

**BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**SAFEGUARDING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**14<sup>th</sup> JULY 2015**

1. **Present:** Councillor J Worton (Chair), Carr, Davies, Duerden, Frost, Hampson, Pourali, Saunders, Wraith.

Apologies for absence were received from K. Morritt, Parent Governor Representative in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

2. **Declarations of pecuniary and non pecuniary interest**

During the meeting it was noted that Cllr Wraith is the Chair of the licensing panel.

3. **Previous minutes**

Members requested an update whether any other local authorities are currently using the Forge for accommodation.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Annual Report**

The Chair welcomed the witness to the meeting, which included:

- Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, BSCB
- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director, People Directorate, BMBC
- Mel John – Ross, Service Director, Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding, BMBC
- Sarah Sinclair, BSCB Manager, BMBC
- Deborah Mahmood, Deputy Chief Superintendent, Barnsley District, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
- Brigid Reid, Chief Nurse, Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Sharon Cooke, Head of Children and Family Social Care, BMBC
- Councillor Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson – People (Safeguarding)

Sue Fiennes, Independent Chair of both the Safeguarding Children Board and the Adult Safeguarding Board in Sheffield attended the meeting in an advisory capacity to the Scrutiny panel.

B. Dyson gave an introduction in respect of the work being done by BSCB and highlighted the improvements that have been made following Ofsted’s (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) inspection in 2014 to ‘review the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board’.

Nationally there has been an increase in concern regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). BSCB have completed an action plan and have been through both the Jay and Casey reports noting actions required in Barnsley to provide reassurance. It was highlighted a number of resources have been directed to tackle CSE for example additional officer support from SYP, a specialist Social Worker has been employed as well as the move to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

It was also noted that the profile for CSE in Barnsley is different to that which occurred in Rotherham.

During the last year, 3 Serious Case Reviews have been commissioned by BSCB to identify where lessons can be learned. It was also noted that the BSCB sub-committees are working well and are chaired by some of our partner agencies.

Members proceeded to ask the following questions:

- i) How do you ensure that the voice of our children and young people is heard by BSBC and influences its work?

The group were advised that meetings are held in schools and at the end of these, discussions are then held with the children where they can raise any concerns they may have, such as whether they feel safe in their environment. There are known places where children feel vulnerable; these include the interchange within the town centre and also Mandella Gardens. Internet safety is continually promoted; there is a Task and Finish Group (TFG) chaired by the Principle of Barnsley College that is currently looking into this. An additional TFG are currently looking at the issue of bullying.

Meetings are also held with the Children in Care (CiC) Council and they are given the opportunity to ask any questions relating to services to senior officers from BMBC.

Members highlighted that on p9 of the BSCB Annual Report, a date needs amending regarding the Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Panel (CSEM).

- ii) Are there any concerns regarding taxis and licensing?

Members were advised that work in relation to taxis and licensing in Barnsley had been reviewed; however we have not had the same issues in Barnsley as in Rotherham. It was highlighted that taxi drivers from Rotherham have applied for licences within the Barnsley area.

The Council is working with colleagues in the region to ensure that intelligence and good practice is shared. As a result of this, improvements have been made to our internal processes. A representative from licensing attends the CSE strategic group and we ensure there is cross-agency liaison.

There is a Corporate Programme with the Senior Management Team at the Council that is studying the implications of the report written by Louise Casey following the inspection of Rotherham MBC. There is liaison between partner agencies, other local authorities and hotels within the Borough. Schools have undertaken specific training with regards to CSE; also, procedures have been revised for children who are reported missing in light of revised guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).

- iii) What is the profile of CSE in Barnsley and what is being done to try and reduce any incidents occurring?

It was explained to Members that the perpetrators in Barnsley tend to be males aged 17-25 and the victims are young girls who are in their early teens. This would be classed by the NSPCC in their lowest level category 1 out of 4 and would be termed as there being 'inappropriate relationships'.

There are measures in place to help young girls which includes helping them to remain within the education system and to raise their self-esteem. This also helps with the reduction of unauthorised absences from school and teenage pregnancies. Within Barnsley District Police there are 3 newly appointed 'Young Person's Officers' who will regularly attend all schools, apart from Horizon Community College who have their own support workers.

