



Executive
14th November 2005

**Report from the Director of
Children & Families**

For Action and Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

**The establishment of a Local Safeguarding Children Board
in Brent.**

Forward Plan Ref: C&F05/06-022

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Children Act 2004 requires each top tier local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to replace the Area Child Protection Committee, by April 2006. This report informs members of the purpose of the Board, proposes a structure and asks members to agree that the Board is established from December 2005.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive agree to establish a LSCB in Brent from December 2005.
- 2.2 That the Executive agree to the Board structure described in this report.
- 2.3 That the Executive agree that the Brent LSCB have an independent chair and that responsibility for the selection of the chair is delegated to the Director of Children and Families.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Children Act, 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board, to be made up of representatives from the agencies and bodies which have regular contact with children or responsibilities for services to them in the local area.

3.2 The Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board will be the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in the London Borough of Brent will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what the agencies do.

3.3 The Department for Education and Skills has issued draft guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – Everyone's Business' to provide an opportunity for ACPC's and agencies to comment on proposals for the establishing of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. This draft guidance has been used as the basis for the detailed planning for the Brent Safeguarding Children Board. The final government guidance is due at the end of December 2005. The Safeguarding Children Board will review the structure and terms of reference of the Board following publication of the final guidance. A further report will be brought before the Executive if any changes to the structure, terms of reference or membership need to be made.

3.4 **Objectives of the Board:**

- a) To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the London Borough of Brent; and
- (b) To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of Board as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

3.5 **Differences between an LSCB and an ACPC**

An LSCB will have much in common with and retain many of the responsibilities of the ACPC and the core of its business will be to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The primary difference is that the LSCB has the responsibility to **ensure** the effectiveness of what is done by each agency to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also has a wider remit than the ACPC which includes the responsibility to prevent harm happening in the first place.

The LSCB will have a number of additional functions:

- An oversight of recruitment policies and procedures to recruit and supervise people who work with children

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered,
- A monitoring and evaluation role
- A requirement to ensure co-operation between Local Authorities when children move across boundaries
- To establish and implement child death review procedures for all children who die in the borough.

3.6 **Phasing of the Responsibilities of the Board**

The primary, core role of the LSCB is to ensure that work to protect children is properly co-ordinated and is effective. When this core business is secure, the LSCBs will extend its role to include the wider remit of safeguarding to include work to avoid harm from occurring to children in the first place. Progression to this wider remit will be considered in the yearly business planning process.

3.7 **Accountability of the Board**

The LCSB will be accountable through the chair of the Board to the Director of Children and Families and to the Lead Member for Children and Families.

3.8 The chair of the Board will keep the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership Board informed of the work of the Board.

3.9 As it is essential the LSCB is effective in communicating with all partner agencies, it will be the responsibility of each agency's representative on the Board to inform their agency of the work of the Board. Agencies will agree representation on the Board by means of a protocol agreed with the LSCB.

3.10 **Terms of Reference of the Board**

To achieve its objectives, the Safeguarding Children's board will:

1. Monitor the effectiveness of organisations' implementation of their duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
2. Ensure that information is available to children to know who they can contact when they have concerns about their own safety and welfare.
3. Develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority.
4. Develop and implement strategies to safeguard and promote the welfare of groups of children who are potentially more vulnerable than the general population, for example children living away from home, children who have run away from home, or children with disabilities.
5. Ensure that systems are in place to identify and support the safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered.

6. Develop and implement a training strategy to meet the training needs of staff across all agencies to work effectively together to safeguard and promote the welfare of child who may be at risk of significant harm.
7. Develop standards for the recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children and monitor their implementation and compliance. This will be informed by the findings of the Bichard Report.
8. Ensure that systems are in place for all agencies for the investigation of allegations of breaches of safeguarding practices concerning persons working with children and monitor compliance with the procedures.
9. Establish means of communication with the communities in the London Borough of Brent to ensure that issues of safeguarding are understood by all communities and to provide the opportunity for those communities' issues to be addressed by the LSCB.
10. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the Local Authority and board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve.
11. Participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account.
12. Undertake serious cases reviews as required by chapter 6 of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
13. Develop and analyse performance indicators relevant to safeguarding children in Brent.
14. Agree the reporting of management information from agencies to provide an overview of safeguarding activity within the area of the Safeguarding Children Board.
15. Implement child death review groups prior to the statutory deadline of April 2008.

3.11 Board Membership

Statutory membership

The following organisations are required to co-operate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and will have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions:

- the Chief Officer of Police
- the Probation Board

- The Youth Offending Team
- Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trust
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts
- the Connexions Service
- CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service)

3.12 **Other Members**

- Domestic Violence Forum
- Local authority legal services
- Drug and Alcohol misuse services
- Representative of Voluntary Organisations
- Housing

3.13 The core membership of the Board is being finalised and will be agreed before the first meeting. All agencies were represented at a senior level on the ACPC and the core membership of the LSCB will include a significant number who served on the ACPC. This will give continuity and retain expertise. In addition representatives have been invited from agencies not represented on the ACPC, for example the Drug and Alcohol Misuse Service, voluntary organisations and the Domestic Violence Forum.

