

**THURROCK LOCAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2012 - 2013**



Forward by Dave Peplow, Independent Chair,

I am pleased to introduce the LSCB Annual Report for 2012-2013. All LSCB's are required to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in their area, including an assessment of local safeguarding arrangements, achievements made and the challenges which still remain. This report sets out the progress and achievements over the last year and those priority areas which the Board will focus on over the next 12 months.

The LSCB has made considerable progress this year. Partnership working has strengthened despite personnel changes within the Board, with a greater sense of the Board functioning as a multi-agency forum. Alongside our Business Plan the LSCB continues its wider programme of work through its sub groups, responding to new challenges as they arise. There is still work to be completed and the LSCB must ensure an effective multi-agency performance management framework is implemented which enables our targets and aspirations to be achieved and acknowledged.

Our vision is that every child and young person in Thurrock should grow up safe from maltreatment, neglect and criminal activity. Keeping children safe requires a culture, across all agencies, where staff are open to challenge and new ideas. I am privileged to work with partners who share my commitment to this vision and are willing to analyse their own performance to ensure it improves outcomes for children. We want to build on a safeguarding system where the focus is firmly on the experience of the child or young person's journey from needing to receiving information, help and support.

Thurrock LSCB and its partner agencies are increasingly operating in a difficult environment. Partner agencies face even greater challenges in the coming year with significant budget cuts and organisational restructures. Despite such challenges, agencies remain highly committed to improving safeguarding standards. This was recognised in the 2012 Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services which commended the effectiveness of multi-agency work in which Thurrock received a "Good" grading.

There is still a lot to do, but we are beginning to see the benefits of a consistent Business Support Team and welcome our new Business Manager to the team.

As we move forward there will be a strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention. I would like to thank the members of the Board for their work during this reporting period and particularly to all the front line practitioners and managers in Thurrock for their dedicated work in safeguarding children.





Dave Peplow

Independent Chair

Comments by the report author

I came into post in September 2012 as the new Business Manager and this represented an opportunity to review processes and the work of the Board with 'fresh eyes'. This was and remains particularly important in view of the ongoing pressures to be more efficient and effective.

Since coming into post, our business and administrative processes have been streamlined to ensure that the sub groups of the Board and their Chairs receive effective support. We have also introduced new ways of managing meetings, with forward plans, task matrixes and other business processes that support the efficiency of our groups achieving their outcomes.

This work to deliver 'more for less' and make best use of contributions from partner agencies continues and a tight reign has been maintained on LSCB finances which has enabled us to maintain a standstill financial contribution position from our partners for 2013/2014 .

My work focuses on supporting the Board, the Chair and our partner agencies, ensuring that the work of the LSCB is promoted as much as possible to include the communities we serve. I help the Board to continually review how we work and what we could do better, learning lessons from other Boards and also of course taking action to ensure that any lessons to be learned from Serious Case Reviews and managed reviews are implemented throughout our partner agencies.

I am passionate about the wide range of work the Board carries out with its partner agencies to protect and safeguard our children and young people of Thurrock. I am also committed to supporting the Board to engage more effectively with the community it serves and hearing the voice of our young people in our planning. Since coming into post, I have been impressed at the commitment of the majority of Board partner agencies who do the best they can to protect our children and young people. I write this report on behalf of the Independent Chair of the Board as a reflection of the progress made not only from my point of view but also taking into consideration the views of others. The report includes hard data and some personal reflections and comments from some of those involved in this work including our lay member who provides a 'community voice' to the Board. The report is also based on evidence and examples from the 2012/13 Business Plan and the progress the Board is



making to transform the way it works to meet future challenges in safeguarding our children and young people.

I hope you find this report helpful in understanding the commitment the Thurrock LSCB provides to ensure the children and young people of Thurrock receive the appropriate safeguarding support.

A P Cotgrove

Alan Cotgrove

LSCB Business Manager



Background to Children's Safeguarding in Thurrock

Thurrock lies to the east of London on the banks of the River Thames and within the Thames Gateway growth zone. The Borough is host to one of the biggest growth and regeneration programmes in the UK which will create 26,000 jobs and 18,000 new homes in the coming years. The programme includes the creation of the Grays Campus for South Essex College which will mark a change in the town's economy and future prospects, providing a learning centre for local young people to gain the qualifications and develop the skills for the new jobs being created in the Borough.



Thurrock's population is 157,700, having grown by over 22.5% since 1990. The population is projected to rise by a further 28% (44,000 people) by 2030. Thurrock has a young population by national standards. There are 42,300 children under the age of 19 (26.7% of population) including 12,100 children under the age of five.



The population is increasingly diverse. According to the 2011 Census the non-white ethnic population was 15.7% – a significant increase from the 2001 Census of 4.7%. Among school-age children, more than one in four (26.5%) are from a black and minority ethnic group. Much of this change is being driven by the new homes that have been, and continue to be built across Thurrock.

Three-quarters (75%) of the working age population are in employment. Unemployment among young people has risen steeply in recent years and supporting young people into employment and minimising long-term unemployment is a key challenge.

Nearly one in five working age people have no qualifications in Thurrock. The proportion of working age people qualified below NVQ level 2 however is high, so Thurrock is in the top 20% councils nationally.

Average house prices in Thurrock are historically lower than both national and regional averages. The Council manages its own stock of over 10,000 homes. The availability of affordable housing and its inclusion in new housing developments is a focus for the Council to ensure sustainable growth.

Overall levels of deprivation in Thurrock are consistent with the national average however, Thurrock experiences significant pockets of deprivation and inequality, with several areas falling within the 20% most deprived areas in England.

