

**THURROCK LOCAL
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014 - 2015**





Forward by Dave Peplow, Independent Chair,

I am pleased to introduce the LSCB Annual Report for 2014-2015. 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.

Our priorities continue to develop, responding to new challenges as they arise. There is still work to be completed and this forms part of our Business Plan for the coming year to enable our targets and aspirations to be achieved and acknowledged.

Our vision remains clear - 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. That ethos has again been tested during the year with the publication of the "Julia" Serious Case Review and other reviews and safeguarding audits undertaken. I am privileged to work with partners who share my commitment to this vision and are willing to analyse their performance to ensure it improves outcomes for children. We need to continue to build on a safeguarding system where the focus is firmly on the voice and experience of the child's journey from needing, to receiving information, help and support. Our work over the last year with young people through the "Walk online roadshows" has assisted this process. Our annual conference has become a focal point again with this year's conference on neglect being oversubscribed. As we move forward in 2015, there will be a strong emphasis to build on the early help and prevention. Examining the impact of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and greater focus to ensure that we do all we can to prevent children and young people meeting crisis point before interventions become available.

I would like to thank members of the Board for their work during this reporting period and particularly all the front line practitioners and managers and the LSCB Business Team for their dedicated work in safeguarding children.

Dave Peplow



Comments by the report author

I write this report on behalf of the Board as a reflection of the progress made in improving safeguarding for the children and young people of Thurrock during 2014/15. It takes into consideration the views of Board members, data and some personal reflections. The report provides evidence and examples from the 2014 /15 Business Plan, the progress and activity the Board is making across safeguarding and the way it works to support and challenge our partners in safeguarding our children and young people.

The aim to deliver 'more for less 'and make best use of contributions from partner agencies continues to be a challenge. A tight reign has been maintained on LSCB finances again this year which has enabled the Board to maintain a good financial position and we welcome the additional support from the new health platform that continues to develop in strength.

The refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) has allowed us to review our priorities for the coming year and to review the changing dynamics of the children of Thurrock. We have evolved our structure over the last year supporting our learning and improvement framework and have made some significant inroads into a better understanding of the safeguarding needs in particular of those that are most vulnerable to child sexual exploitation.

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 over the next few years will create 26,000 jobs and 18,000 new homes. The new Grays Campus for South Essex College opened in September 2014, marking 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 to 207,000 by 2033. Thurrock has a young population by national standards.

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% and that dynamic is predicted to change further. Among school-age children, more than one in four (26.5%) are from a black and minority ethnic group. Recent data indicates this rate has now increased to 30% (Education Commission Report 2013). 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 and agenda for both Children's Services and the Children's Partnership. This work is now starting to impact with a downward trend beginning to show.

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).



About the Thurrock LSCB

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children 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, 2015). 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 through the Full Board and each of the sub groups, details of which are outlined later in this report.

For 2014-15, membership of the Board and representation from all agencies on each of the sub committees has improved on recent years, which was generally good. We saw a number of changes over the year of individual representatives within the Police which had a temporary impact on the continuity of their contribution, but I am pleased to say that this has now stabilised and we are receiving very good support and also the addition of a non-voting member from the Police and Crime Commissioners office.

We saw a welcome improvement of education engaging from all types of education establishments in both sub groups and the Board resulting in representation from primary, secondary, academy, special schools and further education. We have reviewed over the last 12 months the way meetings were run, how information was shared and how the Board can more effectively challenge practice. We have built on the commissioned review of the Board in 2013 and we continue to work on improving our systems and structures even further.

Those changes have included:

- New governance policy of the Board
- Introducing of a more challenging Performance Improvement Panel
- More direct challenge of services at Board meetings through thematic reviews
- Greater focus on outcomes for children

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 and reflect on practice and policy.

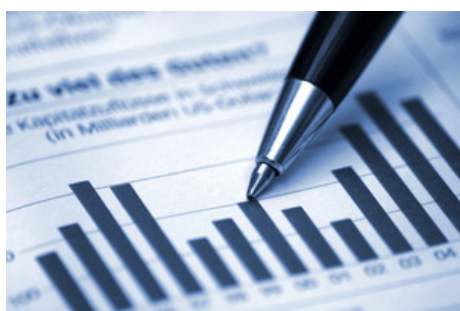
These are the main areas the Board have been involved in

- Policy development and refresh of the Pan Essex Child Protection Procedures (refreshed March 2015)
- Development of the Early Offer of Help and a member of the EH Project Board



- Development and supporting the implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Developing a new threshold and pathways to service document (reviewed annually).
- Development of joint working protocols
- Independent Chair a member of Health & Wellbeing Board

The LSCB also contributes and continues to work closely with the Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) and Community Safety Partnership, developing local policy and procedures.



Our Business plan for 2014-2015

A review of the Business Plan in March 2015 showed that in most key areas progress had been made against the actions set. Where any actions have been delayed or not completed within the predicted timescale a review was undertaken to challenge Board members. Where this was the case they have either been actioned, accounted for or carried forward to the current year.

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, in particular Child Sexual Exploitation as well as identifying local impact and trends emerging nationally arising from Serious Case Reviews and Independent Management Reviews. These approaches will form the basis of individual work plans for the Serious Case Review Panel and where local issues arise, the Audit Group and the Performance Panel in 2014/15 has focused on achieving better outcomes for Thurrock children.

Key highlights and achievements 2014-15:

- The 2014 LSCB Conference on Neglect
- Publication in December of the Serious Case Review “Julia”



- a responsive and reflective multi agency learning and development programme that has been cost effective
- Engagement and working alongside the Youth Cabinet
- Business Plan on target and flexible to reflect emerging issues
- Continued focus on improvement and challenge by looking at business processes in the Board and challenging agencies and practice where needed
- Development of Facebook and Twitter as a medium of communication.
- Development of a more robust and accountable constitution
- Continued progress with engagement and links with Faith Groups across the Borough
- Continued links and sharing good practice with other Boards within Essex and the region
- Development of good practice through the Eastern region improvement board.
- Engaging with the community through the “Big Lunch and “Tilbury Family Fest” Events.
- 86,387 items of safeguarding material distributed to professionals, parents and children.

Areas reviewed and actions

- Thematic review process for Section 11 implemented for all partners through the Full Board
- Refreshed approach to Child Sexual Exploitation, new training provided, intelligence network implemented,
- Focus on links with young people working with Thurrock Youth Cabinet
- New CSE strategy and focus on our most vulnerable children and young people

Reports reviewed

- Private fostering
- Local Authority fostering
- Children’s Partnership activity and policy development
- Child Death Review
- CAF
- Ofsted Inspection 2012 action plan outcomes
- Independent Reviewing Officers responsibilities
- Local Designated Officer role
- Sexual health service and response to sexual violence



Areas for development in 2015-16

- Greater involvement of children and young people in the work of the Board and the development of youth safeguarding Ambassadors.
- Review how Working Together 2015 is embedding across practice
- Single agency audit of safeguarding training
- Designated and safeguarding training for education establishments
- 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.
- Greater focus on outcomes
- Monitor the impact of the transformation processes across a number of agencies e.g. Probation, Local Authority, 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
- Improving administration and support to the Board through cloud based technology

Working with others

The LSCB has maintained and developed further its links with the Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) with a joint stakeholder event planned for 2015. The CYPP manage and commission the delivery of the Interagency 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 support groups sit within the children’s safeguarding structure in Thurrock. The LSCB recognise the most important fact is that we have the right groups with the right people and regularly review practice through reporting processes to the Board, which ensures that all elements of children’s safeguarding is in place to meet the needs of Thurrock’s children.



Agencies Voice

In 2013/14 we added a new section to this Annual report to show how our partner agencies have contributed to improving safeguarding for Thurrock children and young people. This process was seen as a helpful approach by all the Boards' partners in focussing both partnership and single agencies priorities and this element has been included again for this year's report.

