Contents

**Introduction** 2

**Chapter 1: About Bexley** 3

**Chapter 2: Role & Scope of Bexley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)** 4

- What is the purpose of the BSCB? 4
- What are the main roles for the Bexley Safeguarding Children Board 5
- Membership and structure of BSCB 5
- Key Roles 6
- Key relationships 6
- Financial arrangements 7

**Chapter 3: How safe are our children and young people in Bexley?** 8

- Children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) 8
- Children who are ‘Looked After’ 9

**Chapter 4: Progress in key strategic areas 2012/13** 10

- Focus on Child Protection 10
- Increasing scrutiny, quality and effectiveness 10
- Improved governance and accountability arrangements 10
- Strengthen engagement of BSCB with organisations in Bexley 10
- Update on multi-agency training 11
- Strategic priorities for 2013/15 11

**Chapter 5: What happens when a child dies or is seriously harmed in Bexley?** 12

- Child Deaths Reviews in Bexley 2012/13 12
- Serious Case Reviews in Bexley 2012/13 13
- Conclusion: Where next for child protection in Bexley? 14

**Appendix A: Membership of BSCB** 16

**Appendix B: Structure** 18

**Appendix C: Budget Statement 2012/13** 19
Introduction

In May 2012, an independent review was completed into the child protection system across the whole of the country. In response, the government has stated that Local Safeguarding Children Boards have a “unique, system-wide, role to play in protecting children and young people”.

In Bexley, we have worked hard over the past year to improve the ability of all of Bexley’s statutory agencies and local communities to protect and promote the wellbeing of children in the borough.

Bexley’s Children’s Social Care Ofsted inspection report of safeguarding and looked after children raised concerns about the effectiveness of the statutory partnership to protect children in Bexley. It was critical of BSCB for not holding agencies to account.

There has been significant progress over the last 12 months in consolidating the safeguarding partnership, through three key areas – clarifying the BSCB’s governance arrangements; ensuring that all professionals working with children understand what are known as thresholds, eligibility and assessment processes for child protection support; and the development of a new quality assurance framework. We are now much better placed to know what works well in protecting children in Bexley and the areas that still need improving.

There has been substantial activity to establish a robust partnership framework for child protection in Bexley to ensure overall scrutiny of performance during 2012/13. However, over the year, we have realised that further challenge is required if all agencies working with children are able to evidence how they protect all children all of the time.

Bexley currently has 218 children subject to a plan. We also know from audits we have undertaken, looking at referrals into Children’s Social Care, that different professionals working with children have different expectations about what constitutes a child at risk. As a result of our analysis of different approaches in Bexley, we think that sometimes agencies are slow to share information about children at risk. This means it is not always possible to consider what would be the best support for a child, young person and their family/carers at any given time. This is an area that BSCB will be retaining a focus on over the coming months.

This is my last report as the board chair. Barbara Trevanion has been appointed as the new chair and I am certain that her extensive knowledge, skills and experience will provide the board with the leadership required to successfully progress current and new challenges over the coming months and years.

Brian Boxall
Independent Chair
31 March 2013
Chapter 1: About Bexley

Bexley is the 7th largest London borough by area, covering an area of 23 square miles. Situated in the south east of London, it has common borders with the London Borough of Bromley to the south and the Royal Borough of Greenwich to the west. Across the River Thames, to the north, it borders the London Borough of Havering, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and a small boundary with the unitary authority Thurrock in Essex to the north east. To the east, it borders the Dartford borough in Kent. Bexley borough is within the Thames Gateway, an area designated as a national priority for urban regeneration.

There are 60,043 children and young people living in Bexley (2011 Census), making up 25.9% of the recorded population of 231,997.

Deprivation

The Index of deprivation ranks Bexley at 221st of the 354 local authority districts across England and Wales, and 25th of the 33 London Boroughs overall. Bexley has three wards which fall within the top 20% of most deprived nationally: Thamesmead East, North End and Erith. Of the borough’s population, 15.4% (35,713) reside in these wards. Many residents in these areas experience similar challenges to those faced by those in many inner London areas, such as higher levels of teenage pregnancy; higher levels of unemployment and worklessness (borough wide unemployment rates are 2.4% on average compared to a London average of 3.2% - October 2013 figures). These three wards have the highest unemployment rates in Bexley, all being above the borough average, with families having fewer opportunities, lower incomes and higher levels of child and family poverty - increasingly due to low pay in-work poverty. Thamesmead East also has the greatest proportion of social housing in the borough (38.9% of all dwellings in the ward).
The Bexley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is the partnership body responsible for co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of Bexley services to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people. The Board is made up of senior representatives from all the main agencies and organisations in Bexley concerned with child welfare.