Just over one in five children in Thurrock is growing up in poverty (21.9%) – just slightly above the national rate (21.1%). The gap between the highest and lowest areas of deprivation in respect of child poverty is wide. For example, in Tilbury 55% of children are living in poverty, 25 times the level of child poverty in the least deprived ward of Corringham and Fobbing. The areas in Thurrock with the highest levels of child poverty also experience the lowest educational attainment and have more people in poor health or with disabilities which prevent them from working; higher proportions of workless families and higher numbers of adults with poor basic skills or who lack qualifications.

Infant and child mortality rates in Thurrock are consistent with national averages.

Children in Thurrock have average levels of obesity. 10.0% of children aged 4-5 years and 21.1% of children aged 10-11 years are classified as obese (9.2% and 19.2% nationally respectively).



Persistent Absence levels at secondary levels have decreased from 9.2% in 2010 to 8.3% in 2012, there has been a slight increase in 2012 compared to 2011 performance but this is still in line with national performance (in 2011) and is being monitored closely.

New arrangements have been introduced to improve access to school for pupils who have experienced difficulties in schooling or who have moved into the area. This has been through a renewed Fair Access Protocol and Access Panel. This has led to significant improvements in access to mainstream schools for these pupils and the utilisation of managed moves to prevent exclusion.



About the Thurrock LSCB

Thurrock's Local Safeguarding Children's Board exists as a statutory body and has a range of roles including developing policies and procedures and scrutinising and challenging local safeguarding practice. Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the Objectives for the LSCB as:

- To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area and;
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for these purposes.

While the LSCB do not have the power to direct partner agencies, they have a role in making clear where improvement is needed. Each Board Partner retains their own existing line of accountability for safeguarding. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2013). The role therefore of the Board is to have an independent co-ordinating and challenge role around safeguarding practice across its partner agencies. This is carried out via each of the sub groups, details of which are outlined later in this report.



For 2012-13, membership of the Board and representation from all agencies on each of the sub committees was good, however, it is recognised that improvements can be made in the way the Board functions to ensure that it better discharges its statutory functions. The Board is reviewing the way meetings are run, how information is shared and presented and how it can more effectively challenge practice. Work has begun on this already and will be moved forward further in 2013-14 following an independent review on its ability to meet its responsibilities.

The LSCB continues to participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure all members implement their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the delivery of all their services. The LSCB also contributes and works closely with the Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) and provides safeguarding reports to the Children's Partnership Board and Thurrock Council's Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

This report will show that overall the Board is carrying out its statutory duties effectively. However there are areas for development which have been acknowledged and form the basis of ongoing work in the next phase of our delivery plans for the next three years.



Our Business plan for 2012-2013

A review of the Business plan in March 2013 showed that in most key areas progress had been made against the actions set. Where any actions were delayed or not completed within the predicted timescale a review was undertaken to address this or carry them forward. It was felt also that new and emerging themes needed to be incorporated into the plan moving forward to reflect the priorities in the Borough as well as nationally arising from Serious Case Reviews and Independent Management Reviews. These will form the basis of individual work plans for the Serious Case Review and Audit group and the Performance sub group in 2013- 2014 and will feature in our future business plans.



Key highlights and achievements 2012-13:

- Recruitment of a Lay Member
- Recruitment of Business Manager and Administration Support following a period of interim arrangements
- Delivery of high profile and successful events including the 2012 Conference on Child Sexual Exploitation
- Re branding and marketing of the LSCB
- Delivery of a responsive and reflective learning and development programme that is cost effective and also meets the needs of practitioners and agencies in Thurrock
- Business plan on target and flexible to reflect emerging issues
- Ongoing support from agencies – with overall good commitment to attending meetings and supporting the work of the Board. This enables discussions and challenges to any concerns to be addressed.
- Continued focus on improvement and challenge by looking at business processes in the Board and challenging agencies and practice where needed through audit and performance reviews.
- Development of a revised website to promote the work of the Board, ensuring information about safeguarding is cascaded, support is available to the community and share best practice amongst practitioners
- Continued links and sharing practice with other Boards, both within Essex and throughout the region

Areas reviewed and actions

- The Board reviewed Children's Social Care Section 11 requirements
- New Performance Group implemented
- Audits conducted across all aspects of safeguarding
- Supported new Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and 16 days of action
- Thematic review process for Section 11 implemented for all partners

Reports reviewed

- Private fostering
- Local Authority Fostering
- Children's Partnership



- Child Death Review
- MARAC
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Ofsted Inspection 2012 action plan
- Sexual health service and response to sexual violence
- Specific managed review cases

Areas for development in 2013-14

- Greater involvement of children and young people in the work of the Board
- Review of the new Working Together 2013 and the potential impact of this on the role of the Board
- Inspection frameworks and findings – there is a need to ensure that the board maintains its position as being fit for purpose to meet the challenges it faces. In support of this an independent review of the structure and governance of the Thurrock LSCB will take place during 2013/14.
- Assessment of the transformation processes across a number of agencies e.g. Probation, Police, Health and Education with Academies and Free Schools and any potential impact on safeguarding practice
- Focus on Sexual Exploitation following the Children’s Commissioner Report and local intelligence
- Need for continuous review of smarter working and better use of resources
- Consideration of more “Pan Essex” and regional working and sharing of practice in some key areas such as training and learning provision and Child Sexual Exploitation where boundaries do not apply to perpetrators.
- Making best use of action plans, data and case examples to continue to robustly challenge areas of concern

Childrens Partnership

The LSCB has close links with the Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) whom manage the training element of the LSCB and also provide a number of sub groups in support of safeguarding which are intrinsically linked into the work of the LSCB. It could be debated where various groups sit within the children’s safeguarding structure in Thurrock. The LSCB recognise the most important fact is that we have the right groups and its



representation on those groups regularly review practice to ensure that all elements of children’s safeguarding is in place to meet the needs of Thurrock’s children.

