

# **Children and Young People Select Committee**

## **Scrutiny Review of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

**January 2017**

## **Foreword**

We are pleased to present the final report and recommendations of the Children and Young People Select Committee following our review of the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board.

In undertaking this review we recognised that there needs to be improved challenge and greater assurance to ensure effectiveness of safeguarding practice across all agencies. We have however been impressed and reassured by the commitment of the Council and Partners and would encourage Board members to continue to do all they can as a collective and individuals to strive to safeguard vulnerable children and young people in our Borough.

**Councillor Carol Clark  
Chair**



**Councillor Tracey Stott  
Vice Chair**



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## **Select Committee – Membership**

Councillor Carol Clark (Chair)  
Councillor Tracey Stott (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Elsi Hampton  
Councillor Di Hewitt  
Councillor Barbara Inman  
Councillor Ross Patterson  
Councillor Lauriane Povey  
Councillor Mrs Sylvia Walmsley  
Councillor Sally Ann Watson

## **Co-opted Representatives**

Norah Moffat  
Mr Phil Rigby  
Mr R G Lupton

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## Original Brief

### **What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?**

Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB) is the key statutory body responsible for overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in the borough.

It is important that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, as the lead agency, takes steps to evaluate the effectiveness of SLSCB against the Ofsted inspection criteria.

A rigorous and independent review by CYP Select Committee would enable us to assess the progress made by SLSCB to date and determine whether any additional actions are necessary in order to meet these criteria.

SLSCB has not been subject to a specific Ofsted inspection to date, but the Council's self-assessment would indicate that whilst there are a number of strengths, there are still some areas we need to further improve.

### **The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

- What is the outgoing Chair's view about the effectiveness of the Board?
- What do Peer Reviews tell us about the effectiveness of the Board?
- How is the LSCB held to account?
- How effective has the LSCB been in monitoring and challenging the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements? What evidence is there that this challenge has led to changes in these arrangements and local working practices and relationships?
- How effective is the LSCB Local Learning and Improvement Framework in sharing lessons from experience and driving service quality and development?
- How does the LSCB systematically ensure that the voice and feedback of children is embedded in local safeguarding arrangements at the individual and strategic levels? Does the approach enable children from diverse backgrounds and with different needs to share their voice?
- What information does the Board receive in order to meet its statutory duties?
- How is disagreement/ professional challenge resolved?
- How do we ensure that all partners procedures are in place?
- Are Governance structures fit for purpose?
- How does the Board deal with serious case reviews?
- How does the Board oversee early help services?
- What difference has the Board made?
- Why have we got four LSCBs across Tees?
- How is the Board financed?
- What interface does the Board have with other Boards?
- What do Ofsted judgements tell us about best practice?
- What does success look like?

### **Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Council Services and Commissioned Services, Voluntary and Community Sector, Local Safeguarding Board and Members agencies

**Expected duration of review and key milestones:**

12 months

**What information do we need?**

**Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):**

Working Together 2015  
SLSCB Learning and Development Framework  
SLSCB Annual Reports and Business Plan  
Ofsted Judgements  
Current Ofsted Guidance on SIF  
LGA Peer Review – Durham  
PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 Vulnerability Report  
Safeguarding Children – A Practical Guide for Overview and Scrutiny Councillors CfPS

**New information:**

National Review of LSCBs  
Recent Inspections partners may have had around safeguarding

**Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, senior user, general public, expert witness, etc.)**

Chief Executive

- How is the Board/ Chair held to account?

Independent Chair of the SLSCB outgoing incoming

- Effectiveness of current Board aspirations for the future

All Key Partners and lay members

- Partners inspection feedback around safeguarding
- Strengths and weaknesses of Stockton Board compared to others

Cabinet Member

- Views on effectiveness of Board

Key SBC Officers

- Views on effectiveness of Board
- Background and Context
- Effectiveness of partnership arrangements

Primary and Secondary Heads

- Effectiveness of information received from the Board

**How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)**

Committee Meeting discussion/ interviews

Survey of partners/ Head Teachers

Observation of Board Meetings

The focus of the first two meetings will be to provide background and context and an assessment of the effectiveness of the current operation of the Board. The outgoing Independent Chair will be invited to provide views.