**What is the purpose of the BSCB?**

The Bexley Safeguarding Children Board was created on 1 April 2006 in line with the Children Act of 2004, which introduced Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) for England and Wales.

A major undertaking of the BCSB is that it expects all statutory agencies to be on the same page when it comes to looking after the safety and wellbeing of children in Bexley. This is what we mean when we say the BSCB promotes a ‘multi-agency’ approach.

At the same time, the BSCB is responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to make certain that the services provided for children and young people in Bexley are effective and actually make a difference. The effectiveness of BSCB relies upon its ability to champion the safeguarding agenda through exercising an independent voice.

The diagram shows the range of organisations that participate and are represented within the BSCB.

LSCBs were set up to strengthen the ability of local authorities to effectively protect children and young people by promoting shared accountability, generating learning from practice, and monitoring the effectiveness of work with children and their families (DFES, 2007; DFE, 2011).

The Bexley Safeguarding Children Board provides a vital link in the chain between various organisational efforts, both statutory and voluntary, to protect children and young people in Bexley. Our aim is to ensure that all these efforts work effectively in co-ordination so that children and their families experience a harmonious and ‘joined up’ service.

BSCB is also responsible for raising awareness of child protection issues in Bexley so that everybody in the community can play a role in making our borough a safer place for children and young people to grow up. Our message is that protecting children from harm really is everyone’s business.
The objectives of a LSCB as set out in the Children Act 2004 are:

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 authority by which it is established; and

b) To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for these purposes

(Children Act 2004 s14)

What are the main roles for the Bexley Safeguarding Children Board?

The roles for the BSCB include the following:

- Developing policies, standards and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by LBB, Bexley Police, Bexley NHS, Bexley Probation Trust and Bexley schools, both collectively and individually
- Recommending areas and priorities for the commissioning of children's services
- Raising awareness of, and communicating, child protection issues to individuals and organisations
- Establishing and carrying out a review in cases where a child has died or has been seriously harmed in order to advise on lessons that can be learned (known as Serious Case Reviews)
- Ensuring the provision of single agency and multi-agency training on safeguarding to correspond with local needs

Membership and structure of BSCB

This section contains information about who is involved on the board and how it is organised.

Attendance

Regular and consistent attendance at meetings is necessary and attendance is monitored throughout the year. BSCB expects an attendance rate of no less than 80% for partners – Police, Local Authority, Probation Trust, Youth Offending Service, Bexley Care Trust, NHS Foundation Trusts. BSCB met four times in the last year.

Analysis of the data for 2012-13 indicates that membership attendance is variable. Attendance by the Designated Nurse for Child Protection, Primary reps and BSCB staff is exemplary. Attendance by Children's Services representatives, Youth Offending Services, Early Help and Prevention Service and Schools and Colleges is good. Other members appear to struggle to attend with the optimal frequency for a variety of reasons. The Chair remains committed to meet with agencies who struggle to meet their commitment to attend BSCB.

Attendance at sub-groups is much more variable, with other priorities encroaching on agency's time. Budget cuts and service reviews undertaken in 2012/13 have begun to impact on the attendance of some partner agencies and attendance at sub-groups.

BSCB has three tiers of activity:

1. **Main Board**

The statutory membership of an LSCB is set out in Section 13(3) of the Children Act 2004 and in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, Chapter 3. Member organisations are required to co-operate with the Local Authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and have a shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions. LSCB members should have a strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their respective organisations. They should be able to speak for their organisation with authority, commit their organisation on policy and practice matters, and hold their organisation to account.

A full list of BSCB’s membership for 2012-13 is available in Appendix A.

2. **The Executive Board**

The Executive body is made up of senior representatives from the key member agencies. The Executive has strategic oversight of all Board activity and takes the lead on developing and driving the implementation of the Board’s main activities and ‘Business Plan’. It is also the body responsible for holding to account the work of sub-groups and their chairs.

3. **Sub-groups**

The purpose of BSCB sub-groups is to tackle the various areas of concern to the BSCB on a more targeted and thematic basis. The sub-groups report to the executive board and are ultimately accountable to the main Bexley Safeguarding Children Board.
BSCB has continued developing its support and sub-group arrangements over the last year, specifically to respond to the Safeguarding and Looked After Children improvement notice issued by the Department for Education following the inadequate Ofsted Inspection in July 2012.

