



**NOTTINGHAM
CHILDREN'S
PARTNERSHIP**

PROUD OF NOTTINGHAM'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Title of paper:	Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report	
Report to:	Nottingham Children's Partnership Board	
Date:	15 October 2009	
Director(s)/Corporate Director(s):	Ian Curryer	Wards affected: All
Author Contact and contact details:	Margaret McGlade-Independent Chair, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board	
Officers who have provided input:	Dorne Collinson-Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	
Relevant Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) objectives(s):		
Provide early, effective support and protection to children, young people and families		X
Nurture and support strong, healthy families		X
Increase children and young people's emotional resilience and the maturity of their decision-making		X
Ensure that all our children, young people and families are provided with a sound foundation for lifelong learning and progression into skilled economic activity		X
Reduce deprivation and its impact on children and young people		
Summary of issues:		
<p>Keeping children in Nottingham safe from avoidable harm is one of the highest priorities for the Children's Partnership Board and its partner agencies. This report and the accompanying Annual Report of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership board outlines the current progress of safeguarding work in Nottingham. The report stresses the needed for every agency to keep safeguarding as a top priority and to exercise constant and effective oversight of their agency's contribution to keeping children safe.</p>		
Recommendations:		
1	That the Children's Partnership Board receive the Annual Report of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board, and the comments from the Independent Chair.	
2	That the Children's Partnership Board maintains a focus of the effectiveness of its provision for safeguarding children in the City and satisfies itself that children are routinely protected.	
3	That the Children's Partnership Board states its intent to improve the overall quality of safeguarding as measured by external inspection from adequate to good, and from good to excellent and sets a timescale for achieving this.	

1. **TITLE OF REPORT:** Report of the Independent Chair of Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board and the Board's Annual Report

2. **REASON:**

2.1 The governance arrangements for the Children's Partnership Board and the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board include the expectation that there will be a twice yearly report from the Safeguarding Children Board to the Children Partnership Board. This is the first such report under the new Trust arrangements.

2.2 This first report has been timed to enable the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Board to be presented. The full report will be circulated to the Board for this meeting. An Executive Summary of the main themes covered by the report is attached.

2.3 In addition the Independent Chair has highlighted in the summary of issues some key issues for the Children's Partnership Board to consider.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

3.1 That the Children's Partnership Board receive the Annual Report of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board, and the comments from the Independent Chair.

3.2 That the Children's Partnership Board maintains a focus of the effectiveness of its provision for safeguarding children in the City and satisfies itself that children are routinely protected.

3.3 That the Children's Partnership Board states its intent to improve the overall quality of safeguarding as measured by external inspection from adequate to good, and from good to excellent and sets a timescale for achieving this.

4. **BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS**

4.1 An Executive Summary of the Annual Report of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board is attached.

5. **RISKS:** The risks to children and the Children's Partnership Board agencies are high if safeguarding processes and services are not effective. The LSCB has its own risk register; it is assumed that all statutory agencies feature risk related to safeguarding children significantly highly in their strategic risk registers and have appropriate risk management procedures in place to management the risk.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Board is funded by its participating agencies. Its responsibilities are expanding and are likely to continue to do so as a result of the implementation of the Government's response to Lord Laming's review. At a time when public sector funding is likely to come under pressure agencies will need to commit to ensuring that the Board is able to fulfil its statutory functions into the future.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Board is a statutory partnership; the Annual Report is required by statutory guidance.

8. CLIENT GROUP:

- 8.1 All children at risk of significant harm or likely to be in need of support or protection.

9. IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES

- 9.1 Working Together 2006, the statutory guidance which governs the Board's work, sets out specific groups of more vulnerable or marginalised children for whom specific policies are required.
- 9.2 The voluntary and community sector has a representative on the Board nominated through the Shadow Board arrangements.
- 9.3 The participation of children and young people directly in the work of the Board is as yet undeveloped and is a key priority.

10. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED:

- 10.1 Whilst primarily focused on the Stay Safe Outcome the work of the Safeguarding Board and its partner agencies to protect children affects all five outcomes.