Best practice visits to North Yorkshire and Leeds will then take place in July.

The Committee will then have the opportunity to speak to the incoming Independent Chair in the Autumn and focus on best practice.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children's Board (SLSCB), undertaken by the Committee during the Municipal Year 2015/16. The topic was identified for review at Scrutiny Liaison Forum and included in the 2015/16 Work Programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB) is the key statutory body responsible for overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in the Borough and it is important that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, as the lead agency, takes steps to evaluate the effectiveness of SLSCB against the Ofsted inspection criteria.

1.3 The main aim of the review was to provide a rigorous and independent review to enable an assessment of the progress made by SLSCB to date and determine whether any additional actions are necessary in order to meet Ofsted criteria. The Committee pursued the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

- What is the outgoing Chair's view about the effectiveness of the Board?
- What do Peer Reviews tell us about the effectiveness of the Board?
- How is the LSCB held to account?
- How effective has the LSCB been in monitoring and challenging the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements? What evidence is there that this challenge has led to changes in these arrangements and local working practices and relationships?
- How effective is the LSCB Local Learning and Improvement Framework in sharing lessons from experience and driving service quality and development?
- How does the LSCB systematically ensure that the voice and feedback of children is embedded in local safeguarding arrangements at the individual and strategic levels? Does the approach enable children from diverse backgrounds and with different needs to share their voice?
- What information does the Board received in order to meet its statutory duties?
- How is disagreement/ professional challenge resolved?
- How do we ensure that all partners' procedures are in place?
- Are Governance structures fit for purpose?
- How does the Board deal with serious case reviews?
- How does the Board oversee early help services?
- What difference has the Board made?
- Why have we got four LSCBs across Tees?
- How is the Board financed?
- What interface does the Board have with other Boards?
- What do Ofsted judgements tell us about best practice?
- What does success look like?

1.4 During the course of the review, Ofsted undertook an inspection of children's services and rated the effectiveness of the SLSCB as "requiring improvement". The Committee have reviewed the relevant section of the report and recommendations.



## **2.0 Background**

### **Statutory Framework**

2.1 Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 required each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisation and individuals (other than the Local Authority) that should be represented on LSCBs.

2.2 The LSCB has a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements.

2.3 Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the objectives of LSCBs which are:

- (a) 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
- (b) To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

2.4 Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulation 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCK in relation to the above objectives are as follows:

- 1 (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:
  - (i) The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
  - (ii) Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
  - (iii) Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
  - (iv) Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
  - (v) Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
  - (vi) Cooperation with neighbouring children's services Authorities and their Board partners
- (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.

2.5 Regulation 5(2) which relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 which relates to the LSCB Child Death functions are covered in chapter 4 of this guidance.

2.6 Regulation 5(3) provides that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.

2.7 In order to fulfil its statutory function, the LSCB:

- Ensures that agencies work together effectively to protect children at risk of significant harm.
- Produces policies and procedures
- Communicates and raises awareness of safeguarding
- Monitoring and evaluating – holding agencies to account
- Training
- Functions relating to child deaths and serious case reviews

2.8 In addition the LSCB should use data and, as a minimum, should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
- Assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations set out in chapter 2 of this guidance
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

2.9 LSCBs do not commission or deliver direct frontline services though they may provide training. While LSCBs do not have the power to direct other organisations they do have a role in making clear where improvements are needed. Each Board partner retains their own existing line of accountability for safeguarding.

### 3.0 Evidence

#### Stockton SLSCB

3.1 Stockton Board meetings are scheduled monthly. In addition to the main Board meetings, there are various sub groups. Stockton Borough Council has a co-ordination role and partners contribute funding as follows:

SLSCB Core Budget

<b>INCOME</b>	2015 / 2016	
CAFCASS		550
Catalyst		1,500
Local Authority		61,257
National Probation Service		744
Police		16,683
SBC Schools		25,000
Stockton & Hartlepool CCG		53,055
	Sub Total	<b>158,789</b>
Brought Forward from 2014 / 2015		39,712
	<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>198,501</b>

3.2 In addition, regular meetings take place with the Chief Executive (SBC), Director of Children's Services and other Senior Officers. The lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is a participating observer at Board meetings and an Annual report circulated as per Statutory Requirements and is available on SLSCB website

## The Wood Review

3.3 The Government's response to the Wood Review on LSCBs published in May 2016 was as follows:

"The Wood Review argues that strong, effective multi-agency arrangements are ones that are responsive to local circumstances and fully engage the right people.

