

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB 31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 4 November 2015 from 14.00 - 16.18

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (Vice Chair)
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Pat Ferguson
Councillor Leslie Ayoola
Councillor Josh Cook
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor Corall Jenkins

Absent

Beverley Frost

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman	- Director of Children's Social Care
Chris Cook	- Chair of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board
Malcolm Dillon	- Chair of Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board
Richard Matthews	- Parent Governor Representative
Councillor David Mellen	- Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years
Alison Michalska	- Corporate Director for Children and Adults

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Beverley Frost (3rd Sector Representative) – personal

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

19 MINUTES

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015 and they were signed by the Chair.

20 NOTTINGHAM CITY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD (NCSCB) – ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15 AND NOTTINGHAM CITY ADULT SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP BOARD (NCASPB) – ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Chris Cook, Chair of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children's Board (NCSCB), presented the Annual Report for 2014/15 to the Committee, highlighting the following information:

- (a) The Annual Report for 2014/15 covers a range of issues, including the governance and accountability frameworks within which the Board operates covering the relationship between the two safeguarding boards and a range of Council committees, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Partnership Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) The report also sets out NCSCB's performance against the Business Plans for 2014/15 that analyses the Board's impact on outcomes in relation to service effectiveness and outcomes for service users. This includes outlines of key work undertaken in safeguarding priority areas such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, missing children, child sexual exploitation and deprivation of liberty safeguards;
- (c) The Annual Report includes an outline of individual partner agency safeguarding performance during 2014/15 and further analysis of the Board's quality assurance and performance management work in 2014/15;
- (d) There have been a number of positives to report this year, such as the continued commitment and engagement from the majority of partners on the Board and its constituent committees, including the sharing of the chairing of sub-groups across agencies. There is also an effective interface between NCSCB and the Children's Partnership Board and with the wider partnership geography through the Safeguarding Assurance Forum;
- (e) During 2014/15 NCSCB revised its practice guidance to ensure effective safeguarding and to reflect national and local learning from reviews including serious case reviews. There has been a significant focus on areas of improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection of 2014 with some measure of success in a range of areas;
- (f) Structures and organisational arrangements have been effectively remodelled under once directorate in order to better promote the co-ordination of delivery and processes. The NCSCB's Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) strategy and action plans have been health checked against the learning from national reviews in Rotherham, Oxfordshire and via Ofsted and action has been taken to address any areas of improvement that need to be applied in Nottingham City;
- (g) Other key strengths from the NCSCB throughout 2014/15 include the creation of a Communication and Engagement Sub-Group, and the launch of a new NCSCB bulletin;

- (h) There are a number of key areas for development and improvement, such as improved attendance and engagement from NHS England and from schools, the recruitment of new lay members and consistency of attendance at subgroups, most importantly the Quality Assurance Sub Group which has failed to secure a quoracy on a number of occasions during 2014/15. Although representatives of the NHS are unable to commit to every meeting, there is reassurance that where issues arise, an NHS representative would be available and in attendance;
- (i) Other areas for development and improvement include: improved engagement of partners in the provision of quality assurance and performance management information for the Board to ensure that it is effectively able to test its impact. The Board would also like an extension of its work with children and young people to ensure that their views and opinions shape the work of the NCSCB.

Malcolm Dillon, Chair of the Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (NCASPB) presented the Annual Report for 2014/15 to the Committee, highlighting the following information:

- (j) Following a peer review of local safeguarding arrangements in the city, it was felt that by having one chair of the local safeguarding board risked squeezing the work of adult safeguarding. Following on from the implementation of the Care Act 2014, there is now statutory basis to adult safeguarding parallel to that of children safeguarding. There is an emphasis on collaboration, protection and working with those experiencing abuse or adults in need of care in the city;
- (k) During 2014/15, there has been continued commitment and engagement from the majority of partners on the Board and its constituent committees, including those that now have a statutory duty to attend the Safeguarding Adults Board, such as the City Council, Nottinghamshire Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group;
- (l) In support of the expectations of the Care Act 2014, the NCASPB has supported the following schemes: the revision of cross-authority multi-agency procedures, the development of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and formulated training strategies;
- (m) A communication and engagement sub-group has begun its works in supporting the NCASPB objective of hearing the voice of the service user in planning, delivering and evaluation safeguarding arrangements. Other strengths include the Board's training materials and quality assurance arrangements being updated including revisions made to secure compliance with the Care Act 2014 expectations;
- (n) There are a number of key areas identified by the NCASPB for development and improvement, such as the continued implementation of the expectations of the Care Act and the effective scrutiny, challenge, quality assurance and performance management of the safeguarding implications of the Care Act on

constituent organisations. Further work is required to establish a data and reporting group for domestic violence data to support Board strategic decision making in a more meaningful way, including the identification of key themes and trends.

Following comments and questions from the Committee, the following information was highlighted:

- (o) NCSCB utilises a range of reviews to monitor and report on processes, especially where there have been causes for concern. For example, NCSCB has a sub-group which deals with serious incidents and will report on action plans to ensure that concerns are adequately picked up. There is a certain amount of scrutiny in place to monitor processes, such as two positions of two independent chairs which provide independent scrutiny.