A diagram of the structure of BSCB and its sub groups is available in Appendix B.

**Key roles**

**Independent Chair**

All LSCBs appoint an Independent Chair who can bring expertise and a clear guiding hand to the Board, to make sure that the LSCB fulfils its roles effectively. The Independent Chair also frees up the board members to participate on an equal footing, without any single agency having the added influence of chairing the Board.

The Independent Chair, Brain Boxall, has now been in place since July 2010 and his role is to provide oversight, accountability and challenge to the work of BSCB.

**Director of Children’s Services**

The Director of Education and Social Care is required to sit on the main Board of BSCB as this is a pivotal role in the provision of education and children’s social care within the Local Authority. This post is held by Mark Charters and he has a responsibility to make sure that the BSCB functions effectively and liaises closely with the Independent Chair, who keeps him updated on progress.

**Lead Member**

The Lead Member for Children is the name given to the Councillor elected locally with delegated responsibility from the Council for making sure that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities to safeguard children and young people. In Bexley, Cllr Katie Perrior holds this position. Cllr Perrior contributes to the BSCB as a ‘participating observer’. This means that she takes part in the discussion, asks questions and seeks clarity, but is not part of the decision-making process.

**Key relationships**

During 2012/13 Bexley agencies have been subject to major public sector reform – particularly the NHS – and communication lines sometimes change. It’s essential that the management boards of each statutory agency in Bexley cement a close connection with the Safeguarding Children Board and invest in its work.

**Children and Young People’s Partnership**

The Children and Young People’s Partnership (CYPP) receives the BSCB annual report. The BSCB holds the CYPP to account to ensure they develop the services that are needed based on the recommendations the BSCB makes. In Bexley, the CYPP reports directly to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

“Partners in Bexley are fully committed to protecting and safeguarding all of the borough’s children. We all discharge this responsibility within our specific agencies, but come together in the BSCB to help, guide and scrutinise all areas of the borough’s care for children, learning from good practice and areas where we could have done better. A key cornerstone of our partnership is to create strong learning culture within Bexley, that moves beyond blame and into continuous improvement, through co-operation, collaboration and support.”

– Mark Charters. Director of Education and Social Care for the London Borough of Bexley October 2013
The Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a new structure, which came into being in April 2013, following the formal approval of new legislation by Government. This Board is concerned with services for both adults and children and is responsible for co-ordinating the efforts of the local authority and the NHS for the whole population.

At this stage the relationship between the BSCB and the new Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is still emerging and it is certain that there will need to be a clear and well-defined relationship.

As the HWB will be interested in the services to the whole population, including adults and the elderly, BSCB must ensure that the needs of vulnerable children are kept in focus.

New health arrangements

As a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the arrangements for the local commissioning of health (NHS) services have changed. From 1 April 2013 a new organisation ‘The Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group’ (CCG) commenced its work. The Bexley CCG will be an important contributor to the BSCB, as the provision of services to support children, young people and families is a vital part of their commissioning responsibilities.

Financial arrangements

During 2012/13 contributions from partners remained steady at £133,550. Additional income from legal fee contributions and training income amounted to £5,400, giving total income for the LSCB of £138,950. Expenditure for the year totalled £169,019, which gave a net total expenditure (excess of expenditure over contributions and income for the year) of £30,069. This was funded by a reduction in the LSCB general surplus balance of £30,069, which left just £19,420 available in balances to contribute towards future years’ general expenditure.

The LSCB also holds two other balances totalling £37,610 (Guaranteed Surplus and Munro funding) but these are currently considered to be ring-fenced and so not part of general balances.

Evidently the LSCB balances will no longer be able to cover net expenditure if spending continues as it has done over the past year.

As a result of the changes to BSCB responsibilities during 2013/14 a financial review was instigated to look at partnership funding contributions and to make sure that the BSCB support functions are based on a sound footing. As the BSCB contributions have not changed, bar the London Borough of Bexley, since its inception in 2006, any new plans are timely and will need to ensure that BSCB is provided with sufficient funds to ensure it meets its responsibilities.

