

BSCB Annual Report 2016-17 – Executive Summary

The BSCB annual report 2016/17 is made up of 7 overall sections described below:

1. Foreword from the Independent Chair

The annual report includes a foreword from the Independent Chair which notes that in 2016/17 the BSCB prioritised work on:

- Safeguarding front doors
- Basic child protection practice
 - Core groups
 - Initial child protection conferences
 - Neglect
- Adolescent risk
 - Child sexual exploitation.

The Independent Chair's foreword also sets out the statutory requirements of LSCBs and lists some of its achievements for 2016/17, amongst them the review of the multi-agency thresholds, the BSCB training programme and the BSCB serious incident process. At the same time, the Independent Chair also describes how the DfE-funded innovation, *Back to Practice*, was implemented. The focus on practice and using the Learning Hub to triangulate information from a wide variety of sources increased the collective understanding of safeguarding across the partnership. The Learning Hub analysed information and made recommendations on improvement to the Quality and Effectiveness Board. As a result of the *Back to Practice* model, the following successes were noted:

- A shared understanding of what good safeguarding looks like
- An improvement in work with teenagers evidenced through the work of the weekly missing meeting and the BSCB case file analysis
- An improved initial response from children's social care evidenced through positive feedback from professionals from different agencies at Learning Hub workshops
- Single agency and multi-agency training is leading to a more competent and confident workforce evidenced by evaluation of training events.

Challenges and priorities for 2017/18 are also described including the following:

- Implementing the actions agreed by the Quality and Effectiveness Board and ensuring these have a positive impact on practice
- Planning a children and young people's Learning Hub event before the end of the 2017/18 financial year as part of the Keeping Yourself and Your Friends Safe campaign
- Ensuring consistent good quality basic safeguarding practice across the partnership
- Responding to adolescent risk.

2. Responsibilities of the Bexley Safeguarding Children Board

The 2016/17 annual report notes that as a minimum, LSCBs are required to undertake the tasks outlined in the table below. The table notes where these items are covered in the 2016/17 annual report:

Requirement	Where covered in annual report
Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help.	Section 5
Assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations as set out in Working Together chapter 2.	Covered in the work outlined in sections 5 and 6.
Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons learned.	Sections 4.3, 5 and 6.3
Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.	Sections 6.1 and 6.2

The annual report is intended for professionals in partner agencies and voluntary organisations as well as others who have an interest in the welfare of children and young people. This section of the annual report goes on to outline the requirements for LSCB annual reports according to Working Together. BSCB membership for 2016/17 is noted in Appendix 1 of the annual report. Appendix 2 of the annual report sets out the attendance record of agencies at the Learning Hub events during 2016/17. Appendix 3 details the membership of the sub and task groups which met in 2016/17.

The national review of LSCBs and the Children and Social Work Bill are also set out in this section of the annual report. This includes an overview of the Alan Wood Review of the role and function of LSCBs in 2015 and the Government's response in May 2016. During 2016/17 the Children and Social Work Bill made its way through the legislative process with little parliamentary comment on the clauses relating to LSCBs. The Bill was passed in May 2017 and became the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

3. The Bexley context

This section of the annual report includes some key facts on the London Borough of Bexley including information taken from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment from September 2016. There is also an analysis of some key safeguarding data including referrals to social care, numbers of children in need and looked after children, children with a child protection plan (CPP), and the respective categories of abuse recorded. Information about each of the following agencies is included here:

- Bexley Council
- Bexley Voluntary Services Council (BVSC)
- Metropolitan Police
- The NHS in Bexley
- Bexley schools & colleges.

There is also a description of Signs of Safety which is the approach which underpins safeguarding practice across the safeguarding partnership in Bexley. Finally this section notes the details of the *Back to Practice* innovation.

