



Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2014/15 and Business Plan 2015/16

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



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, for the purposes of protecting 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
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 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 2014/15

PRIORITY 1

To have communicated the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

To tell people about safeguarding, the GSCB:

- Ran seven multi-agency roadshow events in 2014 (Annual Safeguarding Conference), which about 500 professionals went to
- Worked with the Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People to scope out a campaign to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Highlighted the importance of listening to the views and experiences of children and young people through a presentation and workshop designed and led by the Ambassadors at the GSCB Roadshows
- Provided an event for Secondary Schools called 'Safeguarding and Early Help'. At this event, resources were launched to help schools deal with the difficult issues of teenage relationship abuse and consent
- Raised awareness of the GSCB and what to do if you have concerns about a child through the Gloucestershire Hospital's safeguarding event
- Ran a communication campaign as part of national Child Safety Week to raise awareness of the dangers of blind cords, nappy sacks, heavy objects and co-sleeping.

PRIORITY 2

Holding each other to account: evaluating how well partners are working together to safeguard children and young people, building on good practice and challenging poor.

To do this, the GSCB:

- Measured whether schools have a documented early help offer through a review of their safeguarding arrangements (S175/157)
- Undertook a review of organisations self-assessments to be able to hold them to account in terms of their safeguarding practices and identify further actions for improvement
- Reviewed the performance framework to include more multi-agency and early help indicators that will allow the GSCB to challenge safeguarding practice more robustly across all partner organisations
- 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 an in-depth review of Children in Need. This included a focus group for practitioners and a questionnaire for children, young people and parents. The review identified areas of good practice and the development of a 'top tips' poster. Tips included:

Have we evidenced that the right agencies are involved?

Have we evidenced the child's experiences, wishes and feelings?

Have we considered the needs of, and risks to any siblings?

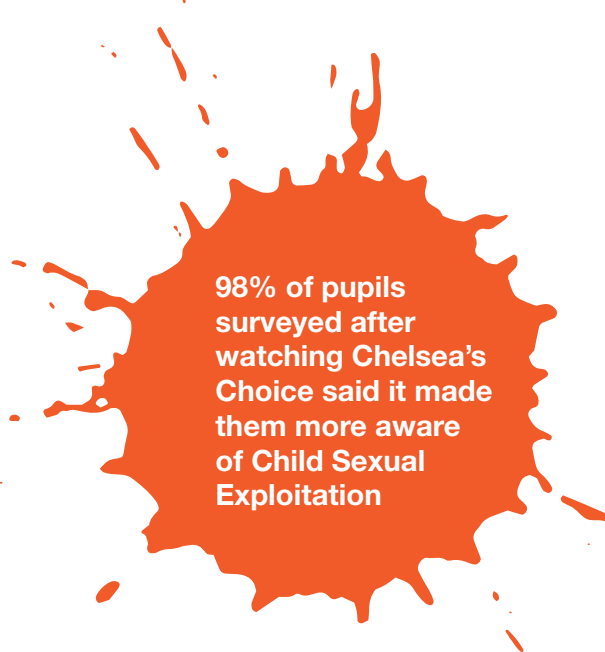
Have we clearly considered cultural and diversity needs?

PRIORITY 3

Ensure the safeguarding needs of particularly vulnerable children and young people are being addressed.

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

- Incorporated learning from local and national serious case reviews into single and multi-agency training
- Delivered a play called 'Chelsea's Choice' to over 9000 secondary school pupils
- Produced a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan so that all organisations are aware of the priority areas that we need to focus on to protect young people who are at risk of or are being exploited
- Continued to develop the range of multi-agency courses that are available. A new one-day CSE training course is currently being developed as well as a one-day course to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation.



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

PRIORITY 4

Ensure that multi-agency learning, as informed by the Systems Approach to Serious Case Reviews, is used to improve working practice and monitored through multi-agency quality assurance.

To keep learning and improving, the GSCB has:

- Looked at the way in which we review serious cases to make sure that the learning opportunities are maximised in each individual case
- Shared learning through single and multi-agency safeguarding training and through the GSCB Roadshows
- Published a serious case review. Key points of learning were:

Always keep a clear focus on the experiences of the child

Make sure that communication is open and transparent

Keep accurate, up to date chronologies

It is robust plans that will keep a child safe – plans must have the child's needs at the heart

Being able to reflect on safeguarding practice is essential for all staff

Healthy challenge is an important part of working with families and other professionals

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.

Quality Assurance - The Board continues to strengthen 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 developed the performance reporting process during 2014/15.

Communication - The GSCB has an agreed communication strategy in place and there have been lots of communication activity carried out during the year. The challenge for the GSCB going forward is to make sure that we are able to evidence the difference that our communications are having in making children and young people safer from harm.

Roadshows - The GSCB delivered seven safeguarding events across the county during December 2014. People who attended heard about local developments to safeguard children, learning from local and national serious case reviews and listening to the views and experiences of children and young people. Workshops took place to explore how we work with challenging families, working together in child protection core groups and listening to the child's experiences.

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 are young people aged between 16-25 who bring a wide range of experience to support the work that they do. The Ambassadors have been involved in a number of projects with the GSCB during the year, including:

- A review of the GSCB website to make sure that the young people's pages are up to date and accessible to children and young people
- Development of a young people's version of the Annual Report for 2013/14 and Business Plan 2015/16
- Being part of the Independent Chair recruitment process in April 2014
- Producing and leading a presentation and workshop at the Roadshows in December 2014
- Being part of the Lay Member recruitment process in December 2014.

