

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
Meeting to be held on 5 December 2014

**Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board – Early Help Thematic Inspection Findings, LSCB Annual Report, Information-Sharing Pilot and Child Sexual Exploitation.**

Electoral Division affected: All
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(Appendices A, B and C refer)

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### **Executive Summary**

At the March 2014 meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee members asked Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) representatives to return to present a number of items when they became available. Those items are:

1. LSCB Annual Report – report attached (Appendix A)
2. Findings from a thematic practice inspection of Early Help Services – report attached (Appendix B)
3. Update about the information-sharing pilot between the NHS and CYP Directorate – newsletter attached (Appendix C)

In addition, Committee has requested some information about work in Lancashire around the issue of child sexual exploitation, and a report about this has also been provided.

### **Recommendation**

Committee members are asked to consider each of the reports provided.

Committee members may wish to assure themselves that services provided by LCC to children at risk of sexual exploitation, and to those families needing early help, are effective and sufficient in light of the specific reports about those issues.

Committee members may also wish to note the successes of the LSCB over the last financial year, but also the areas for development; specifically relating to issues of concern.

## **Background and Advice**

### **1. Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report**

- 1.1. The LSCB has a statutory responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of work undertaken by agencies to safeguard children in Lancashire. The LSCB Annual Report sets out the work undertaken in this regard in Lancashire for the 2013-14 financial year. The report is attached for information.
- 1.2. The LSCB Annual report sets out key successes and also areas for development for all LSCB member agencies during the coming twelve months. Committee will see that a great deal of effective work to safeguard children has taken place during the last twelve months. However, there are several areas for development and the LSCB remains particularly concerned about services for children experiencing emotional and mental health issues. This issue has recently been presented to the Lancashire Health and Well Being Board and ongoing development work has been agreed. The LSCB will continue to work with partner agencies to address all areas for development identified in the Annual Report and Lancashire County Council is a key organisation in all this work.

### **2. Thematic practice inspection of Early Help Services**

- 2.1. The LSCB completed a multi-agency thematic practice inspection of Early Help in Lancashire in May 2014. The inspection team comprised a number of professionals from LSCB partner agencies, but also a team of young inspectors who have been funded by the LSCB to undertake inspections and assess how well agencies are safeguarding children and young people.
- 2.2. The inspection found a number of strengths in respect to early help, some of which would benefit from replication across Lancashire, as well as a number of issues which require discussion to clarify matters going forward. We also identified potential improvements, which if adopted could provide further improvement in the early help children and young people and their families receive, further enabling families to work with agencies to build their resilience and address any issues/problems at an early stage.
- 2.3. The final report from this practice inspection is attached for information. Of note are the strengths around the work by children's centres, the investment by agencies in Early Help activity and the level of consultation involved in specific commissions.
- 2.4. However, there were eighteen areas identified for development and these have been shared with the CYP Trust and also the newly formed Children's Partnership Boards. There remain issues with the instigation of the 'CAF' process (Common Assessment Framework – a multi-agency assessment and response to family needs) and the application of thresholds. In addition,

the SEND reforms and future resourcing of all agencies will present challenges in the coordinated delivery of Early Help support.

- 2.5. The LSCB will monitor progress of actions resulting from this thematic inspection and hold agencies to account for delivering improvements. In addition, the joint meeting of the Trust and LSCB on the 27 November will have a focus on early help and developing a shared set of outcomes for early help.
- 2.6. The Health and Wellbeing Board has endorsed the Children and Young People's Plan as the 'starting well' plan and therefore has strong strategic links with the early help agenda. This will provide clarity about the strategic lead for the Early Help agenda which was felt to be lacking by the inspection team.
- 2.7. The newly formed Children's Partnership Boards (CPBs) have all agreed that early Help, and the findings from this thematic inspection, will form part of their local action plans. The LSCB will have representation at every one of those CPB meetings to ensure progress continues to be made.