The Childs voice

Following the success of the LSCB Conference in December 2012, greater engagement with young people and their involvement in the Board is recognised as an area for further development in 2013/14. The Board recognises that work to involve young people is not as advanced as it could be and actions are being progressed to rectify this. Such actions are to include having a consultation mechanism in place, and inviting young people to a development day with the Board to ensure their views are taken into consideration when setting future business plans. The Board also intend to hold its 2013 Conference on “The Voice of the Child”



LSCB Business Unit

The Business Unit of the Board has taken on increased responsibilities following the appointment of a dedicated Business Manager and refreshed support team to oversee the work of the Board. This has helped to streamline processes and look at new ways of working. The need to appoint further support resources will be assessed over the coming



year. Further development of the LSCB website as well as taking on a more proactive safeguarding awareness role with professionals and the community are two areas of work currently being progressed.

Relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board

The LSCB is developing its relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board particularly at a time when there is significant transformation across the Health community, not at least the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). In this reporting period the Board have been working in shadow role pending the full implementation of the board in April 2013. Early consideration has been given to clarifying the arrangements for safeguarding both children and vulnerable adults before the new NHS arrangements are implemented in 2013. The LSCB is confident that this early work will ensure that there will be no gap in safeguarding arrangements as a result of this work.

LSCB STRUCTURE

Full Board

The full board met on four occasions with good attendance from all statutory and member organisations. Areas reviewed and discussed included

- Domestic homicide protocol
- Who's Looking After the Children – our response to children detained by police
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Section 11 themed audits
- The activates and reports of the sub groups
- Reflective learning

The Local Authority Lead Member with responsibility for children and young people sits on the board as a participating observer which allows them to participate in discussion but does not have a voting right. This enables another context of the communities' voice to be heard within the LSCB communications framework.

Management Executive



The Board has a number of sub groups which report direct to the Management Executive who are the custodians of the LSCB Business Plan. The Management Executive met eight times during this period. The review of the Business plan is conducted through a clear governance structure and the activities of the sub groups.

The focus and purpose of the groups is to ensure that the LSCB are able to be satisfied that children are safe across Thurrock.

Sub Groups

The sub groups are the key mechanism in the Board for challenging practice and any gaps or weaknesses in service provision and ensure that the Board is continuing to make a difference to safeguarding practice across Thurrock. They are well supported by partner agencies and all have shown considerable progress against objectives set as part of the current Business Plan. They are all functioning well and their work areas and terms of reference continue to be reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. These groups are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the LSCB.

Scrutiny and challenge

For this reporting year the groups of the LSCB comprise of:-

- ✚ Child Death Review Sub Group
- ✚ Serious Case Review and Audit Group
- ✚ Performance Management Sub Group
- ✚ Interagency Training Sub Group

Each sub group has its own terms of reference and business priorities and reports into the LSCB Management Executive. The groups have been given the flexibility to adapt to meet emerging priorities, for instance, new legislation/guidance or serious case reviews that affect safeguarding in Thurrock. Where appropriate they can implement Task & Finish groups to compliment the work undertaken.

Child Death Review

All child deaths are reviewed as part of the LSCB responsibilities to support learning outcomes. This process is undertaken under the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET)



procedures at both strategic and operational level. There is a pan Essex Strategic Child Death Overview Panel which aims to identify any lessons to be learned from the death of a child in order to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and to identify modifiable factors which may, when addressed, prevent further such deaths in the future. It provides multi-agency, sub-regional awareness raising sessions around the child death review process and ensures that parents/carers are supported following their loss and are given the opportunity to contribute any comments or questions that they might have to the review of their child's death.

An annual child death report is presented to the Thurrock LSCB and Children's Partnership Board which provides an account and overview of the child death cases reviewed, makes recommendations in relation to further actions and ensures that all recommendations are accounted for and disseminated to relevant partner agencies and stakeholders. A child death review action plan is in place to audit the activities of the group. This quality assurance scrutiny by the Board of the report provides reassurance that partners are doing all they can in assessing modifying factors and implementing strategies to reduce those risks.

Geographically based are the Local Child Death Review Panels, which for Thurrock are placed within the South West Essex group. This group assesses the response at a more local level and detailed level. This group is tasked to review all child deaths in the SW Essex area to identify any modifiable factors and make recommendations to the Strategic group and appropriate agency to address any issues.

Serious Case Review and Audit Group

As part of streamlining LSCB business, the process for conducting serious case reviews and audits changed during this reporting period, with the Serious Case Review group and Audit group amalgamating to one group. The meeting structure is now in two parts with the capability of calling partners to attend potential SCR referrals when required and a regular cohort of partner agencies working on the audit process. Outcomes of audits are shown later in the report.

Lessons from Serious Case Reviews

Thurrock did not have any serious case reviews for this reporting period. Other national serious case reviews whose findings had an impact on safeguarding in Thurrock were



disseminated to the respective agencies for the learning outcomes to be embedded into practice.

Briefings on lessons learnt from Serious Case Reviews were carried out in 2012/13 and further events are planned for 2013/14 including our conference covering the “Voice of the child”, which has been identified in a number of serious case reviews across the country and acknowledged as an area for Thurrock to develop further .

The future work programme of the group is determined by the action plans arising from serious case reviews and a priority for the group is to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented in a timely manner. Briefing staff on the lessons learned from SCR’s will continue to be a key activity in the coming year. The group will also be reviewing the SCR process undertaken including considering the feedback from staff involved in managed reviews to continue to improve the process in a supportive learning environment.

Managed Case Reviews

The Board undertook a managed review of a case that did not meet the threshold of a serious case review using the SCIE methodology as its vehicle to work with all agencies involved. The full details of the findings can be found in the final report of this review. Further managed reviews are planned for 2013/2014

The Audit Process

The LSCB Audit group includes representation from Police, Health, YOS, Probation, Housing, Social Care and Commissioned Providers. The members are middle managers or professionals with a specific safeguarding brief. The group met on a four weekly rotation.