3.14 Brent ACPC has had an independent chair for 3 years. This has enhanced the independence and reputation of ACPC and it is proposed that the LSCB retains an independent chair to be appointed by the Director of Children and Families. It is further proposed that the Assistant Director for Social Care in the Children and Families Department become the vice chair and that the accountability of the board is ensured through regular meetings of an LSCB steering group of the Director of Children and Families, The LSCB Independent Chair, the vice chair, the LSCB Co-ordinator and the Lead Member for Children and Families. The steering group will be chaired by the Director of Children & Families.

3.15 **Board Links**

The Board will ensure that the following agencies are able to request items to be placed on the Board agenda and participate in sub-committees of the Board as appropriate:

Head Teachers

Dental Health Services
Pharmacists
Ambulance service
Leisure Services
Sports Services
Sexual Health Services
MAPPA
The Coroner
The Local Family Justice Council
Local Criminal Justice Board
Witness Support Services

3.16 **Consultation Groups**

The Board will use existing consultation groups to seek the views of residents in the London Borough of Brent and to be informed of their issues in taking forward the safeguarding agenda. Consultation groups will be established for services users and for faith communities.

3.17 **Sub Committees**

To take forward the work of the Board, a sub committee structure will be established. The sub-committees of the Board will be:

- Policy and Procedures
- Training
- Prevention
- Serious Case Review Group
- Safety in Employment
- Monitoring and Inspection

3.18 **Business Planning Process**

The Board will develop an annual Business Plan. This will review the work of the board and identify the work agenda for the Board and its sub-committees for the forthcoming year. The budget for the year will be established in the business planning process and will take into account the financial planning cycle of contributing agencies.

3.19 The Board will have the responsibility for the construction of the business plan, but will ensure that sub-committees, consultation groups and other link agencies will have the opportunity to influence the content of the plan.

3.20 The business plan of the Board will be a public document.

3.21 **Safeguarding Children Board Budget**

All agencies that are statutory members of the Board share the responsibility for the funding of the Board. The Board budget will be established by the annual business plan.

3.22 Implementation Date

The Brent Safeguarding Children Board will take over the responsibilities of the Brent Area Child Protection Committee and it is proposed that the Board will work to the above terms of reference from the 6th December 2005.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The effective functioning of the Board will require:

An independent chair

A Safeguarding Children Board coordinator

A Safeguarding Trainer

Administrative support for the Board and its sub committees

A budget to commission audit and inspection

A budget for prevention.

A budget for the funding of Safeguarding Training.

4.2 The estimate cost of the Brent Safeguarding Children Board in £2006/7 is £170,000. The ACPC has agreed this is the level of funding needed for the LSCB but partner agencies have not yet formally agreed their contributions for the year 2006/7. The guidance makes it clear that the member organisations share responsibility for determining how the necessary resources will be provided and the major portion will be shared between the Council and PCT.

4.3 The Councils contribution of £79,000 has already been identified and includes the existing contribution to the ACPC of £22,000. If the contributions of partner agencies cannot be agreed at the level indicated then it will be necessary to adjust the LSCB expenditure to reflect this.

4.4 The additional cost of the LSCB in 2005/6 will be a quarter year of the annual Salary of the LSCB coordinator (approx. £14,000) which will be met from the Children and Families Department budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 S13 of the Children Act 2004 requires the Authority to establish a LSCB and there must be one in place by 1 April 2006. The Dfes is currently consulting on Regulations and Guidance which will set out the responsibilities of the LSCB in more detail.

5.2 S11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on key people and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; these bodies include local authorities, the police, the health service and Youth Offending Teams amongst others. This duty complements the duty placed by section 175 of the Education Act 2002 on Local Education Authorities and the governing

bodies of both schools and further education institutions to make arrangements to carry out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- 5.3 The LSCB has a key role in co-ordinating the effectiveness of what is done by each of the Board partners individually and collectively for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local authority area.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Board and its sub-committees will ensure through its structure, membership and working practices that the diverse needs of children and their families in Brent will be fully taken account of in the policies of the Board and in the Board actions to ensure the cooperation of Board members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area.

- 6.2 The development of consultation groups to link with the Board's structure will provide the Board with an opportunity to be informed of perspectives on safeguarding from groups in the community and for issues of special importance to those groups to be understood and discussed fully.

- 6.3 The Safeguarding Board has a responsibility to ensure that the safety and welfare of the most vulnerable children are addressed. This will include ensuring that the safeguarding needs of disabled children are understood and addressed.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 A Safeguarding Coordinator, a Safeguarding Trainer and Safeguarding Administrative Assistant are being recruited to undertake the tasks required. Office accommodation will be required for these three posts and has provisionally been identified.

Background Papers

Children Act 2004

'Working Together to Safeguard Children – Everyone's Business' – DfEs

Contact Officers

Janet Palmer, Assistant Director Social Care, Children and Families Department

Director of Children and Families

John Christie