



**Nottinghamshire**  
**SAFEGUARDING**  
**CHILDREN Board**

Working in Partnership to Safeguard  
Children & Young People

# ANNUAL REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2013 – 2014

# FOREWORD FROM THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Welcome to the 2013/14 Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Annual Report.

The full report provides an overview of the Board's work during 2013/14, our view of the effectiveness of local arrangements for safeguarding children and young people, the challenges we face and our priorities for meeting these over the coming year and beyond. The report contributes to the accountability of the NSCB and its partner agencies for the effectiveness of their work to keep the children and young people of Nottinghamshire safe.

This Executive Summary provides key highlights of the report. I hope that you find it informative and interesting.

Chris Few  
NSCB Independent Chair

For further information about the content of this report or the work of the NSCB please contact the NSCB office on 0115 9773935, email [info.nscb@nottsgov.uk](mailto:info.nscb@nottsgov.uk) or visit the website at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb).

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2013/14 the work of the NSCB was focused through a business plan reflecting three strategic priorities. The following is a summary of key activities and achievements under these priorities.

**Through a comprehensive understanding of the needs of children and young people in Nottinghamshire, ensure that the work of the NSCB is focused on the most vulnerable, their safety and empowerment.**

Prioritisation of the Board's work is steered by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment as well as the Board's review, audit, performance monitoring and scrutiny activity.

## CHILDREN AT RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a high profile area of safeguarding children work and has attracted widespread attention. The multi-agency group, established under the auspices of the NSCB and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board, continued to take forward developmental work to address all aspects of CSE in line with national guidelines and research. Significant developments this year included:

- Provision of an e-learning module targeted at all front line staff, including those who may have only peripheral contact with children, e.g. park rangers and licensing officers
- Better engagement with children, young people and their families through a specially commissioned play, rolled out to schools in the county, and the recruitment of a project worker
- Strengthening the organisational framework and resources directed at addressing CSE
- Provision of information on CSE to parents and carers.

## MISSING CHILDREN

Strategic and development work to safeguard children who go missing is overseen by a multi-agency steering group. Developments in this area were also driven by a NSCB multi-agency audit:

- The NSCB policy and procedural framework for responding to missing children was revised to take account of changes in statutory guidance and guidance from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which introduced a distinction between missing children and those who are absent. The links between child sexual exploitation and children who go missing are emphasized
- More sophisticated analysis of data has been introduced to identify and respond to increasing risk connected with geographic "hotspots" and individual children
- Use of disruption methods such as child abduction warning notices by the police has increased
- The Targeted Support Service reviewed and revised their arrangements for responding to missing young people
- Measures were put in place to ensure that relevant information about missing children is available to health professionals.

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

## CHILDREN WITH PARENTS OR CARERS THAT HAVE MENTAL ILL HEALTH AND/OR DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

Nottinghamshire was one of nine areas which participated in an Ofsted thematic review of joint working between adult and children's services when parents or carers have mental health and/or drug and alcohol problems.

- The NSCB challenged the approach of the group established to address the review findings, leading to revision of the work plan with a greater focus on achieving multi-agency solutions to the identification of and responses to such children.

## PRIVATE FOSTERING

- A range of initiatives were implemented with front line practitioners, including MASH staff, to promote awareness and identification of Private Fostering arrangements
- IT support for the assessment of suitability of placements and recording of visits has been improved and 1:1 e-support provided to social workers using the new episodes
- Public awareness of the notification requirements for private fostering arrangements has been promoted through websites, leaflets and professional contact
- There is evidence of improved performance in relation to the services provided although, in line with the national picture, the number of notifications remains low.

## Ensure scrutiny of safeguarding outcomes for children and young people; and develop a dynamic learning and improvement framework

### LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The NSCB Learning and Improvement Framework was developed and implemented. The purpose of the framework is to enable organisations to be clear about their responsibilities to learn from experience and to act and secure improvement as a result.

### SCRUTINY AND CHALLENGE

The NSCB has challenged organisations regarding services provided and safeguarding practice in order to test the adequacy of arrangements. This has been in connection with the findings of reviews and audit work, specific monitoring of key activities through the performance information report and scrutiny of plans prepared by other strategic partnerships; as well as issues brought to the attention of the Board by external organisations and individuals. The NSCB uses the regular meetings of the Board and Executive, as well as direct contact with agencies and partnerships by the independent chair, to challenge and seek assurance regarding performance.

