

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

APPENDIX 1



**THURROCK LOCAL  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN** BOARD

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## **Introduction by Independent Chair of the Board - David Archibald**

I am pleased to present the LSCB Annual Report for 2017/18.

The LSCB is required to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in its area, including an assessment of local safeguarding arrangements. This report also sets out the progress and achievements over the last year and those priority areas the Board will focus on over the next 12 months.

This report captures some of the excellent work the Board has undertaken to support and challenge the improvement of services for children and its work of raising awareness within all elements of the community.

Partnership working has strengthened despite personnel changes within the Board, with a greater sense of the Board functioning as a multi-agency forum.

Our vision is that every child and young person in Thurrock should grow up safe from maltreatment, neglect and criminal activity. We wanted to further improve our safeguarding system with the focus firmly on the experience of the child or young person's journey and how the new Brighter Future programme on early help provision, has embedded into practice.

I am pleased with the progress made locally during this period and we will continue to be vigilant in providing a level of challenge to partners responsible for keeping Thurrock children and young people safe, as we begin our approach to implementing new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in 2019.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the LSCB this year for their hard work and commitment. I would particularly like to thank our Business Team and Business Manager, for supporting me to keep the LSCB operating smoothly.



David Archibald



## **Overview of the Annual Report**

This annual report content provides evidence and examples from our 2017/18 Business Plan, which has driven the focus of the Board's activities along with information which highlights the Board's involvement in policy, auditing and reviews of services across agencies working with children.

The way the Board functions to support and challenge partners in safeguarding children are changing. The introduction of new safeguarding arrangements following the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018, will create new opportunities and challenges.

We are well advanced in our preparation for these new arrangements, streamlining our existing structure and building our processes with our colleagues across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET).

Our aim this year was to build on those high standards acknowledged during our Ofsted Inspection in 2016 and start to plan for the future.

The world of safeguarding children will always be a continual cycle of change. The Board and its future safeguarding arrangements need to ensure that it is fit to meet those needs.

This report will show some of the further progress we have made.

## **About the LSCB**

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory body which has a range of roles, scrutinising and challenging local safeguarding practice as part of its responsibilities under Section 14 of the Children Act 2004.

The Board has an independent co-ordinating and challenging role around safeguarding practice across its partner agencies and these functions are carried out through the Full Board and each of its Sub Groups, whose activities are outlined later in this report.

While the LSCB do not have the power to direct partner agencies, it has a key 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, 2015).

During this reporting year we have continued to receive good support at our meetings from all agencies.

We continue to work on improving our systems and structures on our journey to be an outstanding Safeguarding Board and have made further changes this year to the structure of the Board, amalgamating roles and responsibilities for greater efficiency.

To support our activities the Board has made some structural changes during the year and consolidated some of the groups for better efficiency of our partner's time. The Structure for this year comprises of:-

- ❖ Full Board
- ❖ Management Executive Group
- ❖ Performance Improvement Panel (PIP)
- ❖ Serious Case Review Sub Group
- ❖ Audit Group
- ❖ MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation ) Group
- ❖ Risk Assessment Group (RAG)
- ❖ CDOP (Child Death Overview Panel - SET)
- ❖ Child Death Review (CDR) South West

In addition, a new Strategic Group was established in September 2017, with a focus both on further improving the Partnership's strategic focus, and also preparing detailed proposals for future multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Thurrock.

To ensure the Board is aware of all cross cutting safeguarding impacts, representation on other boards and multi-agency groups includes:

- ❖ Health & Well Being Board (Independent Chair)
- ❖ Community Safety Partnership (Business Manager)
- ❖ SET CSE Strategic Group (Business Manager, Chair MACE)
- ❖ SET Procedures Group (Business Manager)
- ❖ Regional LSCB Chairs and Managers Group (Independent Chair, Business Manager)



- ❖ VAWG - Violence against women and girls Group (Business Manager)
- ❖ Signs of Safety Group (Project Officer)
- ❖ Graded Care Profile 2 Group (Project Officer)

## **LSCB Business Plan 2017/18**

For 2017/18, the Board agreed to maintain its four strategic Aims:

- ❖ Safeguarding is Everyone business
- ❖ Reduce the number of children and young people in need of responsive safeguarding through effective help and support at an earlier stage
- ❖ Voice of the child
- ❖ A Board fit to meet future demand.