Agencies were again asked to respond to four key headings.

What did your agency do in 2014/15 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible

CRC This last year witnessed the biggest change to the Probation Service in 100 years. On 1st June 2014, Essex Probation split into two separate probation service provider organisations: the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (ECRC). This involved enormous changes, both organisational – splitting and moving all staff; and operational – splitting and moving 6000 live cases, including their records, plans and arrangements for safe management. On 1st February 2015, ECRC passed from public ownership (MoJ) into private ownership (Sodexo), at the same time taking on new responsibilities for 'short-term prisoners under the Offender Rehabilitation Act.

As part of its approach to these changes, Essex Probation – and then Essex CRC – committed itself to maintaining its focus on Safeguarding and protecting children. This is in part reflected in the fact that throughout this challenging period ECRC has maintained its full 'presence' in operational Child Protection arrangements (including in the developments around the MASH) and in the work of the Board and its sub-groups.

Particular areas of development in the last year included our putting our staff into the Thurrock MASH; and leading a review of processes leading to the MARAC 'backlog', seconding a manager who cleared the then-existing backlog of MARAC cases and making proposals for changes to the JDATT/MASH/MARAC processes that would enable MARAC work to be manageable for all agencies. These proposals were subsequently accepted by the SET DA Board to whom this work was handed back in December 2014.

NELFT Safeguarding Children Training

Safeguarding Children training is mandatory and is provided to all staff working for NELFT. Compliance reports are completed monthly by the training dept. On 31.03.15 uptake of level 1 training was 98.78%, level 2 uptake was 94% and level 3 uptake was 91% for Thurrock staff.

All NELFT safeguarding children training has been updated to reflect the new Intercollegiate Document – "Safeguarding children and young people: roles and competences for health care staff "(March 2014). NELFT is committed to ensuring staff receive training that is evidence based and reflects national guidance and recommendations.

NELFT is committed to partnership working and promoting collaborative working .The Named Nurse is an active participant in delivering all LSCB interagency training sessions and is an active member of the LSCB training subgroup.



New training developed

In the last year NELFT has developed on line levels 1 and 2 safeguarding training packages. This will make training more accessible to staff and ensure compliance rates are maintained

Evidencing how training has had an impact on practice and has improved outcomes for children and families remains a challenge for NELFT.

The safeguarding children team have recently reviewed and developed pre and post evaluation questionnaires which will enable trainers to identify all learning achieved from the training sessions.

To evidence how training has had an impact on practice, NELFT have recently developed a telephone survey that will be completed with random training attendees 6 weeks post all classroom training events delivered. This will be implemented from **01.06.15** and will enable NELFT to identify, from staff, how the training has changed their practice and what positive impact this has had on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices

An enhanced DV and DASH-RIC E learning package has been developed and it is envisaged that uptake of this training will increase referral rates to MARAC and increase completion of DASH-RIC assessments to ensure children and their parent / carers are safeguarded from the impacts of domestic abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE Training

NELFT are 84.5% compliant with frontline staff having completed the Thurrock LSCB online CSE basic awareness training. Uptake of training will ensure all frontline staff have an understanding of CSE and know how to recognise key indicators and behaviours displayed by children who may be at risk of CSE.

An E learning CSE training package which includes CSE awareness and enhanced modules has also been developed within NELFT.

NELFT has also developed an enhanced CSE training which is being delivered this year to targeted services who may come into contact with children at risk of CSE such as sexual health/ GUM workers, School Nurses and CAMHs

In November 2014 a learning event was also held across NELFT to disseminate the findings from SCR "Julia" and to ensure all staffs are aware of CSE and how to recognise behaviour indicators. NELFT staffs have access to the published report on the LSCB websites and it is also accessible on the NELFT safeguarding intranet.

CSE Champions

Across Thurrock all safeguarding supervisors have been trained as CSE champions and a super champion has also been identified. CSE champions will attend CSE champion forums and disseminate learning and information relating to CSE to front line practitioners and



support them, through supervision, with the management of CSE cases and the use of the CSE risk assessment tool.

NELFT has developed a CSE self-assessment tool for service areas to use with their teams to identify gaps in staff knowledge, skills and competencies and identify further training requirements.

CSE and FGM Training

A learning event was also held across the South West Health Economy on CSE and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to ensure staff are aware of the indicators for CSE, and FGM, and are familiar with referral pathways and use of the CSE risk assessment tool.

Through recognition of FGM and use of referral pathways it is expected that MASH referral rates for suspected and identified cases of FGM will improve and appropriate multi-agency intervention will be provided to protect children and young people from the harmful effects of FGM.

Staff 's completion of the CSE risk assessment tool will enable practitioners to identify children and young people at risk of CSE , increase CSE referral rates to MASH and ensure early health intervention is provided to reduce and improve health outcomes for children and young people affected by CSE. The CSE risk assessment tool is being used across children's services and an audit will be completed later this year to monitor staff compliance across GUM/Sexual health and School Nursing Services.

Radicalisation

All NELFT staff now complete PREVENT training and are committed to the prevent agenda .Training will enable staff to have an increased awareness to identify young people at risk of radicalisation and terrorism.

Policies and Procedures

NELFT has recently developed a Fabricated and Induced illness (FII) Procedure to support staff in the identification and management of suspected FII cases. This procedure can be accessed by all staff on the trust intranet.

A NELFT CSE Policy was developed in December 2014 and is on the trust intranet. CSE and harmful practice procedural guidelines are presently being progressed to support the CSE Policy.

Safeguarding Children Supervision

Safeguarding Children supervision is mandatory for all NELFT staff that come into contact with children and young people and they must receive one to one or group supervision, dependant on their roles and responsibilities.

Staff Compliance rates in May 2015 for 1:1 was 94.5% and group was 89%. Through the supervision process practitioners will be enabled to contribute to improved outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. Effective supervision promotes good standards of practice and the delivery of a high quality service (Working together to safeguard children 2013). The voice of the child is discussed and recorded in all supervision sessions.



A supervision audit was completed in Feb 15 to monitor the quality of supervision and staff compliance with the safeguarding children supervision policy. The report and the findings are presently being finalised.

Voice of the Child

NELFT staff ensure the wishes and feelings of children and young people are heard and young people are involved in their service provision. The voice of the child is now captured and recorded at all core contacts and a voice of the child action plan is being progressed across NELFT.

Audits

Annual Section 11 self-assessment audit was completed to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across NELFT and to evidence improved outcomes.

A further NELFT wide audit was completed in May 2014 to assess the quality, timeliness and outcomes of Multi Agency Referral Forms (MARFS's). This audit is completed to enable NELFT to identify learning, improve the quality and the referral rates, and to improve outcomes for children.

Partnership working

NELFT is committed to partnership working and ensures appropriate senior staff from NELFT are present on all LSCB meetings and subgroups. Safeguarding updates are cascaded to staff through local safeguarding and operational meetings and safeguarding is a standard agenda item on all team meetings.

MASH

NELFT is committed to the implementation of the MASH and two health practitioners have been appointed to work as part of the MASH to support partnership working.

Early Offer of Help and collaborative working

The Head of Thurrock Children's Services is an integrated locality manager and is also the chair of the Central MAGS panel. There is consistent and appropriate representation at all three MAGS panels.

Regular meetings are held with the integrated locality managers and early offer of help to promote joint working. Representation is provided at both Early Offer of Help and Operational and Strategic boards, and the Troubled Family's boards.

SEPT

SEPT reviewed and updated its training programmes and added an enhanced section on Domestic Abuse to include forced marriage FGM etc. Training compliance is excellent but this year we have focussed on the impact of training on clinical practice and as such attendees are asked to evidence how training has changed clinical practice. Initial feedback has been positive e.g.

