

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**SECTOR LED YORKSHIRE & HUMBER PEER CHALLENGE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To present the learning from the Yorkshire and Humber Peer Challenge of the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Yorkshire and Humber Peer Challenge was undertaken in March 2016 by a team led by John Harris (Independent LSCB Chair in Doncaster and Sandwell), and including Suzannah Cookson (Designated Nurse for Safeguarding, Doncaster CCG), and Caroline Rhodes (LSCB Business Manager, Kirklees). The process was managed and coordinated by Rob Mayall (SLI Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber and LSCB and SAB Chair, North East Lincolnshire).
- 2.2 As well as a desk-based analysis of documentation, the peer challenge process included a wide range of on-site activities, involving nearly 60 participants. These activities included interviews and focus groups. The team met with portfolio-holding councillors, the Chief Executive of the local authority, the Director of People, the LSCB chair, officers at all levels within children's services and some key stakeholders from across the partnership, including several who were chairs of work streams and/or members of the LSCB. The challenge team also met with a small group of young people from the Youth Council.
- 2.3 Upon completion of the review, the team presented their evaluation initially via verbal feedback to the LSCB, and then on a formal basis via a letter under the six scoping headings which were used as the framework for the review. The letter presents a very positive assessment of the leadership and effectiveness of the LSCB, how well the LSCB keeps children safe, engages partners, children and families, has oversight of practice and how it embraces continuous learning.
- 2.4 Key learning points:
- 2.4.1 The LSCB plays a key role in local safeguarding arrangements that continue to deliver good safeguarding outcomes for children and young people. The LSCB is given a high profile, is strategically positioned and engaged, and influential in its activities.
- 2.4.2 Partnership working is well-established at all levels.

- 2.4.3 The LSCB and the wider partnerships in North Lincolnshire benefit from the local authority's high ambitions for children and young people and its effective 'system leadership' of the safeguarding agenda. The local authority's political and corporate ambitions for better outcomes for children in North Lincolnshire are stretching and provide a model for others across the system.
- 2.4.4 The LSCB is effective, but highly reliant on local authority leadership of many of its systems and processes. The more equitable distribution of leadership across activities would help demonstrate partner ownership of the safeguarding agenda,
- 2.4.5 Challenge behaviours underpinned by robust challenge processes are evident throughout the system – and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.
- 2.4.6 The LSCB's audit model has had a transformational impact in connecting the work of the Board with frontline multi-agency practice. The model may benefit from being streamlined to reduce the resource commitment on partners.
- 2.4.7 There are strong and effective assurance processes with partner agencies and schools/academies.
- 2.4.8 Practitioners demonstrated a strong commitment to child-centred reflective practice.
- 2.4.9 The voice of children and young people is influential in priority setting, shaping services, quality assurance, and partnership governance.
- 2.4.10 The energy and ambition of the local authority and the independent chair may not be adequately matched by capacity at all points within the system.
- 2.4.11 The audit challenge process may benefit from being streamlined, with greater emphasis placed upon accountability of partners.
- 2.4.12 The large majority of multi-agency training is delivered by local authority staff, and that spreading this responsibility across the partnership may represent an area for development.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The peer challenge undertaken in North Lincolnshire provides an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the LSCB against 6 key areas described in the challenge letter. The findings present a positive picture of multi-agency cooperation, operating in a context of healthy challenge. The outcome letter has been shared with the LSCB, and action planning is in place to embed the learning and further develop LSCB systems, processes, and practice as part of a culture of continuous improvement.
- 3.2 The peer challenge team highlighted the impact of the LSCB audit challenge process, and described it as providing an effective 'line of sight' to frontline operational practice. In response to the team's feedback the model has now been streamlined to reduce the resource implications for partners, whilst increasing multi-agency accountability.
- 3.3 Since the peer challenge the LSCB team have revised the system for evaluating multi-agency training, and the model for the LSCB annual review document has

been strengthened to provide greater emphasis upon highlighting impact in relation to all areas of the LSCB's work.

