



Cheshire East Local  
Safeguarding Children Board

# Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board



**Annual Report 2014-15  
& priorities for next year**  
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# Annual Report 2014-15 and Priorities for Next Year

"It has been really positive being able to bring the commitments that were made to young people on the Local Safeguarding Children Board's 'Takeover Day' come to life. Although this hasn't been an easy journey, it's amazing to see an idea followed through and to be able to show young people the 'what you said' what we did' difference. It's a massive start for the LSCB and we are both very proud to have been involved in this journey. We look forward to working with the children and young people of Cheshire East and staff in all agencies to make a difference to the work of the LSCB in 2015-16."

*Liam and Jodie Hill, Voice for Children*



## Board

## About the Safeguarding



Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board (CESCB) is made up of people who work with children from the local authority, schools, health, the police and others. The Board works together to keep children and young people safe from harm. This report sets out what we have done over the past year and also what we plan to do next year to make Cheshire East a safer place for children and young people.

## How do we work?

**Main Board** – this is the main group of people who must work to keep children and young people safe – this is set out in guidance.

**Executive** – this is a smaller group of Board Members who make sure that all the plans made by the board get done.

**Sub groups (Cheshire East)** – these are groups that work on key areas of work:

- Quality and Outcomes
- Audit and Case Review

- Learning and Improvement
- Communication and Engagement
- Safeguarding Children Operational Group
- Policy & Procedures
- Private Fostering
- Child Sexual Exploitation/Missing from Home & Care

### Sub groups (Pan-Cheshire)

- Pan-Cheshire Child Death Overview
- Pan-Cheshire Policies and Procedures
- Pan-Cheshire CSE/Missing/Trafficking

## Children at risk in Cheshire East

### The Child's Journey...



### Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)

ChECS is the 'front door' to services, support and advice for children and their families. Anyone who is worried about a child can ring and speak to a trained worker about what is best to do for that child. Last year there were 7493 people who got in touch with ChECS - 10% more than the year before. About 37% (2783) of these we felt needed to be looked at by Social Workers, 33% more than the year before. There were 629 children and young people who were discussed 2 or more times during the year.

### Early Help

Over the past year we have been better at helping more children, young people and their families before their problems got too big. Staff who work children and young people have got better at giving this help and have used the 'common assessment framework' (CAF) as a way of finding out what help is needed. Over the past year the number of CAFs have gone up by around 15% - 611 new CAFs were opened in 2014-15 (it was 532 the year before). At the end of the year there were 29% more 'open' CAFs from the same time last year.

### Children in Need

Children in need are those that need extra help and a plan to do as well as other children. Last year we had 1184 children in need (5% less than the year before). We are better at making sure these children have plan and are visited more often, but we need to make sure that these plans are clearer about what needs to change and when.

### Children with a Child Protection Plan



Children are on a Child Protection Plan when they are thought to be at risk of harm. This might be from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. The number of children on a Child Protection Plan has gone up by 55% from 202 in 2013-14 to 313 by March 2015. It has gone up by 95% over the past 3 years, which is a big rise. We have looked at this and the right children are on a child protection plan.

### **Cared for Children**

When a child or young person is not able to live with their own family, they are 'cared for' by the local authority. Many of these children go back to their families when they can look after them again. In Cheshire East we had 357 cared for children at the year end, a slight rise from last year. 151 children came into care during the year (a slight rise of 5 on last year). The average age for children coming into care is 8 years old, lower than last year when it was 9 years old.



### **Care Leavers**

When a young person who is in care reaches age 16, they are known as a care leaver. As at March 2015, there were 232 care leavers in Cheshire East – a steady number over the year. The number of children eligible to leave care each month has risen from the previous year. Almost all young people in care remain looked after until they are 18 years of age. There are some good changes made for care leavers, but we need to get better at making sure they get good health services and places to live.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. When we think this might happen, we make a plan to keep these children safe. 15 children had a CSE plan in 2014-15. Most were girls (87%) – close to last year's figure. The youngest has been 13 years old and the oldest 17.

