

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

**Annual Report
2016/17
& Business Plan
2017/18**

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)



Gloucestershire
Safeguarding Children
Board

Introduction from the Independent Chair

This summary report has been produced in partnership with the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People with the purpose of raising awareness of the work that has been undertaken by the Board during the year to ensure that we all work together to achieve the desired safeguarding outcomes for children and young people in Gloucestershire. This report and the full annual report will also be published on the GSCB website at www.gscb.org.uk to provide a transparent account of the work and objectives of the GSCB.

The GSCB has been very active over the past year checking and testing safeguarding practice, reviewing cases in which children have suffered serious harm, as well as training and raising awareness of important safeguarding issues among our children's workforce. It has been encouraging an environment of mutual supportive challenge and an expectation of high quality responses to vulnerable, neglected and abused children. We have an experienced, committed and diligent Business Unit facilitating that work and all our member organisations contribute to it.

Gloucestershire is a safe county for our children to grow up in and most children here are healthy and happy. However, the welfare of some of our children is compromised for a variety of reasons such as being exposed to: domestic abuse, neglect and other forms of sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Safeguarding organisations are actively responding to those children and the numbers of those subject of child protection plans, in the care of the local authority and being supported to promote their welfare is high. This work is challenging. We want to help parents to care for their children when they are struggling to do so effectively. But children deserve to be protected from abuse; sometimes they must be removed from parents and placed with someone who will ensure their safe development and those who abuse them must be assertively held to account.

In the last year, we have had the benefit of independent scrutiny of the police through an inspection of child protection arrangements by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and of GSCB and local authority child safeguarding arrangements by Ofsted. Although they have highlighted areas to be proud of, they have clearly reinforced that we need a significant step change in the quality of our collective child protection practice to reach the standard of practice to which we aspire.

In the coming year, we will narrow our focus. We will concentrate on work to protect children from neglect and abuse and influence the driving up consistency of good practice in this area. We will foster a mutual attitude of complete intolerance of work that does not adequately protect our most vulnerable children. There is evidence that recruitment and retention of staff is becoming difficult and we must continue to engender a culture of continuous learning and improvement rather than blame and recrimination if we are to truly serve our children well.



Dave McCallum, GSCB Independent Chair
June 2017

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.

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

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, the Prevent Partnership Board, the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning.

GSCB Activity during 2016/17

The last GSCB annual report was published in July 2016 and since that time a considerable amount of activity has been undertaken by the GSCB through its eight sub-groups. During the year we have:

Moved to a new website provider and updated the content to ensure that high quality information is provided in an accessible format

Worked with Cheltenham Town FC to include safeguarding awareness raising information in a brochure that is given out to children, young people and parents

Continued the development of the GSCB Twitter account, which now has over 500 followers and enables us to share pro-active safeguarding messages to professionals and the wider general population

Sent out 38 GSCB alerts in relation to key issues, updates and learning. We are now better able to measure the impact of the alerts through increased use of data, which evidences more people looking at the website after an alert has been issued

Raised awareness of the information and guidance that is available on the GSCB website, including access to multi-agency training information, e-learning and the importance of signing up to GSCB alerts. Over 3,200 individuals are now signed up to the alerts which is a really positive development

Produced a summary version of the Annual Report and Business Plan to highlight the role of the Board and priority areas for 2016/17. All resources are available to download from the GSCB website

Actively publicised the introduction of the early help graduated pathway and raised awareness through the GSCB Roadshows and Designated Safeguarding Lead forums for educational settings and early years settings

Continued to deliver Chelsea's Choice to year 8 pupils across Gloucestershire Secondary Schools. Over 45,000 young people have now seen the play

Actively supported National CSE Awareness Raising Day on the 18th March 2017 through a poster campaign, media release and social media

Provided the Alter Ego production 'In The Net' to Year 4 pupils across Gloucestershire, jointly funded by Gloucestershire Constabulary. During 2016/17, over 4,200 children saw the production

Provided Designated Safeguarding Lead forums to educational settings covering a wide range of key issues, including learning from recent serious case reviews

Strengthened the approach to reporting the impact of multi-agency training to the GSCB Executive, thereby ensuring that there is regular debate and discussion to how we can best understand the difference that training is having on safeguarding practice

Developed new multi-agency training courses based on emerging need. For example, as a result of learning from Serious Case Reviews we have introduced a course in relation to working with fathers

Successfully delivered the three day 'Train the Trainer' programme in June 2016.

