

APPENDIX 6(a)



Partnership Agreement between the Blackpool Improvement Board and Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board

The Governance arrangements in place to deliver the 12 week Blackpool Children's Services Improvement plan.

Introduction

Blackpool Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted in November/December 2018. The report gave an overall effectiveness judgement of "inadequate". Whilst this inspection process did not directly involve the inspection of safeguarding partners who work with Children's Services, the final report makes significant comment about partnership engagement.

In particular, it makes two specific points. In the summary inspectors state:

"Strategic partnerships have not addressed key weakness effectively, including chronic neglect, which leads to poor outcomes for too many children in Blackpool". It goes on to say that ***"the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to work together to improve outcomes and protect children"*** needs to improve.

At section 37 under the section, "The impact of leaders on social; work practice with children and families is inadequate" the report states:

"BSCB is more closely aligned with the improvement board than it was, but attendance of key partners has been a constant challenge at both strategic s and further work is required to hold partners to account".

Clearly the role of the safeguarding partnership will be crucial in ensuring Blackpool Children's Services are able to improve and meet the requirements of at least a 'good' judgement from Ofsted.

Commissioners have been appointed by the Department for Education to oversee an improvement process. Commissioners are expected to make an initial assessment in June.

In order to deliver the required level of improvement Blackpool Children's Services have developed a 12 week improvement plan.

On Thursday 23rd April key partners engaged in a 'governance' meeting to discuss how partners would best be able to work together to ensure that Children's Services is properly supported, whilst continuing to fulfil the needs of their own agencies and the wider partnership of the safeguarding board.

This paper provides below a summary of the key ways in which the safeguarding partners will work together to achieve our aims and objectives.

Governance arrangements

Representatives from the police, CCG and Blackpool Victoria hospital were present at the meeting as well as the DCS, chair of the improvement board and chair of BSCB. Given the changes currently underway with regard to the BSCB it was agreed that the focus of the meeting would be on the way in which partners engage with the improvement board and how the work of that board will dovetail to that of the BSCB.

The following points have been agreed:

The Improvement Board

- The improvement board is responsible for ensuring the improvement plan is progressing.
- The improvement board is a multi-agency board that will focus on holding partners to account as well as monitoring the performance of Children's Social Care. It will monitor the partnership response to statutory child protection processes.
- Actions relating to partnership working, contained in the improvement plan, will be tasked to the chair of BSCB who will report to the improvement board on areas of progress and any reasons for delay.
- The chair of the improvement board will task the chair of the BSCB to resolve child protection issues involving safeguarding partners.
- It is essential that there is clarity in meeting structures to avoid duplication of effort.
- The chairs of the BSCB and improvement board will coordinate their meeting structures.
- Relevant agencies will ensure that attendance at the improvement board is at a "senior level".
- Improvement board members will ensure they are fully briefed prior to attendance, to ensure that they are able to hold each other to account in an effective manner.

The Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board

- BSCB will deliver multi-agency responses contained in the improvement plan.
- BSCB will focus on the areas of child protection which involve a multi-agency approach.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the improvement plan for Children's Services is a critical area of business, it was important that partnership work in other areas is not ignored. For example, work that is currently underway to improve the way in which the partnership responds to domestic abuse.
- Where work is to be undertaken by partners, the BSCB chair must ensure that these requests are SMART in nature. It needs to be: "*explicit; what is the 'Ask'?*".
- The BSCB will consider the current Early Help offer as part of its work along with issues of Neglect. Current BSCB priorities will remain in place.
- The BSCB will focus on the following priorities:
 - Multi-agency statutory child protection (in particular the areas highlighted at the improvement board).
 - Early Help
 - Neglect
 - Criminal exploitation
 - Domestic abuse

- The Awaken team
 - MASH
- The BSCB chair will ensure that the risks associated with the transition arrangements (moving to a pan Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership) are understood and mitigated.

Conclusion

This is a summary of the agreements made at the meeting of the 23rd April. Partners have confirmed that these governance arrangements are agreed.

This 'agreement' was finalised on 8th May 2019.