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Independent Chair's Comments

- The governance arrangements for the Children's Partnership Board and the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board include the expectation that there will be a twice yearly report from the Safeguarding Children Board to the Children Partnership Board. This is the first such report under the new Trust arrangements.
- This first report has been timed to enable the presentation of the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Board. The full report will be circulated to the Board for this meeting. An Executive Summary of the main themes covered by the report is attached. This annual report was produced before the comparator information for 2008/9 was available. Comparative performance will therefore be subject to further consideration
- The Nottingham City Safeguarding Board is well established and attendance at Board meetings and participation in the work of the Board through its sub groups by partner agencies is high.
- The Board coordinates a significant programme of multi-agency work; policy, procedures and best practice guidance, public information, quality assurance of practice, reviews of unexpected child deaths, serious case reviews, and inter-agency training and seminars which promote good practice and develop skills in interagency working, responding to issues raised through audits and reviews.
- Safeguarding Children from harm is a statutory responsibility of the partnership agencies participating in the Children's Trust arrangements. Whilst the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board is the statutory partnership which co-ordinates interagency activity on behalf of the partners and seeks to ensure the effectiveness of that work; it is the agencies themselves who carry out the work with children and are accountable for their own performance.
- Recognition that safeguarding is every agency's responsibility and is not confined to Children's Social Care, child health services within the NHS or the Police Service child protection unit is central to increasing the safety of children in Nottingham.
- Services which work with adults who are parents have a key role to play in safeguarding children and their staff must be equipped to recognise the risks to children which arise from the mental health drug and alcohol and domestic violence or other violent offending behaviour, separately or in combination.
- Development of safeguarding in Nottingham therefore needs to strengthen the alignment of the Adult Safeguarding Board, the Crime and Drugs Partnership, the Youth Offending Team Board and the Safeguarding Children Board, strategically and practically.
- Nottingham has a higher than average rate of referral to Children's Social Care compared to its statistical neighbours; the majority of these referrals have been shown to be appropriate, but this highlights the need for all the agencies providing targeted services to children at lower levels of need than Children's Social Care to increase their capacity to support and protect children and prevent the need for an social care referral. This is an area for significant development for the Children's Partnership Board and which requires leadership from the Children's Partnership Board.

- A continuing challenge for the Children's Partnership Board is to ensure that staff in all agencies fully understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and implement them on every occasion; and that the Executive Board of each agency is able to satisfy itself that policies and procedures are routinely complied with and that outcomes for children are improving as a result.
- The Children's Partnership Board needs to have the highest expectations for safeguarding children in Nottingham; and to have a clear ambition to demonstrate through independent inspection that its services are steadily improving and have a clear timescale for reaching good or excellent in safeguarding.
- Primarily this requires continuous focused attention on the quality of work, by front line practitioners and their team leaders and the support and supervision provided to them managerially.
- The report by Lord Laming into Child Protection in England and the Government's response to it sets a challenging agenda for all Children's Trusts.
- The Executive Summary of the Annual report and the full Report provides relevant local information about the state of safeguarding in Nottingham.

Margaret McGlade
Independent Chair, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board
7.October 2009

NCSCB Annual Report 08-09 - Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board has 2 functions:

- to coordinate multiagency arrangements to protect children
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done to protect children in Nottingham.

The Annual Report is organised to show activity undertaken to deliver these functions.

1.2 The Safeguarding Children Board consists of senior representatives of all the statutory agencies with a responsibility to protect children meeting with specialist advisers and representatives from professional groups and third sector organisations.

1.3 2008/9 was a year of high profile attention for safeguarding nationally, as a result of the murder of Baby Peter in Haringey. This has had a local impact on referrals for services and increased interest in the work of the Local Safeguarding Board.

1.4 This Annual Report has for the first time focused on assessing the effectiveness of what is done to safeguard children, bringing together information from a variety of sources. The absence of a sufficient national performance framework for assessing effectiveness was noted by Lord Laming in his report following the death of Baby Peter and it is anticipated that a framework will be developed nationally to be used by Local Safeguarding Boards in future years.