- iv) Is there any evidence to support the idea of young girls being more vulnerable to being a victim of CSE if there is the absence of a father figure within the family home?

The group were advised that if there is a parental breakdown, young people are encouraged to maintain regular contact with both parents, as long as this is safe to do.

It is widely recognised that young girls who have been brought up within a strong family unit are more resilient and therefore less likely to accept any inappropriate attention from older males.

The service acknowledged that the role of key males within young people's lives is an area they could explore within BSCB audits.

- v) Page 7 of the BCSB Annual Report 2014-15, identifies a higher than national average of teenage conception rates; is it the more vulnerable young girls who are becoming pregnant and what is being done regarding this?

Members were advised there are significant issues with teenage pregnancies within certain areas of the Borough.

BSCB takes a strong interest in teenage pregnancy rates but this action sits within the Children's Trust Executive Group (TEG). There needs to be a change in the cultural attitude to teenage pregnancy across the Borough. It was highlighted that the greatest mitigation to teenage pregnancy is attendance and progress at school; therefore we need to work with our secondary schools to continue to improve this and identify those at risk.

- vi) The potential closure of Children's Centres in the Borough will affect our Early Help Offer, what will be done to mitigate this?

The group were advised that due to the unprecedented reduction in budget the Council was unable to maintain current services; therefore as a result of the consultation, proposals are being developed. Members were advised that services need to target the most vulnerable therefore proactive work is taking place to help those families who find it difficult to go to open access services. Members were advised there is an adequate supply of day care provision for families within the Borough; therefore it is proposing to close the Council's day care service unless it must act as the provider as a last resort. There is still a lot of work to be done but services need to target the 'hard to reach'.

- vii) What evidence is available to demonstrate that a shift to early help and intervention has been embedded across partners?

The committee were advised that the shift to an early help offer has not yet been fully embedded but services are on a journey to achieve this. A lot of work has been done

with other agencies to help them understand service thresholds. Also, we are trying to make sure professionals maintain high standards with regards to their expectations from families, for example to avoid children attending school without being toilet trained.

viii) Are all key stakeholders on board and engaged in the work of BSCB?

The Members were advised BSCB is very active, currently there are thirty seven people who are involved and there is good engagement from partners. There have been some difficulties with regards to consistent attendance from some partners however this should now have been addressed. Within the sub groups it has been harder to get representation from all agencies; however sub-committee chairs have challenged this and can also escalate this to the Board.

ix) Within p29 of the report why are only a few protected characteristics mentioned with regards to equality, diversity and participation, also what resources are available to front line staff with regards to dealing with families with complications such as faith and culture and how you consult with them?

The group was advised that individual agencies undertake their own consultations with service users, not the BSCB itself. For example we recently had a presentation at the Board regarding how one of the agencies had engaged with the Roma Gypsy Traveller community. One of the Police Protection Unit (PPU) supervisors did a presentation on CSE and looked at the barriers with regards to reporting mechanisms for different communities.

Organisations have people on them who are Safeguarding leads, for example in schools. These people act as the central contact and issues can then be escalated to the relevant agencies and BSCB.

Work is also done to commission interpreters so that we can have detailed and appropriate discussions with service users. Equality and diversity issues are considered as part of our assessments for young people so that help can be given regarding any specific issues.

x) P7 of the BSCB Annual Report 2014-15 confirms Barnsley's teenage pregnancy rate is 40.9 per 1000 of the population, are pregnancies for those aged 16 and under treated differently to those aged 17 and above, for example to determine whether the young girls are victims of CSE?

The committee were advised there is a dedicated teenage pregnancy midwife who specialises in providing support for young mums. Prior to the birth an 'Early Help' checklist is completed to ascertain the help that will be needed. Those aged 16 and under are treated differently to those who are older and any young person aged 16 and under would be assessed as a person 'at risk' of CSE and we would work with the police as required.

xi) With regards to specialist support with translation services, are we also helping families to access classes where English is not their first language?