The activity and case categories selected for review were selected at random; include single and multi-agency audits which were notified in advance to each representative before the meeting. Each agency representative was then expected to review its own records in relation to the case and the identified practice point e.g. Section 47 Child Protection. Where relevant, notes and case files were brought to the meetings and shared with the group. The focus of the group includes the appropriateness, quality and timeliness of each agency’s involvement,



not just in the immediate period but also over a longer timeframe where this is relevant. Prime concerns considered are whether children appear to be safe / have been safeguarded, whether they have been the main focus of activity and particularly – when age appropriate – that the children have been spoken to and their views elicited. The emphasis during the early part of the year has been much more focused on whether policy and procedures had been followed. This is still considered important, but the theme has shifted its focus to outcomes of practice and the voice of the child.

Audit Outcomes

Minutes of the meeting were recorded with comments on each case made by the group. These identified good practice and joint working as well as noting any concerns about the work completed. Where any serious concerns about the safety of a child were identified, these were immediately notified to the appropriate agency and the group requested and received updates on any such case.

The findings and outcomes of the Audit Group meetings were reported to the LSCB regularly through the Executive meeting and there is an annual summary of activity provided for the Full Board, so that the overall quality of local safeguarding practice can be evaluated and any lessons for improvement taken forward at both an operational and strategic level.

A forward plan has been agreed for future audits' to ensure all safeguarding elements are considered taking into account equality and diversity.

The group has focused on ensuring that learning from its activities is captured and fed back to the appropriate agencies through an action plan process.

Each representative has been keen to ensure that the investment of their time has been an effective means of assessing how well local partners are working together to safeguard children. All members of the group have reported that they have found the audit process a learning opportunity to broaden their understanding and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of every agency. The group has gradually developed a shared, appropriate expectation of what they would expect to see from safeguarding responses not just from their own agency but also from other agencies.

Audits undertaken 2012/2013



April 2012 - Audit of 10 Looked After Children cases. This process proved challenging to the group and future audits would be reduced to a maximum of six. It was identified that some education and health elements in some cases needed additional work and this was fed back to those agencies.

May 2012 – Six audits S47 of children with disabilities. The audits showed good partnership working, good record of recording and decision making.

July 2012 – Five audits of children with disabilities. Two of the audits identified the need for more action and improvement within the core assessment process, this information was fed back to Children’s Social Care.

October 2012 – Five audits to examine the appropriateness of Threshold for S47. All cases were deemed to be at the appropriate level.

March 2013 – random audit of a single case involving child protection of a child on a plan of two years with complex needs. The audit resulted in practice feed back to Children’s Social Care, Probation and Coram a service provider.

Performance Management Sub Group

The Performance Management Sub Group monitor the effectiveness of current practice in protecting children in Thurrock from harm, both via ongoing and set pieces of work highlighting any areas of practice that need to be addressed. The Performance Management Sub Group supports the LSCB in the monitoring, promotion and planning of high quality practice in line with the interagency performance management framework.

The sub group monitors and analyses trends in a range of performance indicators and other management information and reports back to the LSCB highlighting areas of concern, themes or significant trends that are occurring.



The LSCB Performance Management Sub Group has developed a framework called the “Thurrock wheel” which has received regional recognition as good practice in monitoring the effectiveness of what is done by the Board partners, individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Continuous performance management is at the core of Thurrock LSCB ethos, ensuring the effectiveness and impact of interagency safeguarding activity makes a difference. Areas of concern, practice, performance issues or areas requiring development identified and evidenced through the performance management framework where highlighted were fed back to agencies. The Chair of the sub group reports directly to the LSCB Executive in respect of the progress and impact of safeguarding in Thurrock.

During 2012-2013 the sub group established a themed programme of quality assurance examining practice and service delivery in order to provide a systematic approach to organisational learning and development which resulted in improved safeguarding for children and young people in Thurrock.

The group examined performance in the following areas:

- ✚ Are we sure that no two children will die as a result of the same system failure/s
- ✚ Is the Children’s workforce fit for purpose
- ✚ Are we satisfied with the quality of care for any child not living with its parent, a close relative or someone else with parental responsibility
- ✚ Child death review

The outcome of each performance review was recorded on an action matrix and updated by the relevant organisation.

Training Sub Group

The Training Sub Group has a key role in ensuring that each agency delivers effective child protection training of professionals and volunteers who work with children, young people and their families or services that affect the safety and welfare of children. It is the responsibility of the LSCB to ensure that multi-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare that meets local needs is provided. The purpose of the training is to develop and promote shared understanding amongst safeguarding partners around the tasks, processes, principles, roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children promoting their welfare to result in better outcomes for children and young people in Thurrock.



Two new members joined the group representing NHS South Essex and Adult Social Care. Adult Social Care were keen to engage with the group and their role in the group both strengthens its overarching expertise but also provides a clear route into adult social care for promotion of training for the inter-agency workforce. Other individuals or agencies with specific expertise join on a short-term basis to focus on individual pieces of work as appropriate.

The group is seeking to identify an individual who has an overarching involvement with schools and education who has the capacity to join the group and this continues to be a challenge. The group would benefit significantly from having an education representative involved. There are Head Teachers who would be willing to sit on the group however, whilst this would provide an education perspective it would potentially still leave gaps in terms of allowing the group to engage with schools as a whole.

The group has also benefited from the involvement of the LSCB and Children's Partnership Business Manager, providing clearer links to priorities across the partnership and an increased level of accountability going forward into 2013-14. The dedicated administrative support from the LSCB and Children's Partnership administrator is also starting to have a positive impact, to administer a larger training programme during 2013-14.

