

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

**Annual Report
2015/16
& Business Plan
2016/17**

**Summary
Report**



Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility – everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015)

What is the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) here to do?

The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) is responsible for joining up the work of all organisations on the Board, to protect children in Gloucestershire from harm.

The Board is made up of senior managers from many different organisations, including the County Council, Police, Hospital Trust, Care Services, 2gether, District Councils and education settings.



How effective is work to safeguard children in Gloucestershire?

Safeguarding services in Gloucestershire are effective for most children and this is a county where the vast majority of children are safe. An area of strength is the positive relationships between those working to safeguard children across all organisations. However, we do know that sometimes work is not good enough and professionals delivering safeguarding in the county are working under a great deal of pressure. The GSCB is working hard to influence consistently better safeguarding practice to support every vulnerable child and young person.

What are the GSCB Sub Groups?

Workforce Development - training and learning

Multi-Agency Quality Assurance (MAQuA) - checking standards and sharing findings

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) - learning from child deaths

Communications - raising awareness of how to keep children safe

Serious Case Review - learning from practice

Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children - understanding and helping children at risk of harm

Policy and Procedures - guidance for staff

Education and Learning - keeping children safe in schools and colleges

There has also been one 'Task and Finish' Group during the year:
Substance Misuse (impact on children from parents' drug and alcohol issues)

Who does the GSCB work with?

The GSCB does not undertake direct work with children and young people but holds other organisations to account for the work that they are doing to keep children safe.

The GSCB works closely with other partnerships in Gloucestershire. These include the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Gloucestershire Children's Partnership, and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board.

GSCB Activity during 2015/16

PRIORITY 1

Communications are effective and appropriate to the target audience

To tell people about safeguarding, the GSCB:

- Produced a summary version of the Annual Report and Business Plan to raise awareness of the work undertaken by the Board during the year and the priorities for the year ahead
- Ran seven multi-agency safeguarding roadshows which over 400 professionals went to
- Launched the GSCB Twitter Account @glosLSCB which now has over 300 followers
- Held a successful Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) seminar in July 2015 which launched the Police and Crime Commissioner film “Friend Request”
- Highlighted the importance of listening to and understanding the experiences of the child through a series of workshops designed and facilitated by the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People at the GSCB Roadshow events
- Updated and reviewed the GSCB website throughout the year to make sure that the information we provide is of a high standard and easily accessible
- Supported a safeguarding event held by the Barton and Tredworth Neighbourhood partnership to raise awareness of safeguarding issues in black and minority ethnic communities
- Ran six forums for safeguarding leads in schools covering a wide range of topics including raising awareness of radicalisation and extremism

PRIORITY 2

We challenge ourselves and each other to build on good practice and identify areas for improvement

To do this, the GSCB:

- Undertook a detailed look into how ‘Early Help’ is provided in Gloucestershire which highlighted areas of good practice as well as areas where we need to improve
- Reviewed the performance framework to allow the GSCB to be able to challenge safeguarding practice more robustly
- Trained professionals to make sure that they know the importance of challenging each other if they think the standard of work is not good enough
- Undertook a review of how organisations are working to keep children safe through a self-assessment audit. This covered topics such as governance and accountability, information sharing, training and policies and procedures. We found that more needs to be done to improve understanding of healthy challenge and how we can measure the difference that training has had on making things better for children and young people
- Undertook an audit on ‘Strategy Discussions’ which resulted in the creation of an easy to read bulletin for practitioners. Learning included:

We know that the right people are usually invited to, and attend meetings but we need to make sure that health professionals are always included

Making sure that discussions always take place in a timely way

Professionals need to make sure that they bring all the right information with them to meetings, including a timeline of key events

The main outcome from a Strategy Discussion is not to plan a Child Protection Conference but to consider further investigations that might be needed (S47)

PRIORITY 3

The safeguarding needs of particularly vulnerable children and young people are addressed

The GSCB knows that some children and young people are especially at risk of harm. During the year the GSCB has:

- Undertaken work to develop a Gloucestershire Neglect Strategy which will be launched in 2016/17, alongside tools for professionals
- Delivered a play called 'Chelsea's Choice' to over 9000 secondary school pupils and piloted the play 'In The Net' for younger children.
- Undertaken a wide range of awareness raising in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation. However, we do know that there is more to be done to engage with hard to reach and under-represented groups
- Continued to develop the inter-agency training provided through the GSCB. The evaluations confirm that professionals find the training to be of a high standard and through the impact framework we are now starting to see evidence that training has made a positive difference to professional practice