A copy of BSCB’s budget for the financial year 2012-13 is available in Appendix C.
The 2011 Census recorded 60,043 children and young people (aged 0 – 19) living in Bexley. This represents a 7% increase on the number of young people living in the borough 10 years previously. In addition, the number of 0–4 year olds have significantly increased in recent years, with numbers of 0 – 4 year olds 14.3% higher than in 2001.

It is impossible to offer a complete picture of the children whose safety is at risk in Bexley because some abuse or neglect may be hidden, despite the best efforts of local services to identify, step in and support children who are being harmed. Families themselves mask abuse or neglect and neighbours may turn a blind eye to a child’s need for protection.

That is why the Department for Education ‘Working Together’ guidance (2010) emphasises the shared responsibility we all have in keeping children safe:

“All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families and to recognise that safeguarding children and young people from harm must be everyone’s business.”

It might be helpful to start by looking at the categories of children and young people in Bexley who have been identified by the Local Authority and other agencies as in need of protection:

### Children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP)

Children who have a Child Protection Plan (CPP) are considered to be in need of protection from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The CPP details the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns, how the child will be kept safe, and how we will know when progress is being made.

Of the 218 children subject to a CPP in Bexley, as at 31 March 2013, approximately 81% are categorised as emotional abuse or neglect. Evidence nationally shows that children who grow up in families where there is domestic violence, mental illness and/or parental substance misuse are most likely to be at risk of serious harm. There continue to be low levels of children with plans relating to sexual abuse both nationally and in Bexley.

The graph shows that the number of children subject to a CPP in Bexley has been rising over the last two years, with the rate of increase rising again from July 2012. As at the end of March 2013, there are 40.2 per 10,000 of the population under 18 in Bexley on a CPP. The national rate of children subject to a CPP on 31 March 2012 was 37.8.
Children who are ‘Looked After’

To also understand how safe children are in Bexley, we can look at the number of LAC children. As at 31 March 2013 there were 256 LAC children in Bexley.

Only after exploring every possibility of protecting a child at home will the local authority seek a court decision to move a child away from his or her family. Such decisions, while incredibly difficult, are made when it is the best possible option to ensure the child’s safety and wellbeing. Such a move can be the best way to support the family.

The below graph shows that the number of LAC continues to be a challenge in Bexley, with a gradual increase over the course of the year:

45% of LAC were placed outside of Bexley at 31 March. 89% of LAC were placed within 20 miles of where they used to live.

During 2012/13 there were 114 (44.5%) Bexley children looked after in other areas.

There are very good reasons why authorities place some children out of area – with prospective adopters, with relatives, in specialist residential provision, catering for acute need or disability, which is not available closer.

Following the conviction of nine members of a sex-grooming network in Rochdale, all councils must make sure they can properly safeguard teenagers placed in residential children’s homes, particularly those placed many miles from home, which increases their sense of vulnerability. These are young people at particular risk of being exploited by sex-grooming networks and it is extremely difficult for boroughs, as the corporate parents, to properly safeguard these young people when they are placed many miles away. BSCB will want assurance from local agencies that Bexley children placed in some areas of the borough are appropriately safeguarded.

Who is responsible for protecting Bexley’s children and young people?

Everybody has a part to play in protecting children. Local communities can help by identifying what is happening in their areas. Safeguarding is everybody’s business.

Ultimately, when there remain serious concerns about harm to a child, a referral is made to Children’s Social Care. Most contacts and referrals into Children’s Social Care come from all sorts of other professionals such as police officers, teachers, health visitors, midwives, nurses, GPs, mental health professionals or other specialist services. To make their decisions, Children’s Social Care needs lots of information from the person making the referral. All professionals have a responsibility to ensure that accurate information is provided swiftly and shared promptly.

A part of this is developing a common understanding of the levels of need in Bexley – or what is sometimes known as agreement over ‘thresholds.’ Occasionally, professionals have a different understanding of the criteria that should be met before making a referral to Children’s Social Care.
Chapter 4: Progress in key strategic areas 2012/13

Focus on Child Protection

What did we do? How well did we do it?

During 2012/13 BSCB identified inconsistent understanding among member agencies about what constitutes the appropriate ‘thresholds’ for a child to be referred into Children’s Social Care.

Mitigating undue harm is also about ensuring professionals, children and families have a common understanding about the referral process.

In 2012/13, BSCB has taken steps to start to address this issue. Key developments included:

- Playing a key role in developing a new co-located Triage for Duty and Assessment Teams to help pave the way forward for a multi-agency safeguarding hub for processing all referrals into Children’s Social Care next year.
- Shared learning from case reviews
- Completing 2 audits looking at multi-agency practice in relation to the use of thresholds and disabled children

The challenges ahead

Despite the progress made over the past 12 months, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Bexley continues to have many challenges ahead.