### **Children Missing from Home/Care**

Most children who go missing in Cheshire East go missing once and from their home. Some children go missing many times and this includes those who have moved between care and home/semi-independent living and cared for young people. There were a total of 878 times that a child went missing last year, slight more (4.9%) than in 2013-14. This was 310 children, and of these 199 (64%) went missing once, 44 (14%) went missing 5 times or more, and 3 (1%) went missing 20 or more times. Almost two thirds of those who went missing just once went from their family home.

### **Children exposed to Domestic Abuse**

Children in homes where there is violence need special help to keep safe. A meeting called a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is where their needs are looked at. In Cheshire East this works well. The number of cases has risen by 30% in the last year to 531 adults with 702 children.

### **Children living in homes with substance misuse**

As at March 2015, there were 348 known children and young people living with parents with drug and/or alcohol issues. We have looked at some cases of children who live in these homes and we know that we need to get better at helping them which we will do this year.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the where doctors remove part of a girl's genitalia for non-medical reasons. This is often done because it is part of a religion or culture, but it is child abuse and against the law. We have made sure that those working with young people know what to do if they think this is planned or has happened to a young girl, but we need to get better at how we work together to stop this happening.

### Children at risk of radicalisation/extremism

There have been a number of cases in the news of young people being drawn into terrorism. This is known as radicalisation or extremism. The LSCB has a key role to play in making sure that these children and young people are kept safe from extreme views and actions that may put their safety at risk.

### How well did we do in our priorities for 2014-15?



### Develop of the next stage of a multi-agency 'front door' model

A range of agencies are now working with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) to give a more joined up service and better view of risk. ChECS now has the CSE Team, Domestic Violence Hub, Police, Missing from Home Team and Family Information Service as part of the Team.

### Improve the combined response to specific safeguarding areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Missing from Home and Care etc

The LSCB has written a new Pan-Cheshire strategy for Child Sexual Exploitation and put in place a new Pan-Cheshire way of working for our children and young people who go missing from home or care (MFH/C). Our group that looks at children at risk of CSE has been good at sharing information and putting plans in place to reduce risk and track children at risk, persons of interest and locations. A CSE screening tool has been put in place in 2014-15 to help those working with young people see if they are at risk. A new group of CSE Champions are helping to support best practice for those working with these children. Over the past year we have also made lots of people more aware of CSE – we have a new web site, Know and See, aimed at schools, health, parents/carers, members of the public, taxis, hotels etc. We have worked with children and young people to produce leaflets for young people and their parents who are survivors of CSE in Cheshire East.

### Develop a new neglect strategy, practitioner training and tools

Neglect is where a child's basic needs – food, clothing, supervision etc – are not being met. Last year we put together a plan of what we will do to stop this happening to children and how we could give them better support sooner year. This includes people who work in police, health, schools etc

who are champions and will help others to know how to support these young people, along with training and tools.

### *Improve communication and prompt information sharing and engage better with frontline practitioners to drive up quality of practice*

Those staff working direct with children and young people can tell us a lot about what we need to do to make their lives better. Their Managers are also need to make sure that they work with young people in the best way they can. A group of managers from lots of different places now meet together to discuss this and then tell the Board what needs to change. Board members also visit these staff in their workplace to see what it's like for them. This group is looking at putting together some standards that will set out how Social Workers, Police, Teachers and others will work together to make life better for children and young people day to day. We also have an LSCB website, twitter and facebook pages to keep these workers up to date.

### *Develop a 'strengthening families' model for child protection conferences*

When children and young people are on a child protection plan, they are asked to take part in a child protection conference which is a meeting to discuss concerns about their care. We want to make these much better for young people and their families so we worked on a plan last year to put in a new model in 2015-16.



### *Look at innovative ways to deliver services*

We have looked at new ways of working and we have got some money from the government to work with an agency called Catch 22 to try out new way of working with children in need in the Crewe area. Project Crewe will be set up in 2015-16.

### *Put in place a better model for engaging young people in safeguarding*

We had a young person led LSCB 'takeover' in November 2014. We then put together an action plan based on what they told us we needed to do as a Board to involve young people. We made lots of changes, including the taking on 'Voice for Children', two care leavers who joined the board to be a 'voice' for young people. We worked with young people in schools to put on the 'Have you heard conference' – a young person's way of dealing keeping them safe. Young people also told us what was good and what needed to better on our website.

