



annual conference

ADCS The Association of Directors of Children's Services
The Midland Hotel Manchester July 2017

Turning multi-agency safeguarding reforms into reality

ADCS annual conference, Thursday 6 July 2017

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Leading Children's Services



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Welcome, introduction and overview of reforms

James Thomas, Director of Children's Services, Newham London
Borough Council and ADCS rep on DfE Safeguarding Reform Board

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Why?

- “We should not hide from the reasons why we are not as effective overall as we should be. These are found at national and local level; they are evident in all professions; exist in all agencies; and are present in all regions. This evidence shows bureaucratic processes; too much timid inquiry at practitioner and system level; an unwillingness to challenge partners when they opt out of cooperating; and too much acceptance of less than good performance at both the level of agency performance and individual practice.”
- “We should be asking for outcomes for children and young people to be improved, not how they are organised.”
- “We do not have a national learning framework for considering the lessons of the tragic events that take a child's life or seriously harms them.”

What?

- Local Safeguarding Arrangements
 - Learning Reviews – National and Local
 - Child Death Reviews
 - Revised *Working Together* guidance and timeline.
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How?

- Safeguarding Reform Board
- *Working Together* consultation
- Your panel today
- Your contributions
- Questions to take back.



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Safeguarding – what next?

David Ashcroft, Chair, AILC; Chair Norfolk SCB



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Our opportunity to go for gold?

- What have we learnt and where are we starting from
- Core principles – footprint, functions, funding
- Key propositions
- Early messages from AILC survey.



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What have we learnt?

- Listen to children and young people, and their families
- Recognise the ways that abuse, neglect and exploitation can be linked, cumulative and complex – in place, time and impact – and demand multi-agency responses, often across boundaries and jurisdictions
- All too easy for issues to be ignored or left unchallenged – or hidden
- Partner agencies need to be held to account - independently and publically; and hold each other to account – robustly and regularly
- We need to ensure that schools and other universal services are included – safeguarding is not just about child protection intervention by statutory agencies.



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Opportunities not yet realised?

- Much that isn't in Act – DfE seeking input and consultation, and interest from HO, DoH, as well as leaders of prime partners
- Complexity and existing diversity not recognised by Wood Review
- New Minister and wider political uncertainty around austerity, policy, Brexit
- Lots of voices – did the implications of the safeguarding provisions in the bill receive the same scrutiny as the exemption clauses, PHSE, care leavers, social work regulation and reform?
- Still a lot to debate and finalise – Up to us to make the most of possibilities.



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Where are we starting from?

- Strengths and achievements of Boards, agency leads, partners, professional leads and chairs in ensuring effective safeguarding practice – reflected in Ofsted, JTAI and other inspections
- Benchmark of what needs to be in place – Good and Outstanding
- Encourage local authorities, health and police to be bold and ambitious in aspirations for future safeguarding plans
- Use the new flexibilities to do it better, rather than just to do less
- Dangers of a ‘lowest common denominator’ approach
- Serious risks to funding and resource – loss of capacity and expertise.



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Core principles

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organization should play their full part
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children
- Organisational responsibilities founded on Section 11 duties of Children Act 2004

Working Together 2015, core duties still persist whatever the structure: decisions required on:

Footprint, Functions, Funding.



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Effective local safeguarding arrangements

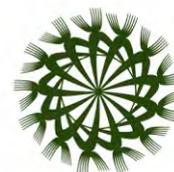
- Strong, effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements do not just happen; they demand an active commitment to collaboration and common purpose
- This can be in tension with other organisational and policy objectives: agencies have different authorising environments, but must share a common purpose for their joint safeguarding work
- Effective protection of children and the promotion of their well-being can only be secured through working together
- Therefore, safeguarding arrangements for children and young people have to be built, sustained, tested and continuously improved.



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Built, Sustained, Tested and Improved

- *Built* – a framework is required to enable agencies to actively participate and engage – should be locally determined but must deliver consistent functions
- *Sustained* – safeguarding is always about risk and uncertainty – events, cases, practice will challenge and effort is required to maintain the best – leadership demands renewal. Adequate funding and capacity is essential
- *Tested* – open to scrutiny and challenge – using meaningful measures and focusing on outcomes
- *Continuously improved* – we can always get better – learning across the UK, expertise, research and the voices and views of victims and survivors.



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Key propositions – safeguarding arrangements/practice

- Champion the interests and rights of children and young people;
- Provide the independent challenge and leadership that is essential to ensure the best outcomes for children amidst competing priorities;
- Involve all partners, not just police, health and the local authority, with a clear duty to co-operate and sanctions;
- Scrutinise and improve practice - using a range of approaches and meaningful measures (e.g. section 11, audits, data, case reviews, learning hubs; feedback from children, families and practitioners and Annual Reports) to provide accountable oversight and feedback on performance and outcomes;
- Learn from experience and evidence of what works well – creating workable strategic and operational arrangements that fit form to function and are proportionate, efficient, effective and adequately resourced;
- Meet the leadership challenge of harnessing multiple partners to achieve common goals.



