

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Stephen Ashley, Independent Chair of Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board
Date of Meeting	20 June 2019

BLACKPOOL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD HALF YEAR REVIEW

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider an update on the operation of Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board and future multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the contents of the report, provide challenge and identify any issues for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to be fully informed of the work of Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board and future multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) continues to discharge its responsibilities under Working Together 2015, during a transitional period while the multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements required by Working Together 2018 are established. Since the last report to the Scrutiny Committee, the BSCB Independent Chair, Nancy Palmer, has stepped down and been replaced by Stephen Ashley. Mr Ashley is an experienced LSCB Independent Chair, having previously held the same role in Rotherham, Tower Hamlets and Hillingdon. He has subsequently been appointed to the same role in Lancashire.

6.2 As a consequence of the recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services, BSCB has formalised its governance arrangements with the Children's Improvement Board Appendix 6(a). BSCB consequently takes responsibility for any elements of the Children's Services Improvement Plan that require partnership actions, while the BSCB Independent Chair sits as a member of the Improvement Board and provides independent challenge.

6.3 Neglect

6.3.1 BSCB's response to neglect has been provided in accordance with an agreed strategy that ran from 2016-2019. Central to this strategy was the adoption of a suite of neglect assessment tools that would enable multi-agency practitioners to consistently identify and address neglect. The Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services identified that the overall response to neglect was ineffective and left too many children living with chronic neglect. They did not find evidence of the use of the neglect assessment tools in cases that they reviewed. BSCB has consequently decided to undertake a more thorough review of the multi-agency response to neglect. To date this has included a consultation with strategic board members, as to how they implemented the current strategy, and with practitioners to determine their experiences of working with neglected children. A recently established Early Help and Neglect Task and Finish Group will now be responsible for the development of a new strategy.

6.4 Early Help

6.4.1 BSCB agreed an Early Intervention and Prevention strategy - Appendix 6(b) - in October 2018 and launched this to practitioners through its Early Help Support Network in December 2018. While this strategy provides a framework for the multi-agency provision of Early Help, it is acknowledged that more detailed work is required to ensure consistent practice throughout Blackpool. This will be developed through the previously mentioned Early Help and Neglect Task and Finish Group. It is anticipated that this group's work will include the development of a consistent operating model, building on current examples of co-located place based service provision; a review of current assessments and documentation; a review of support

available to multi-agency practitioners and consideration as to how early help activity is captured.

6.5 Child Exploitation

6.5.1 BSCB agreed a multi-agency Child Exploitation pathway, together with a screening tool and specialist assessment, in February 2019. This process was launched to approximately 250 multi-agency practitioners at the end of March 2019 and is now embedded in Awaken team practice and disseminated through the BSCB training programme. The remit of the multi-agency Awaken team has been expanded to cover all forms of exploitation, together with modern day slavery, trafficking, honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation. Awaken practitioners use the new specialist assessment tool to agree a Child Missing, Exploited or Trafficked plan, which is developed and monitored in multi-agency monthly meetings. The expansion of the team's remit has seen its caseload expand from 40 cases in November 2018 to 91 on 31 March 2019.

6.6 Future Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements

6.6.1 The Blackpool Council Executive approved a framework for future Safeguarding Partnership arrangements in February 2019. These are in response to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which places equal responsibility on local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and the chief constable of police to establish Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. The Safeguarding Partnership will cover the Lancashire Constabulary area, so also include colleagues in Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire. The Safeguarding Partners will publish their arrangements by 28 June 2019, in accordance with statutory requirements.

6.6.2 The Safeguarding Partnership arrangements will come into place in September 2019, at which point BSCB will cease to exist (save for a one year grace period to complete outstanding Serious Case Reviews). In the meantime BSCB activities will continue, with a final annual report in process and a Board meeting set for 24 July.

6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 6(a) Partnership Agreement between Blackpool Children's Improvement Board and Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board
Appendix 6(b) BSCB Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 There are no legal issues to consider.

9.0 Human resources considerations:

9.1 There are no human resources issues to consider.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 There are no equalities considerations.

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 There are no financial considerations – new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements will be delivered from the previously agreed LSCB budget.

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 There are no risk management considerations.

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 This update does not contravene any of the Council's core values, morals and beliefs.

14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

14.1 None

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None