Through this approach we can ensure that local services working together are effective in safeguarding children and supporting families.

Our plan sets out the Boards priorities for the year. Progress of the plan was monitored by the relevant Board Sub Group to ensure accountability and outcomes were achieved. The plan is available to view on our website [www.thurrocklscb.org.uk](http://www.thurrocklscb.org.uk)

Alongside these priorities we sought to improve our Quality Assurance and Learning Improvement Framework through more involvement of frontline practitioners in our audit process and also our work across the Southend, Essex and Thurrock partnership approach (SET)

The areas in which we focused included:

- ❖ Child sexual exploitation
- ❖ Children who go missing
- ❖ Self-harm and poor mental health
- ❖ Suicide
- ❖ Children at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism
- ❖ Children at risk of serious youth violence and gangs
- ❖ Updating of SET Safeguarding Procedures
- ❖ Learning and improvements programmes for practitioners



The Board completed 52 actions set for this reporting period with nine being carried over to the next reporting period due to changes in either process or feasibility.

Reports and procedures reviewed by the Board included:

- ❖ Private Fostering
- ❖ Local Authority Fostering
- ❖ Child Death Review
- ❖ Community Safety Partnership
- ❖ MASH (Multi Agency safeguarding Hub)
- ❖ MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

The Board were disappointed that we did not receive the LADO and IRO report for this year and the Children Home Educated report. This has been challenged and has now been rectified.

## **Understanding the Safeguarding needs of Thurrock Children**

- ❖ The number of young people aged 0-18 years in Thurrock is predicted to increase from 41,904 (25.1% of the population) by 9.8% over the next ten years\*
- ❖ The population is increasingly diverse with 34% of school aged children from Black and Minority Ethnic Group\*
- ❖ Thurrock experiences significant pockets of deprivation and inequality, with several areas falling within the 20% most deprived areas in England.
- ❖ Infant and child mortality rates in Thurrock are consistent with national averages.
- ❖ Thurrock has above the national average of children on Child Protection Plans \*

\*CSC self-assessment data March 2018

## **Safeguarding Context**

The LSCB are pleased to acknowledge some of the excellent work undertaken in safeguarding children and young people by agencies and partnerships across the Borough. The list is not exhaustive but includes recognition of the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB), local community and voluntary



organisations (CVS), that contribute to making Thurrock a safe place and supporting Thurrock's overarching vision.

## Highlights

- ❖ Joint Conference between the LSCB, SAB and CSP "Holistic approach to safeguarding the Families of Thurrock"
- ❖ PREVENT Agenda
- ❖ Adult Safeguarding support for Serious Case Reviews and audits
- ❖ Brighter Futures Programme
- ❖ Understanding and responding to gangs

## Safeguarding Thresholds

Thurrock continues to apply its thresholds rigorously and the Board annually reviews its published document. This year it has taken into account the changes to the Early Offer of Help service with the introduction of the Brighter Futures programme and inclusion of the Troubled Families programme within the new Prevent and Support Service (PASS).

## Snap Shot on Performance to safeguard Thurrock Children

### Looked After Children

The rate of Children in Care has reduced compared to the previous year. The actual number of Looked After Children was 307 (April 2018) compared to 333 (April 2017). This comprises of 64% male and 34% female, with the main age group being 10 to 15 years (45%).

### LAC Reviews

84% of reviews were conducted within statutory timescales.

### Health Assessments

Initial Health Assessments of the 196 rolling cases at time of reporting highlighted 21% remain outstanding. Since this reporting period, joint working between Children's Social Care and the LAC nurse has seen a significant improvement in this position.



## **Child Protection Plans**

The rate of children subject to Child Protection Plans (CP) has decreased significantly from the previous reporting period. The actual number of children subject of a plan in Thurrock has decreased from 275 (April 2017) to 239 (April 2018). This figure is back in line with the previous figures of 233 in 2015/16.

Thurrock has reduced from being significantly higher than statistical neighbours to now being in-line with statistical neighbours. This is as a result of the introduction of Signs of Safety as a social work model of intervention with families, which encourages strength based practice with families.

Of these 239 cases there is a fairly even spread of 53% male and 47% female. The open cases have undergone an extensive programme of audit and performance management scrutiny by Children's Social Care and the Board has conducted its own audits. This has supported the position of having the right children on the right plans and category.