2. Summary of Safeguarding Activity in 2008/9

2.1 The rates of safeguarding service delivery within Nottingham City are relatively high. For a number of years, referrals to Children's Social Care have been approximately double the rate of the all England average {07-08 Nottingham received 1085 referrals per 10,000 population compared to the all England average of 490 and statistical neighbour figure of 825}.

2.2 Increased referral rates have been specifically noted since November 08 following the publicity linked to the Baby Peter case in Haringey. In the quarter ending Dec 08, referrals were equivalent to 1216 per 10,000 children. In the Quarter ending March 09, this figure rose to 1487, giving a quarter averages of 1412 per 10,000. This combined with the very high number of children subject to a protection plan creates significant capacity pressures in social work teams.

2.3 Increased referrals have not, however, contributed to higher numbers of child protection enquiries conducted under Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act or of Initial Child Protection Conferences. This would indicate that the increase in referrals is related to children who are in need of services but where abuse or neglect is not suspected. It is therefore possible that the needs of these children could be met without referral to Children's Social Care if other parts of the network of support services for children were able to provide them with appropriate services

at an earlier level. The reforms to children's services introduced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families provided for a Common Assessment Framework to be used by all professions who were concerned about children and the allocation of a lead professional to co ordinate services around the child. The increased use of these provisions could contribute to a reduction of referrals to specialist service provision ensuring families receive the right service at the right time. The challenge will be how to achieve this whilst continuing to offer high level of services to those children who are currently most in need.

- 2.4 As at the 31st March 2009, Nottingham had 412 children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan. This is equivalent to 74 children per 10,000 population compared to a statistical neighbour figure of 37.7 per 10,000 population.
- 2.5 This difference cannot be explained by the number of children commencing a Child Protection Plan alone which is 6% higher than similar authorities, the greater difference is in the number of children subject to a plan for more than 2 years at 15.5% compared with 4.5% in similar authorities. The high numbers of children who have been subject to a Plan for longer than two years is linked to measures that have been put in place to improve the number of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. Whilst performance around the latter has improved significantly, moving Nottingham into the highest performing band, the length of time children remain the subject of a Plan is obviously an area of concern that is worthy of further exploration. The NCSCB has consequently commissioned an audit of Child Protection Plans that have lasted for two years or more in order to provide a better understanding of the factors contributing to this issue. This audit is due to report back at the end of October.
- 2.6 By far the biggest category for which children have Child Protection Plans is neglect. This is linked to the large numbers of under 5s who are the subject of Plans and will also incorporate issues relating to parental substance misuse, mental ill health and learning difficulties. The second largest category is physical/emotional abuse which generally relates to domestic violence cases. Nottingham City still has a relatively high number of children who are the subject of Child Protection Plans due to concerns that fall into more than one category. This pattern of intervention is not surprising given the complexity of social issues facing children within Nottingham City, in particular, the high rates of parental substance misuse and domestic violence that are evident.
- 2.7 The under 5s remain the largest age category for those children who have a Child Protection Plan. This mirrors national research in respect of those children who are most vulnerable to serious injury or death as a consequence of child abuse. 2007-08 however saw a significant increase in children aged between 10 and 14 who became the subject of a plan.
- 2.8 The ethnicity of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan shows a marked variation to the ethnicity of the population {based upon information from the 2001 census}. White children with Child Protection Plans are under represented with a total percentage of 64% compared to a general population figure of 84.9%. Asian children are also under represented; only 4.1% have a Child Protection Plan compared to a population figure of 6.6%. The percentage of Black Caribbean and Black African children who have Child Protection Plans {7%}

almost directly mirrors the general population in Nottingham at 6.5%. Children with mixed ethnicity who are the subject of a child protection plan are significantly over represented 22.5% compared to a general population figure of 3.1%.