It is vital that we build on the progress made to improve the protection arrangements for children and young people. Ensuring member agencies understand and implement BSCB’s recommended policies and procedures around thresholds, the Bexley Early Assessment of Need (BEAN) and early intervention remains a big challenge.

Increasing scrutiny, quality and effectiveness

What did we do? How well did we do it?

During 2012/13 the Quality and Effectiveness sub-group has been responsible for leading BSCB’s work in this area, with the aim to drive the quality of service improvement and delivery of outcomes vigilantly, transparently and consistently across the partnership.

Key achievements included:

- Redesign of the data set
- Log of single agency audits
- Two multi-agency audits:
  - Thresholds for referrals to Children’s Social Care
  - Safeguarding Children with Disability

The challenges ahead

Continuing the work to improve BSCB’s approach to performance management and quality assurance in a way that strengthens the scrutiny and challenge role of BSCB is our main priority. Our success should be reflected in the outcomes for young people.

Improved governance and accountability arrangements

What did we do? How well did we do it?

BSCB has examined its structure over the past year and put in place new governance arrangements following an independent review. This is part of its response to the new expectations arising from Professor Munro’s expectations and as a response to the Bexley Improvement Plan.

Moreover, it has been necessary to take account of the changes that are currently taking place within the public sector more broadly. BSCB has monitored reforms to the health economy and criminal justice agencies to ensure safeguarding arrangements are not put at risk.

The challenges ahead

During 2012/13 a new Clinical Commissioning Group became the structure in health for ensuring that children are adequately safeguarded in Bexley.

Strengthen engagement of BSCB with organisations in Bexley

What did we do? How well did we do it?

Safeguarding Briefings are produced for staff in all agencies to provide interested parties with information and raise awareness about issues pertinent to safeguarding children in Bexley. Examples of topics covered in the briefings were:

- BSCB Annual Report 2011 / 2012
- Staff Engagement Sessions
- Working Together 2013
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- The challenges ahead
BSCB is mindful of the impact locally of the national reforms and recognises the increasing challenge of sustaining and improving the engagement of all organisations in Bexley.

**Update on multi-agency training**

The BSCB has a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate child protection training is provided in Bexley in order to meet local needs. This covers both the training provided by single agencies to their own staff and multi-agency training where staff from different agencies train together. The delivery of multi-agency basic awareness training by practitioners from all agencies through the BSCB has proved to be an effective model of collaborative working in Bexley, with 71 staff receiving the basic awareness training.

During 2012/13, the Learning and Development sub-group has been responsible for leading BSCB’s work in this area, with the aim to strengthen the competency and confidence of Bexley’s workforce in child protection matters. The training programme delivered this year was developed based on emerging themes identified through recommendations from Serious Case Reviews, high profile local cases and from operational practitioners and managers. A total of 49 courses were delivered this year with 674 staff attending.

The multi-agency breakdown of attendees on the BSCB programme (not including E-Learning) is outlined below:

**Multi-Agency safeguarding training, 2012-2013 (attendance broken down by sector/agency)**

**Strategic priorities for 2013/15**

The Bexley Safeguarding Children Board has identified the following six priorities for 2013-15:

1. BSCB fulfils its statutory functions in accordance with Working Together 2013.
2. BSCB strengthens its quality assurance processes to ensure identification of problems and practice improvement.
3. BSCB establishes effective means of communication and engagement with practitioners, children and families.
4. BSCB ensures that practice developments identified in SCRIs and Working Together 2013 are progressed in line with best practice.
5. BSCB works collaboratively with the Safeguarding Improvement Board to monitor and evaluate the Bexley Children Social Care Improvement Journey.
6. BSCB understands contextual risks to the work of the Board and seeks to minimise the impact of these.
Chapter 5: What happens when a child dies or is seriously harmed in Bexley?

There are two processes for responding to a child death in Bexley, depending on whether abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the death.

The first is called a Child Death Review Process. Since 2008, Child Death Reviews have been a statutory requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards, who are expected to review the circumstances of all children’s deaths (up to the age of 18).

