

Safeguarding Early Adopters programme

Learning example

Early Adopter: Trafford

Learning theme: Independent Scrutiny

Introduction

Since the publication of the Wood report in 2016, Trafford Borough Council (TMBC), Greater Manchester Police (GMP), and Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have worked to develop and implement an infrastructure for all-age safeguarding supported and led by a joint¹ Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Board (the '**Board**').

The 'new' structure has now been in place since September 2017. In September 2018, a decision was taken by the Board to commission a short independent review of the new arrangements. Following due process, Barnardo's Training and Consultancy were commissioned to provide independent comment upon:

- the effectiveness and impact of the new arrangements,
- whether these had strengthened multi-agency partnerships,
- how well the new arrangements provide challenge to partner agencies.

Background, aims and objectives

- Exploring the development, implementation and effectiveness of a strategic approach to safeguarding partnership arrangements which strengthen practice and provide assurance of an integrated children and adult safeguarding agenda (all age safeguarding)
- Developing a robust model that provides assurance across the separate children and adult safeguarding areas, and aligns common areas of concern, which are shared across the partnership, to assure better joined up approached and whole family responses and,

In addition to quality assuring safeguarding arrangements in partner agencies, the Board is aware that it needs to ensure that its own arrangements are robust and that the Board safeguarding priorities are clear and transparent with the right business structures in place to support the work of the Board.

There is a clear commitment by all partners to make the best possible use of resources amid diminishing budgets and a climate of increasing uncertainty, but there is enough evidence to conclude that the Board is well supported to navigate the complexities and challenges ahead. There is much to commend the revised board structures in Trafford,

which will undoubtedly continue to evolve and develop.

Approach

Once the broad terms of reference were agreed with Barnardo's Training and Consultancy, the work was allocated to an independent safeguarding consultant.

The Business Manager from the Board circulated information to partner agencies and remained the liaison contact throughout the review period.

During the review, a range of documents were accessed, several face to face meetings took place with key stakeholders, three board/sub board meetings were attended and four focus groups took place with frontline practitioners representing services to both children and adults.

Challenges

This report is based on a brief review of the new safeguarding arrangements introduced in Trafford during 2017/2018. It is not, and was never intended to be, a research paper, nor was it intended to provide a model for independent scrutiny.

As a first stage review, there were some limitations in scope but the review has nevertheless been able to highlight some general areas for improvement. A more in-depth, substantive review would undoubtedly have sought the specific views of senior managers in each of the three statutory agencies and this input, together with the views of children and adults who need access to support services, may well have led to some additional findings. Limited time and capacity has meant the views of these key stakeholders are not represented in this document. However, the observations and comments in this report will hopefully be used as a base from which the safeguarding structures in Trafford can be strengthened even further.

Successes

The findings from this brief review would suggest the revised structure provides scope for a much wider reach across the safeguarding agenda. It offers significantly more opportunities for multi-agency collaboration to improve outcomes for children and adults who need the support of services. It is early days to determine just how well the new partnerships will work together to weather the many and varied challenges ahead, but, it is clear that there is a willingness and a strong commitment from all partner agencies to embrace a different way of working. This is a good basis upon which to develop and strengthen All-Age safeguarding arrangements in Trafford.

Conclusion

Leadership, Accountability and Governance

Finding 1: The Executive Sub-Board, central to the new safeguarding structure has during

the review process been replaced with a Business Group and much will depend on how this group functions. Unless its terms of reference, including its relationship with the Board and the Sub-Boards are clear, the effectiveness of the 'new' safeguarding arrangements will be less effective than they could be.

Finding 2: Accountability should be strengthened. Lines of reporting including what is reported, how and to whom, is unclear. This means there is an increased possibility of gaps and duplication of effort.

A Shared Vision

Finding 3: the Board needs to strengthen its relationship with frontline practitioners through significantly improved communication channels. These should simply and clearly explain Trafford's safeguarding structure, the work of the Boards including short and long terms goals and how and where frontline practitioners can influence safeguarding strategies at Board level.

Strategic Planning, Priorities, and Review

Finding 4: Without a strategic plan and identified priorities to drive forward the work programmes of the Board and Sub-Boards, there is a risk that efforts will not be as coordinated as they could be. This will make it difficult to measure progress and assess impact on outcomes. It will also increase the potential for Sub-Boards to develop their work programmes in isolation from each other.

Finding 5: The terms of reference for the Board and Sub-Boards, whilst useful at the outset of the change process, now need to be reviewed and simplified so they more clearly articulate the purpose and function (or responsibilities) of the Board and each sub-board. This process should include the recently - established Business Group.

Finding 6: The Sub-Boards are still developing but without an overall safeguarding strategy, the strategic priorities of these boards and consequently their work plans are not as well developed as they could be. This will make it difficult to measure and review progress.

Board Structures and management processes

Finding 7: The Co-Chairs of the Sub-Boards would benefit from bespoke support around their chairing role. The assumption that at their level of responsibility all the Co-Chairs would be confident and effective at chairing their nominated sub-group is perhaps misplaced given there are now different structures and 'new' arrangements in place.

Finding 8: The business support team needs ongoing review to ensure that the resources are used to best effect and that demand upon the team' are overseen by the Board.

The Voice of the Child, Adults, and Families

Finding 9: Children, families and adults who need the support of services have not been consulted about, or asked to participate in, the redesign of safeguarding arrangements in Trafford. The Board needs to consider how best individuals of all ages can be informed about these arrangements and what creative means can be identified so that their voices and experiences can influence the development of services.

Multi –agency partnerships and opportunities for challenge

Finding 10: The system to check and challenge the effectiveness of the Board and Sub-Boards should be strengthened.

The Barnardos report has provided Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Board with recommendations which will underpin the 2019-20 strategy and business plan. One recommendation has been implemented which has changed the governance structure of the Board and the partnership arrangements are being revised to include this.