The Board are determined to ensure that CP plans are timely and effective in achieving better outcomes for our children, and acknowledge the work undertaken by Children's Social Care in reviewing the category of multiple, which is no longer used, and also the work undertaken in reducing the timescales a young person remains on a plan.

This is now reflected in the timeframes that a young person remains on a plan being significantly reduced, which the Board will continue to monitor.

## **Child in Need**

CIN cases have seen an increase to 683 cases (Aug. 2018) compared with 618 cases compared to the previous year.

More children are being worked with as children in need, and this reflects the reduction in children subject to a Child Protection plan.

## **New Policies and Procedures**

The Board has contributed to the development of practice and process to improve services



to children.

- ❖ Supporting the introduction and implementation of The Graded Care Profile 2 as part of the Board's Neglect Strategy
- ❖ Supporting the introduction and implementation of "The Signs of Safety" Model for improving our partner's response to safeguarding practice.

## **Lay Members**

It still remains a challenge to fully incorporate lay membership within the Board. We currently have one lay member who is an active member on the Full Board. The Business Team promote and support the role through a variety of sources and publicity with the community.

This will be further addressed in planning for the new safeguarding arrangements for 2019.

## **Allegations Management**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has close links with the LSCB, which 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 and requests an Annual LADO Report to keep the Board appraise of trends and the activities the LADO undertakes. For this reporting period the Board did not receive the LADO report. This matter was challenged by the Independent Chair and has now been addressed.

## **Section 11**

The Boards Section 11 process is robust and provides good assurance regarding the quality of partner's commitment and prioritisation of safeguarding. The annual returns are reviewed



by the Audit Group for compliance and any action plans monitored for improving outcomes. The commitment to safeguarding is further scrutinised through the Performance Improvement Panel which requires each agency to answer questions from a Panel of the Board on its contribution to safeguarding.

This continues to involve a robust challenge, useful debate, and the identification of opportunities for further improvement.

## **Education 157/175 Audits**

It is pleasing to report that an excellent response from all our schools has taken place again this year along with the requirement for additional information supporting the PREVENT agenda. The submissions were quality assured by the Audit Group and where relevant actions plans are in place to monitor compliance and improvement processes.

## **Schools**

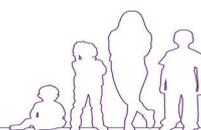
The Local Authority organises a termly Safeguarding Leads Meeting for Schools and Academies which provides a successful forum for the exchange of information relating to safeguarding in schools. The LSCB relationship with education establishments continues to develop and improve.

Work in this area has included consultation on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Anti Bullying work and work on the Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service. This work continues to be well supported by schools.

## **Early Help**

A new multi-agency Brighter Futures Board has been established to oversee service integration and strengthen the offer to families in need.

The processes for the improved service (Brighter Futures) are still in the early stages of development; however a streamlined referral form has been drafted for partners to make direct referrals to the service via one point of contact when there are emerging needs. The use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will be restricted to the making of safeguarding and child protection referrals to the MASH. It is anticipated that all referrals to



the service will be dealt with within 24 hours and the family allocated to a member of the team who will, alongside the Lead Professional, co-ordinate a TAF meeting and develop a Family Plan.

## **Learning and Improvement Programme**

At the beginning of the year the Board published its current learning and training programme on the LSCB Website. During the course of the year we added additional training and development programmes identified through audits and serious case reviews that would benefit practitioners in improving outcomes for children.