Training Provision

Inter-Agency Child Protection Training

Four sessions were scheduled for 2012-13. One of these in October 2012 was cancelled due to low levels of bookings despite wide circulation. This training was delivered directly by members of the training group with representatives from Children's Social Care, Health, Basildon & Thurrock University Hospital, South Essex Partnership Trust, Essex Police and Adult Social Care. A review of the content and format of this training was completed following the November delivery and refreshed. The new format is based on case studies developed by Essex Police and has focused on using scenario's and case studies as vehicles for learning , drawing out key themes and good practice as appropriate. The group



are encouraged by the initial response from participants to this training. The group wish to acknowledge the involvement of DI Tracy Wheeler, Essex Police during the development and embedding of the new inter-agency child protection materials

One challenge created through the introduction of the new format is a decision to reduce the number of places per course by half, a reduction from 50 to 25 places. Whilst this has ensured that there is more opportunity to engage with all participants it has also meant that towards the end of 2012-13 demand for training outweighed supply. This is being addressed in the programme for 2013-14, with the number of facilitators for each session being scaled down in order to allow for more sessions to be delivered with minimum impact on facilitators' regular workload.

Online Exploitation of Children & Young People

This training was delivered on two occasions by the Detective Sergeant from Essex Police Online Investigation Team. There was a high response to this training with a total of sixty-five staff attending across the two sessions, indicating that many professionals are aware not only of the increasing risk of safeguarding issues arising through use of online media but also their own need to be informed in order to start to address some of these issues within their agencies. This training will be continued in the 2013-14 training calendar complementing the work of the childrens Partnership E-safety group as the local response to E-safety issues continues to be progressed.

Child Protection – Growing a Questioning Culture

This training was delivered on three occasions in response to recommendations from the SCIE review undertaken by the LSCB on Baby J. An external provider undertook the training which aimed to support professionals to identify how we ensure a consistent, child focused approach in our decision making, the importance of recognising the impact of self on decision making, identifying how we can remove barriers to being child focused in our decision making and the importance of owning our professional judgment and growing a questioning culture. Training was targeted at Team Manager or Service Manager Level in Social Care, Health, Police and Early Years Private, Charitable and Faith Organisations with a total of sixty-two staff attending.

Facilitators training



Recognising the need to further develop the facilitation skills and confidence of the training group members directly involved in delivering training, a 1 day facilitation skills training was commissioned in March 2013. The nine staff participating already had experience of training delivery and this bespoke course served to build on their experience. Additional representatives from health and social care joined the group as part of the long term plan for more frequent delivery. The Learning was put into practice in April 2013 with a noticeable increase in confidence and skills in facilitating group learning.

Training Attendance

Training Event	Number of Courses	Total Attended	Total Attended										
			Housing	Children's	Social Care	Private	Voluntary &	Learning &	Universal	Health	Education	Early Years	Police
Inter-agency Child Protection	1/10/12		Cancelled due to low level of interest										
Inter-agency Child Protection	3	82	4	11	9	0	22	29	0	6	0	1	
Online Exploitation of Children & Young People	2	65	0	25	14	13	5	4	1	1	1	1	
Child Protection Growing a Questioning Culture	3	62	0	15	14	5	5	12	0	11	0	0	



- The total number of attendees for the period April 2012 – April 2013 is 209
- Of this 209 the percentage of attendance across the recorded sectors is as follows:

Sector	Percentage of Total attendance recorded in sectors
Children's Social Care	25%
Learning & Universal Outcomes	8.5%
Private Voluntary & Faith Sector	18%
Health	16%
Education	22%
Early Years	0.5%
Police	7%
Foster Carers	0.5%
Adult Social Care	0.5%
Housing	2%

Highlights

- New content and model of delivery for Inter-agency Child Protection training has been developed and implemented with positive feedback from participants regarding their learning from the programme
- Since introducing the new programme for Inter-agency Child Protection training demand has increased
- Adult Social Care representation on training group has strengthened the groups capacity to encourage joint working across children's and adults services
- Online Exploitation training has been well received with each training identifying that there is still a significant lack of awareness across the workforce as to the real challenges in this area of work
- Investment in the skills of the training group and an increase in trained facilitators reduce the need to commission external providers and strengthen the effectiveness of local delivery with a local perspective, allowing budgets to be used more effectively.



- Administrative support has allowed for training places in the second half of the year to be more evenly allocated across the partner agencies, ensuring that training truly is “inter-agency”



Challenges

- Of the total 352 training places offered in 2012-13, 209 were filled. The group need to give consideration as to how training is promoted, whether it is being targeted appropriately, if it is meeting the needs of the workforce and are all partners supportive of inter-agency training.
- Long-term evaluation of impact of training continues to remain a challenge due to the vast nature of the workforce of which only a small percentage receive inter-agency training. There are a significant number of other variables which all impact on improvements in practice making it difficult to pinpoint the exact impact of training.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The LSCB is funded through partner agency contributions and any income generation provision. These monies are used to pay for management of LSCB business. This includes Serious Case and Managed Reviews; Independent Chairing of the LSCB, the LSCB Business team, costs associated with LSCB and sub group meetings, multi agency training, publications and procedures relating to safeguarding.

The budget is managed through the Local Authority budgetary procedures system by the LSCB Business Manager. A breakdown of the financial position for 2012/13 is shown below.

Income 2012/2013		Expenditure	
Health	15,000.00	LSCB Independent Chair (inc VAT)	14,893.65
Police	15,000.00	LSCB Manager Cost - inclusive	28,529.49
CAFCASS	550.00	LSCB Administrator - inclusive	6,960.25
Probation	9,500.00	Recruitment Costs 2012/13 (inc VAT)	0.00
LA	35489.74	LSCB Training Programme	4,161.70
		Child Death Review Administrator	6,000.00
		Annual Conference	4,888.07
		Serious Case/Mgt Reviews	736.80
		Promotional	0.00
		Venue hire for LSCB events	0.00
		Other expenses (Chronolator fee)	1,044.00
		Contingency	260.00
		Stationery	63.48
Total Income	75,539.74	Total Expenditure	67,537.44
C/F 2011-12	68,641.00		
Total Budget	144,180.74		



Troubled Families Programme

Thurrock Council and its partners are participating in the Troubled Families initiative. This is a national programme developed to address issues of crime and anti-social behaviour, children not engaged in education and worklessness. The initiative will target around (600) families over three years to help them to turn their lives around and in particular the lives and prospects of their children. Families will be offered intensive interventions to address the difficulties that they have. The LSCB is interested and involved in this work at a strategic level as the success of the programme will have positive benefit around the safety and wellbeing of children in Thurrock. The programme is in its early stages with the first families being offered intervention over summer 2012 and the LSCB will receive regular progress reports and updates throughout the year.