4. Back to Practice

The purpose and objectives of the *Back to Practice* innovation are described in this section of the annual report. The 3 key objectives are as follows:

- To ensure the BSCB has a direct line of sight to front-line practice
- To improve reflection and learning from practice
- To make sure the BSCB co-ordinates and drives through quality and effectiveness improvements.

The *Back to Practice* approach is based on an action learning model. Front line practice drives the model. There is reflection on both single agency and multi-agency practice in the Learning Hub which also analysis and triangulates information from a variety of sources. The Learning Hub makes an assessment of the quality of practice including what is working well and recommendations on improvements. Recommendations are considered by the Quality and Effectiveness Board which has responsibility for deciding on actions. The “loop” is completed by improvements being implemented and making an impact on practice.

This section of the annual report also details the work of the Learning Hub and the arrangements for the BSCB (Quality and Effectiveness Board and full Partnership Board). The development of a multi-agency cohort of Safeguarding Champions is also described. Champions are crucial in ‘feeding in’ information on safeguarding children and young people and in disseminating learning through their service/agency. The annual report notes that an evaluation of *Back to Practice* is planned.

5. Effectiveness of safeguarding in Bexley

This section of the annual report covers the safeguarding highlights and area for development as noted by the following key partners and specialist teams:

- Metropolitan police
- Health agencies
- Children’s social care
- Youth offending team (YOT)
- Targeted youth service (TYS)
- Inclusion team
- Special educational needs (SEN).

The report also sets out the work co-ordinated through the BSCB on the following safeguarding priorities:

- Revising and disseminating the multi-agency thresholds (*Effective support* document)
- Front doors
- Basic child protection practice
- Adolescent risk
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Neglect
- Other issues including domestic violence, private fostering and early help.

6. Learning and improvement

This section of the annual report contains details about the review of training provision undertaken in 2016/17 and the training which took place. In January 2016, the BSCB agreed a training programme from April to September 2016 and asked for a review of training functions to take place. In May 2016, the Quality and Effectiveness Board considered an initial report on the review.

A further report to the BSCB Partnership Board in November 2016 provided an update on the training review activity and on the BSCB training which had taken place from April to September 2016. The programme had included two basic safeguarding awareness courses and two advanced safeguarding courses as well as courses on female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, self-harm and suicide, substance misuse and disabled children and safeguarding. 271 participants took part in these training events.

There were no Serious Case Reviews in Bexley in 2016-17. The Serious Incident sub-group met 5 times in 2016/17. During the year the group considered learning from a number of cases and also reviewed the purpose and role of the Serious Incident Group and the BSCB Serious Incident process. During 2016 the Bexley Safeguarding Adults Board commissioned a Safeguarding Adults Review. Due to the cross-sector themes and learning the independent chairs of the BSCB and BSAB kept in close contact throughout the review process.

A summary of the number of audits, case analysis and observations which took place in 2016/17 can be found below:

Item	Number
Observation of core groups	7 core groups
Core Group plans considered by the Learning Hub	2 cases
Multi-agency domestic abuse audit	6 cases
Multi-agency case work considered by the Domestic Abuse Peer Review	8 cases
Adolescent risk case analysis by Independent Chair and Practice Review manager	32 cases
Other cases reviewed and analysed by the Practice Review manager	80 cases
In depth case analysis by the Serious Incidents sub-group	10 cases
Total of 7 observations and 138 cases	

Feedback from a Section 11 peer challenge highlighting strengths and areas for development was reported to the BSCB in July 2016. The annual report also noted the work started on revising the multi-agency data set.

The annual report includes some brief information on the work of the Child Death Overview Panel and the work of the LADO who is responsible for investigating allegations concerning persons who work with children. There are separate CDOP and LADO annual reports.

7. BSCB Governance

The governance section of the annual report notes the BSCB budget for 2016/17, lists the BSCB meetings which took place during 2016/17, describes some key communication methods employed by the BSCB (including plans for the Keeping Yourself and Your Friend Safe campaign) and summarises the content and format of the BSCB Development Plan for 2017/18.