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Some of the most notable examples include:

- The effectiveness of child protection planning arrangements
- Accommodation of looked after teenagers and care leavers
- The provision of health services for children in care
- The prominence accorded to children and young people in preparation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- The operation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – including the need to address backlogs in dealing with domestic violence notifications and the application of thresholds
- The response to children who have been sexually abused and specifically the provision for medical examinations
- Adult mental health, drug and alcohol issues and the response by relevant agencies to the Ofsted thematic inspection 'What About the Children?'
- The effectiveness of early help provision and the interface of these services with statutory child protection arrangements
- The incidence of re-referral of children to the MASH
- The effectiveness of services for young people with eating disorders.

## CHILD DEATH REVIEW

- A short film (available via the NSCB website) was produced by young people to promote road safety in their peer group; funded by the NSCB following a number of fatal road accidents involving teenagers. This initiative was identified as good practice nationally and is being presented at the first National Child Death Review Conference
- Messages have been promoted for:
  - the safe storage of medicines;
  - safe sleeping for babies; and
  - bath-time safety for babies and young children
- The quality of palliative care provided to children with life limiting conditions and the subsequent bereavement support for their families was reviewed when such cases were discussed. Notable examples of good practice, in particular around support for families where the end of life plan involves caring for the child at home, were identified reflecting improvements that partners have introduced to provide a service which enables families' wishes to be fulfilled.

## SERIOUS INCIDENT REVIEW

- Two serious case reviews (EN12 and FN13) were completed during the year and the reports have been published. The report on the CN10 serious case review, completed in September 2010, was published following the conclusion of criminal and coronial proceedings

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

- A further two serious case reviews (GN13 and HN13) were completed in June 2014. GN13 was published in August 2014 and HN13 will be published at the conclusion of outstanding matters
- The NSCB has maintained links with the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board and two neighbouring LSCBs regarding their serious case reviews to ensure that learning was shared
- Responsibility for evaluating the impact of serious case reviews was transferred to the NSCB full Board; emphasising the importance of not only carrying out reviews effectively but ensuring that senior managers are held to account for delivering the changes required.

Outcomes from review activity include:

- Tools linked to the learning from recent reviews, including a Bruising in Babies Pathway and Excellence in Safeguarding, have been disseminated to practitioners
- Improved auditing of supervision in children's social care to ensure quality of focus and reflection is maintained
- Processes to flag cases of children at risk have been embedded in GP practices
- Hospital discharge planning for babies has improved, with improved attendance by medical staff at discharge planning meetings, ensuring that any safeguarding issues are addressed.

## MULTI-AGENCY AUDIT

The profile and extent of multi-agency audit activity has greatly increased during the year following the establishment of a new Multi-Agency Audit Subgroup reporting directly to the Board. Audit priorities have been guided by learning from serious case reviews, performance indicators, and known areas of concern.

Three multi-agency audits have been undertaken and used to challenge safeguarding practice.

- The Voice of the Child - as a result of which:
  - agency specific 'practice pointers' were developed and disseminated within organisations;
  - agencies have been asked to evidence within the 2014 Section 11 audit how they hear the voice of the child in their policies and practice.
- Initial Child Protection Conferences – as a result of which:
  - agencies were specifically challenged about the quality of child protection plans, the engagement of children and their families, and the level of participation by some professional groups in the conference process;
  - new practice guidance was provided for children's social care staff which, reflecting feedback from partner agencies, updated the process for sending invitations to agencies;
  - two new guides for social workers have been prepared to improve the quality of participation by children and young people;

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

- a series of interviews with children and a survey of parents and carers were conducted to ascertain their views on the conference process and inform further improvements;
  - ongoing work was commenced to improve the quality and co-ordination of Child Protection Plans;
  - a follow up audit is scheduled to take place as part of the 2014/15 NSCB audit programme;
  - templates were developed to help professionals from across the partnership provide good quality reports.
- Missing Children – the outcomes of which are included in the missing children section.

## COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

- A full NSCB training programme was delivered including a series of 'What's New in Safeguarding' seminars to:
  - disseminate the learning from reviews and case audits; and
  - provide updates and new information on a range of issues such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Missing Children, E-Safety, and Private Fostering.
- The evaluation process for NSCB multi-agency training has been strengthened to gather information about the impact training courses have made on practice and the outcomes for children
- The NSCB website has been revised to improve accessibility. The site provides a source of information for the public on identifying and responding to concerns for children and includes links to further advice, such as an e-learning module for parents and carers on Child Sexual Exploitation.