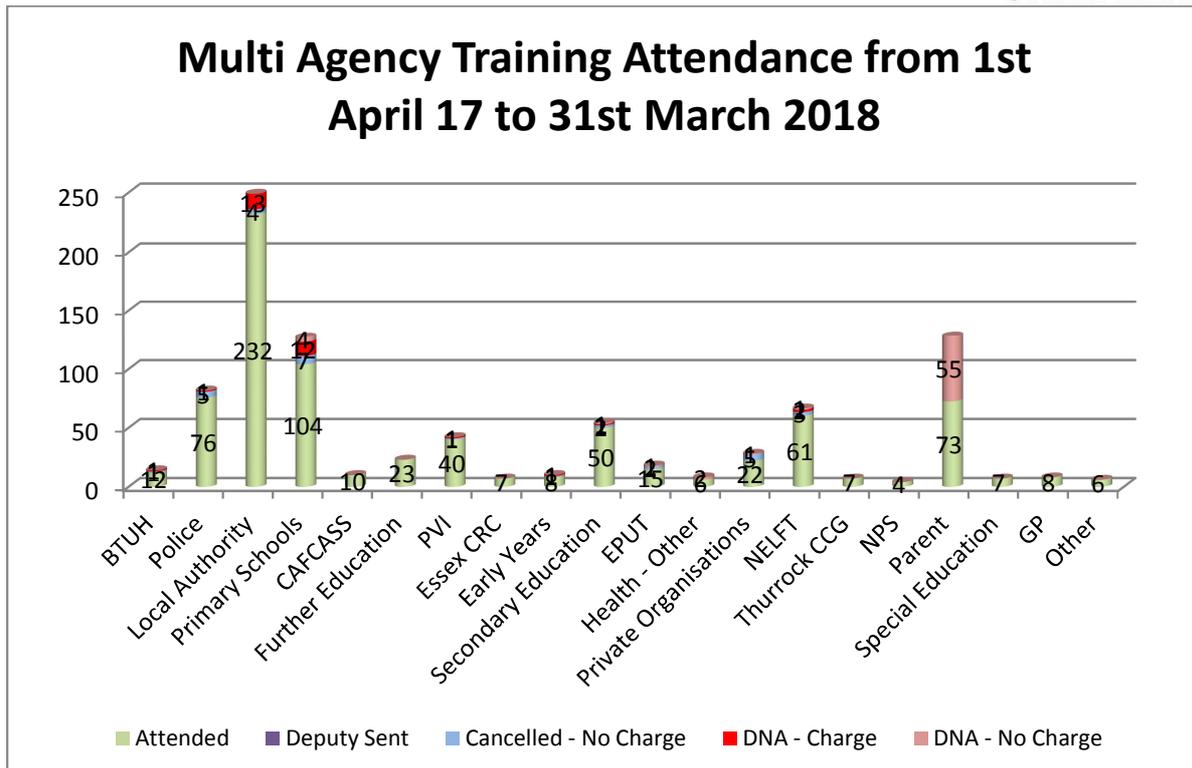
During the last reporting period the Board decided that the current provision of free training for all courses provided was not sustainable and certain “non-core” programmes would incur a charge, on a scaling ratio, depending on the organisation. In applying these changes the Board viewed it as essential to monitor the impact through its Management Executive Group. This new approach has not affected the take up of our programmes and has enabled the Board to offer additional programmes

It continues to be a challenge as highlighted in one of the two Ofsted recommendations from our inspection of 2016 to fully assess the impact of the learning and training we provide. In support of this we have introduced some additional business processes to assist in this task and aim over the next year to further improve the evaluation of our programmes.

The training programmes delivered during 2017-18 was:-

- ❖ Graded Care Profile 2
- ❖ Increasing Awareness of the Child Death Review Process
- ❖ Inter-Agency Child Protection training
- ❖ SCR Harry Learning Event
- ❖ Psychology of the Offender
- ❖ Signs of Safety Awareness
- ❖ Towards Confident Child Protection
- ❖ Walk Online Roadshow for Parents, Carers and Professionals





## Child Death Review Process

All child deaths are reviewed as part of the LSCB responsibilities to support learning outcomes. This process has continued to be undertaken jointly through the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) child death review process 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.

In September 2017, SET saw the introduction of the Learning Disabilities Mortality review programme (LeDer). This is still in its early implementation and will be reported on further as the programme develops. An Annual Child Death Report is presented to the 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. An Annual Operational report is also provided to partners and the LSCB by the Rapid Response Team (Health).

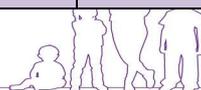
This quality assurance scrutiny by the Board of the reports, provide reassurance that partners are doing all they can in assessing modifying factors and implementing strategies to reduce those risks. From their findings the Board implements a number of safety initiatives and distributes literature on safer sleeping, furniture safety and water safety information in readiness for awareness campaigns over the spring and summer months. The Annual CDR report is available on our website [www.thurrocklscb.org.uk](http://www.thurrocklscb.org.uk)

## Finance and Resources

The LSCB is funded through statutory partner agency contributions and income generation through training or events provided by the Board where recovery costs have been agreed. These monies are used to pay for LSCB business, including Serious Case Reviews; independent chairing of the LSCB, the LSCB Business Team, and 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. A breakdown of the financial position for 2017/18 is shown below