- 3.4 The Peer Challenge outcome letter affirms that in North Lincolnshire there is a strong multi-agency foundation underpinning a successful children's safeguarding system. The suggestions made by the Peer Challenge team about areas for further development will continue to be considered within the ongoing process of learning, challenge, and self-evaluation that helps to drive forward the work and effectiveness of the LSCB.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The peer challenge evaluation has demonstrated that North Lincolnshire is in a good position in terms of how effectively the LSCB oversees children's safeguarding arrangements, and also in terms of being well-placed to move forward in response to the needs of children, families, and communities, within the context of the government's reform agenda.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 There are currently no resource implications for the Council associated with the learning outcomes of the Peer Challenge Review as presented in this paper

#### **6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 6.1 Not applicable

#### **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

- 7.1 The Peer Challenge outcome letter and the identified learning has been shared with the full Board including the independent chair.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That Cabinet Member notes the learning from the Yorkshire and Humber Peer Challenge Review of the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

### **DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE**

Civic Centre  
Ashby Road  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN16 1AB  
Author: Tom Hewis  
Date: 28 June 2016

#### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Sector Led Improvement in Yorkshire and the Humber Peer Challenge North Lincolnshire (copies can be found in the Group Office)

# SECTOR LED IMPROVEMENT IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

## PEER CHALLENGE

March 2016

Dear Edwina,

### LSCB PEER CHALLENGE: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE – MARCH 2016

Thank you for taking part in the twentieth Children's Services Peer Challenge activity in the region and the fifth to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as its focus. You asked us to address the following:

- The overall effectiveness of the Board and evidence of positive partnership working, including that with other strategic groups, and appropriate challenge at all levels
- The effectiveness of governance arrangements and leadership in relation to the safeguarding children agenda, particularly in agreed Board priority areas, i.e. CSE, Early Help and Neglect (n.b. North Lincolnshire is already working with Kirklees on a peer review of its approach to CSE, so peer challenge to have a lighter touch on this priority area)
- Evidence of feedback from children and young people at service delivery and Board levels including the extent to which their needs are at the centre of Board thinking.
- The quality of, and extent to which audit (within agencies and at Board level), and performance information impacts on service improvement
- The effectiveness of work being done to embed learning from Serious Case Reviews in practice.
- The impact of the Board's activities on front line practitioners

Your preparatory work for this Peer Challenge was immensely helpful in enabling the peer challenge team to focus its activity appropriately. The team received a warm welcome and excellent co-operation and support throughout the process. It was evident to us all that all those we met were interested in learning and continuous improvement.

We agreed to send you a letter confirming and elaborating on our findings as presented at the end of the Peer Challenge process.

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. A team of peers used their experience to reflect on the evidence you presented through documentation, conversation and observation. We hope their conclusions, captured in our final presentation to you and in this report will assist you in your on-going improvement. It is important to note that:

- We can only report on what we saw and read – and this was inevitably limited to what it is possible to achieve in a two day period
- We found a very strong foundation for the Board's work and the areas for development that we have identified reflect that starting point.
- Much of what we have identified will be familiar to you

## 1. Background

The Peer Challenge process developed for Children's Services across the Yorkshire and Humber region builds upon the peer review model developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) and all 15 Local Authorities and Safeguarding Children Boards are engaged in the process.

In order to support the Peer Challenge process all Local Authorities have nominated key members from their senior leadership teams to be trained in the Peer Challenge process and to be members of Peer Challenge teams. Peer Challenges are led by Directors of Children's Services or LSCB Chairs.

## 2. Process

The Peer Challenge in North Lincolnshire was provided by a team which was led by John Harris (Independent LSCB Chair in Doncaster and Sandwell), Suzannah Cookson (Designated Nurse for Safeguarding, Doncaster CCG), Caroline Rhodes (LSCB Business

Manager, Kirklees). The process was managed and coordinated by Rob Mayall (SLI Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber and LSCB and SAB Chair, North East Lincolnshire).

The team spent two days working in North Lincolnshire collecting evidence with which to frame their findings and then drew together and presented their conclusions on day three of the Challenge. This activity took place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016. Prior to the on-site activity, colleagues in North Lincolnshire shared a wide range of information with the team to support its preparations.