In Bexley, the Child Death Overview Panel has oversight of the processes, ensuring that:

• reviews occur in a timely fashion
• the information, support and investigation of each death is appropriate and compassionate
• there is appropriate investigation or referral of any deaths where there are safeguarding or criminal issues
• where issues or lessons emerge that have broader relevance, or public health implications, they are effectively disseminated
• information is collated and reported to the Department for Education

The second is known as a Serious Case Review. LSCBs are required to consider holding a Serious Case Review (SCR) when abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in a child’s death and there are concerns about how professionals may have worked together.

The purpose of a SCR is to:

• establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
• identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result; and
• as a consequence, improve multi-agency working when it comes to protecting children

BSCB takes seriously its responsibilities to ensure that lessons learned when children die or are seriously harmed are swiftly embedded and messages are used to support improvement across agencies.

We are committed to publishing our Serious Case Reviews as part of our accountability to the wider community in Bexley.

Child Deaths Reviews in Bexley 2012/13

The Child Death Overview Panel has a statutory responsibility to review the death of all children who are resident within BSCB’s geographical area from birth up to the age of 18 years.

In the period January 2012 - March 2013, there have been 26 deaths, 15 of which were unexpected. This number has remained fairly constant over the four years that CDOP has been in operation.

Cause of all deaths - Bexley CDOP Jan 2012 - Mar 2013 (N=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDOP Category</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deliberately inflicted injury, abuse or neglect</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Suicide or deliberately self-inflicted harm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trauma &amp; other external factors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Malignancy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Acute medical or surgical condition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chronic medical condition</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chromosomal, genetic &amp; congenital anomalies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Perinatal/neonatal event</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sudden unexpected, unexplained death</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yet to be categorised by CDOP</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures and table show that:

• Deaths in childhood are relatively uncommon
• Similar numbers of males and females died
• Most deaths occur in newborns, young infants and older teenagers
• The most common cause of child deaths continues to be issues related to prematurity (N=11)
Perinatal and neonatal deaths are challenging to review and fully informed judgements are difficult without the appropriate expertise (e.g. neonatologists, midwifery, obstetricians). Therefore Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley CDOP’s host an annual meeting with SLHT to review 3-4 selected neonatal deaths from the three boroughs which take place at SLHT. The Bexley Designated doctor for child deaths raised queries in relation to two neonatal deaths from necrotizing enterocolitis. CDOP was reassured that policies and procedures were in place in terms of enteral feeding of premature babies and the rates of Necrotizing enterocolitis were similar across the country and for a district general hospital of similar size/delivery rates.

The CDOP procedures also looks at whether there were any modifiable factors which may help prevent similar deaths in the future, and seek to identify any lessons to be learnt from the death, or patterns of similar deaths in the area. This information is used to formulate any training or future campaigns to promote safeguarding practices. In relation to contributory factors the reviews show that:

- Child's needs frequently provided a complete and sufficient explanation for the death
- Family and environment were only possible contributors in one death
- Parenting capacity was only a possible contributor in one case
- Service provision factors were only a possible contributor in one case

From the cases reviewed modifiable factors were identified in just one case. The review indicated that known issues were often responded to without sufficient assessment or joined up working and identified a lack of holistic assessment and coordination. The case was referred to the Serious Case Review panel for an independent management review. A further case was referred to the Standing Serious Case Review Panel for consideration for serious case review. This is currently ongoing.

The reasons for the incomplete consideration of the cases were due to pending Serious Case Review findings, Inquest findings and Serious Incident findings.

Conclusions

Annualised rates of child deaths notified to Bexley CDOP appear to continue at similar frequency as in earlier reporting periods. It is important that Bexley Public Health staff consider overall rates of death in infants, children and young adults using routine standardised data sources to complement CDOP analyses of individual cases.

Reviews suggest that few cases of unexpected child deaths are directly contributed to service failings. However, it is possible that these annual analyses underestimate the importance of service failings, due to delays in the addition of the findings of on-going Serious Case Reviews to the CDOP data sheet.

This analysis again noted that unexpected child deaths are more frequent in non-white British ethnic groups. Given the continuation of this trend, more detailed insight should be sought into the issue.

Recommendations

1. A more detailed aggregate analysis of Bexley CDOP findings should be undertaken on the data accumulated over the full available period since 2008, including consideration of ethnicity.

2. Consideration be given to an audit of the involvement of specialist palliative care services in appropriate child deaths considered by the CDOP.

Serious Case Reviews in Bexley 2012/13

During the reporting period the BSCB started two serious case reviews. These are yet to be completed and further details will appear in the 2013-14 Annual Report.
Conclusion: Where next for child protection in Bexley?

