

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report To: Audit Committee - 23 June 2017

Subject: Partnership Governance Improvement:
Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board

Report of: Independent Chair of Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board
Director of Children's Services

Summary

In a report to Audit Committee in December 2016 Council's Partnership Governance Register reported that the risk rating for the Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board ("MSCB") as "High".

Given concerns raised during the Committee meeting in respect of this assessment following on from the findings of the 2014 OfStEd inspection, Members requested that a report be submitted to describe the work undertaken to improve the governance arrangements of the MSCB. This report provides an update on key actions taken to strengthen the governance of the MSCB over the last six months.

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the report

Wards Affected:

None

Contact Officers:

Julia Stephens Row
Independent Chair of Manchester Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards
Email: j.stephens-row@manchester.gov.uk Independent Chair of Manchester

Paul Marshall, Director of Children's Services 234 3804
Email p.marshall1@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

- Significant Partnerships Register reports to Audit Committee 2016

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide an update to Audit committee on key actions taken to strengthen the governance of the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (“MSCB”).

2. Background

- 2.1. When the Partnership Register was updated and reported to Audit Committee in December 2016, the risk rating for the MSCB was reported as “High”, which was the same rating recorded in 2015. Concerns were raised by Members in relation to this assessment as well as comments made by the external auditor in the Annual Audit Letter in respect of children’s social care and safeguarding governance.
- 2.2. In response to the concerns raised during the meeting, the Strategic Director of Adult Social Services recommended that a report was submitted for consideration by the Audit Committee to describe the work undertaken to improve the governance arrangements of the MSCB. She further suggested that the Independent Chair of the Board be invited to a later meeting to answer committee member’s questions.

3. Progress in Strengthening MSCB Governance

- 3.1. Over the last six months MSCB Governance arrangements have been strengthened and improved. The key areas of improvement are as follows:
 - 3.1.1. Following a refresh of the terms of reference, an integrated Safeguarding Standard service for both MSCB and Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board was considered and agreed. The membership of the Board is reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure that partners from across the safeguarding community are represented by staff of appropriate seniority. The board meets bi-monthly and agendas are structured to provide assurance of the multi-agency response to safeguarding and make sure the statutory responsibilities of MSCB are discharged.
 - 3.1.2. The Board is supported by a strong Leadership Group made up of sub group chairs and key partners including the Executive Director Nursing & Safeguarding, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, the Director of Children’s Services and the Superintendent GMP City of Manchester Division, who are responsible for driving forward board business, having ownership of the business plan, risk register, budget and providing a forum for discussion around how sub groups can work effectively together. The Leadership Group is chaired by the independent chair and is a forum for challenge; red flags are raised at these where there are issues that need addressing.
 - 3.1.3. Feeding into the Leadership Group are a number of sub groups serving cross cutting strategic areas such as Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement, Communication and Engagement, Learning and Development, Safeguarding Practice Development and Complex Safeguarding.

- 3.1.4. The Child Death Overview Panel reports to Leadership Group and there is a sub group specifically having oversight of the serious case review programme, making sure that legal responsibilities are met and most importantly that multi-agency learning from serious incidents is captured quickly and appropriately so that it can be embedded across the partnership.
- 3.1.5. The Board manages the delivery of its strategic objectives through a rigorous business planning cycle. The plan was reviewed at the end of the financial year and the views of children and young people were sought into the development of priorities for the coming year through an open survey on the newly refreshed MSCB website as well as through focus groups led by partner organisations. The input gathered by these means was considered by Board and sub group members at a visioning event and a new set of priorities has been agreed and will form the basis of the new business plan, populated by the sub groups, and a corresponding new set of risks. These priorities and their business plan actions will be discussed with children and young people using strength based conversations at a joint MSCB and MSAB event in June.
- 3.1.6. The joint board event will host children and young people's groups (such as young carers, a secondary school group, Manchester Youth Council) and adult service user groups to make sure that the work that both safeguarding boards intend to take forward resonates with Manchester's residents and citizens. At the other end of the planning process, partners have been asked for their input into the annual report and their section 11 self-assessment information which will be produced alongside the adults board reports. It is anticipated that these reports will provide clear evidence to support the distance travelled and progress made over the last year.

4. Management and Monitoring of Improvement Activity

- 4.1. The MSCB has completed the actions against the findings of the Ofsted Inspection in 2014 and produces a bi-monthly progress report.
- 4.2. MSCB will be an active participant in a planned LGA Peer Review, having suggested the addition of a key line of enquiry for the terms of reference which would better test the accountability and governance arrangements of the Board. The Board business unit is hosted within Manchester City Council and as such processes including finance are subject to the standard checks and balances of the City Council.
- 4.3. The Board chair and Board business unit have sought opportunities to learn from other Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, seeking to share good practice and continuously improve. Links have been improved between partners across Greater Manchester through involvement with the GM chairs and Board Managers groups.
- 4.4. The Board has refreshed the former Memorandum of Understanding and created an InterBoard Protocol, ensuring that links between the strategic multi-agency partnership boards in Manchester. This protocol sets out the principles underpinning how the Boards work within their defined remits, the

interface between the boards and the practical means by which effective co-ordination and coherence between the Boards will be sustained. This is in the process of ratification by the Boards and will lead to greater interaction between the Boards and their chairs, which in turn will lead to improved outcomes for citizens.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

- 5.1. Since the last report to the Audit Committee in December 2016 a significant amount of improvement activity has taken place to strengthen the leadership and governance of the MSCB.
- 5.2. This activity addresses concerns raised in the partnership governance assessment and continues to be monitored actively through reporting to the Improvement Board.
- 5.3. Audit Committee are asked to note the report.