"I felt very involved in the process from start to finish and felt that my views were as valued as other members of the interview panel"

Ambassador involved in Lay Member recruitment process

84% of people said that they would find the event helpful to their practice.

GSCB Training - Safeguarding training in the county continues to support all those who work with children, young people and families. All interagency 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 4,400. The evaluations have been positive and the GSCB is now strengthening how it measures the difference that training has made to professional practice.



Early Help

Good early help means local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Assess the 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

Children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan are supported by social workers in one of the seven children and families teams in Gloucestershire. Of all current Child Protection Plans the most common category of need/abuse is neglect, which makes up almost 50% of all plans.

The GSCB Roadshows included a workshop on the purpose of a Child Protection Core Group and also what are the essential ingredients for an effective core group. Professionals were asked to write down what they thought were some of the key ingredients and it is clear that communication and healthy challenge were felt to be really important.



Children in Care

The Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People are becoming more involved in supporting the work of the Children in Care Teams. As a result of the Ambassadors work the Children in Care Teams now have Participation Champions who have strong links with the Gloucestershire County Council Participation Team.

Domestic Abuse

In October 2014 the Countywide Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy was signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The strategy has a key focus on early help and prevention of harm for individuals, families and communities.

One issue that has been highlighted relates to unhealthy relationships between young people and work has been undertaken by Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) over the last 3 years to produce resources which enable schools to address these issues as part of the PSHE curriculum. Voluntary organisations have also delivered sessions in schools to support these key messages also. There are obvious links between teenage relationship abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The CSE Team within the Police is being developed to include youth support and social care. Two youth workers will provide outreach support to young people to help support them to engage with other services.

Multi-Agency CSE training is available through the GSCB. Currently this includes a half-day face to face training session and e-learning training programmes. Due to an identified need for more advanced training, a new one-day training programme is currently being finalised which will include a wider agenda around sexual violence.

Schools have been trained in the use of the CSE screening tool to identify when a child might be at risk of being exploited.

Children who go Missing from Home or Care

The quality of information has improved and there is now a better understanding of the number of children and young people who go missing within Gloucestershire. The Youth Support Service provide a return home interview to gain a better understanding of why the young person went missing and are currently piloting an extension to this service for young people who may not feel comfortable talking with their Social Worker about running away.

Disabled Children and Young People (DCYP)

At the end of March 2015, there were 10 disabled children and young people subject of a Child Protection Plan. It is difficult to compare Gloucestershire to other local authorities as not all areas collect separate information for disabled children and young people. Gloucestershire is now starting to share information with other local authorities which will allow us to get a better understanding of how we are doing compared to other areas.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

In response to concerns about the increase in the numbers of young people who are harming themselves a multi-agency partnership has been established to oversee a programme of work that will include looking at all available information and also messages from young people. An offer for schools is being developed on positive messages for pupils and where to seek help as well as a more joined-up network of support for young people following self-harm.



Learning from Serious Case Reviews

During the year there has been one serious case review published by the GSCB. In addition, there are currently three Serious Case Reviews being carried out that will be finalised and published during 2015/16. Action taken by the GSCB has included:

- Getting in touch with all partners to see if they had any ongoing concerns about children who were being supported through a Child Protection Plan or as a Child in Need
- Raising awareness of neglect through a series of neglect workshops and increasing understanding about the impact that neglect can have on a child or young person
- Re-launching the Escalation Policy to give professionals the confidence to challenge if they disagree with the action being taken to help vulnerable children
- Reviewing when professionals should intervene to keep children safe and launching new guidance on the Levels of Intervention
- Taking every opportunity to remind professionals that the focus must always be on the needs of the child, even more so when the parents themselves have many demands and difficulties.

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 are managed consistently across agencies and private employers and are brought to a close as quickly as possible.

During 2014/15 there were 316 allegations made to the LADO. This is slightly higher than the number reported in 2013/14 and considerably higher than in 2012/13. Of these allegations, 120 were taken to a multi-agency Allegations Management meeting as they met the allegations management threshold.

What will happen next?

GSCB Business Plan 2015/16

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:

- Review the structure of the Communication Sub-Group
- Develop more creative communication channels e.g. Twitter and Facebook
- Deliver a series of agreed communication campaigns
- Be actively involved in the recommissioning of South West Child Protection Procedures
- Review local policies and procedures
- Ensure the early help offer is published by all schools and educational settings.

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. It is equally important to share the ways that agencies work well together as well as what needs to be improved so that this can be built upon.

How:

- Measure the impact of multi-agency training
- Act upon findings from the analysis of the schools audit
- Undertake an in-depth review of early help in Gloucestershire
- Carry out a review of cases where parental substance misuse is a significant factor
- 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
- Review the arrangements made by organisations to meet their safeguarding responsibilities
- Continue to develop links between children and adult services.



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 Children in Care
- Provide high quality multi-agency safeguarding training
- Undertake a series of CP Process reviews
- Oversee the implementation of the CSE Strategy Action Plan
- Make sure that all reviews consider the extent to which children and young people have the opportunities for their views and opinions to be heard
- Hold a safeguarding roadshow for practitioners working with our more diverse communities.

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 timely and robust decisions on all new cases put forward for consideration
- Ensure that Serious Case Reviews are completed to a high standard
- Ensure that all Child Death backlog cases have been considered and all new cases are dealt with in a timely way
- Work closely with the communication and Workforce Development Sub-Group to share learning.



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