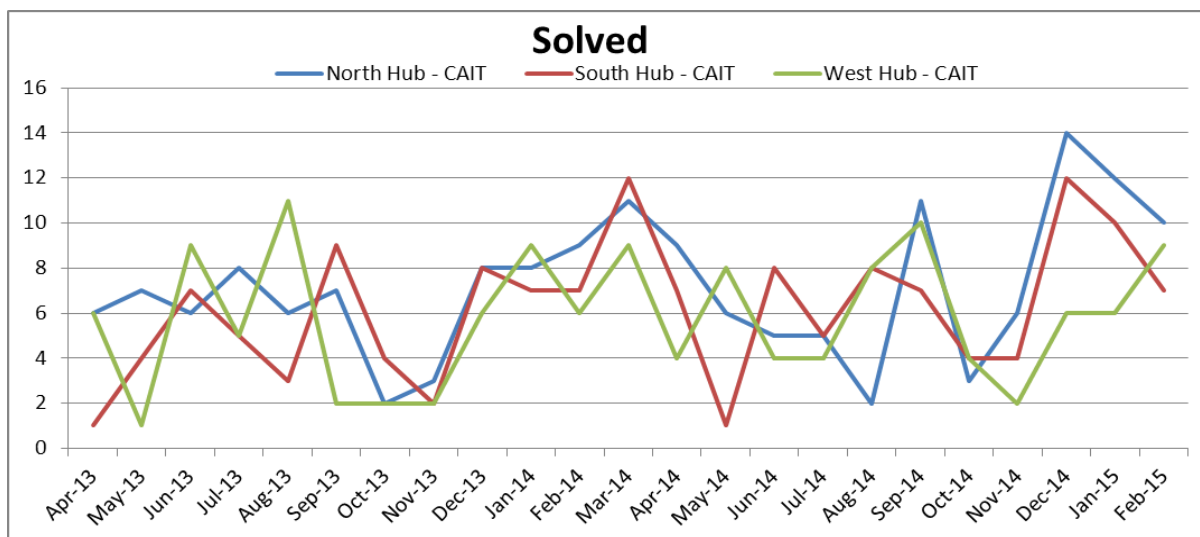
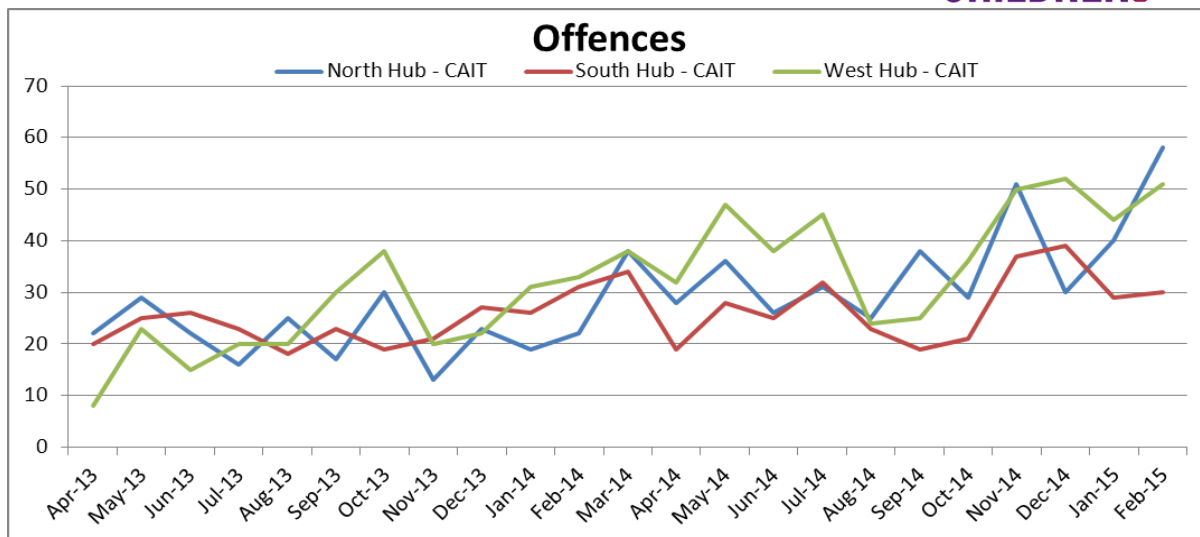
"I routinely discuss the support available to the whole family when I see any parent for a mental health assessment".

"I have put safeguarding as a routine agenda item in our team meetings"



- Thurrock CCG GP Sec 11 Audits – 2014/5 – 100% response rate from GP practices in Thurrock, have now completed a Sec 11 audit.
They have rag rated their practice and identified where their gaps are and have action plans in place.
- This has heightened safeguarding statutory requirements, awareness, practices responsibilities and CQC requirements.
 - Every GP Practice now has a GP Safeguarding Lead.
 - The action plans will be monitored by the CCG Safeguarding Team and Named GP.
 - Final Analysis Report is available on request.
 - Training, Supervision and Lessons learnt from Case Reviews and Cases Escalated:
 - These have increased the levels of cases escalated to Designated Nurse/Safeguarding Teams
 - Practitioners now have a questioning culture and are challenging colleagues from other agencies.
 - GP's are now also challenging and escalating their concerns – CSC, SERICC etc
 - GP's are now initiating, requesting and suggesting ways to engage them in the CP Processes.
 - GP's are now questioning request forms and scrutinising the validity and content of forms.
 - Increased awareness on Fabricated cases, more vigilance. Practitioners calling more professionals meetings and completing chronologies to obtain better understanding and clearer picture before involving external agencies.
- Internal CQC Framework Inspection on GUM – unable to share report as this belongs to NELFT.
Policy and procedures reviewed
CSE/CSA Training
Departmental changes made – eg: selected staff have now been NSPCC trained to deliver supervision.
Lead for CSE in department
Child focused practice and child voice been heard and recorded.
More datix (serious incident) and consultation/referrals made.
Inspection action plans are been rigorously monitored by NELFT.
- Police The demand within the Police Child Abuse Investigation Teams has been steadily increasing over the last two years. Of greatest impact has been a 40% increase in sexual offences experienced by both the Child Abuse Investigation Teams and the Sexual Offence investigation Teams. Below shows this increased across the county, Thurrock being serviced by the West hub. The second graph shows the increase in those offences “solved” where a positive outcome has been achieved (charged, cautioned or other positive disposal).





Essex Police continues to support the Thurrock MASH and has invested a Detective Sergeant and a Detective Constable within the team to support the multi-agency ethos of improved information sharing and decision making. The Child Sexual Exploitation Triage Team has been reviewed and improvements made to the referral pathway and coordinated activity to ensure those at risk are properly identified and prioritised. This has resulted in better inclusion of the missing person coordinators so the links between missing children and exploitation is properly understood. Operation Dartford led to the first successful prosecution for offences linked to Child Sexual Exploitation and has provided valuable lessons to improve the outcomes for these young people. This work continues to be coordinated through the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Strategic CSE group chaired by the Police.

“Walk the Line” was a road show which was delivered to schools within Thurrock in 2014 and provided online safety education. The Essex Police Youth Officers have all been trained to continue to provide these inputs.

NPS

From the 1st June 2014, the National Probation Service (NPS) became a newly formed organisation.