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1. Champion the interest and rights of children

- Focus on outcomes for children rather than agency compliance
- Children and young people can often be marginalised within and between public agencies – mental health and emotional well being; those outside education system
- Championing children in health services and as citizens of place.



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2. Provide independent challenge

- Challenge is a process not an event
- Requires strong and persistent relationships
- “Never let it go”
- Engaging elected members and non-executives.



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3. Involve all partners

- Danger of two-tier arrangements, and of locating responsibility in health
- Involvement of schools is key – status blind
- National partners – NPS, CRCs and CAFCASS
- Rebalancing the partnership – positive to engage health and police, but will this formula deliver? And who are health?
- Role of professional advisors and expertise: DHPs; PSW; Legal; Business Managers; Performance and Monitoring and audit roles, etc.
- Charitable, voluntary and community groups, increasing fragmentation of provision.



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4. Scrutinise and improve practice

- Focus on outcomes for children rather than agency compliance
- Using a range of measures and mechanisms – not just SCRs and KPIs:
 - Section 11
 - Multi agency audits
 - Case reviews and good practice
 - Learning hubs
 - Feedback from children, families and practitioners
 - Annual Reports and public accountability.
- Learning and improvement frameworks:
 - Not just how training is coordinated, but a whole system approach to leadership and learning: improvement as both sector- and practice-led.



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5. Learn from what works well

- System is not broken – but is under acute pressure
- LSCBs have already developed and changed – the best work is not done round a Board table!
- CSE was a wake-up call, but many LSCBs have led good responses and made links to other risks to children
- Working with other boards and challenges – SABs, DASVBs, CSPs, STPs, HWBs
- Public Protection Forums/Strategic Safeguarding Boards
- Influence on strategic direction and provision – evidence-based challenge around prevalence, pathways and gaps.



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6. The challenge of multi-agency working - the leadership question

- Brokering complex and competing demands
- Who holds the ring for safeguarding children?
- Creating the space for all to work together
- Modelling respectful challenge and professional curiosity
- Demanding effective joined-up commissioning.



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Early learning – AILC Chairs' survey May

- 35% staying the same
- 30% preliminary discussions
- 21% minor changes/improvements with core LSCB structure
- 14% significant change being processed.



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A few quotes and thoughts

“We envisage arrangements underneath an umbrella of ‘keeping people safe’”

“If it ain’t broke - don’t fix it”

“Avoid pressure to be reductive”

“Further change could remove focus from children”

“There is no consensus as to what steps to take or when to take them”

“Future arrangements are dependent on the capacity, competence and characteristics of local partners”

“Behaviours and relationships rather than structure”

“Changes in wider partnership context e.g. STPs”

“Current statutory framework must be fulfilled until the bitter end”

“Wood Review added little to a system that was generally working well”

Opportunity with Partners to set ambitious future arrangements

Copies of the survey available today– second round in September



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Thank you

David Ashcroft, Chair of Association of Independent LSCB Chairs

chair@lscbchairs.org.uk



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July 2017

**Redesigning our
safeguarding
system**



Jane Held
Independent Chair – Milton Keynes

Michael Bracey
DCS/DASS – Milton Keynes Council

Context

As a place...

- Growing
- Diverse
- Safe
- Successful

As a partnership...

- Positive
- Ambitious
- Integrated
- Stretched



'Requires Improvement' for the LSCB and for safeguarding, looked after children and care leavers (2016)

Rationale

Feedback from peer reviews, inspection and our own experience was telling us we had not got things right and identified the areas where improvement was needed...

How we better
co-ordinate who
is doing what

How we better
use multi-agency
performance
information

How we better
promote
multi-agency
learning and
development

We also knew that our partnership arrangements would not be sustainable into the future or fit for purpose as we became more joined up.

There was no external pressure – we redesigned because we wanted to.

Ambition

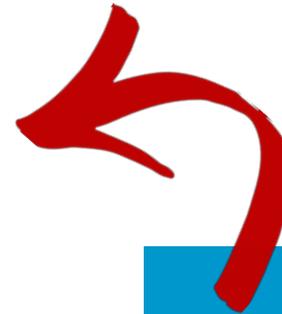
Following an extensive consultation during 2016, we agreed a new set of partnership arrangements to support our core 'people partnerships'.

Our ambition is to raise the expectation of three key agencies; namely health, police and the council.