3.4 The review found widespread agreement that the current system needs to change in favour of a new model that will ensure collective accountability across the system. This is the view that has emerged from extensive consultation with a wide range of individuals and organisations and with independent experts such as Lord Laming and Baroness Jay.

3.5 We agree with that. Current arrangements are inflexible and too often ineffective. Meetings take place involving large numbers of people, but decision-making leading to effective action on the ground can be all too often lacking.

3.6 We will introduce a stronger but more flexible statutory framework that will support local partners to work together more effectively to protect and safeguard children and young people, embedding improved multi-agency behaviours and practices. This framework will set out clear requirements for the key local partners, while allowing them freedom to determine how they organise themselves to meet those requirements and improve outcomes for children locally. "

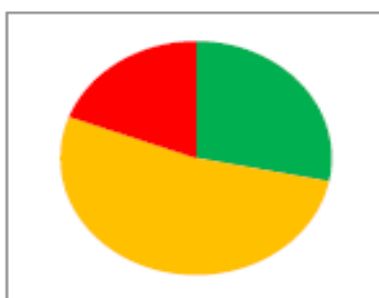
## Ofsted Framework

3.7 Ofsted undertake reviews of the effectiveness of LSCBs at the same time as the inspection of the Local Authority. Ofsted conduct an assessment against the following characteristics:

**The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004<sup>36</sup> and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006.<sup>37</sup> The LSCB is able to provide evidence that it coordinates the work of statutory partners in helping, protecting and caring for children in its local area and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements. Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact on management and practice. The LSCB checks that policies and procedures in respect of thresholds for intervention are understood and operate effectively and identifies where there are areas for improvement. Challenge of practice between partners and casework auditing are rigorous and used to identify where improvements can be made in front-line performance and management oversight. Serious case reviews, management reviews and reviews of child deaths are used by the local authority and partners as opportunities for learning and feedback that drive improvement. The LSCB provides robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance that influence and inform the planning and delivery of high-quality services.**

3.8 The Committee were advised that at the time of the review, that nationally Ofsted had rated LSCBs as follows:

LSCB effectiveness		
Judgement	Count	%
Outstanding	0	0%
Good	22	28%
RI	41	53%
Inadequate	15	19%



3.9 During the course of the review, Ofsted undertook an inspection of Stockton’s children’s services. Whilst the overall judgement was “good”, the report judged the Stockton Local Safeguarding Report as “requiring improvement”. The Executive Summary states:

“The board has very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. SLSCB meets its statutory functions. It benefits from appropriate multi-agency membership, very good attendance and strong commitment, including from three lay members who bring independent challenge to the board’s work. However, the board has lacked thoroughness in aspects of challenge and analyses of some key areas of its purpose. It does not yet have clear mechanisms for analysing, evaluation and collating how partner agencies are ensuring the effectiveness of their practice in respect of some key safeguarding practice. Performance information has been too focused on data and not on the underlying explanations of why performance is good or poor

Insufficient action has been taken to ensure that thresholds are understood across partner agencies. Furthermore, the 2016-17 joint Stockton-on-Tees and Hartlepool training programme has been introduced without a full needs analysis, despite under-participation on some courses in 2015-16.

Although the board has commissioned work on the influence and “voice of the child” it has yet to ensure that this is embedded in the work of the board and across all partner agencies.

A key strength of the SLSCB is the work of the sub groups, especially those working across other Teesside local safeguarding children boards, including the vulnerable, exploited, missing and trafficked group (VEMT), which adds strength and challenge to safeguard children, the shared procedures sub group and the child death overview panel (CDOP).

The board has been instrumental in shaping services for children and young people in Stockton-on-Tees, including those for domestic abuse and promoting the safety of children in public settings, and has been influential in the introduction of the multi-agency children’s hub.

The annual report 2014-15 lacks rigour. While it includes a great deal of information, it is too lengthy, and does not include sufficient assessment and analysis of performance and effectiveness.”

