

## A review of LSCB Effective Practice: Executive Summary

December 2014

### Introduction

This review is for LSCB Independent Chairs, Business Managers and Board Members. It identifies the good and effective practice that is currently being used within highly performing LSCBs. It highlights the characteristics of successful LSCB Chairs, the ways in which LSCBs review their performance and share practice and identifies a range of useful tools and resources. The findings are drawn from: a search of the literature available including Ofsted inspection reports for “good” and “outstanding” LSCBs as well as material from relevant organisations and websites; in addition, from telephone interviews with LSCB Chairs of highly performing LSCBs and relevant professional individuals.

### Key Findings

#### *Characteristics of an effective independent Chair*

Independent Chairs need to have experience of at least one aspect of children's services at a senior level and a track record of partnership working to secure the attendance of senior agency representatives and challenge their performance.

Good chairing skills are required which includes the ability to facilitate discussion well, to ensure meetings are well-planned and making sure the Board members understand the collective decisions they have taken.

Ensuring mechanisms are in place to listen to children and young people, is a responsibility of the Chair. This can take a range of forms and examples are given where, for instance, children and young people have reviewed LSCB websites to improve the design and content.

#### *Reviewing and Challenging LSCB Performance*

LSCBs are routinely undertaking single and multi-agency audits of their performance. Scrutiny and Performance or Quality Assurance sub-groups are widely used to assist the Board in interrogating data and highlighting the key issues for the Board. There is an increasing focus on identifying indicators that measure outcomes rather than outputs.

Some regions have developed their own Quality Assurance Frameworks based on a number of overarching principles agreed within the region. Individual Boards then adapt the framework to suit their needs.

LSCBs embrace challenge and scrutiny of their performance and employ a variety of methods to do this. These include: lay members challenging the Board, one agency scrutinising another agency; Board members working in groups to scrutinise Section 11 audits; Board members visiting front line workers from another discipline/agency.

*Peer review* is widely used between neighbouring areas and within regions. New methodologies are also being piloted and developed to help LSCBs wanting to take part in peer review approaches.

### *Tools and websites*

A range of audit tools and toolkits are highlighted in research using different methods, including some on a regional basis or developed locally:

- The *Standard Self-Assessment and Improvement Tool* (SAIT) developed and for and used by all Welsh LSCBs where members rate their performance against 5 domains and then propose actions to address areas of weakness;
- The Eastern Region developed its own *Making a Difference* toolkit for LSCB performance management, an intelligence-based approach to managing and improving people, resources, processes and activities to achieve objectives, within a learning and improvement culture; The West Midlands *Children's Services Performance Datapack* takes the form of a regional performance report and brings together a range of intelligence across the region's children's services;
- Several quality assurance frameworks identified are based on the principles of *Outcomes Based Accountability*, and *lead indicators*, both of which aim to focus on outcomes, rather than outputs;
- LSCBs are widely using *Section 11* toolkits, for example, the pan-London S.11 audit tool, and the joint *Staffordshire/Stoke S.11* toolkit.

Two particularly useful websites identified in the review are:

- The Association of Independent LSCB Chairs ([www.lscbchairs.org.uk](http://www.lscbchairs.org.uk)), and
- The London Safeguarding Children Board ([www.londonscb.gov.uk/audit\\_tools](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/audit_tools)).

### *Collaborating and sharing practice*

The review found that collaboration and sharing practice is greatly valued by LSCB Chairs. Most of the regional groupings are pro-active in sharing their "what works" tools and forming collaborations and relationships either formally or informally.

### *Multi-Agency Training and Learning*

LSCBs must ensure there are appropriate training and learning opportunities for people working in services contributing to the safety and welfare of children. A number of helpful examples of this are highlighted in the Review, including a briefing paper by *Research in Practice* which provides advice to LSCBs on how they can use their resources for training and staff development effectively.

### *Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*

Some Boards are taking a prominent role in their areas in leading the development of CSE strategies. The review gives examples of LSCBs bringing professionals together for joint awareness training, including those who do not work directly with children. Boards have been instrumental in setting up multi-agency hubs and teams to improve information sharing, inter-agency responses to CSE and the identification of young people at risk of sexual exploitation.