### **3. Update about the Information-Sharing Pilot**

- 3.1. The Child Protection – Information Sharing project is an NHS England initiative that will help to deliver the Department of Health policy "Making sure health and social care services work together". It focuses on improving the protection of children who have previously been identified as vulnerable by children's social care when they visit NHS unscheduled care settings. CP-IS provides health professionals with prompt and easy access to key social care information that can help them to assess whether a child is at risk, for example, whether a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- 3.2. Lancashire was one of the 'first wave' Authorities to go live with this system and it is now operational. The system is due to be rolled out across other Local Authority areas nationally given the success of the system in Lancashire and other pilot areas. In Lancashire, it was recognised that Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust were not part of the initial tranche of hospitals using the scheme. Given the concerns that existed about performance in safeguarding children, it was agreed by LCC that information would be shared with them before the go-live date to further protect vulnerable children.
- 3.3. A newsletter about the scheme has been attached for information.

### **4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

- 4.1. Responding to and working to prevent CSE has been a priority for Lancashire LSCB and its partner agencies for a number of years. The multi-agency strategy covers three main areas - prevention, protection and prosecution.

- 4.2. Three specialist multi-agency teams are in place across the pan-Lancashire area and they report to an over-arching CSE sub group that reports to the LSCB. Rates of referrals to those teams in response to concern about potential CSE have remained constant across the county over the last three years with around 1400 referrals per annum.
- 4.3. The LSCB and partner agencies in Lancashire recently took part in a CSE Awareness week. During this week of activity, a multi-agency professional's conference was held to highlight current issues around sexual exploitation and discuss future areas for development. A simultaneous young people's conference also took place and the two groups came together in the afternoon for the young people to share what they had learnt and developed. The work they did will now be taken back into schools to raise awareness amongst their peers about the risks and nature of sexual exploitation. The young people involved reported that they learnt a great deal and were enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge.
- 4.4. In October 2014 the LSCB ran an event for all providers of children's homes in Lancashire. This well-attended event saw one hundred people from private and Local Authority Children's homes come together to hear about CSE, health issues and other important matters relating to children Looked After in residential provision. The LSCB was especially keen to engage providers who look after children placed from outside Lancashire given the LSCB's responsibility for ensuring that all children living in Lancashire are safeguarded, regardless of which Local Authority may be 'Looking After' them.
- 4.5. The LSCB is planning to undertake a multi-agency 'CSE diagnostic' during the next two months which will give a current picture of strengths and areas for development in this area of work. This benchmarking will take into account all the findings from the recent Alexis Jay report, the report by Ann Coffey and also the LGA best practice guidance. The LSCB will then hold agencies to account for any required actions to ensure continuous improvement of services for children at risk of sexual exploitation.
- 4.6. A separate report detailing the work around CSE in Lancashire has been attached for information.

## 5. Consultations

- 5.1 All partner agencies have been consulted during the course of these reports being prepared.

## 6. Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

**Legal:** The LSCB exists as a result of a statutory requirement. Accountability for its effectiveness rests with the LA Chief Executive. Failure of the LSCB to perform effectively reflects badly on the reputation of all agencies.

**Personnel and finance:** The staff supporting the Board (the Business Management Team), are "hosted" by the council and provided with line management via Children's Services. The budget is made up from agency contributions but held by the council and managed in accordance with the council's financial regulations.

**Equality and Diversity:** The LSCB concerns itself with services to support some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the county. Failure of the LSCB to ensure effective services would impact on these vulnerable groups.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

#### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
1. LSCB Annual Report	Sept 2014	Kathryn Grindrod/LSCB/538352
2. Report of Thematic Inspection – Early Help	May 2014	Kathryn Grindrod/LSCB/538352
3. Information-sharing pilot Newsletter	August 2014	Kathryn Grindrod/LSCB/538352
4. CSE Report for Overview and Scrutiny Committee	December 2014	Kathryn Grindrod/LSCB/538352