98% of pupils surveyed after watching Chelsea's Choice said it made them more aware of Child Sexual Exploitation

PRIORITY 4

We can evidence that multi-agency learning is used to improve working practices

To keep learning and improving, the GSCB has:

- Developed a Gloucestershire model for undertaking case reviews which has been tested out on a case meeting the criteria for a Serious Case Review. An evaluation will take place on completion of the review
- Strengthened the role between the SCR Sub-Group and CDOP, especially in relation to sharing of information when a child dies unexpectedly
- Shared learning in relation to the child's experience through Serious Case Reviews through the safeguarding roadshow events. Key messages included:

Understanding what it is like to be the child – what would it be like to walk in their shoes for a day

Talk to the child, or observe them if they can't talk. Don't automatically accept the parents explanation

If you continue to be worried about a child be persistent and inquisitive

If you don't feel your concerns are being listened to, be persistent – use the GSCB Escalation Policy

About the GSCB...



How it fits together - The GSCB has a clear structure for its Board, Executive Committee and Sub-Groups. Each has clear terms of reference to support roles and responsibilities. The structure represents the range of organisations across the county, including the voluntary and community sector. The Board also includes three 'lay members' who are there to represent the views of the people of Gloucestershire. Work will continue to look at how the work undertaken by the Board can effectively lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Quality Assurance - The Board has continued to maintain the way in which it reviews how organisations are working together to safeguard children and to identify ways in which we can improve. The GSCB also looks at the performance of organisations working with children and young people on a quarterly basis and has improved the performance reporting process during 2015/16. Quality assurance work demonstrates areas of good practice but has also highlighted that learning from quality assurance activity needs to become more embedded in safeguarding practice.

Communication - The GSCB has an agreed communication strategy in place, which was updated during the year and there has been lots of communication activity carried out during the year. The challenge for the GSCB going forward is to strengthen the way in which we engage with hard to reach groups and this will be a focus for the year ahead.

Roadshows - The GSCB delivered seven safeguarding events across the county during November 2015. The focus of these events was the experiences of the child and included a number of presentations and a series of workshops exploring the child's experience within the child protection system, early help and children's emotional health and wellbeing.

"Last years roadshow was good but this event was excellent"

"It was a privilege to be involved. It was amazing to see how much the board has done since the last business day"

Ambassador involved in the GSCB Business Planning Day

Involvement of Children and Young People - The GSCB works closely with the Gloucestershire County Council Participation Team and the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People. The Ambassadors have been involved in a number of projects with the GSCB during the year, including:

- Development of a summary version of the Annual Report (2014/15) and Business Plan (2015/16)
- Raising awareness of safeguarding disabled children through a presentation to the GSCB in May 2015 and one of the Ambassadors acting as a 'critical friend'
- Significant involvement in the production and facilitation of workshops at the GSCB Safeguarding Roadshows in November 2015
- A presentation at the GSCB Business Planning Day in February 2016

GSCB Training - Safeguarding training in the county continues to support all those who work with children, young people and families. All inter-agency training is regularly reviewed to make sure that it is up to date, of a high quality and meets the needs of professionals in Gloucestershire. The total number of people who were trained by the GSCB over the year was over 4,000. The evaluations have been positive and the GSCB has strengthened the way in which it measures the difference that training has made to professional practice during the year.

Early Help

Good early help means local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of need for early help; and
- Provide targeted early help support to address the assessed needs of a child and their family focussing on things that will make things better for the child



Child Protection

At the end of March 2016 there were 580 children subject of a child protection plan in Gloucestershire. These children are supported by social workers in one of the seven children and families teams in Gloucestershire.

The partnership wide issue of high levels of children becoming subject of a child protection plan more than once is a cause for concern. This needs a continued focus to ensure that children and young people have their needs met in a sustainable and timely way so that they don't need any further support through the child protection system in the future.

The GSCB Multi-Agency Child Protection Focus Group focuses on the effectiveness of multi-agency work and the lessons that can be learnt across agencies. During the year the following strengths and barriers were identified as key themes:

Strengths

Effective working through Core Groups
Shared chronology
School involvement – information and reflection
Professional respect

Barriers

Working with families who won't engage and who may be suspicious/challenging
Changes in staff
Information Sharing
Parents needs taking priority

Children in Care

At the end of March 2016, there were 561 Children in Care in Gloucestershire and most children are placed in some type of community, family based placement; a large number are placed with family and friends carers.