- The focus of the NPS for the coming year is to complete the Section 11 audit and to continue to promote the training and quality assurance processes for safeguarding children.
- The NPS will ensure it works with its partners to identify children at risk of harm and will review and update child protection policies, protocols and procedures to reflect national and local recommendations.
- Senior Managers will ensure that local area staff who work with offenders:
 - are familiar with guidance on the recognition of children in need, particularly those who have been abused or neglected;
 - know what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of children,
 - and recognise the role they can play in working with offenders that can improve their skills as parents and carers as well as reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Grays
Convent

- CP training as part of induction process and whole staff
- Follow up training on Prevent Strategies, Radicalisation, FGM & Modern slavery
- 2 members of staff received designated person training
- Designated Lead attended or hosted all Core Group Meetings in Looked After Children and/or Child in Need Conferences
- Improved 'What to do if' lines of communication – displayed in public places and all classrooms
- Improved referral forms to include body map
- Provision – Open Door Counsellors
- Brentwood Children's Society Counsellor

Outcomes

Increased awareness of all staff on all aspects of Safeguarding including specific areas – Radicalisation and FGM

- Those with particular responsibility for safeguarding are up to date with current procedures through training.

Gable
Hall

Over the past year we have been keen to promote a number of key issues including e safety, Child Sexual Exploitation and Radicalisation.

This sits beside our regular safeguarding issues which we address regularly through form activities, assemblies and focus drop down days. These include anti bullying, stranger danger, social media, violence against women, LGBT awareness, emotional wellbeing. We are also constantly reviewing the physical environment to ensure the safety of all members of the community

We have a Crisis Response Policy and team and regularly take part in practise scenarios which could happen.

The last pupil survey which are carried out in October 2014 indicated that the over 90% of pupils think that bullying and racial abuse is dealt with quickly and effectively.

There were only 12 incidents of racial abuse recorded for the whole of last academic year. Recent parent surveys carried out in January 2015 and April 2015 indicate that 95% and 96% respectively say their child is happy to come to school with 100% in both surveys saying their child feels safe to come to school



Beacon Hill
Governors went on safer recruitment and safeguarding courses
All staff updated with Guidance from “Keeping children safe in education”
Academy safeguarding policy reviewed and updated
Proact-Scip Uk positive behaviour support training updated for all staff and 3 instructors
E safety policy and audit undertaken
All staff medical training updated – epilepsy, gastro feeding, oxygen, suction, paediatric first aid
All pupil individual care plans updated
New curriculum rewrites including PSHE
All staff completed disqualification by association declarations
Senior staff attended CSE training
Storage and administration of medical procedures updated

Children’s Social Care
The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

The implementation of Thurrock’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Early Offer of Help (EOH) and Troubled Families, ‘integrated triad’ in July 2014, significantly enhanced the partnership’s ability to manage the interface between early help and statutory services. The MASH brings together a variety of agencies into an integrated co-located multi agency team; where information is shared appropriately and securely on children, families and adults.

The MASH builds on the success already secured by the service in introducing a police officer to the social work duty team (first council in Essex to do so) and which has been greatly appreciated across both services and served as a pilot for other areas. The MASH is situated at the centre of the main council offices in Grays, taking advantage of the benefits of the recent office transformation.

MASH core agencies include:

- Children’s Social Care
- Essex Police
- Locality Senior practitioner
- Troubled Families Programme Manager
- Health
- Probation & CRC
- Housing
- Education Welfare

MASH satellite agencies include:

- Adult services (Community solutions team)
- Link to Community mental health services
- Link to Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- Link to Education Psychologist (EP)
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health service/ currently known as CAMHS
- Link to the Sunshine Centre
- Basildon and Thurrock Hospital

The MASH has significantly enhanced information sharing and allowed for the rapid intervention to protect children where this would not otherwise of been possible.

Troubled Families

Our validated Payment by Results data shows that Thurrock have successfully ‘turned around’ over 100% of families within Phase 1 of the Troubled Families Programme. We believe the ‘Triad’ provides us with a solid base for entering Phase 2 of the Troubled



Families Programme.

We are very proud of our Troubled Families Programme and unique Thurrock strengths, which include:

- Dedication to working with and helping improve the lives of the people living within Thurrock. A team that are prepared to work and deliver support services in flexible ways to ensure the best outcomes for the Troubled Families e.g. one Parental Outreach Worker is currently taking a number of previously withdrawn young people out doing “Positive Activities” (Football/Basketball/Tennis, etc.) in local parks. Some of these young people were so withdrawn they had seldom ventured out of the family home or to school in over a year. This has also allowed other services to engage them such as Thurrock Therapeutic Treatment Services.
- A strong belief in the ideals of the Troubled Families programme - use of the Team Around the Family model which emphasises and encourages participation; is action orientated and supported by a SMART outcomes framework.
- A full engagement plan for schools, with frequent visits to ensure the Troubled Families agenda is fully embedded within participating local schools.
- Development of co-located Thurrock Housing Department, Troubled Families Champions
- A strong Multi-Agency Partnership Board

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

CRC The main challenge has been the implementation of the ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ changes, as above.

NELFT Cost Savings

In this present economic climate NELFT is constantly required to reduce costs but continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services offered to children and their families. There has been a level of services decommissioned or funding reduced this has included children’s weight management services, immunisation services, reduction of funding for school nursing services, reduction in funding for sexual health/GUM services. This will have a consequence in that services will need re-designing/re modelling. This may also require the hard choices of having to cut services.

In addition the requirement of commissioners to ensure value of the public purse has required services having to go to tender. This requires both senior staff and clinicians learning new skills in order where NELFT do participate in the tendering process.

There are a number of consequences :

1. Where NELFT participate senior staff may be removed from clinical duties for long periods of time.
2. Where NELFT win tenders for services this may require service redesign



3. Where NELFT do not win tender there may be a period of uncertainty for staff which may impact on clinical services (eg. Low morale, increased sickness)
4. Increased number of providers may increase risk of poor information sharing, potential for silo working

In order to minimise these risks NELFT have developed processes to ensure effective communication when staff moving between organisations which includes appropriate sharing of clinical records, face to face handover where there are individual children/families that are of concern, information sharing agreements.

Evidencing improved outcomes

Being able to evidence that the health intervention provided has had a positive outcome on the child's health and wellbeing remains a challenge. All children subject to Child Protection / CIN plans have care plans in place that are SMART and commensurate with risk and are regularly reviewed to ensure risks are reduced and health outcomes are achieved. All care plans are recorded in the electronic record keeping system .

Ensure a child centred approach

Effective safeguarding services must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and wishes of children and young people .Staff need to ensure the child / young person is seen and heard, and their views are taken seriously and recorded. The work we have progressed so far to capture the voice of the child needs to be further embedded in practice.

SEPT Challenges include maintaining the support and providing up to date information for teams in SEPT whilst the NHS continues to change. In addition there have been a number of new guidance's issued nationally e.g FGM data sets, Prevent etc . We have a safeguarding Champion Group where we share information and invite speakers and specialist presentations in order to cascade these updates to teams. We also highlight all Thurrock events on our weekly Trust news website for those staff specific to Thurrock area.

Thurrock CCG Safeguarding:
a) Different agenda's and priorities, understanding of thresholds, organisational cultures, language, standards and expectations.

a) LAC:

- Ensuring accurate LAC data recording- working with social care to improve Health assessment and immunisation uptake
- Interaction with LAC by visits to CICC and on LAC Activity day.
- Raising awareness of LAC and Private fostering at GP Training.

Safeguarding:

b) Initiated meetings with service managers and heads of services to resolve and share concerns.

Invited heads of service and managers to GP Forums to bridge any gaps and iron out any misunderstanding of expectations, roles and responsibilities.

Discussion with GP's and health practitioners on ways to improve working relationships. GP's initiations and suggestions on how to engage them as a group shared with relevant agencies.