Sexual Exploitation

The majority of children in the UK grow up safe from harm however there are a small number of children who are being sexually exploited and it is thought that this is an area which is under-reported. Research has shown that this abuse can be perpetrated by individuals from all sections of society and can be targeted at boys and girls from all sections of society. There are certain factors in a child's life that can make them more vulnerable to being sexually exploited, for example the links between children who go missing and those who are sexually exploited are well documented.

Thurrock LSCB has made substantial progress in working to improve outcomes for children who go missing from home or care or who are at risk of sexual exploitation. The Children's Partnership has a Missing Children Panel which has oversight of the picture of children who go missing in Thurrock. They also review individual cases and have highlighted some children who are at risk of CSE and take positive action to meet their safeguarding needs and provide a report to the LSCB for scrutiny.

The Government has also made sexual exploitation a priority and has produced a Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan and also a cross-Government strategy on missing children and adults. The LSCB has been reviewing the Children's Commissioners Interim findings on CSE (October 2012) and has been working on its own action plan to quality assuring its systems and processes against the reports recommendations and making sure that those who come into contact with children and young people are aware of possible signs



of sexual exploitation and how to respond. Further work in this area is seen as a priority for the LSCB in the coming year.

Lay members

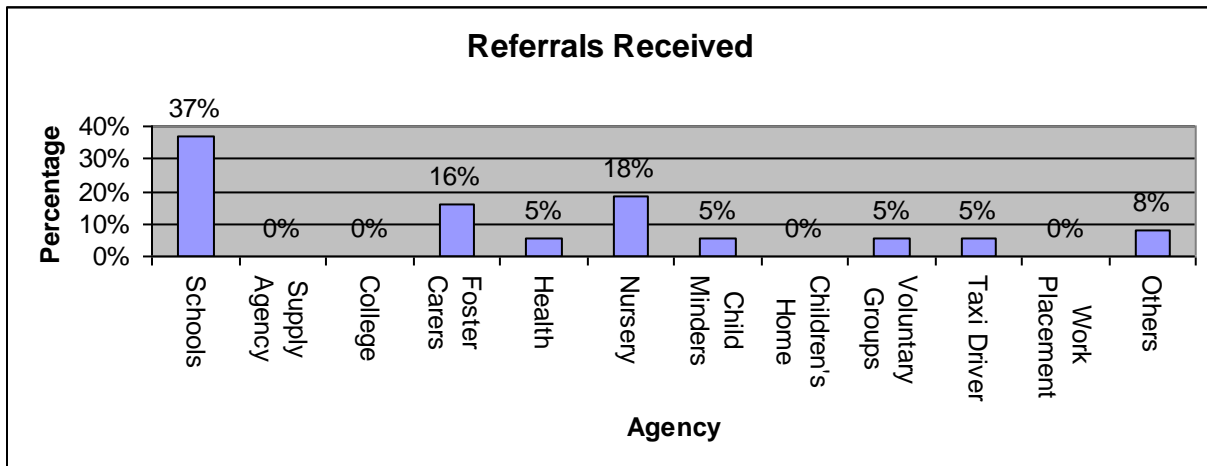
The Board now has one volunteer lay member whose role has been essential in offering the 'community voice' to the Board and challenging what the Board does. They have a standing agenda item at board meetings and provide a positive challenge to partners picking up local media and community voice building the link between the strategic works of the Board and the local community. Thurrock LSCB have been very fortunate in having a lay member who is well known within the community which has proved invaluable in assisting with community awareness and supporting events including the Christmas party and presents for our Looked After Children. We are currently actively seeking a second lay member.

Allegations Management

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has close links with the LSCB who monitors the recommendations and outcomes of allegations of abuse against those who work with children ensuring completion within timescale.

The LSCB has a duty to ensure that all allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with consistent procedures. The Board needs to ensure that there are effective inter-agency procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. During this reporting period there are have been 38 referrals to the LADO, this is consistent with the previous years reporting.





The outcomes from allegation investigations in Thurrock show that the proportion resulting in no further action is 47% this may be due to the fact that schools are reporting all allegations that are made. The LSCB will continue to monitor this.

LSCB Action:

- ✚ The Board will make recommendations to the Inter-Agency Training Group to provide further awareness training and the roles of agencies in disclosing to the LADO.
- ✚ The LSCB will write to every agency reaffirming the requirement to use the Designated Officer procedures to investigate allegations and set a clear expectation for all statutory and voluntary agencies to nominate a designated senior officer for ensuring any allegations are referred to Thurrock LA for investigation

Good examples of safeguarding practice

The LSCB are pleased to acknowledge some of the excellent work undertaken in safeguarding children and young people by the Children’s Partnership, Community Safety Partnership and local community and voluntary organisations that contribute to making Thurrock a safe place and supporting Thurrock overarching vision

Thurrock: A place of **opportunity, enterprise** and **excellence**, where **individuals, communities** and **businesses** flourish to live.

Highlights

- Positive alcohol strategy and proactive operations to combat and reduce underage drinking
- Violence against Women Strategy and Implementation Plan

SAFEGUARDING INSPECTIONS



Thurrock had an inspection of its Youth Offending Service (YOS) in 2012, an Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Services (SLAC) in June 2012 and an inspection of Fostering Services in March 2013. The YOS inspection rated the service as Creditable, while the other two inspections found the service to be rated as Good.