During the year there has been a rise in the numbers of children coming into care including young girls at risk of sexual exploitation/self harm and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The GSCB is concerned about the large number of offenders who are Children in Care and will be seeking assurance for how this is being addressed.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse remains a significant concern. Although there is evidence of good understanding around the issues of domestic abuse between adults and the impact on children, we are concerned about how we are identifying and supporting those young people who are in domestically abusive relationships themselves.

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) provide resources to schools to help them address these issues as part of the PSHE curriculum. Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services (GDASS) provide support to women and men over 16 years old who are experiencing domestic abuse. For children under the age of 16, support is provided via the parent or guardian accessing the service. The Crush programme for 13-19 year olds provides awareness of what constitutes a healthy and an unhealthy relationship.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The CSE Team is now multi-agency and includes Youth Support and Social Care alongside the Police CSE officers and the Missing Persons Coordinator. CSE outreach workers are actively working with a number of young people who are at high risk of CSE and are providing support to enable them to engage with other services.

The CSE Screening Tool was updated during the year and is now accompanied by a set of guidance notes. The new tool was launched in February 2016. Use of the screening tool is covered in the inter-agency CSE training, which was revised during 2015/16 and is now a one-day face to face training course which includes direct input from practitioners working within the CSE Multi-Agency Team. The GSCB does remain concerned by the devastating effects that CSE has on children and communities and recognises the ongoing need to focus on disruption activity and support to victims.

Children who go Missing from Home or Care

The Missing Children Protocol which provides a multi-agency framework for the action that needs to be taken when children and young people are at risk of/are going missing from home or care was updated during 2015/16.

Also, during the year a review was undertaken by another local authority which looked at how we work with children either at risk of, or who are going missing. This review highlighted strengths in how children are actively sought and returned to a safe place but also areas for development in relation to frontline practitioners' oversight of risk management processes.

Disabled Children and Young People (DCYP)

In May 2015 the GSCB received a presentation in relation to safeguarding disabled children. The Board members were asked to consider a series of case studies and think about the lived experience of the child and how this links to the GSCB role of overseeing the safeguarding system.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

Gloucestershire's Future in Mind, the local transformation plan for improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people was published in November 2015. The plan was produced and informed by children and young people, parents and carers and through partnership working between the wide range of partners in Gloucestershire. The plan will be monitored by the Gloucestershire Children's Partnership. As part of the GSCB safeguarding roadshows in 2015, a workshop relating to young people's emotional health and wellbeing was co-facilitated by two Ambassadors and raised awareness of the need to really listen to children and young people and not make uninformed judgements.



Learning from Child Deaths and Serious Case Reviews

During the year the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) were notified of a total number of 19 child deaths. The purpose of CDOP is to review the deaths of all children who live in Gloucestershire to see if there are any lessons to be learnt which could help prevent future deaths, or improve services to children and families. The CDOP Annual Report was presented to the GSCB in November 2015 and it was agreed that it was a robust report, with clear themes identified and follow up actions to be taken.

During 2015/16 there were no serious case reviews published by the GSCB. Two reviews were signed off by the Board but have not yet been published due to other processes running in parallel. A further two reviews are ongoing.

A Learning Event also took place in respect of a case that did not meet the criteria for a serious case review but where it was clear that there would be multi-agency learning to take forward.

Allegations Management

(Allegations Management is where we deal with concerns that somebody might not be safe to work or volunteer with children)

The Allegations Management process in Gloucestershire is managed through the GSCB Business Unit. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) gives advice and guidance in relation to allegations as well as monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are managed consistently across agencies and private employers and are brought to a close as quickly as possible.

During 2015/16 there were 411 allegations made to the LADO. This is considerably higher than the number reported in 2014/15. Of these allegations, 135 were taken to a multi-agency Allegations Management meeting as they met the allegations management threshold.

The full Allegations Management Annual Report for 2015/16, which will provide a detailed analysis of the trends throughout the year, will be available on the GSCB website once it has been published.

What will happen next?