3.10 The recommendations contained in the report are as follows:

- 1) Ensure that quality assurance and performance management processes provide clear analyses, so that the SLSCB has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of partner agencies.
- 2) Ensure that the joint Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees threshold document is effectively used and understood by partner agencies.
- 3) Ensure that the views of children and young people help to influence the work of the board and the safeguarding practice of all partner agencies.
- 4) Undertake an analysis and evaluation of need to inform the Stockton-on-Tees and Hartlepool 2017-18 joint training programme.
- 5) Ensure that the annual report for 2015-16 is succinct, and includes a clear analysis of performance and the effectiveness of partners agencies in undertaking their safeguarding functions.

### **Evidence from Outgoing and Incoming Independent Chairs of the Board**

#### **Feedback from Colin Morris – Outgoing Chair**

3.11 Colin Morris assessed the effectiveness of the Board as follows:

- There was strong multi agency working and commitment to the Board
- Agencies now sent more senior representation and this had led to Board being more challenging and influential
- Attendance by Board Members was excellent
- There had been concerns in the past about the commitment of some agencies, particularly where there was representation on more than one Board, however, steps had been taken to rationalise structures and working arrangements
- The Local Authority remained the driving force behind the Board and efforts needed to maintained to secure the same level of interest and commitment from all of the other agencies represented
- The Board benefited from strong and consistent lay membership
- One challenge had been follow through and delivery of agreed actions. Colin had for example written to agencies in relation to CAF, Early Help, Voice of the Child and Section 11 compliance
- There has been significant improvement in the performance information presented to the Board
- There was a need to maintain the momentum and commitment which had been achieved around the VEMT work
- He commented that although a statutory board, the powers of the board were limited and this will be picked up in the national review
- Work on the Neglect Strategy and Voice of the Child needed to gather pace
- All agencies needed to recognise the need for greater focus on early help

3.12 Overall, he felt that the Board was more effective than many others and commended Neil Schneider the Lead Agency Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for their support and commitment and the service for their support and honesty. He was conducting a 360 degree feedback in respect of individuals/ agencies represented on the LSCB and this was to be presented to the Chief Executive.

## Feedback from Dave Pickard – New Chair

3.13 Dave Pickard conducted one to one discussions with Board Members which revealed:

Board members liked:

- Good information
- Interesting/stimulating
- Broadens perspectives
- Sincerity
- Genuine desire to do better
- Learning into practice

Board members didn't like:

- To many papers and lengthy meetings
- Imposing and LA dominated
- Where are we going? Not a clear thread
- Defensiveness
- Focus on process not outcomes. What are we achieving for young people?
- Want to be part of it but feel on the edge. Do I have an equal voice?

Board members wanted to see:

- More group work and a thematic approach
- Evidence of outcomes and impact
- Best practice
- Mentoring
- Discussion on implications of a report rather than verbal reproduction of the report
- The Board being a team with a common aim
- I would like to see from the chair:
- Encouraging mutual responsibility from all
- Help people understand each other's views/organisations
- Focussed agendas/discussions
- Ensuring an equal voice/contribution/valuing
- Authority/challenge/accountability/leadership

Positives from Ofsted Inspection included:

- Very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Good membership, attendance and commitment
- Work of sub-groups
- Instrumental in shaping services
- Good governance across partnerships
- Safer Place for Children in public settings

3.14 He believed that everyone sat around the table was passionate about making a difference and did so within their own sphere of influence. In conclusion he felt that the Board should focus on:

- Ensuring Co-ordination
- Effective Challenge
- Enabling change

and that it was importance to demonstrate that:

- Board members together were greater than the individual parts
- the Board were clear what they are doing and why

- the Board were clear about what they were achieving
- Board priorities were driving the business
- All members of the Board fully understood their role and remit.
- Board priorities and ways of working placed children at the centre
- The Board is integrated with other partnerships and structures
- the Board has a clear role with regard to preventative activity

### **Evidence from Board Members**

#### **Neil Schneider – Chief Executive – Stockton Borough Council**

3.15 The Chief Executive believed that it was important for him to be involved in the work of the SLSCB and whilst it was not possible to attend every meeting, he attended on a regular basis in addition to attending regular meetings with the Independent Chair of the SLSCB and Director of Children's Services.