The SLAC inspection found the overall effectiveness of safeguarding services in Thurrock to be good. Commenting on good safeguarding outcomes for children and young people, with good examples from the Youth Offending Team and Education Services. The inspection identified some areas for improvement, immediate actions around agreements between Children Social Care and CAF is reached and understood, where thresholds are not met and that there is a good understanding of the pathways to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

Other actions were, written outcomes sent to refers, all actions and decisions to be recorded on each child's file at the same time, including siblings, case records to include a chronology, risk assessments to be included before assessments are signed off by managers, Child Protection and Child In Need plans to be SMART.

Further work to improve the awareness of Private Fostering, ensure that all health providers to be fully engaged and make appropriate referrals to the CAF process, NHS South Essex and Basildon & Thurrock University NHS Foundation Trust to ensure that staff should have regular planned supervision.

Each of these recommendations was formulated into an action plan, and all have been completed and audits undertaken to measure compliance and effectiveness.

SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

THRESHOLDS

Thurrock continues to apply its thresholds rigorously and whilst always traditionally significantly high numbers of referrals recent years has seen a decrease in referrals to just below that of the national and statistical neighbours. The implication of the Early Offer will help to strengthen the interface between Children's Social Care and partner agencies in terms of cases that do not meet the threshold for Social Care involvement. Data on repeat referrals shows Thurrock over the last 3 years consistently below the national and benchmark average. This suggests Thurrock is accurate in determining what kinds of cases need to come into the service and understanding of this threshold is very well understood by partners. Nevertheless the referral rate into the service remains an area for vigilant attention.



Rate of Referrals per 10,000	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
National rate	490	497	548	555	534	Not available	
Stat Neighbours	427	525	560	550	555	Not available	
Thurrock	528	1046	671	416	374	457	

100% of new referrals in Thurrock have a management decision within 24 hours as to whether further intervention is required. Rates of Initial Assessments are in line with our referral rate above both National and Statistical Neighbours (436 per 10,000, national 398).

Compliance with timescales is strong. 83% of Initials are completed within timescale, against a National Average of 77% and Statistical Neighbour average of 76%. Thurrock currently completes 370 Cores per 10,000 against a National Average of 195 and Statistical Neighbour is 209. Timescales on Cores are 74% completed within 35 days in Thurrock against a National Average of 76% and Statistical Neighbour average of 79%. Thurrock has seen a decrease in performance in this area in recent months, this is due to management changes, however plans are in place to address the performance in this area. Given the high number of Core Assessments completed the current performance is still fairly impressive.

A number of hypotheses have been tested to explain the differences between core activity in Thurrock and activity elsewhere. We have found little evidence that Initials are being progressed to Cores in order to artificially inflate timescales performance. Staff has been fully engaged in the human rights discussions about over-intervention in the private lives of families. The rate of Child Protection enquiries in Thurrock stands at 160 per 10,000, the National Average is 110, Statistical Neighbour 111. This accounts in part for the higher than average rate of Cores. We believe that our practice is very robust in updating Cores on open cases, which again may explain in part our high numbers. Thurrock remains satisfied from internal and external scrutiny and testing that our threshold for Child Protection enquiries is robust.



The rate of children subject to Child Protection plans is high; Thurrock - 53 per 10,000; National - 38; Statistical Neighbour - 38 (the actual number of children subject of a plan in Thurrock is 204). Child Protection thresholds are consistent in Thurrock; the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan measured against the number of Section 47 investigations undertaken has remained consistent at about 50% for a five year period. This is largely in line with National and Statistical Neighbours' figures for the same period.

The most recent SLAC inspection found that "when child protection concerns are identified, swift action is taken to ensure children are safe. Child Protection Case Conferences are timely and there is good oversight of plans to ensure they do not drift".

Caseloads of Social Workers are maintained at safe levels with a maximum of 20 children for each practitioner, dependent on individual experience and the duty to limit the caseload of newly qualified social workers. The average is 17 children per social worker. Thurrock has large families so this equates to an average of between eight to 10 families.

We were proud that the CIB identified two members of Thurrock safeguarding staff to assist another authority in a peer review process around their policies and procedures regarding Child Sexual Exploitation.

Children in Care

The SLAC inspection found the overall effectiveness of services for children and young people in care to be good, with the quality of provision also rated as good. Inspectors found that capacity for improvement is good, stating "the Council and partners share clear aspirations and strong ambition aspirations for children and young people in care".

There are currently 273 children in Care in Thurrock; figures continue to rise in line with the national pattern 11.7% since April 2012. The outcomes for children in Care, as measured by the performance indicators, are on the whole good, and in some areas very good.

Current numbers per placement by type is 106 placements in-house fostering, 122 purchased fostering placements (inc. mother and baby placements) and 28 residential



placements. Three young people are in supported lodgings and 8 are in independent placements and some are placed at home on care orders.

The increased numbers in purchased placements has been closely monitored, however has impacted significantly on the placement budget. Work is being explored regarding the further development of in-house mother and baby foster placements.

A review of all placements with young people 14+ has been undertaken and has shown the vast majority of young people aged 14 and above that are in Care are appropriately in Care. In a small number of cases appropriate alternative arrangements have been made.

Thurrock often purchases placements outside the area for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in order to ensure good matching with their carers, and easier access to communities of origin, which helps to build bonding capital for children who have often been deeply traumatised.

Childrens Social Care always attempt to arrange for children to be cared for by their own relatives. They have strong systems to assess the suitability of family members and the Special Guardianship Order figures show that they have successfully accomplished exits from care by supporting relative carers' applications.