## **Ensure the governance and framework of the NSCB is effective at the delivery of its core purpose (in line with Working Together 2013)**

- The NSCB has explored new ways to carry out its functions more effectively. A development day took place in April 2013 and the NSCB Constitution was revised to reflect new structures and responsibilities
- An independent review of the Board found positive aspects of a well-functioning Board. Specific new work-streams arising from the review have been included within the business plan for 2014-16
- A new set of inter-agency safeguarding children procedures were jointly developed with Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board following a wide ranging consultation process with practitioners and managers from partner agencies. They reflect the changes to practice arising from Working Together 2013, learning from local reviews, audits and performance

# KEY ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

monitoring work. Systems to analyse the level of access to the procedures and practice guidance have been incorporated

- In October 2013 the NSCB took responsibility for the revised Pathway to Provision in line with Working Together 2013 which requires Local Safeguarding Children Boards to provide policies and procedures on thresholds for intervention and the associated pathways
- In February 2014 a significant number of the NSCB members attended a two day Multi-Agency Critical Incident (MACIE) simulation exercise where senior and front line managers worked together on several real time child protection scenarios.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN

There has been an increased effort to ensure that the children and young people are engaged with and participate in the work of the Board and in decisions that affect them. This is reflected in a number of the developments, activities and achievements highlighted above. Other examples include:

- My Protection Plan (MPP), a tool to gather children's views at the time they are subject to a Child Protection Plan, was completed by two thirds of children over the age of 4. This is a significant improvement from the previous year. In order to build a fuller picture a series of interviews have also taken place with a sample of children and their parents after their plans have ended
- There is evidence of a more robust approach by Independent Reviewing Officers to challenging local authority practice and of an improved focus on looked after children who live outside the local authority, those who go missing and those at risk of sexual exploitation.

## FRONT LINE STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The programme of visits by NSCB members to frontline practice has continued and contributes to greater connectivity between the Board and operational staff. The visits have facilitated two way communication and provided opportunities to identify issues impacting on child protection work. Visits have been carried out to District Child Protection Teams, Clayfields Secure Children's Home, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Early Help Unit. Reports outlining the findings from those visits, including any recommendations, have been presented to the Board.



# EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS – ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Whilst it is clear that the risk of harm to children and young people cannot be eliminated entirely and there is no complacency regarding the need to continually improve services and their coordination, the NSCB is satisfied, through its quality assurance, review and audit functions, that the arrangements to safeguard children put in place by its partner agencies are overall appropriate and effective. The Board is further satisfied that robust arrangements are in place to identify areas which should be improved and that key issues have been prioritised in the plans of the Board, its partner agencies, and other strategic partnerships.

The three strategic priorities from 2013/14 have been refined and will continue to guide the work of the Board over the next two years (to reflect the currency of the Children & Young People Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Nottinghamshire). The associated business plan has been revised to reflect achievements to date as well as national and local drivers and will continue to be reviewed to ensure its relevance.

## Key challenges for agencies and partnerships during 2014/15 and beyond

- Ensure that the responses by all agencies and organisations to resource constraints take a long term view on the need to reduce child abuse and neglect and contribute to breaking the inter-generational cycle of adverse outcomes for children
- Ensure that in the delivery and review of all strategic partnership plans and agency service developments, the needs of and impact on children and young people are fully considered
- Reassure and maintain the confidence of the people of Nottinghamshire, including the staff of partner agencies, in the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; particularly in the context of local and national attention on responses to child sexual exploitation and historic sexual abuse
- Ensure that arrangements for the introduction of the absent classification for missing children do not increase vulnerability and risk
- Embed current initiatives to improve the robustness of child protection planning
- Ensure piloting of the Safeguarding Assessment and Analysis Framework does not adversely impact on services outside of the pilot area
- Ensure that the current review of CAMHS leads to provision of effective and coherent services for all children with mental health difficulties – including capacity in services for those who need in-patient treatment
- Completion of the work in response to the 'What About the Children' thematic report to ensure that all children exposed to parental mental health and substance misuse issues are identified and responded to appropriately
- Ensure that the comprehensive multi-agency approach to preventing and responding to Child Sexual Exploitation in Nottinghamshire is embedded into ongoing service provision.