As well as a desk-based analysis of documentation, the Peer Challenge process included a wide range of on-site activities, with nearly 60 participants. These activities included interviews and focus groups. We met with Councillors who are portfolio holders, the Chief Executive of the local authority, the People Director for North Lincolnshire Council, the LSCB Chair, Officers at all levels within children's services and some key stakeholders from across the partnership, including several who were chairs of work streams and/or members of the LSCB Board. We also met with a small group of young people from the Youth Council.

As a result of this activity we identified over 160 strengths and areas for development, which were refined into the six scoping headings as previously identified by North Lincolnshire, which have provided a framework for the Challenge, initial feedback and this letter.

Initial findings, against the six key headings, were presented to a large and inclusive partner group on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2016.

### **3. Detailed Findings**

#### **3.1 Headline Strengths and Areas for Development**

##### **Strengths**

- The Board plays a key role in local safeguarding arrangements that continue to deliver good safeguarding outcomes for children and young people. We saw a Board with a high profile, strategically positioned and engaged and influential in its activities.
- The Chair provides authoritative leadership and challenge. We heard numerous references to the effectiveness of the Chair. We noted her role in the Board and the broader system and noted numerous examples of adroitly judged interventions with partners and processes as well as reports on an inclusive style in the Leadership Board which encourages engagement and respectful challenge.
- Partnership working is established at all levels. The partnerships are well established, and are weathering organisational and personnel change not least because there is also a stability of tenure across a number of key players (senior managers in the local authority and the LSCB Chair in particular).
- The Board and the wider partnerships in North Lincolnshire benefit from the local authority's high ambitions for children and young people and its effective 'system leadership' of the safeguarding agenda. The local authority's political and corporate ambitions for better outcomes for children in North Lincolnshire are stretching and provide a model for others across the system. The local authority has taken its 'place shaping' role seriously and provides strong system leadership.
- Challenge behaviours underpinned by robust challenge processes are evident throughout the system – and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. We could see processes which supported challenge, (a wide range of audit and scrutiny activity), and heard of peer to peer/partner to partner challenge being encouraged and evidenced.
- The Board's audit model is reported to be having a transformational impact in connecting the work of the Board with frontline multi-agency practice. Those we spoke to were universally positive about this audit model, which seems to have had a positive effect going well beyond connecting the Board with the front line (see later in this letter 3.5)
- Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to child-centred reflective practice. There was a strong, positive child centred culture evident amongst the practitioners we met.

- The voice of children and young people is influential in priority setting, shaping services, quality assurance, and partnership governance. We heard of a wide variety of activity to ensure that 'voice' was heard and genuinely influenced service improvement.

#### Areas for development

- There is high ambition and an energy in the system to implement your continuously improving early help approaches, but this is not yet matched by the consistent application of processes across partner agencies. As recent Board audits of Early Help have shown, there is a need to reduce the variability in the quality of assessment (other than in children's social care), planning of the multi-agency contribution to direct work with children and families.
- Actively develop dispersed multi-agency leadership of the Board's key function and action groups. The Board is effective, but highly reliant on local authority leadership of many of its systems and processes. The distribution of leadership across activities would help demonstrate partner ownership of the safeguarding agenda, spread resources more equitably and bring a valuable breadth of perspective.
- Check that the energy for change from the top is matched by the capacity in the wider system. The high ambition and energy for change needs calibrating against whole system capacity.
- Develop and agree key assurance questions about the Board's priorities to enable the Board to scrutinise and evaluate the system wide impact of its work on a long term basis. The development of some overarching, strategic assurance questions would help the Board develop even more of a shared strategic vision as well as providing a qualitative framework against which progress could be evaluated.