Attending mediation meetings



LAC

- Improved multiagency working around LAC ,looking at strengthening links between provider organisations and social care in relation to LAC

Police

In November 2014 Operation Maple was launched and is led by the Deputy Chief Constable to look at Essex Police response to allegations of child abuse. This followed proactive internal scrutiny of investigative quality and timeliness which uncovered some issues, mainly in the North of the county. As a result Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Constabulary and the College of Policing visited the force early in 2015 to understand the scope of the issue and provide oversight and peer review support to Operation Maple. This has attracted media interest and shows the commitment and openness of senior leaders to deliver a service that is robust and provides the best outcomes for children and young people. A change of leadership, improved training and a robust performance framework evidence areas of the improvement plan that have already been embedded. The Strategic Change Management Team is tasked with finding financial savings across the force in line with the Governments Current Spending Review under the “Evolve” Programme. The next phase of this programme is the Public Protection project which aims to design and deliver a Public Protection function fit for the future which is lean, efficient and provides the resources necessary to deliver what is recognised as a priority for the force. It is anticipated that this may be an area which sees growth rather than savings.

Grays Convent

- Some social workers keep us informed but as a general rule, after making a referral we feel that we are responsible for further investigation to find out about outcomes for pupils and their families
- We address this by following up the cases with Social Services
- In the run up to school holidays, we can be inundated with safeguarding issues and struggle to cope with the demands of this along with other aspects of school life
- We work hard to meet the needs of our pupils at this busy time.

Gable Hill

One of the biggest challenges we face as a school to improve outcomes is to engage more of our parents with keeping their child safe on line or through Social Media App such as Instagram, Facebook, Snap Chat Kik ect. With ever changing technologies it is very difficult to keep up to date and many parents are unaware of the dangers their child can face or the consequences they themselves can face if the phone agreement or internet connection is in their name. This can also apply to staff who need to be made aware of the latest technology that pupils are accessing.

Beacon Hill

Biggest challenge has emerged this year, pupils can remain at Beacon Hill until 19 but when they become an adult at 18 they are subject to a completely different set of safeguarding procedures. We have had issues around professionals making decisions for these young people without a Mental Capacity Assessment or a best interests meeting. Extremely concerned at different approaches taken particularly around behaviour support

Children’s Social

Retention and recruitment of high quality social workers and social work managers has been a challenge for Children’s Social Care.



Care The Council have actively invested in a programme of growing our own social workers and the development of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Academy.
Our salaries have remained highly competitive within the Eastern Region and we have a comprehensive package of professional training and development to equip our workforce to meet the challenges of modern day social work.
Feedback from our staff is positive regarding the training and support provided by Thurrock.
We are committed to ensuring high quality social work for our children, families and communities. We continue to review the impact of changes of social workers on our children, young people and families, and avoid or mitigate this wherever possible.
We are working with partners across the Eastern Region to manage the quality and supply of agency / locum social workers and maintain the provision of high quality social worker.
We are an organisation that is committed to learning and continuous improvement and activity seek feedback from our service users to develop our services and the performance of our staff.

What challenges around multi agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?

CRC The main challenge this year has been the implementation of the ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ changes, as above.

NELFT **Partnership working in the MASH** – Joint supervision sessions are being held regularly with practitioners working in the MASH. This has enabled staff to have a better understanding of each other’s roles and to develop a common language which has promoted joint working. An example of how this has worked is that there have been a few occasions when health referrals have not been accepted and have been sent back for single agency response. In these instances health staff was supported to discuss the referral with MASH to review the reasons and also to review the quality of the referral sent in.

Ensuring CIN procedures are followed

A local serious case review identified that CIN procedures are not always followed and practitioners have recently identified some cases where they had not been informed children were subject to CIN plans. Health staff must ensure they challenge social care if CIN procedures are not followed and ensure CIN network meetings are held regularly as per Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) child protection procedures 2015. Staffs are also reminded to follow the escalation and conflict resolution guidance as per local SET procedures.

SEPT The Trust has been preparing Adult Mental Health and CAMHS services for a CQC inspection for safeguarding children and LAC. In order to raise awareness of services in SW Essex we held a number of joint meetings between NHS providers to review working together processes. For example in 2014

- The Midwives have met with the mental health crisis team to discuss those people pregnant but accessing mental health services.
- Meetings between the Community Mental Health Team and Named Safeguarding children Nurses and manager of children’s services in NELFT



have taken place .

- Meetings between Hospital staff, A&E staff, Mental Health inpatient staff and Thurrock Named safeguarding nurse took place to explore arrangements for children admitted and discharged from hospital and parents with mental health admitted/discharged.

All the above meetings raised awareness of each others roles, contact details and working together arrangements for families.

Thurrock Safeguarding – as above (2)

CCG

Police

The Thurrock MASH has been delivered and is functioning well. The CSE Triage Team has been remodelled to ensure robust gatekeeping and hence improved focus on those most at risk. These teams provide practical, high quality, multi-agency information sharing.

Athena was launched on 1st April 2015 and Essex Police are the first of seven forces to “go live” with this new IT system which brings together investigation, intelligence, custody and case management. With the advent of such a large project, teething issues have been identified and are being worked through to ensure the quality of this information sharing remains high. The extraction of management data has proved challenging and is a priority for the force as this has mainly affected the sharing of domestic abuse incidents involving children with partners.

Grays
Convent

- Some colleagues feel that the initial response from the MASH team can be variable
- For one or two of our pupils, they have been allocated a number of Social Workers and this can mean that we frequently have to repeat concerns or information.

Gable
Hall

The MASH team meeting cause issues in as much as they never run to time which has repercussions back at school. There have also been meetings called by social services who have then failed to turn up.

Be Wise has been an extremely good team to work with and out of the 7 pupils referred to them, none have re offended

There have been concerns with initial response since the need to complete a CAF before they will accept even an emergency referral

Beacon
Hill

With regard to the above, we are trying to organise joint training around communication and positive behaviour support with partner agencies who support our pupils beyond school

We also had some problems clarifying with other teams who is responsible for following up some concerns.

We still have some difficulties around the use of CAF forms when we need specific single agency referrals, in particular for the children with disabilities team. The reasons for Beacon Hill pupils needing to access social care support are very different from mainstream pupils and often families still perceive that there is a “stigma” attached to having a social worker

Children’s
Social
Care

Thurrock Children’s Social Care continues to explore new ways of working to enhance communication and information sharing across agencies. The MASH has been a key success in driving high quality practice in this area. Clear, effective and robust information sharing agreements are in place.



Thurrock Children's Social Care through joint training, the use of technology and co-location are continuously working to improve communication across agencies and the delivery of services for children and families.

The use of language and the appropriateness of this has been focused on by Children's Social Care and partners to ensure that harm / potential harm is identified and acted upon appropriately, and not mask or minimised.

Children's Social Care has and will continue to challenge agencies to demonstrate that 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' and that sharing information is only part of the professional responsibility. Agencies need to also own the information they have shared and act and challenge appropriately.

Good quality reflective supervision, internal and external challenge has been promoted across Children's Social Care (with a key focus on false and disguised compliance).

As agencies have faced budget pressures and reductions it has been an ongoing pressure to ensure that services continue to holistically protect and promote high quality outcomes for children, young people and families. It is the sign of the maturity of the partnership in Thurrock that these issues have been and continue to be discussed openly to ensure best possible outcomes for children and value for money. Agencies have been able to challenge each other and consider the impact of financial decisions within one agency on the partnership and the delivery of positive outcomes for children as a whole, across Thurrock. Children's Social Care has actively and constructively contributed to this process.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2015/16?

CRC The final developments of ECRC operational and organisational changes, arising out of 'Transforming Rehabilitation' will be implemented throughout the coming year and, again, ECRC's key priority will be to maintain our existing focus on Safeguarding and protecting children and maintaining our presence in operational Child Protection arrangements and in relation to the SCB, the Board and its sub-groups.