Members were advised that as part of Children's Social Care services, work is specifically done to look at families' integration into their local community. This helps to avoid isolation and we can encourage participation in adult learning. We also have

transient populations for example roadside travellers who it is difficult to encourage engagement with services as they may only be here for a very limited time.

We know that it is not good practice in safeguarding work to rely on family members to interpret conversations, therefore we employ translation services. The population of Barnsley is changing which we're aware of; therefore we will do what we can as services to respond to service user needs.

xii) How effective are the relationships between BSCB and other Boards?

It was advised that a framework has been developed regarding how BSCB works with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and TEG. BSCB always ask the question of whether any issues should be referred to other boards, for example the issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was escalated from BSCB to TEG.

xiii) What plans are in place to develop more robust commissioning arrangements with regards to Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)?

The group was advised that procedures have been tightened and the improved quality of the recent reports has been recognised. However it was also noted that good providers are in short supply with regards to undertaking SCR's, therefore this will continue to be a challenge for the Board.

xiv) How do you encourage challenge at Board meetings and how has the Board responded to the Ofsted recommendations?

Members were advised the Board welcomed the Ofsted inspection and continues to encourage both challenge and open debate. Following the initial inspection there were seven areas of improvement identified along with a number of strengths. The Board is proud of the improvements that have been made, which were recognised in the second inspection by Ofsted. The DfE were pleased with the progress Barnsley had made and could see this was continuing. As a result, in the most recent inspection, the Ofsted judgement was raised to 'requires improvement'.

The Board appreciates that making progress following the Ofsted inspections ensures they are embracing the challenge to improve children's lives within the Borough. At the next inspection, the Board is aspiring to achieve a rating of at least 'good' and advised they would send Members the list of areas noted by Ofsted in the 2014 inspection as 'requiring improvement'.

xv) How confident are you in the Board's strategies and action plans and in achieving a higher Ofsted inspection rating?

The group were advised that whilst the Board has continued to improve and is in a better place in terms of processes and systems, it equally recognises that it is a human system therefore things can go wrong and no cast-iron guarantees can be given. We have a Multi-agency approach which helps to drive service improvement and additional resources have been put in place within organisations where possible.

Better use is now made of the data the Board receives; strategic leaders are going out to front-line services so that we have better sight of practice and where issues may need to be addressed. There is now a better escalation process when issues occur

and we learn from these. There is a significant amount of good practice in the Borough; we now need to make sure this is consistent.

- xvi) How effective are performance management arrangements? To what extent is BSCB effective at holding partners to account? Is there genuine challenge amongst professionals?

The Members were advised that previously there were sixty nine performance indicators that the Board considered which has now been reduced to fifteen which enables their work to be much more focused and effective. The Performance, Audit & Quality Assurance Sub-committee (PAQA) go through all the performance indicators and escalate key concerns to the Board. Quality audits are also undertaken as well as the monitoring of specific actions plans e.g. CSE.

Respectful challenge is encouraged with everyone being advised and reminded at the start of Board meetings to raise any questions or concerns they might have. Board members advised that over the last 2 years there has been a shift, with challenge occurring at all levels and the route of escalation being used. Challenge and follow-up of issues also takes place outside of Board meetings to ensure actions are carried out.

The committee suggested that within BSCB's Annual Report there should be more information on the Board's Quality Audits, including what they have found and how best practice has been put in place, demonstrating the link between data and actions taken. It was also suggested that a glossary is included regarding the acronyms used.

The Chair thanked all the witnesses for their attendance and their helpful contribution and declared the meeting closed.

### **Actions**

- a) Members to receive an update as to whether any other local authorities are currently using the Forge for accommodation.
- b) BSCB to amend date on p9 of the Annual Report.
- c) BSCB to explore the role of key males within young people's lives within their audits.
- d) BSCB to send Members the list of areas requiring improvement following the Ofsted inspection in 2014.
- e) BSCB to include more detailed information in the Annual Report with regards to Quality Audits including how data has been utilised to undertake actions, as well as how best practice has been put in place.
- f) Members recommend that a Glossary is included as part of BSCB's Annual Report.