3.16 He was responsible for overseeing the appointment of the Independent Chair and discussed the operation of the Board as part of appraisal of the Chair. One outcome of these was that work would take place on succession planning.

3.17 The Chief Executive emphasised the importance of commitment from all Board members and that he had challenged individual board members on commitment in the past. He felt that it was important that other agencies took the lead as well as the Local Authority and there had been more recent evidence of this from Board Members. He felt that there was now good attendance and contribution from key partners. He also highlighted that the independent chair carried out appraisals of other Board members and their input into the work of the SLSCB.

3.18 He believed that the Board was well resourced and he was aware of positive feedback from Board Members serving on more than one Board. He was assured by the clear focus and visible commitment of the Board.

3.19 He felt that examples of innovative/good practice included the more focused performance management framework, the voice of the child and also focusing more on outcomes.

#### **Cllr Ann McCoy – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Stockton Borough Council**

3.20 The Cabinet Member felt that the Chair and members of the Board provided effective challenge in their roles as board members and that there had been significant improvements in the operation of the board over the last two years. She highlighted Section 11 work, the Neglect Strategy and the Voice of the Child as examples of valuable work. She felt that attendance at SLSCB meetings were a vital part of her role as lead Cabinet Member.

#### **Julie Allen - Probation**

3.21 Julie had been a member of the SLSCB since June 2014 and commented that it took time to fully understand the wide range of work carried out by the board. With regard to effectiveness, the Committee heard that regular reviews on performance took place and detailed performance reports were discussed at board meetings and challenged.

3.22 Julie believed that scrutiny led to effectiveness. It was noted that SLSCB agendas were robust/full agendas and consistently well structured. The Committee heard that there were strict expectations that all board members had read and understood the papers prior to each meeting. Notwithstanding this, Julie commented that she would prefer to see more

regular, shorter meetings.

3.23 Clear priorities had been set in the Business Plan. Key agenda items included early help and voice of the child. She felt that work carried out on smaller specific issues was useful as were the regular bulletins and the work of the Tees Wide Procedures Group. She also highlighted the Section 11 Audit as being a particularly valuable.

3.24 With regard to attendance she felt that the board was well attended by agencies. It was noted that any agencies with poor attendance would be contacted by the Chair.

3.25 In relation to added value and outcomes of the Board, Julie felt that this was achieved through the breadth of work and the wide range of agencies represented; members of the board were able to take back what was learned into their own organizations. She felt that the work of the sub groups were particularly useful as well as work that had been carried out on the Joint Neglect Strategy and the development of a new performance framework.

3.26 Taking into consideration the high level of joint working across the Tees, Members asked why there were currently four LSCBS as opposed to one large board for all four areas. Julie commented that as an external member, providing four responses to four boards was not a good use of her time but she acknowledged that if there was one board, there would need to be a new structure to ensure local focus was maintained. She commented that she would, however, welcome greater consistency across the four LSCBs.

### **Round Table Discussion with Board Members**

3.27 The following Board Members attended a further meeting of the Committee and responses to key questions are set out below:

#### **Lyndsey Robertson**

- Deputy Director of Nursing, Patient Safety and Quality at North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust
- Board Member of the SLSCB
- Chair of the Joint Training Group between Hartlepool and Stockton

#### **Jean Golightly**

- Director of Nursing and Quality for Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Executive Lead for Safeguarding across Children and Adults
- Member of SLSCB
- Member of Hartlepool LSCB
- Member of Middlesbrough LSCB
- Member of Redcar & Cleveland LSCB
- Chair of Performance Management Framework for the four Tees LSCBs

#### **Alastair Simpson**

- Head of Vulnerability for Cleveland Police
- Member of SLSCB
- Member of Hartlepool LSCB
- Member of Middlesbrough LSCB
- Member of Redcar & Cleveland LSCB
- Member of the Tees Safeguarding Adults Board.