Co-produced a conference to raise awareness of abuse in teenage relationships with the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People. The conference, which included the Alter Ego production of 'Tough Love' was well attended and received excellent evaluations

Launched the Countywide Neglect Strategy and have undertaken further work to develop a toolkit for practitioners

Held a CSE conference in collaboration with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in July 2016. The event was well attended by professionals and received very positive evaluations

Launched training to taxi drivers throughout the county.

Produced a multi-agency chronology guidance document that makes it clear to all professionals working with children, families and vulnerable adults the purpose of a chronology and what should be included

Reviewed the Gloucestershire Levels of Intervention Guidance to take into account changes to the local delivery structure and requirements in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Revised and updated the GSCB Unborn Baby Protocol in line with the findings from the 'Ben' Serious Case Review

Continued to work with the South West Child Protection Procedures Group to determine how the SWCPP will be delivered in the future

Undertaken a multi-agency CSE audit which incorporated a review of distance travelled since the last CSE audit was undertaken in 2012. The audit found an improvement in knowledge and understanding in relation to CSE but that there needs to be a greater focus on disruption activity

Undertaken a multi-agency children with disabilities audit which looked at the case files of 20 disabled children and held a focus group with professionals to explore their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding disabled children

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 - Through the Multi Agency Quality Assurance (MAQuA) Sub-Group the Board has continued to maintain its approach to quality assurance and performance reporting. In line with the requirements in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, the GSCB has developed and updated its Learning and Improvement Framework which includes key principles for learning and improvement and the quality assurance methodology for the GSCB. The GSCB recognises that the quality assurance approach needs to be strengthened to ensure that when less than good practice is identified there is a clear plan of what needs to change and there are clear timescales for change, which is followed up by MAQuA. This is a priority action within the Business Plan for 2017/18.

Communication - There has been a wide range of communication activity undertaken throughout the year, the majority of which has been driven by the GSCB Business Unit. It was agreed at the GSCB Business Planning Day that the role of the Communications Network would be further reviewed by the Independent Chair and Business Manager with the recognition that communications should be a golden thread which run through all the activity of the GSCB and not necessarily a standalone group. It is felt that smaller task groups could be pulled together to undertake specific pieces of work, and the role of the communications network will be to ensure that these messages are reaching frontline practitioners.

"I really enjoyed the domestic abuse in relationships conference. It really boosted my confidence in terms of delivering a presentation in front of a large group of people. It's also given me a chance to work on a big project as part of a team and I feel that the afternoon went really well to raise awareness of such an important issue".

Ambassador involved in the conference to raise awareness of abuse in teenage relationships

Roadshows - The Safeguarding Roadshows in November 2016 were very well received by those professionals who attended. Participants at each of the 7 events heard about local developments to safeguard children as well as findings from local and national Serious Case Reviews, based on 'Pathways to Harm' and 'Pathways to Protection'. They also participated in three workshops exploring early help, safeguarding children with disabilities and children living with domestic abuse.

Involvement of Children and Young People - The GSCB works closely with the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People. The Ambassadors have been involved in a number of projects with the GSCB throughout the year. These have included:

- Development of a summary version of the Annual Report (2015/16) and Business Plan (2016/17)
- Significant involvement in the production and facilitation of workshops at the GSCB Safeguarding Roadshows in November 2016
- Co-production of a conference to raise awareness of abuse in teenage relationships which was attended by over 150 professionals
- A presentation at the GSCB Business Planning Day in February 2017
- Development of a proposal for a formal Ambassador Reference Group to become part of the governance arrangements of the GSCB to ensure that the views and experiences of children and young people are central to all our work.