Income	2017/18
Local Authority	108,000.00
Police	15,000.00
CAFCASS	550.00
NPS	4,750.00
CRC	4,750.00
Thurrock CCG	15,000.00
NELFT	5,000.00
BTUH	5,000.00
Income Generation	24,711.80
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>182,761.80</b>
Expenditure	
LSCB Business Team	108,600.00
Roomhire Costs	1,951.41
Equipment Purchase	1,769.12
Stationery	565.90
Professional Services	0.00
WOLR Costs - <i>under review</i>	
Training	9,497.50
CDR Costs	8,326.86
Independent Chair	20,065.12
Serious Case Reviews	21,442.60
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>172,218.51</b>
<b>Carry Forward to 2018/19</b>	<b>10,543.29</b>



## **Lessons from Serious and Managed Case Reviews**

Thurrock commissioned one Serious Case Review and one Managed Review for this reporting period. The cases are subject of ongoing enquiries. The Board also took cognisance of other national Serious Case Reviews whose findings had an impact on safeguarding in Thurrock and these were reviewed during the year and disseminated to the respective agencies for the learning outcomes to be embedded into practice.

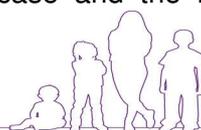
The process of undertaking these and previous reviews identified some concerns on the quality and timeliness of some partner agencies responses. These challenges have been highlighted with the senior management of those agencies to reflect on the impact this can have on the SCR process.

The group's priorities are to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented in a timely manner and monitor for impact of change. Briefing staff on the lessons learned from SCR's will continue to be a key activity in the coming year and work is in progress to develop our website to incorporate better information. The group will also be reviewing the SCR processes undertaken considering the feedback from staff involved in recent reviews to continue to improve the process of supporting staff involved in the review process.

## **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 five occasions.

The activity and case categories selected for audit and review are selected on a rolling programme at random. Depending on the nature of the audit being undertaken, an established audit tool is used for consistency of practice tailored to the type of audit being conducted. Our audits include single and multi-agency audits which are notified in advance to each representative before the meeting. Each agency representative is then expected to review its own records in relation to the case and the identified practice point. Where



relevant, notes and case files are 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 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 they have been spoken to and had 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 and any learning has a systems approach. This is still considered important, but the theme has shifted its focus to outcomes of practice and the voice of the child.

The group have reported that they have found the audit process a learning opportunity to broaden their own understanding and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of every agency. The group has 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.

A learning booklet is now produced highlighting the key learning elements identified and circulated to partners. Full details of the audits are available through the LSCB Business Team.

## **Audit Outcomes**

Minutes of the meeting are recorded with comments on each case made by the group, identifying good practice and joint working as well as noting any concerns about the work completed. If serious concerns about the safety of a child are identified, these are immediately notified to the appropriate agency and the Group request and receive updates on any such case.

The findings and outcomes of the Audit Group meetings are reported to the LSCB regularly through the Management Executive meeting and there is an annual summary of activity 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.



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.

## **Audits undertaken during 2017/2018**

The audit group met on five occasions during this reporting year and undertook both thematic and specific audits. The areas included:

- ❖ Specific audits of two at risk young people
- ❖ LAC - Three cases were examined. Learning identified concerns surrounding placement of young people in known gang locations which may be placed at risk of exploitation.
- ❖ Audit of section 157/175 and Section 11 returns. Action plans in place for areas to develop
- ❖ The group also reviewed all historical actions from previous audits to seek assurance that changes had been made and the process had impacted on the welfare of children.
- ❖ Audit two LAC, two CP and two CIN cases examining practice standards and multi-agency contribution to process. Learning cascaded back to agencies
- ❖ Benchmarking of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) against National Working Group (NWG) criteria and preparing a gap analysis for discussion at the MACE group followed by audit of two cases at risk of CSE
- ❖ A significant serious incident
- ❖ CSE risk assessments

## **Walk Online Road Show**

This year saw a break in our road shows for our young people to enable a review of the programme and ensure that the content was meeting the evolving world of safeguarding.

The Board have now captured to date in excess of 12,200 pupils from across the Borough. This is an exceptional achievement and this approach of engaging with young people was recognised by Ofsted during their inspection in March 2016 as an item of outstanding



practice and published in their spring journal as outstanding practice. The Board is proud of this achievement and is now preparing for the next programme.