NELFT

- Complete the development of The Safeguarding Operational Procedures to support the Safeguarding Children Policy
- Complete the CSE and harmful practice procedural guidelines to support the CSE Policy.
- Continue to support the MASH and promote and improve partnership working in the MASH
- Continue to promote early offer of help and completion of CAF's
- Targeted staff to complete enhanced CSE training
- To further develop safeguarding children outcome measures
- Further work to ensure a child centred approach and capture the voice of the child.
- Increase number of NELFT referrals to MARAC
- Increase number of NELFT referrals for CSE and FGM

SEPT To arrange a conference on domestic abuse (including forced marriage, FGM, modern day slavery, sexual exploitation)
To ensure smooth transition of services moving from SEPT to other providers
To update the SEPT Safeguarding policies, procedures and strategic framework to reflect national and SET Guidance



Health-watch	I can say that a priority for this year is to engage more with children's and young people's services and to ensure that we get our name known so we can offer support to the children and young people of Thurrock.
Thurrock CCG	<p>Safeguarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCG continues to fulfil its safeguarding children and Young People commitments and be able to confidently assure the community, ourselves and partners that we are compliant and confident that safeguarding is safe. 2. Support Commissioners and Contract Leads on Children Safeguarding Service Specification, KPI's and Contracts. 3. Ensuring and supporting Providers in meeting the standards and safeguarding performance indicators set by the CCG, Contracts, Commissioners and the Accountability Framework. 4. Establish robust and effective GP Leads Safeguarding Educational Forums. 5. Establishing good working together/relationships/links with Adults Safeguarding and NHSE AT. 6) The CCG Safeguarding Team leading on Planning, Devising and Delivering health focussed training and workshops around local SCR, Alternative Reviews and Key (new) topics in Safeguarding Children. 7) Continue to improve and provide support and guidance to GP practices and Independent Contractors. <p>LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improving processes in relation to health assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Improving participation- use of health app for LAC <p>There is now an appointment of a Named Safeguarding Professional lead to support the Named GP in Thurrock.</p>
Police	<p>Essex Police is committed to improving Child Abuse Investigation and the wider safeguarding agenda. Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation feature in the National Strategic Policing Requirement for the first time as national threats and are the top priorities in the Essex Police control strategy.</p> <p>The fundamental redesign of Public Protection and the use of improved IT systems to deliver Child Abuse Investigation are firm priorities for 2015/16 alongside the implementation of the Op Maple Improvement Plan to ensure Essex Police deliver the best possible services to protect Children and Young People.</p> <p>Training of all Essex police officers and staff is another priority and delivery of the new three day Public Protection Course is starting in June and is a rolling two year programme to ensure all staff are able to properly identify and assess risk to the most vulnerable in our community.</p>
Grays Convent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To induct a newly appointed Pastoral Lead into school • To provide training on safeguarding and Child Protection to Heads of Key Stage and new Pastoral Lead • To update Safer Recruitment training where appropriate • To look to developing digital safeguarding records rather than paper copies
Gable Hall	<p>As a school our safeguarding priorities for 2015/16 will continue to be those outline in the first question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E safety with particular focus on social media • Raising awareness of the dangers of social media with parents and



- supporting them with ways to monitor their child
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Radicalisation

Beacon Hill Creating opportunities to share training with families and stake holders in order to create a seamless approach to supporting Beacon Hill students as they move through and beyond the school
Explore further opportunities for family support. We are linking into Face to Face but funding for this has stopped

Children's Social Care To continue to disrupt and prevent Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) while providing high quality support to victims and their families.
To co-produce our CSE strategies and operational responses with victims and their families.
Using qualitative and quantitative data to continue to develop a comprehensive and integrated Early Offer of Help and Troubled Families Programme.
To continue to strengthen our responses to tackling and identifying neglect across all age groups.
To protect young people from the risks of radicalisation and promote social cohesion with partners across Thurrock.
To continue to develop our effective responses to Female Genital Mutilation with health partners and voluntary agencies.
To raise awareness of child sexual abuse and monitor the level of child protection plans under the category of sexual abuse.
To develop and implement a suicide prevention strategy.
To develop and implement a children missing home and care prevention (guidance) pack for children and young people.

Other Response Received:-

Cafcass moved Government departments in April 2014 from the Department of Education to the Ministry of Justice.
The MOJ is currently in the process of transforming the Family Justice System. This commenced with the introduction of the PLO in 2013 where the focus was to reduce the time children spent in Care Proceedings to 26 weeks with the focus being on Local Authorities completing pre proceedings work and early decision making in the interest of the child/ren. This has brought enormous benefits. The average length of Care Proceedings has reduced in Essex Courts from 51 weeks to 24 weeks so we have truly made progress in working together in the interests of children.
The next challenge is to transform Private Law work to signpost parents away from using the court to resolve their disputes regarding their children's arrangements. Often these cases are before the courts for significant periods of time which is seldom in children's best interests. There is far less availability of Legal funding since April 2014. The MOJ are looking to Cafcass to assist with this transformation and we are currently running pilots in relation to pre court advice, short assessments, dispute resolution. We are fortunate to have received a standstill budget this year to support our initiatives and assist in the transformation process.



The Childs voice

Following the success of the LSCB Conference in December 2012 on Child Sexual Exploitation, greater engagement with young people and their involvement in the Board was an area acknowledged for further development and still continues into 2014/15. The Board recognised at that time that work to involve young people was not as advanced as it could be and actions were put in place to rectify this. Now in 2015 we are in a stronger but still evolving position. Such actions included a Conference for professionals on the Voice of the Child in November 2013, which provided the opportunity for young people to openly express their experiences to those that provide the services to children. Key note speakers and workshops with young people reinforced the message. The Business Team take part in “The Big Lunch” a family event for families in Grays, Tilbury Family Fest and new for this year will also be attending South Ockendon “Fun in the Park”, and the Orsett Show, providing further opportunities to engage with families and children across the Borough. We now have a regular liaison with the Thurrock Youth Cabinet which comprises of 11-19 years old students from across the borough, who assist us in understanding the safeguarding needs and also the social context in which our young people are growing up. This has been an invaluable addition and moves from strength to strength

Walk Online Road Show

In last year’s report, we highlighted some of the other contacts made with our young people, when the Business Team on behalf of the Board, undertook what is probably its biggest challenge in recent years, to raise awareness and gain greater insight into Child Sexual Exploitation through the voice of the child. Partners from across different agencies supported an ambitious project which took place over six days during March 2014 targeting 5,000+ years 5, 6 & 7 pupils from across the whole Borough.

This event was organised based on feedback received from schools, Serious Case Reviews and identified local needs to meet concerns around pupils awareness to sexual exploitation and in particular e-safety and its many facets e.g., cyber bullying, sexting and grooming.

The programme was led by Essex Police Online Investigation Team and was a resounding success, taking cases and examples based on real life examples and the content was hard hitting, but age appropriate, reflecting the nature of the investigations Essex Police were dealing with across these year groups.

The Board took this rare opportunity of having such a large group of young people together to conduct an anonymous survey using electronic keypads, asking questions about their use of the internet.



The questions complemented a recent NSPCC survey on CSE so comparisons could be made from a local to national perspective. The results highlighted some interesting facts which were fed back to schools, parents and professionals to support future interventions and guidance.

For 2014/15 the Board supported further work which was targeted at year 5. In March 2015 four road shows over two days to 2,800 students took place. A second survey allowed a comparison to be drawn on the previous year which has been circulated to professionals with a follow up survey being conducted with the students in the summer term.

The programme has been agreed again for the next reporting year to include year's 10 & 11 which was identified as a need through the Youth Cabinet. On completion of the 2015/16 programme over 12,000 students from every year group from the current year 4 through to year 11 would have had a personal awareness input of the risks of CSE, along with being provide with an assortment of safeguarding literature. This includes our special schools for which we have adapted the programme accordingly.