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

In Gloucestershire, children and their families are supported by a range of early help services. It is estimated that up to 23,000 children and young people are benefiting from some form of early help at any time.

A single, graduated Early Help pathway for all children, young people and families with additional needs was introduced during 2016/17 and is seeing an increase in the number of children benefiting from early help provision.



Child Protection

At the end of March 2017 there were 457 children subject of a child protection plan 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. The Board have agreed that the focus of the Business Plan for 2017/18 will be on ensuring that multi-agency systems to safeguard children at risk of or suffering significant harm are effective. This will include more rigorously holding organisations to account for the quality of frontline practice and ensuring that recognising and improving the lived experience of the child is central to all our work.

Since December 2016, the Child Protection Conference Team has been piloting Restorative Practice as an approach to Conferences. The intention is to increase family engagement and the voice of the child, build better relationships with families and provide a high support, high challenge environment. This is based on the understanding that when we work with and alongside people, rather than make decisions about them in isolation, there is strong evidence to say that the lives of children, adults and families are improved. The revised agenda and approach includes more focus on communication, setting clear bottom lines, family led problem solving and decision making and shared accountability.

A Restorative Child Protection Conference

In January 2017, 'Josh' and his 4 siblings were made subject of Child Protection Plans in order to address issues of neglect and emotional abuse. The Child Protection Conference was chaired using a restorative framework. Due to the complexities and high level of concern, there were a large number of professionals in attendance and it was a very difficult meeting.

Despite this, the Designated Safeguarding Lead from the school that Josh attends commented that "The restorative format made the meeting much easier to handle for the family. I also felt that I was well listened to in my concerns about how I felt the focus on the eldest child was possibly diverting attention away from what may be happening behind the scenes....in a way that I would have struggled to share constructively with such a large group of professionals in the previous format".

Children in Care

At the end of March 2017, there were 614 Children in Care in Gloucestershire, with most children being placed with foster carers or other community based placements. A large number are placed with family and friends carers.

During the year there has been a rise in the number of children coming into care including young girls at risk of sexual exploitation/self harm and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours. There has also been a rise in admissions to care, compared to the number of children being discharged from care, which has contributed to the rise in numbers.

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) are commissioned to 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The CSE PACT Team is a multi-agency team consisting of professionals from the Police, Children's Social Care and the Youth Support Team. The missing children coordinator is also based within the the CSE PACT Team. The team provides a coordinated response to concerns that children and young people are at risk of CSE and support to young people both at risk of and victims of CSE.

During the year, 524 CSE referrals were dealt with by the team. This compares to 422 referrals received during 2015/16 and the increase is consistent with the national trend. The increase should be identified as being a positive and shows that the work to raise awareness across the county is being effective.

We need to better understand the behaviours of perpetrators and continue to be proactive in respect of focusing on perpetrator's, the disruption of groups and gangs and raising awareness through group work and training. The language which professionals use still needs to be re-framed to put the onus and emphasis on the perpetrator and not the victim and this is one of the agreed priorities for the CSE/Missing Children Sub-Group in 2017/8.

Children who go Missing from Home or Care

Children and young people go missing for a variety of reasons. There may have been a misunderstanding about what time they were due back or they may have been the victim of a serious crime. The job of the authorities is to record and investigate missing person reports in order to work to prevent children and young people from being harmed and/or exploited. What we know about children who go missing, in 2016:

- There are on average 128 missing episodes every month, 62 individuals
- 58% of the cohort only go missing once
- 28% have attendance levels at school of less than 90%
- 33% are thought to be at risk of CSE

Disabled Children and Young People (DCYP)

The 0-25 team for children and young people with disabilities is currently supporting 263 children and young people through their early help service of assessment, plan and review and 129 Children who are Children In Need, Children in Care or Children on a Child Protection plan. The team support 255 young people up to the age of 25 across employment, enablement and social care. As the recent inspection of SEND showed, staff across education, social care and health work well together to improve outcomes for children and the graduated pathway is well recognised.