### **3.2 The overall effectiveness of the Board and evidence of positive partnership working, including that with other strategic groups, and appropriate challenge at all levels**

#### Strengths

- You have an effective Chair whose adaptive leadership and modelling of respectful challenge commands confidence at all levels. The Chair is visible in the community; she is appropriately and actively engaged in the escalation of challenge where necessary, with examples given of her support and challenge in relation to co-location of key partners in front door arrangements. Board members reported that the Board can be a challenging place  
*'(LSCB) Boards should not feel comfortable – and this one doesn't'*
- There is a positive Board 'culture' – All LSCB Members (including Lay Members) are clear about expectations in contributing to the Board and taking the Board's priorities into their own organisation. The annual appraisal of Board members is an embedded process, is seen by Board members as a positive and stretching and gives further opportunities to reinforce expectations. The commitment of Board members to the early help agenda has been powerfully demonstrated by their signatures on an early help charter. Lay Members reported feeling included and engaged and were able to give examples of how their perspectives had influenced activity (FGM activity and the publication of a booklet for new arrivals). There is good political engagement in the LSCB. One Board members said:  
*'Partnership defines the Board'*
- There is good evidence of challenge and the impact of challenge in the Board. Examples we noted were: the production of a series of questions for Board members to consider in relation to performance; audit processes have further improved as a result of challenge, as has the CAMHS transformation plan, which has responded to learning from SCRs. The police reported that they had responded to a challenge about CSE data by improving the sharing of this data across the whole Humberside 'footprint'. Board member attendance at case audits is good, providing further opportunities for challenge. We were told:

*'The culture of challenge is welcomed'*

- There are strong and effective assurance processes with partner agencies and schools. Response levels to the S175 schools audit are at 100% and Section 11 audit activity is inclusive and frequent. We also heard of Board members from education undertaking targeted and focussed visits to schools to discuss their perceptions of/engagement in early help processes.
- The Board is focusing on the key safeguarding priorities and can evidence the impact of its work in continuing good safeguarding outcomes. Well structured, comprehensive performance reports for the Board give a clear picture of positive outputs and outcomes in North Lincolnshire. LSCB minutes provide evidence of purposeful programmes of activity with follow up.
- Business Plan priorities are underpinned by good evidence from performance information and needs analysis, translated into robust action plans and programmes of work. We could see evidence of how plans link together and how learning informs priorities and activity.
- Good progress has been made in all three Board priorities
- The new business model for the LSCB is designed to enable it to focus on core business and although its impact cannot yet be assessed because it has only recently been implemented, is a further example of continuous reflection on systems and processes and a determination to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

#### Areas for Development

- There is good evidence of challenge from the Chair (mentioned above) – but wider challenge is not captured on the Board's Challenge Log. The Challenge Log underplays a real strength in the Board and needs to better reflect the strong culture of challenge in the system (see areas for development).
- Draw on learning from Board member appraisals to establish a shared understanding of how Board members from the different partner agencies carry out their roles. One Board member suggested that more could be done to share practice and challenges across Board members – this might come from an analysis and dissemination of messages from appraisals, or post-appraisal Board discussions to share ideas and approaches
- The Annual Report is compliant with statutory guidance but would benefit from being shorter, more evaluative, clearer about impact, and forward-looking. Shorter does not mean easier – it might be quite challenging, at least initially, to compile a report that meets requirements but is more accessible to the reader, but it would be a good investment, particularly if it could also be more analytical and have forward looking objectives and targets

### **3.3 The effectiveness of governance arrangements and leadership in relation to the safeguarding children agenda, particularly in agreed Board priority areas, i.e. CSE, Early Help and Neglect (n.b. North Lincolnshire is already working with Kirklees on a peer review of its approach to CSE, so peer challenge to have a lighter touch on this priority area)**

#### Strengths

- There is a very clear governance framework that is evidenced in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which meets the full range of statutory responsibilities. Opportunities are also being explored and implemented to secure greater efficiency and effectiveness through cross-border working, an example of this being the recent establishment of a joint CDOP with North East Lincolnshire. This has just gone 'live'.