LSCB Business Unit

The Business Unit of the Board comprises of the Board manager, Project Officer, Administrator and an Apprentice who has exceeded our expectations and been extended to the 2nd year programme. The teams resources are allocated 2.5 days per week to support Board business and has been streamlining processes and looking at new ways of working over the last year as Board expectations and support needs increase. The need to appoint any further support resources will be assessed over the coming year as part of the Independent Review findings (2013) and proposals being submitted by the Board Manager. Further development of the new LSCB website was held up for a period of time whilst new local authority IT systems were introduced. These issues have now been resolved and the site is in the process of being refreshed. As well as taking on a more proactive safeguarding awareness role with professionals and the community, other work supporting and measuring outcomes are two areas of work currently being progressed by the unit.

Relationship with the Health and Well-Being Board

The LSCB continues developing its relationship with the Health and Well-Being Board reporting activity and supporting partnership working. There is still significant transformation taking place across the Health community, including commissioned services, Early Offer of Help provision and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and these changes continue to be assessed to enable agencies to



acclimatise to new ways of working. The Independent Chair is now a full member of the Health & Well-being board strengthening our relationships further.

Full Board

The Full Board met on four occasions with good attendance from all statutory and member organisations. Some of the areas reviewed, discussed and challenged included

- Who's Looking After the Children – our response and position to the report was agreed. Police provided information and data on its procedures. A further report requested and response received following HMI inspection of Essex police custody facilities for young people
- 157/175 Audits on education establishments
- Budgets
- Annual Independent Review Officer Report was discussed. A number of challenges made to the Local Authority around case loads and content of the report.
- Childrens Commissioner Report – “If only someone had listened” Action plan to be developed through the CSE sub group
- Child Death Review – Some of the content was challenged by the board and tasked to the Management Executive to action. Awareness campaign were agreed on safe sleeping and the risks of water (pools & ponds)
- The activities and reports of the sub groups were provide to the Board
- Reflective learning by Board members

The Independent Chair has continued to lead the Board through a series of Thematic Section 11 processes. These have included in this reporting period:

- How partners measure the effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding training.
- Improving practitioners skills
- Impact of budget changes on service provision

Board members are required to account for their agencies processes and outcomes within the themed areas and questioned or challenged by members. Feedback from Board members has indicated that this process is both insightful and a refreshing approach.

The Local Authority Lead Member with responsibility for children and young people sits on the Board as a participating observer, allowing them to participate in discussion but does not have a voting right. With the new addition of a representative from the Police and Crime Commissioners office. This



enables another context of the communities' voice to be heard within the LSCB communications framework.

As part of our Learning Improvement Framework we ask members of the Board to complete feedback and reflection after meetings under eight subject headings to ensure that we have made best use of the time and productively of members. The responses are reviewed by the Business Team and Independent Chair to identify where further improvements could be made.

Management Executive

The Management Executive met on eight occasions during this reporting period.

The Boards sub groups report direct to the Management Executive who are the custodians of the LSCB Business Plan and ensure that allocated objectives are actioned by the groups.

The focus and purpose of this group is to ensure that the LSCB are able to be satisfied that children are being appropriately safeguarded across Thurrock.

The Executive reviewed

- Health Action Plan
- Update and progress of the VAWG strategy
- Update and progress on Local Authority Self-Assessment
- Childrens Workforce Strategy
- Report on impact of welfare reform
- Report from Basildon Hospital on safeguarding
- Report from Essex Police on safeguarding
- Report from Probation on safeguarding
- Report on children who are home educated
- Update and progress on response to CSE & Childrens Commissioner paper
- Review of the threshold document
- Progress of the early help changes
- Annual reports
 - ❖ Private Fostering annual report
 - ❖ Independent Reviewing Officer report
 - ❖ E-Safety report
 - ❖ Emergency Duty Team report
 - ❖ Missing Children report
 - ❖ Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers



Sub Groups

The Boards sub groups are the key mechanism for challenging practice and any gaps or areas for development in service provision, ensuring that the Board is contributing to make a difference to safeguarding practice across Thurrock. The groups are well supported by partner agencies and all elements have shown considerable progress against objectives set by them as part of the 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.

Scrutiny and challenge

For this reporting year the groups of the LSCB have changed. The composition for 2014/15 comprise of:-

- Child Death Review Sub Group
- Serious Case Review Panel
- Audit Group
- Performance Panel
- Interagency Training Sub Group
- Multi agency sexual exploitation group (MASE)
- Risk Assessment Group (RAG)

At an Essex and regional level the Board sit as part of the following groups

- SET strategic CSE group (SET=Southend, Essex, Thurrock)
- SET procedures group
- Regional LSCB Chairs Group
- Regional LSCB managers Group

Each group has its own new or refreshed Terms of Reference and business priorities set within the 2014-15 plan and reports into the governance structure. The groups are accountable for their activity through an action matrix, but have also been given the flexibility to adapt their priorities to meet emerging needs, for instance, new legislation/guidance or serious case reviews that affect safeguarding in Thurrock. Where appropriate the groups can implement Task & Finish teams 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 jointly through 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. 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. From their findings the Board implemented a safer sleeping awareness programme in November 2013 and water safety information in readiness for an awareness campaign over the coming spring and summer months.

Geographically based are 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 in the previous year 2012-13 resulting in the Serious Case Review Group and Audit Group being amalgamated to one group. This followed a long period where no serious case reviews had been presented for consideration to the Board and partner representatives time was not being well utilised. In hindsight and as fate often plays its part, this year saw both the need to consider and implement a serious case review and also a separate managed review. This identified a number of weaknesses in the structure and has resulted in the groups re-forming back to two groups, with greater focus and direction.



Lessons from Serious and Managed Case Reviews

Thurrock commissioned one serious case review for this reporting period the case of “Julia”. The SCR findings and publication were published in December 2014. (See website for copy of report). Learning events have taken place across agencies and an edited booklet version of the review has been developed for front line staff. Other national serious case reviews whose findings had an impact on safeguarding in Thurrock were reviewed during the year and disseminated to the respective agencies for the learning outcomes to be embedded into practice.

The future work programme of the group in its new format will be determined by the action plans arising from serious case reviews which will form part of the standing agenda and any local cases submitted for consideration of a SCR.

The group’s priority will be 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 process undertaken considering the feedback from staff involved in managed 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 e.g. S47 Child Protection. 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 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.

Audit Outcomes

Minutes of the meeting are recorded with comments on each case made by the group. These identify 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 requests and receive updates on any such case.

The findings and outcomes of the Audit Group meetings are reported to the LSCB regularly through the 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. All members of 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 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 during 2014/2015

- CIN plans – linked with the serious case review “Julia”
- Specific audit of two at risk young people
- Audit of a significant serious incident
- CSE risk assessments

Full details of the audits are available through the LSCB Business Unit.



Performance Management Sub Group

The Performance Management Sub Group met on two occasions during the transition to the newly formed Performance Improvement Panel. The group supports the LSCB in the monitoring, promotion and planning of high quality practice in line with the interagency performance management framework.

The newly formed Panel is chaired by the Boards Independent Chair and individual agencies present before the panel. The panel comprises of standing members and selected partner members on a rotating basis. Questions are circulated prior to the meeting and the presenting organisation is held to account over its safeguarding responsibilities and also share with the Board good news stories about impact and outcomes.

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 are identified and evidenced through the performance management framework. The chair of the sub group reports directly to the LSCB Executive in respect of the progress and impact of safeguarding in Thurrock.

The group examined performance in the following areas during 2013-2104

Child Death Review process

- Examined the CDR Annual Report and feedback provided to the CDR Coordinator
- Identified data that would support better understanding of neo natal deaths where maternal age is under 20
- Missing children - The group reviewed the Children's Partnership multi-agency Missing Children Panel performance, which tracks individual cases but has also contribute to identifying patterns of absconding and behaviour to minimise the impact of child sexual exploitation. In one case presented, the Missing Children Panel were able to find a reported missing person through its intervention who would otherwise not have been located through other enquiries and illustrated the value of this group. During 2014 having recognised the significant links to CSE the group will join with the CSE group infrastructure, forming a risk assessment group.
- Agencies that have appeared before the panel during this reporting period were
 - Children's Social care
 - Essex Police



Training Sub Group

The Training Sub Group met on eight occasions and 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.