## **How effective are we? Are we doing what we should be?**

3.28 Board members provided the following comments:

- The Board was now developing a greater understanding of the context of the data provided including a greater understanding around the support and services involved in early help and assessment
- A task and finish group had met to review training needs analysis which was an issue raised by Ofsted
- The Boards benchmarked regionally and nationally in order to ensure that it performed effectively
- The Board was increasingly more effective in the way it managed relationships in and outside of Board meetings
- There was a strong emphasis on continuous performance and quality improvement
- The Board had completed audit work which focused on the 'Working Together' safeguarding guidance and all Board members were asked to peer review each other's assessment
- The Board identified important themes such as ensuring that practitioners heard the voice of the child and did not become distracted by the voice of the adult
- Another area which the board focussed on was professional challenge which included ensuring that staff and practitioners had the confidence and sense of responsibility to speak up when they did not agree with a decision or had concerns and this continued to be an area for development
- Members were informed that disguised compliance was often discussed among the Board so as to ensure that all practitioners were actually participating to the level that was perceived
- It was noted that it was each professional's responsibility to ensure that issues and actions were put in place in their own organisations
- In relation to the voice of the child, reports were received on the survey results from LAC and children on child protection plans. In future, reports submitted to the board were required to have a voice of the child section.

## **Do we work efficiently?**

3.29 Board members provided the following comments:

- It was noted that often, the same conversations were repeated across boards and groups, for example, The Health and Wellbeing Board, the SLSCB and Community Safety Partnership. There were also some members of the board who were members of all four Tees LSCBs and therefore it was important to ensure that time was spent efficiently keeping repetition of information to a minimum. The Tees Procedures Group, North Tees Training Group, Tees Wide VEMT structure was effective in allowing appropriate work to be carried out across Tees and securing more consistent approaches
- Reports to Board meetings were often lengthy and there was often a need for further discussions to ensure the most positive outcomes
- The performance management framework allowed the board to compare performance across Tees
- attendance was monitored and reported back to agencies on a six monthly basis

## **What is the added value and what are the outcomes?**

3.30 Board members provided the following comments:

- A number of outcomes were arising from the strategic VEMT were identified including the Chelsea's choice presentations, a survey of year 8 and year 10 children, training of 423 professionals across tees in awareness around human trafficking
- The SLSCB fostered joint working and impetus for change

## **Survey of all Board Members**

3.31 Twelve Board members responded to an online survey.

3.32 Overall feedback was positive with almost all respondents of the view that the SLSCB holds members to account, that local safeguarding arrangements are effective and that lessons are learned to improve. One respondent did not feel that agencies and organisations were working together effectively and there was less clarity about the LSCB Strategy being clear and communicated, listening to the voice of the child, added value and specific outcomes and impacts.

3.33 The comments reveal that Board members feel that there are good relationships, most agencies are held to account and the Board is well organised and supported.

3.34 Improvements identified included the Local Authority taking less of a lead, better involvement of all members, improved quality assurance, lessons learned, reducing lengthy reporting, disseminating clearer information to front line practitioners and listening better to the voice of the child.

3.35 Barriers to improvement included time and resource, lack of consistency, lack of focus on key priorities, lack of understanding about the remit of the LSCB in all agencies and lack of involvement of front line staff.

## **Feedback from Schools**

3.36 A short survey was circulated at a Safeguarding Forum meeting to obtain feedback from schools. Schools felt that positive aspects of safeguarding work with schools included information sharing, updates and training and the responsiveness of Council staff. There were, however, several comments about the need for better communication in respect of the progress of cases and referrals and also an acknowledged lack of awareness about the role of the LSCB.

## **Durham LSCB**

3.37 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee has a discussion with Margaret Whellans, Assistant Director (Durham) and attended a Board meeting at the Durham LSCB. Durham's Board had been judged as "good" in their recent Ofsted Inspection.

3.38 Margaret Whelan's felt that Durham's judgement could be attributed to the following factors:

- Durham LSCB had been the subject of a Peer Review which had concluded that the Board was under-performing and had identified areas for improvement. Based on the Peer Review findings, the Board had reviewed their arrangements. All Board members could map this developmental journey and were able to comment to Ofsted on the improvements that were being implemented.

- There was a strong performance and reporting culture resulting in a lot of detailed information and a strong evidence base. Performance of all partners was tracked and there was a lot of partnership reporting. There were strong Section 11 audit arrangements underpinning the work of the Board and strong accountability of senior leadership across all partners.
- In respect of staffing, the Board were well resourced from a business unit who chased progress and performance management information.