Of the children who are fostered only 10% of children are in residential placements. The capacity of the in-house fostering service is becoming increasingly stretched as numbers continue to rise. Thurrock has a Specialist Therapeutic Fostering Team accommodating young people who would otherwise require residential or even hospital settings. These carers receive multi-disciplinary support and their training is accredited by the University of Essex. All carer training is led by a specialist post holder who works exclusively on this. Together with the very well trained mainstream carers, the service is sufficient.

About half of Thurrock's registered carers live outside the borough's boundaries and thus children often attend schools outside Thurrock. Foster Carer payments are kept under review to ensure they remain attractive, where necessary Children's Services have sought growth in order to maintain a high level of highly motivated carers. This is critical to our improving outcomes for our Children in Care.



Purchased placements have increased as our population has increased and this has in turn seen an increase in purchased residential care. This service is always out of authority. Children's Social Care have recruited a new 'invest to save' post to ensure best use of resources and planned, cost-effective and targeted spending. The post holder has already more than doubled the savings covering her salary.

Only minimal numbers of children are placed at home and work continues to ensure that this is only very temporary and a route to leaving the care system.

Placement stability is a critical factor, anchoring most other outcomes for Children in Care. The projected outturn for 2012/13 for children who have experienced three or more placement moves is 11.0%. This is in line with the National rate of 11.0% and the Statistical Neighbour rate of 11.0%. However this still means that 30 children in our care had more than three placements in the year, which does not meet the 'good enough for my child?' test. The second stability indicator, children who have been in care for more than 2.5 years and in the same placement for two years, is projected to be 58.0%, 68.% National and 69.0% Statistical Neighbours. The anticipated outturn for reviews on time is 100% for Thurrock, National - 90.5% and Statistical Neighbours - 90.6%.

Educational outcomes for Children in Care are a priority. There has been an 80% improvement in Thurrock's compliance with statutory guidelines on Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and a rapid improvement in the quality of the PEPs produced.

An important measure of the Virtual School's success in promoting educational achievement includes comparing children in care' outcomes being in line with their peers. Whilst the outcome at GCSE for 5 passes at A*-C including English and Maths was well above the national in 2011, it had fallen to 5% in 2012 reflecting a cohort that was more mobile and with more complex needs than the previous year's. At Key Stage 2, in a cohort of 9 pupils, 55% achieved Level 4+ in English and in Maths. This is above the national average and a creditable achievement given the number with statements.

Inevitably there can be significant cohort differences for this group, which can impact on performance data. The Local Authority is actively committed to ensuring the highest educational outcomes for Children in Care, Thurrock provides locally funded Personal Education Advisors , allowing Children in Care to access tuition and additional educational



services and experiences that grow the aspiration and skills.

The LSCB note that Children in Care in Thurrock have shown a steady improvement and are close to being in line with the academic performance of their peers. Inevitably there can be significant cohort differences for this group, which can impact on performance data.

Adoption and Permanency

Performance in ensuring children are placed for permanency where possible has been good. The service was inspected by Ofsted in February 2012 and rated the service as good, which was an improvement from the previous inspection, which had rated the service as satisfactory.

In May 2012, the DFE introduced adoption Scorecards, Thurrock was ranked as an authority that met both thresholds.

Numbers of children being placed in 2011/12 was only 3 children, there was an increase in 2012/13 to 11 children being placed, and this figure is set to increase for 2013/14.

The service was subject to an independent review in June 2012 by the Coram “Partnership to Promote Permanency Project”. The report rated the service as good. The areas for improvement were in regards to timescales for completing prospective adopter’s reports and in terms of placing sibling groups.

Thurrock has commissioned BAAF to undertake a training programme to improve performance in the areas highlighted.

Care Leavers

There are two areas of performance for Care Leavers that need further attention. Records show a low percentage of Care Leavers as being in suitable accommodation (Thurrock 82.8%; National 88%; Statistical Neighbours 86%). There were 29 Care Leavers in the cohort at 31 March 2013; of whom two were recorded as in unsuitable accommodation and three were not recorded. Of the two, one was living with friends, the other was a UASC who had chosen to leave his placement and did not inform the LA of his whereabouts. There is a relatively low percentage of Care Leavers in employment education or training (Thurrock 44.8%; National 58.0%; Statistical Neighbour 55.0%).



In recognition of the need to improve the outcomes in this area, an audit of Pathway Plans has been undertaken; the analysis and action plan from the audit is in the process of being developed. Thurrock is also involved with the Care to Work Scheme and as a consequence has a Diversity Apprenticeship Programme tailored to Care Leavers.

The Leaving Care Team now has a dedicated worker whose specific role is to develop employment and training opportunities with young Care Leavers. It is hoped that this will improve outcomes in this area. The LSCB will continue to monitor the development in this area over the coming year.

Challenges and next steps

In summary, it can be said that there has been real progress made to continue to improve safeguarding practice across the Borough primarily via the work of the Board sub groups in 2012 -13 – with many examples of where the Board and its partner agencies has made a difference in safeguarding practice. There are also however some gaps and areas of improvement that have been identified which are currently being addressed and will continue to be worked on in 2013 -14. The Board continues to develop an ethos of ongoing challenge and improvement not only of its partner agencies but also of itself. With this in mind, the LSCB looks to challenge the way we do business – complacency in this important area of work of safeguarding children and young people is clearly not an option. We would like to thank all those members who have committed to the sub groups and activities of the LSCB during this period. We will continue to seek out what we can do better to support the community we serve and ensure that the message that ‘safeguarding is everyone’s business’ continues to be promoted.



WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?

You can phone, write or call into The Initial Response Team.
Phone immediately if you believe it is urgent.

- Thurrock Council Initial Response Team
Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL
01375 652802 or 01375 652634
- Thurrock Council Emergency Duty Team (for out of hours)
01375 372468
- Police Child Abuse Investigation Team
01277 266822
or
Call **999** if you are concerned a child needs immediate protection

- Childline
0800 11 11 www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC
0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk or www.facebook.com/nspcc