The group successful sought to identify an individual who has an overarching involvement with schools and education and can provide a valuable insight to training and development needs for education. This post is now filled on the group and enables a more holistic approach.

Training Provision

A review of training provision is conducted annually across our partner organisations and was presented at the February 2015 meeting. This was a detailed review of both the provision and attendance of agencies to the different programmes offered by the Board to enable to the group to assess future needs. The data in this year's report will assist the board in determining future need.

Training Programmes

Throughout the last year we have ran three courses; Inter-Agency Child Protection Training, Online Exploitation of Children and Young People, and Sand stories using an alternative medium to learning.

Inter-Agency Child Protection Training:

This training was delivered on two occasions. There was a medium response to this training with a total of 39 staff attending from the 50 positions given across the five sessions.

Online Exploitation of Children and Young People:

For the first time, this training was open for parents and carers to attend along with front line staff. Initially the uptake by parents and carers was low however we have seen an increase in numbers at each session delivered.



This training was delivered on four occasions.

Sandstories:

This training was delivered three times during the reporting period. There was a very good response to this training with a good representation from across the agencies attending.

Challenges

- Long-term evaluation on 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. We have developed our post course feedback process and split one course to enable learning practice to form the second part of the programme.

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 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 system by the LSCB Business Manager. A breakdown of the financial position for 2014/15 is shown below.

Income 2014/2015		Planned Expenditure	
Health	30,000.00	LSCB Independent Chair (inc VAT)	AA301-2104-CS410 17,350.00
Police	15,000.00	LSCB Manager Cost - inclusive	AA301-0001-00000 27,909.00
CAFCASS	550.00	LSCB Business Team	AA301-2104-CS403 37,682.00
Probation	9,500.00	Walk On Line Roadshow	AA301-1750-00000 30,354.70
LA Business Team	65,591.40	LSCB Training Programme	AA301-2104-CS400 9,884.92
		Child Death Review Administrator	AA301-2104-CS424 6,000.00
		Annual Conference	AA301-0380-00000 8,683.15
		Serious Case/Mgt Reviews	AA301-2104-CS402 3,760.50
		Promotional/Publications/Marketing	AA301-1801-00000 6,234.85
		Seminars and Courses	AA301-0360-00000 497.40
		Equipment Purchase	AA301-1400-00000 949.75
		Contingency	AA301-0000-00000 1,000.00
		Stationery	AA301-1681-00000 531.04
Total Income	120,641.40	Total Expenditure	150,837.31
C/F 2013-14	99,756.11		
Total Budget	220,397.51		
Carry Forward to 2015-16	69,560.20		
			Fixed costs - staffing of LSCB Business Team
			Disposable Income
			Fixed costs from disposable income



The Board have managed to maintain a standstill budget for a fourth year in a row, but is reaching the point where it is proposed to apply a slight annual increase for 2014/15 to offset additional costs being necessary both as demand increase for outcome based learning as well as changes in infrastructure affecting meeting costs.

Troubled Families Programme

Thurrock Council and its partners are participating in the Troubled Families Programme. This is a national programme developed to address issues of crime and anti-social behaviour, children not engaged in education and worklessness. The initiative for Thurrock targets 360 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 work links with the early help provision of service, providing a mid and long term saving both financial and the point intervention takes place. The programme is just reaching end of year one and of its target of 120 families 100 payment by results submissions will have taken place. The next phase over the coming year targets 180 families. In addition to specific family intervention, through the payment by results approach, the programme has been able to offer financial support to support Children's Social Workers. Social Workers can apply for small amounts of money for basic items or commissioned services to resolve easy to fix low level family issues which would have otherwise escalated. The Board receive progress reports throughout the year from the Programme Lead on outcomes achieved. The impact on those families supported as well as the financial benefit to children's safeguarding has been significant, with many excellent examples where families in crisis have been turned around. The Board fully support the continued work of this very worthwhile programme.

Sexual Exploitation and Risk Behaviour

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. We are part of the Essex



Strategic CSE group which examines and delivers activity across Essex to support victims and bring offenders to justice. In March 2015 the existing Children's Partnership Missing Children Panel and e-safety group underwent a transition process and now form a Risk Assessment Group (RAG) which examines those children who go missing or indicating risky behaviours were partner contributions may be able to assist in better outcomes for the child concerned. They review individual cases and even at this early stage have highlighted some children who are at risk of CSE and taken positive action to meet their safeguarding needs.

At a strategic level a new Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation group (MASE) has also been implemented which reports into the Boards Management Executive for its governance process.

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 Report and has been working on its own action plan to quality assuring its systems and processes against these reports and 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

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. Unfortunately during this year due to other community commitments our lay member resigned which has left a gap of providing the 'community voice' to the Board. We have since been actively engaged in a recruitment campaign and we did have another member for a short period but it is disappointing that we have been unable to find a community member to pick up this important role. We continue to actively seek lay members to be a part of the Board.

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.

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.

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

Highlights

- Positive alcohol strategy and proactive operations to combat and reduce underage drinking
- Violence against Women Strategy and implementation plan
- Honour based abuse - The LSCB has been a sponsor of the showing over 5 sessions of a documentary "BANAZ" to 236 professionals from multi agencies in support of understanding the impact and response to HBA. The film chronicles the life and death of a young British Kurdish woman killed in 2006 in South London on the orders of her family in a so-called honour killing.
- Development of serious youth violence group
- Work on preventing radicalisation

SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

THRESHOLDS

Thurrock continues to apply its thresholds rigorously. With a steady increase in Child Protection Plans Children's Social Care commissioned an independent audit of CP plans during 2014 to ensure that thresholds to intervention were being appropriately applied. The outcome of the sample audited confirmed that risk assessments were being appropriately applied. The threshold document is reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Referrals

Referrals have seen an increase on the previous year with a 2% increase in repeat referrals (19%). Despite this trend, Thurrock over the last three years still remains consistently below the national



and statistical neighbours' 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. 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. Nevertheless the referral rate into the service remains an area for vigilant attention.

Child Protection Plans

The rate of children subject to Child Protection Plans still remains high but the position has been steadily improving against the national average. The actual number of children subject of a plan in Thurrock has reduced from 288 2013/14 to 210 (March 2015). The review and time frames of open case has undergone and extensive programme of audit and performance management scrutiny by children's social care which has supported the position of having the right children on the right plans. 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 Board were previously concerned on the number of Child Protection cases which fall under the category of neglect and that recording of cases of CSE were correctly reflected and recorded. This has been a focus for review and a refresh of the child protection categories has been undertaken and the category of "Multiple has been removed in readiness of the next reporting year, to allow for the primary area of concern to be clearly identified. The board acknowledge the work undertaken by children's social care in response to its concerns.

Children in Care

The rate of Children in Care continues to remain at a fairly consistent level. Thurrock 68 per 10,000; national - 60; statistical neighbour - 67 (the actual number of children in care February 2015 is 293 which includes 31 recorded as UAS). Its needs to be acknowledged that as part of this increase the method of data recording changed during the year 2013/14 and now young people who are placed on remand are also classified as LAC and although not tested , likely to be in the higher age bracket. The outcomes for children in care, as measured by the performance indicators, are on the whole good, and in some areas very good.



Challenges and next steps from the Independent Chair

This reporting period has seen further progress to continue to improve the Boards challenge to maintaining and improving safeguarding practice across the Borough. There are some gaps and areas for improvement that have been identified through the activities of the Board, the independent review and the need for continuous improvement.

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 will continue 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. Can I thank the Business Support Team for their dedication and commitment to making a difference to the Board's business processes. 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.



Dave Peplow

Independent Chair

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