RESOLVED to thank the chairs of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board and Nottingham City Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board for their informative presentation of the Annual Reports for 2014/15.

21 UPDATE ON COUNCIL PROGRESS FOLLOWING THE OFSTED INSPECTION IN 2014

Alison Michalska, Corporate Director for Children and Adults, Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Social Care and Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years, delivered a presentation on the Children's Safeguarding Inspection improvement journey following the Ofsted inspection in 2014. The following information was provided:

- (a) The inspection of 'services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' ran from 11 March 2014 to 2 April 2014 and was Nottingham City Council's first inspection under the new Ofsted framework;
- (b) The Council and Safeguarding Children Board received a judgement of 'Requires Improvement' and although all children were considered safe, the Council and Safeguarding Board are not yet considered 'good' across all levels. The inspectors identified many areas of strength within the services inspected and commended the enthusiasm and commitment of colleagues within the Council;
- (c) The Inspectors identified a number of key areas for development, such as the capacity and development of the workforce. They also concluded that the systems that support the practice, such as the IT package was in need of a serious upgrade. The quality of assessment and care planning needed improving, for example, the teams are incredibly busy but improvements are needed to what we record. It was further reported that the voice of the child was not always ringing through and there were concerns around the length of time taken in the process of fostering and adopting;
- (d) The Inspectors reported that the size of caseloads made it difficult for social workers and independent reviewing officers (IROs) to deliver high quality assessments and plans and drive progress in all cases. In response to this,

the Council has recruited 10 additional social workers and developed a recruitment and retention strategy. The Council has also developed an award winning Newly Qualified Social Workers Induction Programme and where necessary, the Council has employed agency workers to cover gaps;

- (e) The Inspectors reported that the Council should ensure that services and business plans are outcome focussed and measurable. In response, the Council has developed and circulated a Directorate Delivery Plan and a new performance report has been developed to monitor and measure outcomes;
- (f) Ofsted inspectors pointed out that the electronic recording system and its templates do not support good social work recording practice. In response to this, the Council adopted a number of quick fixes but in addition, a new IT system specification was developed and a new case management system has been tendered for implementation in September 2016 (£4.5 million investment);
- (g) The Inspection reported that some children and families do not benefit from a high quality assessment and plans need to be SMART. In response, the Council have updated all plans and assessment templates to ensure that they are SMART. The Council have developed good practice and distributed to these guides to the workforce in addition to training staff members on how best to complete plans;
- (h) Inspectors commented that the remit and capacity of the Virtual School be extended to support children in care over the age of 16. In response to this, the Council has recruited two additional Education Support Officers and has expanded the service to cover post 16. To support this, a governing body has been established;
- (i) Inspectors commented that the Council should increase the range of local authority foster carers. In response, a new package for foster carers has been developed and a new regional provider for assessments established. The Council ran a regional and local recruitment campaign with updated marketing material in order to attract foster carers and improved the training programme on offer;
- (j) In August 2015, colleagues from Leicestershire, Lincoln and Derby carried out a peer review of thresholds and decision making in social care and early help at Nottingham City Council. The review reported that the right children are in care and on plans, Children and Families Direct is managing demand well and that there is a well-planned programme that uses different tools. The peer review noted the enthusiasm of Council staff and good practice that is evident across the department. It was also reported that bringing services into one directorate is a move in the right direction;
- (k) The peer review found a number of areas that could be improved, such as updating all documents and plans so that they are consistently using the same language. The review also reported that Signs of Safety could be embedded across all areas of the business;

- (l) There are a number of new and emerging safeguarding demands and challenges to tackle going forward, such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence, trafficking and the Goddard Inquiry into historical abuse. Since 2013, there has been a 43% increase in caseloads and the Council will need to balance maintaining acceptable caseloads for frontline practitioners, whilst ensuring children in need cases are allocated in a timely manner. The Council will also manage budget reductions whilst maintaining investment in early help and support. The Council faces a challenge in reducing Council spend on agency social workers and the recruitment of social workers;
- (m) Future plans include a re-modelling of the Council's front-door services to ensure that more families receive a timely and proportionate response. This will also ensure that partners are able to access high quality professional advice and guidance. The Council will also look to integrate its early help, target and specialist Children's Services team around a more collaborative and child-centred approach to provide a more streamlined and responsive service;
- (n) The Council will look to continue its recruitment of additional social workers in an effort to alleviate the reliance on agency staff. Regional Directors in the East Midlands regularly meet and will look to develop a memorandum of understanding on the use of agency workers and the scope to fix a price;
- (o) The Council's focus is on ensuring that newly qualified social workers are supported in their frontline education and well supported. There is an obvious gap in the recruitment of social workers, but this is not limited to Nottingham.

RESOLVED to

- (1) Thank Alison Michalska, Helen Blackman and Councillor David Mellen for their informative presentation on Council progress following the Ofsted Inspection in 2014;**
- (2) Receive an update on Council progress following the 2014 Ofsted Inspection in 12 months.**

22 WORK PROGRAMME

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer introduced the report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out the programme of activity for this Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Review Panels for 2015/16.

RESOLVED to agree the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Review Panels for 2015/16, as summarised in the report.