Children Living in Neglectful Situations

The neglect of children and young people is one of the most complex areas of identification and intervention within the child safeguarding field. The GSCB developed a Child Neglect Strategy in August 2016 in response to local knowledge to the causes and effects of neglect, learning from local serious case reviews and learning from the Ofsted thematic inspection report. The aim of the strategy is to improve the early recognition of neglect and improve the collective multi-agency response to providing support to children and young people at the earliest possible stage.



Learning from Child Deaths and Serious Case Reviews

During the year the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) were notified of a total number of 36 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.

During 2016/17 there were three serious case reviews published by the GSCB. A further two reviews are ongoing.

It is also recognised that we need to improve the ways in which we can evidence that actions taken as a result of learning from serious case reviews has improved practice. There are numerous examples of awareness raising activity but the GSCB is not confident that this has made a difference to frontline practice.

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 2016/17 there were 364 allegations made to the LADO. Of these allegations, 137 were taken to a multi-agency Allegations Management meeting as they met the allegations management threshold.

The full Allegations Management Annual Report for 2016/17, 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 2017/18

The GSCB is concerned about the quality of practice, poor outcomes for some children and young people and the number of children coming back into the Child Protection system. For this reason the GSCB has decided to take a 'back to basics' view during 2017/18 and has revised its strategic objectives accordingly. Our overarching purpose and priority this year will be to ensure that:

Multi-agency working to safeguard children suffering or at risk of significant harm is timely and effective



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: MULTI-AGENCY WORKING TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN SUFFERING OR AT RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ARE TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE

Why is this important?

Effective multi-agency systems and processes to protect children and keep them safe from harm are at the heart of all the work undertaken by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board. There needs to be the assurance that organisations are working together to keep children safe. Areas of good practice as well as areas where improvements are needed are recognised and acted upon.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Children will be kept safe – their needs will be understood and help provided will make a difference

Children who are at risk of or suffering neglect are identified and interventions are put in place to stop them from suffering harm

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- Revise audit activity and methodology
 - Undertake a series of checks in the child protection process
 - Examine the effectiveness of the early help pathway in improving outcomes for children
 - Ensure all audit activity includes the participation of children and families
 - Hold organisations to account for the effectiveness of their own auditing activity
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- Launch the Gloucestershire Child Neglect framework
 - Ensure that messages from Serious Case Reviews regarding neglect are shared, understood and acted upon
 - Oversee the neglect strategy delivery plan
 - Make sure that professionals are confident in recognising signs and indicators of child neglect

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Children are effectively protected because professionals and families will have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep children safe

Children not in full-time education will be safe. Children and their carers have been provided with robust safeguarding information in relation to key issues such as CSE, e-safety and health and wellbeing

Children and young people are safeguarded through improved analysis of data, intelligence and quality assurance to better understand a range of issues, including DA, CSE and Missing Children. This leads to an improvement in risk identification and provision of appropriate support services to meet local need

Professionals consistently deliver good practice, quality safeguarding responses and are routinely and assertively advocating on behalf of children

Children are fully equipped with knowledge regarding the risks surrounding accessing the internet on their phones and in the virtual world

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- Ensure that all communications are clear and reach the right audience at the right time
- Increase our communications with hard to reach and seldom heard groups and communities
- Use creative ways to reach children and young people, professionals and the wider community
- Preview local policies and procedures as a result of learning from reviews, audits and practice developments

- Ensure parents of children not in full-time education have the same level of access to safeguarding support
- Test the effectiveness of the exclusions strategy

- Strengthen the range of performance information provided to the Board so that the Board can effectively challenge areas of poor practice
- Develop a multi-agency data profile
- Develop a proposal for implementing a performance panel in each locality

- Ensure staff across all organisations are accessing safeguarding training appropriate to their job role
- Continue to develop and improve the training impact and evaluation framework
- Develop and implement a range of methodologies to undertake learning reviews
- Maximise learning opportunities for professionals from all types of case reviews

- Ensure that all educational settings are aware of and up to date with issues around e-safety
- Work with parents to ensure that they recognise their responsibilities and know where to go to access support

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