- There is strong political and corporate support for keeping children safe, an example of which would be the local authority Chief Executive leading a multi-agency Gold meeting on CSE.
- There is good connectivity and collaboration between the strategic boards (Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP), Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Corporate Parenting Board) demonstrating a strong political and corporate intent to keep children and young people safe. Links between the SAB and LSCB are supported by regular meetings between the Chairs of these Boards and the Director of People and further strengthened by the Assistant Director (Adults) sitting on the LSCB and the Assistant Director (Children) sitting on the SAB. We heard of a continuously improving relationship between these two Boards. We also noted strong links between the CYPP and the LSCB.
- The programme of work and key priorities are defined within the appropriate sub groups, which have a breadth of membership enabling them to progress strategic actions and seek assurance.
- High quality reports and papers support the Board and its various action groups although, as mentioned elsewhere in this letter, we did feel that the challenge log might be more representative of the high levels of challenge evidenced in the system.

#### Areas for Development

- Give greater scope for discussion and challenge at Board meetings by reducing the number and length of reports, ensuring that the format of the reports prompts a focus on the impact for practitioners, and for children and families. Other tactics to consider in creating a more manageable way of addressing a wide agenda include: executive summaries of reports and/or papers with a clear and explicit 'issues for the Board' section.
- Consideration of developing efficiencies through a joined up approach (if it adds value). For example, using the joint CDOP arrangements as a template for further activity. An obvious area for consideration might be joint back office support for the CDOP. We understand there is already an appetite to explore further sub regional potential, with North Lincolnshire taking an active role in this work.
- Develop the potential for partner agencies to take a more active role to lead safeguarding activity. This would be symbolically powerful – demonstrating, through more distributed leadership, partner ownership of the safeguarding agenda and could also create a more equitable distribution of demand on resources. This might also apply at a more operational level, by exploring the potential for partner agencies to take a more active role in training delivery, which currently is predominately provided by local authority staff.
- Consideration of whether the capacity of partners is able to respond to the pace of new development and the volume of activity. Your ambitions are high and strong – rightly so. Some partners reported the challenge of releasing resources to match the demands of change. This suggests a need for robust conversation between and across partners to identify priorities, collectively reflect on the resource implications and collectively committing to what is possible. We are NOT suggesting a relaxation of ambition – but perhaps more conversations about the implications and required commitment of meeting ambition. Given the strong foundations, the Board could be more confident about where its core processes are 'good enough' and could be maintained with a lighter touch, thus enabling partners to re-direct people and resources to other Board priorities.
- Provide clarity for all Board members on the roles, remit and governance of groups and specifically the Standards Board. Not all Board members were clear about the various groups and their membership/terms of reference – this area for development might be met simply through the issuing of a briefing for Board members, but crucially with a subsequent open conversation to ensure that any remaining concerns are then aired and addressed.
- Consider how Board members, individually and collectively might improve their understanding of the safeguarding activities of partner agencies so that there can be a better awareness of how priorities align and future plans can be more widely influenced. This might be achieved in a variety of ways including the sharing of annual safeguarding reports of key partners.

### **3.4. Evidence of feedback from children and young people at service delivery and Board levels including the extent to which their needs are at the centre of Board thinking.**

#### Strengths

- There is a culture that values and empowers children and young people. This is evident throughout the system, at all levels. The content and nature of conversations, policy, processes and documentation all provided us with the evidence of a commitment to children.
- There is a wide range of well-established and well utilised processes for engagement of children and young people. The Youth Council and Youth Parliament are well established and a wide range of other engagement structures are in place. Examples of this would be: Stay Safe/Coolkids/Children in Care Council, Bizz group.
- There is evidence of the views of children and young people impacting on key issues/priorities and the shaping of services. Young people are engaged in recruitment and selection activity and those we spoke to reported that their voice was respected in these processes. CAMHS commissioning has been directly influenced by young people's voice as have children's social care services and young people spoke highly of the chance to engage in debate through 'square table' events.
- There are examples of innovative practice led by children and young people. We were impressed with the plans to produce a young person's version of the annual report, which is young person led. Similarly young people spoke of the potential for a children's video version of the report. We were impressed with the consultation process with young people who had been missing from home to understand better their views and perceptions about the services they receive – this went beyond standard practice. We also noted that the Young Mayor sits on the Health and Well Being Board.

#### Areas for Development

- Young people spoke enthusiastically about the ways in which they were engaged in a wide variety of processes and some were able to describe how things had changed as a result. However, the range of activity is so wide ranging that it would be difficult for young people to see the broader picture of how their voice has been heard – this would similarly be the case for a range of partners. There would be value in finding ways to capture the totality of engagement with children and disseminated this to children, young people and partners – perhaps a 'you said...we did' type report?