### *Gather and collate the voice of children and young people from across all CEC agencies to inform practice and service development.*

As well as direct work with children and young people, the board has made sure that all those people who are on our Board are also listening to what young people say. When we look at cases we talk to the children and young people involved where we can. We also make sure that reports to our board include what children and young people say.

### *Increase partnership ownership of CESC B business and improvements*

In June 2014 the Board met to agree what changes we wanted to do to make us work better together. We agreed that we needed more time to talk about issues that matter rather than having lots of long reports to read. So now we send some information out by email in between meetings. All our papers are now shorter and simpler and clear about what we need to agree. We have an action log so we know all the actions we need to do and keep a track of these. Subgroups provide reports so that the Board knows about any issues or risks and how well plans are coming along.



## *Embed robust and rigorous quality assurance activity and the learning and improvement framework*

There are lots of ways that the Board checks how well work with young people and their families is being done. We have reports that tell us how many children are at risk and how quickly action is being taken. They tell us how well those working with children are doing. We also carry out audits, which are a closer look at individual cases and how well for example the school, police, health and social care worked with that family. We also asked all key agencies to look at how well they safeguard young people through a 'Section 11 audit'. We also had challenge sessions with Health, Public Health, Police and Schools between May and July 2014, where looked in detail at how well they were doing to safeguard children and young people.

## Learning and Improvement

### LSCB Training

We run training courses for all those working with children and young people to improve the way they work. There were 48 courses last year and lots of people attended who said they would (87% - up 2% from last year). No courses were cancelled due to low numbers.

### Independent Review into Suicide and Self-harm in Young People

Last year the Board looked in detail at why a number of young people who had taken their own life in the previous year. The report from this gave us some ways in which we could work better and we have lots of plans in place to make these changes.

## What difference have we made?

Ofsted, the agency that judges whether or not we are doing a good job, came to visit us in November 2014 to carry out an inspection to see what progress we had made in Cheshire East. Some of the good things they said were:

- Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) has got a lot better since the last Ofsted inspection in 2013.
- The vast majority of child protection referrals are passed to the duty teams within 24 hours.
- Putting police lead officers for children and young people missing from home and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), as well as Catch 22 (the service for missing from home and CSE within ChECS), is a positive decision and is making us share information better and more quickly for those children at risk of CSE.
- Staff working in other agencies know when they need to talk to Social Workers about children they have concerns about and give them the information they need to make decisions about the next steps.
- Child protection enquiries, including those where children and young people were seen to be at risk of CSE, made sure that risk was assessed.
- We are better at doing what we need to do when making plans for children in need.
- We have got much better at making sure children and young people are dealt with at the right level of need, including making sure that when risks increase, we increase our involvement.
- When young people are at risk of CSE, we have lots of support for them. We have tools for workers to help them tell which children are most at risk.
- The chairs of the Improvement Board and the Local Children Safeguarding Board have done a good job to make sure agencies work together and share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children.

- At a strategic level we have shown we are better since the last inspection – we own the aim to get better together.
- We have involved children and young people in lot of decisions that affect them and Ofsted said this is now a strength.
- Young people are involved from the Youth council and 'Voice for children'
- Young people have been involved in challenges to Board members.
- Over 2,800 young people were asked how they felt through 'Good Childhood' conversations' - used to inform the children and young people's plan.

## What we need to do in 2015-16



### **We will improve the way that everyone works with children and young people through:**

- Working closer with Social Workers, Police Officers, Teachers, Health Visitors and others
  - Working on key risk areas to children and young people such as CSE, missing from home, female genital mutilation, radicalisation and extremism, forced marriage/honour based abuse and privately fostered children and young people
  - Putting in place 'strengthening families', the new way of doing child protection conferences
  - Making sure our neglect strategy is working
  - Getting more agencies in at our 'front door' to services
  - Making it safer for disabled children
  - Supporting children and young people with mental health issues, including self-harming
- **We will work better with other boards to make life better for children and young people**
  - **We will continue to get young people involved in LSCB business**
  - **We will work with people in the community to safeguard children and young people better, including links with voluntary and faith sector**
  - **We will improve the board's role around early help to families before their problems get worse**