

## London Borough of Bromley

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

#### Briefing for Joint Meeting of Care Services and Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committees 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013

#### MULTI AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN IN BROMLEY

Contact: Helen Davies  
Chair, Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has been set up under the requirements of the Children Act 2004. BSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Bromley will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Bromley and for assuring the effectiveness of what they do.
- 1.2 This briefing sets out the statutory framework within which BSCB operates, the governance arrangements for BSCB, how BSCB meets its statutory requirements and future priorities.

#### 2. THE BRIEFING

##### Statutory Framework

- 2.1 Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) was set up in October 2005 in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act 2004.
- 2.2 Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the **objectives** of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB), which are:
  - to coordinate 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 those purposes

2.3 Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the key **functions** of the LSCB are broadly as follows:

(a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:

- the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
- training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
- recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
- investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
- safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;

(b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;

(c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;

(d) participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and

(e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

2.4 Section 13 of the Children Act 2004, sets out that an LSCB must include at least one representative of the local authority and representatives from the following:

- the chief officer of police;
- the Local Probation Trust;
- the Youth Offending Team;
- the NHS Commissioning Board and clinical commissioning groups;
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts all or most of whose hospitals, establishments and facilities are situated in the local authority area;
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass);

- 2.5 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 requires the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB includes two lay members representing the local community.
- 2.6 Section 13(4) of the Children Act 2004, provides that the local authority must take reasonable steps to ensure the LSCB includes senior representation from the education sector.
- 2.7 Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2013) comes into force on 15 April 2013. This replaces previous guidance issued in 2010.
- 2.8 Working Together (WT) sets out the statutory arrangements for Local Safeguarding Children Boards and states that the guidance should be followed by:

“local authority Chief Executives, Directors of Children’s Services, LSCB Chairs and senior managers within organisations who commission and provide services for children and families, including social workers and professionals from health services, adult services, the police, Academy Trusts, education and the voluntary and community sector who have contact with children and families.”
- 2.9 WT 2013 outlines that the LSCB should be independent and should not be subordinate to, nor subsumed within, other local structures. Every LSCB should have an independent chair who can hold all agencies to account.
- 2.10 It is the responsibility of the Local Authority Chief Executive to appoint or remove the LSCB chair with the agreement of a panel including LSCB partners and lay members. The Chief Executive, drawing on other LSCB partners and, where appropriate, the Lead Member will hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB.
- 2.11 The LSCB Chair should work closely with all LSCB partners and particularly with the Director of Children’s Services. The Director of Children’s Services has the responsibility within the local authority, under section 18 of the Children Act 2004, for improving outcomes for children, local authority children’s social care functions and local cooperation arrangements for children’s services.
- 2.12 The Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board.
- 2.13 The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action

being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.

- 2.14 All LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCB to be strong and effective.

### **Governance arrangements of Bromley Safeguarding Children Board**

- 2.15 The key organisational mechanism for delivering the statutory requirements of the BSCB are the meetings of the Board (4 times a year) and the Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring sub committee (6 times a year). Details of the membership of these committees are shown in the supporting documentation for this meeting. BSCB is compliant with the required representation and the requirement to have an Independent Chair. The Independent Chair chairs both the Board and Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring sub committee.
- 2.16 The role of the Board is to set the strategic direction and priorities for the work of all agencies responsible for safeguarding children in Bromley. In addition the Board ensures all agencies are compliant with Government guidance and requirements. The Board also monitors local arrangements through scrutinising data, audits and case reviews.
- 2.17 The Quality Assurance and Performance monitoring sub group is the main mechanism through which individual agencies are held to account for their safeguarding practises. This is through scrutiny of individual agency audits on specific child protection issues and quality of practice and through 'Section 11' audits. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires all agencies that work with or have responsibility for children to safeguard and promote their welfare. The mechanism for ensuring this occurs is for each agency to complete regular audits of the key ways in which children are safeguarded e.g. through policies and procedures, safe recruitment policies, training etc. These audits by individual agencies are scrutinised by the Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring sub committee where senior representatives of those agencies held to account.
- 2.18 In addition to the two main committees, the training programme of BSCB is monitored through a training sub committee. An Education sub committee and Health sub committee bring together wider representation from those two sectors than is possible at the main Board meeting.

## **How BSCB meets its statutory responsibilities**

2.19 The work of the BSCB in meeting its key statutory responsibilities is summarised in Appendix 1.

2.20 As required, the BSCB produces an annual report which sets out its governance and accountability structures and includes its financial arrangements and membership. It also outlines its achievements and progress for the preceding year, arrangements for quality assurance and performance monitoring and sets out future priorities and developments.

2.21 The annual report for 2011/12 can be found at:

<http://www.bromleysafeguarding.org/pdfs/BSCB%20Annual%20Report%202011-2012%20final.pdf>

## **Future priorities**

2.22 The work and priorities of the BSCB are set out in an annual business plan. Details of the current business plan can be found at:

<http://www.bromleysafeguarding.org/pdfs/BSCB%20Business%20Plan%202013-4%20v%202%20March%202013.pdf>

2.23 Key priorities for 2013/14 include:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the BSCB training programme
- Continuing to promote awareness in key areas of child protection including domestic violence, child sexual exploitation and neglect.
- Establishing more regular multi agency audits of front line practice
- Establishing mechanisms for the views of children and young people to inform the assessment of the effectiveness of child protection practice in Bromley.