Our two key design principles were:

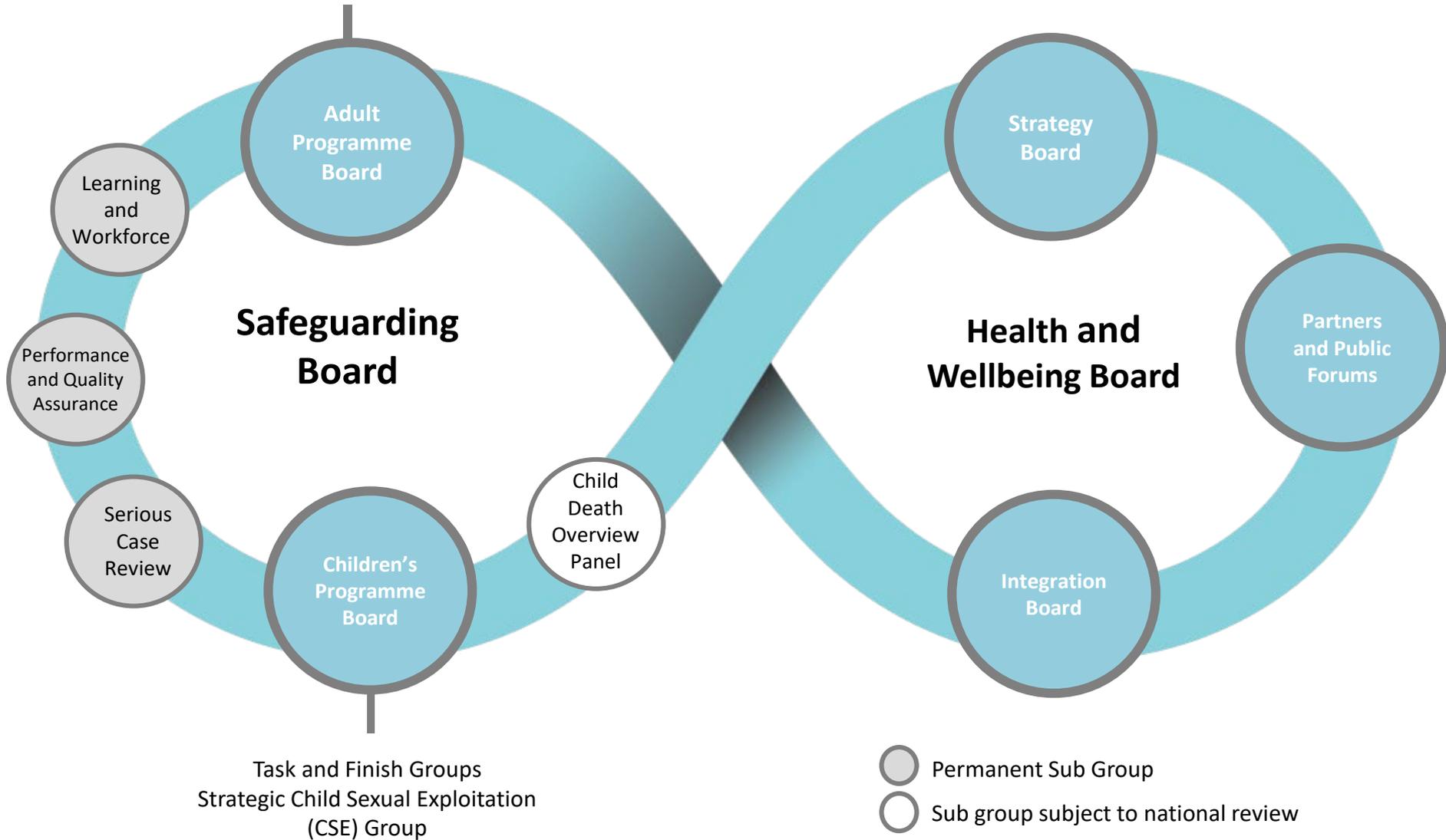
Simplicity - Partners should easily understand how the new arrangements work

Flexibility - Arrangements need to be able to adapt to future needs or changes with legislation or emerging local issues.



We used the national debate following the call (Alan Wood) for the reform of safeguarding arrangements and the government's commitment to take action.

Task and Finish Groups
Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of
Liberty (DOLS) Group



The story so far

Changes supported politically

Changes agreed by partners

'Terms of Reference' approved

Safeguarding Board now meeting

Programme boards set up

Secretariat restructure underway

Process changes underway

Transition plan nearly complete

From my perspective

Independent Chair

- A great opportunity to focus on the core purpose of a safeguarding board and stop doing things we do not need to do
- Hearts and minds not an issue with senior leaders – middle managers less happy
- Upping our game is a tough one!
- Talking through where things sit/who leads what is taking time – but fruitful
- Quality of debate at the Board far better – lots to do to “get strategic”
- A risk we design in very little change below the board – radical change is slow to take hold and systems can easily revert to inertia
- Forging new forms of relationship will take time
- Maintaining clear blue water is a tougher ask for the chair
- Systemic partnership arrangements are much more fluid and flexible – constant negotiation rather than taking up positions
- Its fun designing for better outcomes rather than for legislative compliance.