GSCB Business Plan 2016/17

OBJECTIVE 1

What:

Communications are effective and appropriate to the target audience

Why:

One of the key roles of the GSCB is to ensure that there are clear policies and procedures in place for how agencies work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare and that these have been effectively communicated across the workforce

How:

- Undertake a range of communication activity so that people know how to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues
- Improve the use of Social Media
- Raise awareness amongst communities of GSCB priority issues
- Remain actively involved in the oversight of South West Child Protection Procedures
- Review and update the Levels of Intervention Guidance
- Ensure that educational settings understand the concept of Early Help and how to support Children in Need

OBJECTIVE 2

What:

We challenge ourselves and each other to build on good practice and identify areas for improvement

Why:

In order to drive up standards, partner agencies need to challenge areas of weakness so that there is a culture of continuous improvement across the GSCB

How:

- Continue to develop links between children and adult services
- Hold agencies to account for the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding training
- Undertake an in-depth review of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Undertake a review of self-assessment processes and action plans
- Continue to develop and improve the way in which the GSCB operates
- Continue to review the effectiveness of Core Groups through the Multi-Agency Child Protection Focus Groups



OBJECTIVE 3

What:

The safeguarding needs of particularly vulnerable children and young people are addressed

Why:

All children and young people are vulnerable but particular groups are more so. It is important that these groups are identified and their specific safeguarding needs are addressed

How:

- Undertake a multi-agency review of Out of Hours safeguarding arrangements
- Promote Early Help and ensure that Early Help is embedded in practice
- Undertake a series of CP Process reviews
- Oversee the implementation of the CSE Strategy Action Plan
- Develop an action plan in relation to children who are missing from home, school or care
- Develop closer links between educational settings and the 2gether Trust

OBJECTIVE 4

What:

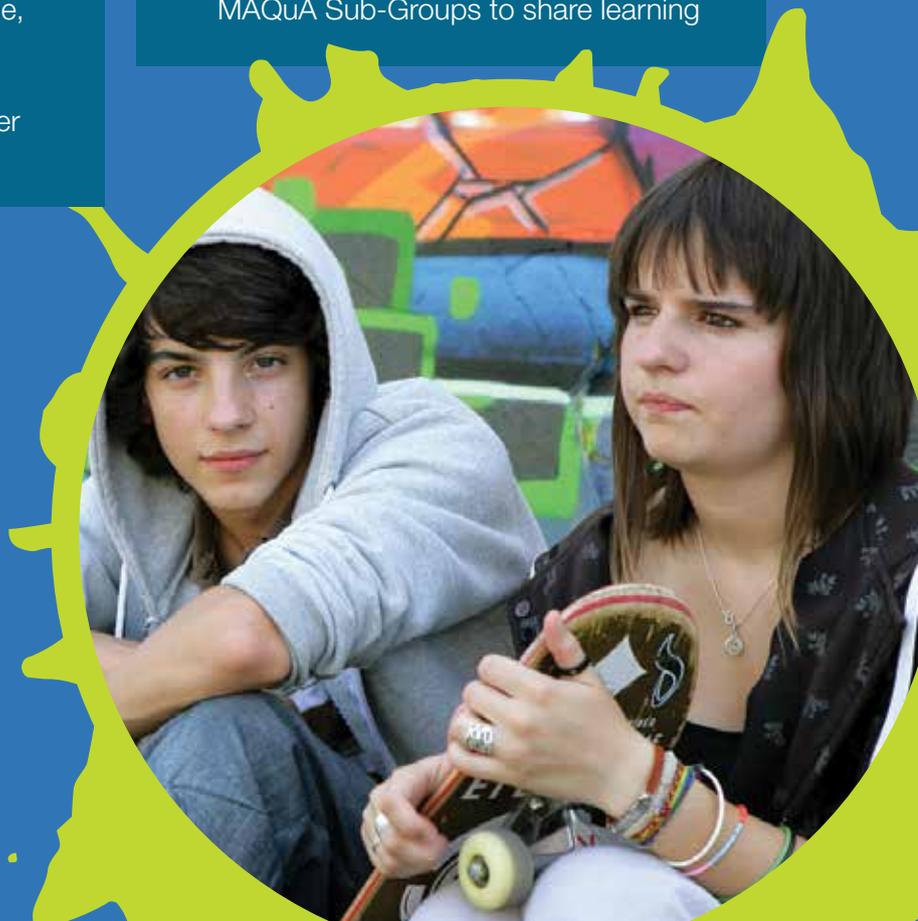
We can evidence that multi-agency learning is used to improve working practices

Why:

It is important to learn from serious incidents. Lessons from reviews can help prevent further incidents from occurring

How:

- Make robust, prompt decisions on all new cases put forward for consideration
- Complete current SCRs, develop action plans and hold agencies to account for completion of actions
- Focus on vulnerability due to the presence of learning disabilities in the CDOP process
- Develop and implement a range of learning methodologies for case reviews
- Work closely with the Communication, CDOP, Workforce Development and MAQuA Sub-Groups to share learning



For all the details within the GSCB Annual Report,
please click [here](#) to read the full version.