The national Munro Review and the 2012 Ofsted Inspection provides us all with a new focus on child protection. Bexley agencies have worked hard over the past year, in BSCB's view, to address key weaknesses in protecting children across the borough. However, when drilling down into the detail, it is clear that BSCB must:

- continue to improve its own quality assurance of Bexley agencies
- be confident to provide challenge, particularly when action is not taken swiftly to protect children. We need to get better at really knowing where Bexley is in terms of protecting the most vulnerable children across the entire borough

Unless Bexley Safeguarding Children Board is an effective partnership body that provides scrutiny of the 'front door', we won't be able to see what has really changed in Bexley.

We hope this annual report has given you some flavour of what has improved in Bexley during 2012/13 and what remains to be tackled. The OFSTED inspection of 2012 is a key driver in identifying priorities for the immediate future. We are confident that the priorities we have chosen for the coming year are clearly based on what we know are the safeguarding challenges for 2013/14.

BSCB takes its responsibility to safeguarding children and young people in Bexley seriously and will report annually to the Leader of Bexley Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Clinical Commissioning Group in Bexley to inform them of how safe children are in the borough. We will also publish information at least once a year so all those people living in Bexley are informed of what's happening and what has changed to improve the services offered to the borough's most vulnerable children and their families.

With the new Working Together and the Developing National Safeguarding Agenda, the Board is very aware that its responsibilities have been enhanced and is determined to ensure that it has a significant presence in developing and monitoring the standards of safeguarding in Bexley.

Finally and most importantly, the judgement for how well BSCB is doing will lie in its contribution to the outcomes for, and experience of, those children in the child protection system.

There are many challenges to the BSCB in the coming year but some in particular have more risk to the delivery of quality services than others. The BSCB Business Unit needs to be strong and well-resourced to ensure the volume of work and support to the Independent Chair and sub-groups is consistent and effective.

Some of these challenges have been outlined in this report and will need to be addressed by the Board Members throughout 2013 – 2014. In addition to those, the Board must ensure that:

- Appropriate resources allocated to support the BSCB in carrying out into statutory functions, both monetary and in kind
- All members understand their role and work towards the priorities of the BSCB being embedded within their individual agencies
- All agencies undertake robust Section 11 audits of their duties to safeguard children and provide the BSCB with evidence to support this
- All agencies work towards improving practice and providing evidence to show better outcomes for Children and Young People
- There is a sustained level of challenge to all agencies around their safeguarding work
- Strong governance arrangements are in place multi-agency audits are carried out to ensure areas of strength and weakness are identified

Messages for local politicians

- You can be the eyes and ears of vulnerable children and families in your Ward. Cllr Katie Perrior, the Lead Member, is your route to making sure their voices are heard by BSCB.
- We are in the midst of recession. It's very likely that the services for children, young people and families in your Ward will be feeling the effects of this. This may have a knock on effect on the well being of the most vulnerable children and young people in your Ward too.
- When you scrutinise any plans for Bexley, keep the protection of children at the front of your mind. Ask questions about how any plans will affect children and young people.
Messages for non-executive directors

• Non-executive directors (NEDs) in the health service have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning across a range of organisations

• NEDs are therefore well placed to examine each organisation’s consideration of children and young people in their planning, ensuring this receives appropriate priority.

Messages for Chief Executives and Directors

• Ensure your workforce is able to contribute to the provision of BSCB safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events

• Your agency’s contribution to the work of BSCB must be categorised as of the highest priority

• The BSCB needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on your capacity to safeguard children and young people in Bexley

Messages for children’s workforce

• Ensure you are booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses and learning events required by BSCB for your role

• Be familiar with, and use when necessary, BSCB’s Escalation Policy to ensure an appropriate response to children and families

• Use your representative on BSCB to make sure the voices of children and young people and front line practitioners are heard

Messages for the community

• You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them

• We all share responsibility for protecting children. If you are worried about a child, follow the steps on the BSCB website – www.BSCB.org.uk

Messages for the local media

• Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility is crucial to the BSCB and you are ideally positioned to help do this