3. Ensuring the Effectiveness of what is done to Protect Children.

3.1 The Board assures the effectiveness of what is done to protect children in a variety of ways. Chief amongst these are audit activity, Serious Case Reviews and the work of the Child Death Overview Panel which overviews all unexpected child deaths in Nottingham.

Audit

3.2 A full programme of audit work was undertaken during 2008-09. This comprised of a variety of different approaches to check the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in Nottingham on an inter-agency basis. The methods used varied from self assessment, in depth audits using a Serious Case Review model to specific bespoke audit processes.

3.3 A number of reoccurring themes emerged through this audit activity: staff are not always using available procedures and practice guidance to strengthen front-line delivery of services; some front-line staff have not received the appropriate levels of safeguarding training; interventions continued to be delivered at the point of crisis and can be dominated by parental issues; considerations around contingency and sustainable planning remains inconsistent; workers lacked a 'professional curiosity' in some cases.

3.4 All the audits have action plans attached to them that will be monitored via the NCSCB. The NCSCB will also be strengthening its own quality assurance processes by ensuring all audit activity, including agency self assessments, have sufficient evidence in place to demonstrate outcomes.

Serious Case Reviews

3.5 During 08/09, 3 SCRs were completed, although only one of these reviews related to an incident that occurred within the year. One review was undertaken jointly with another LSCB.

3.6 The key themes arising from these 3 SCRs were the need for:

- a greater understanding the significance of hard to reach individuals and families
- improved assessment and engagement with families with multiple and chronic difficulties
- better information sharing both within and between agencies
- compliance with agreed procedures.

3.7 Ofsted evaluations in respect of these reviews demonstrate continued improvement in the quality of Individual Management Reviews although there is still development work to be done, particularly in relation to Overview Reports and

process. This is especially relevant given the changing climate nationally. 08/09 has seen a number of developments within the SCR process within Nottingham as a result of the SCR Improvement Plan implemented in April 2008 and updated in November 2008. The Child Death Manager is now in post and SCR Practice Guidance and Toolkit has been developed. Feedback following SCRs is embedded within the process and twice yearly seminars to disseminate learning from local and national reviews are being developed.

The Child Death Overview Panel

- 3.8 The Child Death Overview Panel was established within Nottingham City in April 2008 in line with statutory requirements. This Panel is responsible for reviewing all information on child deaths and reports directly to the NCSCB. During 08-09 this consisted of:

Total No. of deaths (01/04/08 – 31/03/09)	29
No. of unexpected/expected	13/16
Rapid responses (since Oct 08)	7 (17 deaths since Oct 08)

No deaths were classified as preventable.

- 3.9 There are some themes that are beginning to emerge in relation to a number of deaths that have not yet been fully reviewed. These include the need to raise awareness in respect of co-sleeping arrangements and safe places to sleep. Issues have also been identified in relation to shaken baby syndrome and the need to deliver a 'Don't Shake the Baby' campaign.

4. Developing the Safeguarding Board

- 4.1 The NCSCB is committed to demonstrating that we have the right structure and procedures in place to support a quality service to the children and families of Nottingham. As a consequence, there is a commitment amongst partner agencies to move the performance management framework forward to ensure that we can demonstrate that whatever we do impacts positively on outcomes for children and their families. In order to achieve this, the NCSCB has identified the following areas of activity for the forthcoming year:

- i. appointing a Performance Manager
- ii. setting some local performance indicators that monitor the impact of interventions on children and their families
- iii. agreeing what information the Board requires and at what frequency by establishing mechanisms by which partner agencies refer to the Board on their progress in relation to delivering and monitoring good safeguarding practice within their agency
- iv. working closely with the Children's Partnership Board to ensure that there is improved implementation of the CAF
- v. developing ways to gather and analyse intelligence to inform decisions around those children most in need of safeguarding leading to clearer commissioning processes

- vi. developing and implementing a system of partnership peer auditing that works across all agencies
- vii. ensuring that the views of children and their parents/carers are fed into any future performance management processes

Dorne Collinson

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

September 2009