3.39 Observations of the Durham Board meeting are summarised below:

- There was an expectation that all attendees had read the papers in advance
- The majority of Board members contributed to the meetings
- The Action Log helped to hold partners to account
- A reasonable level of challenge was observed
- Good chairing
- The Board was debating similar issues to Stockton about structure/ duplication and what should be carried out locally/ sub regionally
- Non Council Board members chaired the sub groups and reported back to the main Board. This increased ownership and multi-agency engagement.

### **Observation at Stockton Board Meetings**

3.40 Councillors attended several Stockton LSCB Board meetings and observations are summarised below:

- Again there was an expectation that papers had been read in advance
- Each report author/presenter was asked to do no more than a five minute introduction
- Use of Action Log and standing item on organisation/ partnership safeguarding issues was effective in engaging with all partners and allowed the opportunity to reflect on any current issues/ concerns
- There was good contribution from all Board members attending and a high level of challenge
- Following the recent development day, the meeting was experimenting with a cabaret style layout and group discussion of reports on the agenda which worked well in stimulating discussion. The format would be kept under review
- At the end of the meeting, all Board members were asked to identify what the added value has been in attending the meeting.

## **4.0 Key Findings and Recommendations**

### **Structures**

- Sub groups working across Tees were highlighted in the Ofsted report and by Board Members during the review as a key strength
- Duplication was an issue identified by Board Members with the same conversations taking place at each of the Tees Boards and at other meetings such as Health and Wellbeing Boards etc.
- There is a strong case for streamlining what is undertaken across Tees, by individual Boards and by sub groups to make better use of Board Member and agency time and resource

- Stockton to participate and lead if appropriate discussion with other Tees Boards about the balance of work undertaken across Tees and locally and the interface between boards
- In response to the Wood Review the Government have indicated that they will introduce a stronger but more flexible statutory framework. This will give Boards the freedom to review structures and membership according to local circumstances

### **Role and Remit of Board Members**

- There is a need to clarify the role and remit of the Board (as being predominantly one of assurance and oversight, not usually, doing) amongst some agencies and a need to considering how the Board communicates their work and extends their sphere of influence outside of Board meetings
- Board members feel that agencies are held to account but that there is still a need to develop the necessary skills and confidence to challenge. Thoroughness in aspects of challenge was highlighted by Ofsted

### **Style and Ethos**

- A strong commitment from Board members was clearly demonstrated during the review and attendance was monitored and was excellent across all agencies
- Board members commented on strong relationships but also on the need for agencies other than the Council to take a stronger lead
- Board Members commented on the heavy workload and lengthy reports and the need to prioritise more on key issues
- Following the Ofsted inspection and the recent development day a number of improvements to Board meetings have been introduced to make them more productive and stimulate discussion

### **Outcomes**

- There is a wealth of performance information and data submitted to the Board but Ofsted commented that there is a lack of underlying explanations of why performance is good or poor and actions underway to address issues
- There is a need to consider how the Board consistently applies learning from the information they have and ensure that Board Members and Sub Groups have the skills to carry out this analytical role

### **Ofsted**

- The Board need to assure itself that it has responded to the Ofsted recommendations

## **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Stockton LSCB be recommended to:

- 1) participate and initiate discussion where necessary with other Tees Boards about the response to the Wood review and the opportunities to collaborate further and ensure a streamlined and efficient approach with partners.
- 2) continue to develop a self-assessment and review format of Board and sub group meetings to focus discussion on key issues and strengthen the co-ordination, challenge and change functions including the potential role of an Executive.
- 3) continue to identify ways to encourage all partner agencies to play a more active role in discussions, including varying the format of meetings.
- 4) provide training for SLSCB members to ensure that they have the skills to fulfil their roles, especially around assurance roles.
- 5) assure itself that it has responded to the Ofsted recommendations.

## Glossary

LA	Local Authority
SBC	Stockton Borough Council
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
SLSCB	Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board
CYP	Children and Young People
CfPS	Centre for Public Scrutiny
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
VENT	Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing, Trafficked
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CAF	Common Assessment Framework