From my perspective

DCS/DASS and partner

- Gaining political and partnership support was not a huge issue
 - Chair and Corporate Director leadership essential
 - The extended consultation helped us to socialise the proposal widely
 - More challenging was the engagement of 'middle leaders'
 - The move to a smaller group is really important and powerful
 - There is a change in the debate we are now starting to have
 - We are questioning everything all over again!
 - There is a risk members start substituting
 - There is an opportunity to make the HWB relationship meaningful
 - The council is probably doing too much
 - Chairing is challenging
-
- It feels right to me
 - There is no going back (well, not for some time anyway)
 - When the time is right, the community safety partnership needs to join us.

Next steps

1. Developing a single safeguarding strategy = as a mirror image of the HWB strategy – shared priorities from different ends of the telescope
2. Finalising a new secretariat and moving to programme and project methodologies – no more ‘sub groups’
3. Building a genuinely systemic approach to understanding performance, quality and impact
4. Moving away from training and towards workforce development and strategic support
5. Creating a realistic single budget to support our partnership system
6. Training up board and programme board members to work differently
7. **Demonstrating the difference we are making – evaluating the new model as we go.**

The background of the slide is a complex architectural drawing. It features a grid of lines, various geometric shapes like circles and rectangles, and intricate line work that suggests a detailed floor plan or a technical drawing of a building's structure. The drawing is rendered in a light grey or blue color, creating a textured, technical backdrop for the text.

**Redesigning our
safeguarding
system**

Any questions?



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Local reflections on reforms

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Turning multiagency safeguarding reforms into a reality

What can we learn from SCRs – future challenges and opportunities?

Marion Davis

July 6th 2017.

Serious Case Reviews Now

- the good
- the bad
- and the unwieldy

Future Reviews

- Local child safeguarding practice reviews
- National child safeguarding practice reviews
- Criteria still under development but there will be no automatic triggers that require a review to be undertaken.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- Commissioned and published by the new local safeguarding arrangements (LSCB replacement)
- Regulations will specify criteria that must be taken into account
- Much detail as yet unknown e.g. interface with domestic homicide/mental health reviews, and how learning and outcomes are collated.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- Overseen by a national panel with an independent chair and potentially accredited reviewers
- Likely to have a higher profile and be more multi-agency than the current national panel
- National reviews may be selected where there are issues that are complex, of national importance or where themes of concern come to the attention of the panel.

Opportunities and Challenges

- New arrangements require sufficient resourcing
- Working together between national panel and local safeguarding partners will need attention
- Being aware of the potential media message that will attach to local cases being subject of a national review
- Using creative methodologies for reviews, including sector-led approaches and involvement of families and front line staff
- Disseminating learning in a way that positively impacts on the effectiveness of safeguarding for children and young people.

Questions for Local Arrangements (1)

- Has there been mission creep for LSCB's? Will your new local safeguarding arrangements have a tighter focus and be more effective as a result?
- Is your LSCB really holding every agency to account? How might you do this more effectively?
- Are current arrangements too dependent on the Independent Chair and the Local Authority? How might you use the opportunity of the new three lead partners to change this?
- How can we better engage all schools?
- How can we better engage all health commissioners and providers?
- Will your local arrangements be effectively joined up with the other partnership arrangements for Health & Wellbeing, Community Safety, Adults Safeguarding, and Family Justice?



Questions for Local Arrangements (2)

- What might be the most effective way to engage lead members and scrutiny chairs?
- How will you ensure that your local safeguarding arrangements are adequately and effectively resourced?
- Do you need to think about the expertise you have to use data effectively and carry out effective quality assurance?
- Is there a distinction in your local arrangements between effective scrutiny and accountability functions, and effective engagement and safeguarding development and improvement? Does there need to be?
- How might we improve the number of high quality learning reviewers?
- What is the optimal geographical footprint for safeguarding in your area?

Questions for Government

- How will we all know if the reforms have improved children's safeguarding?
- How will lessons from learning reviews be collated and disseminated nationally?
- Should there be a national performance management framework?
- How will there be national join up across departments, in particular with DoH and MoJ?



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Have you considered joining the ADCS Families,
Communities and Young People Policy Committee?

Visit www.adcs.org.uk/committees for further details or
email info@adcs.org.uk

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