• The work of BSCB will be of great interest to your readers and listeners

• Your contribution to safeguarding children and young people in Bexley, through public awareness raising campaigns, is potentially very significant
# Appendix A: Membership of BSCB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Brian Boxall</td>
<td>Independent Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Borough of Bexley</td>
<td>Mark Charters</td>
<td>Director, Education and Social Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Sheila Murphy</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Children’s Social Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Linda Tottman</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Family, Youth and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>David Bryce-Smith</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Environment &amp; Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFCASS</td>
<td>Martin Harris</td>
<td>Head of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Simon Evans-Evans (joined Sept 2012)</td>
<td>Director of Governance &amp; Quality, NHS South East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jill May</td>
<td>Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, NHS South East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dr Mohammed Rahman</td>
<td>GP Lead for Children, NHS South East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dr Sarah Ismail</td>
<td>Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children, NHS South East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Pam Creaven</td>
<td>Executive Lead for Child Safeguarding, NHS South East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Sian Terese (left June 2012)</td>
<td>Director Community Services, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Helen Smith</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Executive, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Carolyn Pilkington</td>
<td>Lead for Safeguarding Children, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jennie Hall</td>
<td>Deputy CEO / Chief Nurse, South London Healthcare Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Claire O’Brien</td>
<td>Associate Director of Patient Experience, South London Healthcare Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Police</td>
<td>Chris Smart</td>
<td>Detective Chief Inspector, Child Abuse Investigation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Justin Armstrong</td>
<td>Detective Inspector, Child Abuse Investigation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Tony Gowen (left Oct 2012)</td>
<td>Acting Superintendent, Borough Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Peter Ayling (joined Dec 2012)</td>
<td>Superintendent, Borough Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>Rob Clarke</td>
<td>Assistant Chief Probation Officer, London Probation Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Pat Slonecki (left Nov 2012)</td>
<td>Headteacher, St Catherine’s Catholic School for Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Beverley Evans (joined Dec 2012)</td>
<td>Headteacher, Oakwood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Fiona Dear</td>
<td>Headteacher, Longlands Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Diana Dryland (joined Sept 2012)</td>
<td>Headteacher, Bursted Wood Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>Julie Bristow</td>
<td>Partnerships Officer, Bexley Voluntary Service Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observer</td>
<td>Cllr Katie Perrior</td>
<td>Lead Member for Children Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>Liz Allen</td>
<td>LSCB Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Penny Davies</td>
<td>Interim LSCB Manager (from Sept 2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Structure

Executive Committee
- Monitors the Business Plan of the BSCB
- Maintains and monitors the Learning and Improvement Framework
- Establishes and Monitors Task and Finish & Sub-Groups
- Receives and Reports feedback from agencies
- Reports exceptions, identifies barriers, monitors progress and makes recommendations to the BSCB regarding the above.

Learning & Development Group
- Develops and reviews BSCB multi-agency training programme
- Identifies new training needs including those from case reviews
- Receives:
  - Statutory Annual Reports
  - Data set reports
  - SCR and other review reports
  - Action plans from SCRs and other case reviews
  - Audit findings
  - Exception reports from monitoring groups

Quality and Effectiveness Group
- Develops, maintains and reviews the BSCB dataset
- Monitors single agency audit process
- Oversees s11 audit process
- Monitors single agency audit/audit findings
- Reports to BSCB on the above.

Standing Serious Case Review Sub Committee
- Commissions multi-agency case reviews
- Agrees inter-agency action plans
- Monitors implementation of action plans, outcomes and impact of these
- Reports to BSCB on the above

Child Death Overview Panel
- Reviews all child deaths and identifies lessons
- Identifies deaths which may require a case review.

Statutory objectives and functions of the BSCB:
(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 area; and
(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.
### Appendix C: Budget statement 2012/13

#### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions from Partners</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London Borough of Bexley</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley Care Trust</td>
<td>31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Police</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFCASS</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total from contributing partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>133,550</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other income</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Contribution re legal fees</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training income</td>
<td>3,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total other income</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,400</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Income for 2012/13**  **138,950**

#### Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Costs</td>
<td>83,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>16,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences, Seminars and Events</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising &amp; Publicity</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Case Review</td>
<td>43,958</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Services &amp; Advice</td>
<td>6,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Chair of LSCB</td>
<td>16,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,073</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>169,019</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Net Expenditure for 2012/13**  **30,069**

#### Balances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balances</th>
<th>£/1/4/2012</th>
<th>£/31/3/2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General LSCB surplus</td>
<td>49,489</td>
<td>-30,069</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guaranteed Surplus</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringfenced Munro funding</td>
<td>17,610</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>87,099</strong></td>
<td><strong>-30,069</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**£57,030**