planning provided by the Team. The paper provided details of caseload numbers; those children on child protection plans, children looked after, children with complex health needs, children in need profile, transition arrangements, case file audits.

4.6 Placements with Children and their Relatives

Lois Highton, Team Manager and Sue Harris, Strategic Lead for Placement Services attended the meeting to provide an update in respect of placements with children and their relatives. The report provided information in respect of:

The numbers of approved family and friends foster carers
Family and Friends Policy
Assessing Family and Friends Carers
Supporting Family and Friends Carers
Protecting children from Harm
How allegations and suspicions of harm are handled
Visits by the Child's Social Worker/the Independent Reviewing Officer

In Bury there are 49 approved Friends and Family Fostering households, providing care for 73 Looked after Children.

4.7. Missing from Home

Susan French, Team Manager reported children missing from home are reported to the MASH. In January, February and March 2017 there were 47, 33 and 57 children missing from home, respectively.

It is good practice that the return home interview takes place within 72 hours of the young person being located or returning after being missing and ideally should be conducted by somebody independent.

Funding has been agreed to fund a post within the CSE team specifically to work with children who go missing.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Members of the group supported by Strategic Leads within the Department have met on four occasions, interviewed 14 different Council Officers and will visit the Multi Agency Hub.

The Ofsted report stated that
"Clear political scrutiny is evident through a Children's Safeguarding scrutiny board and strong political attendance at the Corporate Parenting Board. There are sufficient checks and balances in the governance system holding the leadership of children's services to account, providing coherent political and strategic oversight".

'It was recognised by Ofsted that the expertise and knowledge of this group was one of its strengths. However, it needs to be accepted by anyone who is on the group that meetings start at 5-00/30, and that attendance at 4 meetings each year is a basic requirement. When Members are appointed to this group by their respective political group, this needs to be taken into account. Consistency is vital'.

Members have continued to hold Children's Services to account by providing continued, effective and constructive scrutiny of safeguarding within the Council.

Looking forward, it is hoped that the work to date can be built upon during the forthcoming Municipal Year. At an early stage Members of the Group

recognised the complex multi agency approach to safeguarding meant that to treat the review as a time bound self contained piece of work would not do justice to the critical nature of the subject matter.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS 2018/19

1. That the work of the Overview Project Group be carried over into the new Municipal Year 2018/19.
2. That, in order to retain the expertise and knowledge developed throughout the review, where possible the existing membership be retained and meeting dates be held quarterly and scheduled in advance.
3. That regular updates be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Group.
4. That the group in consultation with the Assistant Director Learning and Culture examine the feasibility of establishing a Borough wide "Closing a Gap" Group in respect of Educational Achievement. (Carried forward from last year)

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