## **Voice of the child**

The Board has undertaken a range of opportunities to hear the voice of local children. The Board has strong links with the Youth Cabinet. We take part in the Annual Youth Conference, attend local community events such as Party in the Park and the Orsett Show providing the opportunity to engage with young people and their families and raising awareness of safeguarding through various booklets, colouring books and information on all aspects of safeguarding. The community engagement is seen as an important element in raising awareness of safeguarding. This year the Board has distributed 62,140 items of promotional/safeguarding information.

The Children and Families Act 2014 (S19) requires that children and families should be involved in decision making at every level of the system and one of Working Together 2015 key principals for effective safeguarding arrangements is to take a child centred approach. Our Audit Group when undertaking individual audits seeks out in every case the voice of the child, to ensure that this element is in the forefront of our practitioners and highlighted where improvements can be made.

Our annual review of the Corporate Parent roles also provides to the Board reassurance that the needs and considerations of Looked After Children are being met. The Board sought reassurance on concerns raised on the timeliness of health assessments being undertaken. For those children that go missing the opportunity of sharing their concerns during the return from missing interviews offers further opportunities to understand their needs. The Board through its MACE and RAG groups are able to seek further reassurance that this particularly vulnerable group of children are heard.

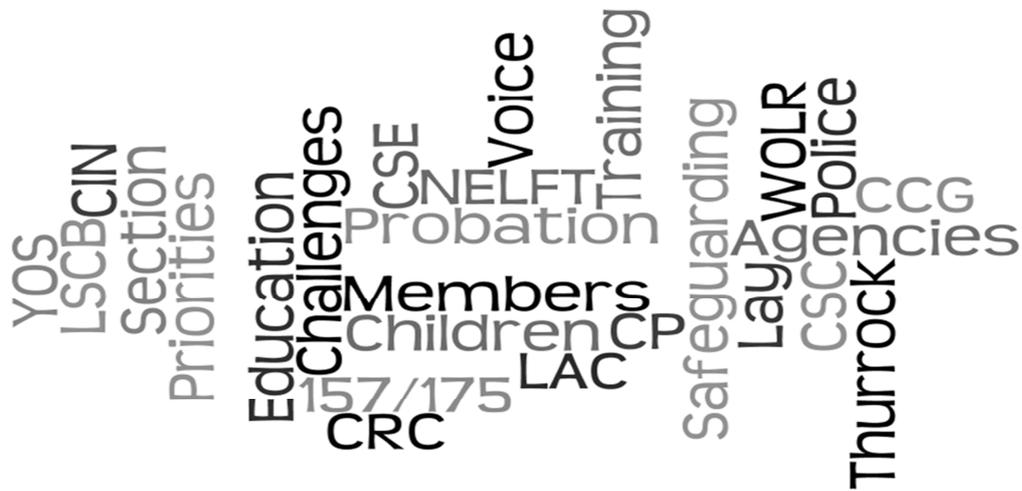
## **Priorities for 2018-2019**

- ❖ Continue to develop a Board fit for change with the introduction of a Strategic Group to oversee the changes to the new safeguarding arrangements
- ❖ Support the development of the changes in outcomes of the refreshed early help provision of the Brighter Futures programme
- ❖ Support the implementation and roll out of Signs of Safety and Graded Care Profile 2



processes

- ❖ Develop our workforce to be more effective in safeguarding



## Challenges and next steps from the Independent Chair

The Board continues on its journey of continuous improvement, seeking to sharpen the focus on its priorities so we are able to fulfil our statutory responsibilities. During this year we have embedded the changes made to our constitution and structure and delivering our Business Plan.

Alongside the business as usual activities we have faced a number of challenges including Serious Case Reviews both completed and initiated, and internal changes across our partners that create challenges in re-establishing individual communication networks. We are facing new challenges daily and with the emerging new safeguarding arrangements it is important that we maintain a robust and solid foundation during these developments.

The Board are clear that it will prioritise and continue to provide a highly effective safeguarding and interagency partnership, while implementing those changes proposed by the Children and Social work Act 2017 and as set out in Working Together (2018). As a Board we are up to that challenge and will continue to drive improvements in the quality of safeguarding through providing high quality support to our partners.

David Archibald  
Independent Chair