### **3.5 The quality of, and extent to which audit (within agencies and at Board level), and performance information impacts on service improvement**

#### Strengths

- Performance information is well developed and used effectively. Reports to the Board are comprehensive and regular. We were impressed that Board members have received guidance on key performance questions.
- A range of audit processes are utilised and there is evidence of learning and action as a result. Furthermore, we noted a receptiveness amongst those practitioners and front line managers we met, to the notion of audit as an aid to quality and continuous improvement, for example, practitioners in the Duty team spoke positively about case file audits as beneficial to practice.
- The recently introduced Board Member case audit process has had a major and positive impact. It has been successful in its intention of connecting the Board with the front line, but seems to have done so much more. Practitioners have valued the multi-agency nature of discussions, learning more about providing (and receiving) respectful challenge; some local audit processes have been influenced by the process; the status of audit is raised by the engagement of senior managers and leaders from across the partnership. Feedback on the model was universally positive.

- The monthly moderation panel is a good opportunity for multi-agency case sampling and also used as a first point of escalation – it is light on bureaucracy and all agencies can make a case for discussion.

#### Areas for Development

- Consider the resource implications of new audit processes on partners. This has been noted as a more general point in 3.3, but was also raised specifically by one partner in relation to the new audit model.
- Consider how new audit processes might be further enhanced. Suggestions made to us were in relation to the inclusion of GPs in the process, (we understand that a variety of actions are being taken to secure this engagement) and possibly finding ways of furthering the voice of children and families in the audit process.
- A further development of audit might be to consider developing a more searching and strategic set of 'whole system' assurance questions. The attached list (Annex 1) suggests the sort of scope these assurance question might take.
- Further develop more rounded performance reporting through the introduction of score cards. We understand that this is a development you are already considering, creating the opportunity to capture a more holistic performance picture and in particular focus on the difference that performance is making to safeguarding in North Lincolnshire.

### **3.6 The effectiveness of work being done to embed learning from Serious Case Reviews in practice.**

#### Strengths

- In common with your well established and comprehensive range of processes and procedures, the LSCB provides comprehensive documented guidance illustrating a systematic approach to ensuring SCR are conducted in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The investment in the SCR process is maximised by the rigorous and extensive dissemination of learning and implementation of actions following SCR. We heard of examples of learning from SCR identifying further cases for escalation, having a positive impact on mental health admissions, influencing safer environments for children and on the quality of plans for local care. We saw examples of audit processes responding to SCR learning, for instance, an audit of provision for children on the edge of tier 4 mental health services.
- The Board's processes for dissemination of learning, including use of follow up audits to measure impact of changes, has produced a connectivity of practitioners to SCR and learning. Practitioners reported that learning from SCR is disseminated in a variety of ways – learning events/team meetings and through supervision discussions.
- The LSCB Chair engages with the SCR process in a differentiated way and provides challenge. The Chair does not chair or sit on the SCR Panel but we were told of her close interest in SCR activity and of her ability to make appropriate judgements about when to engage and add scrutiny, advice, guidance and influence to the process.

#### Areas for Development

- We were uncertain about referral processes to the SCR Panel when cases were of concern but clearly failed to meet SCR criteria. If this uncertainty is shared by partners, then there would be benefit in a clear and concise referral process to SCR Panel where serious incidents do not necessarily meet the SCR criteria.
- Linked to the above point, and to maximise learning from serious incidents, the application of more flexible criteria for learning lessons reviews and an acceptance for a wider diversity of incidents considered by the SCR panel would add to learning opportunities. It may be that the case audit system addresses this point

### 3.7 The impact of the Board's activities on front line practitioners

#### Strengths

- In our conversations with practitioners, we noted a strong culture of continuous improvement across and a focus on providing better outcomes for children.
- Practitioners have welcomed and commented on a high quality responsive multi-agency safeguarding training programme. We noted that training is responsive to changing circumstances and increasingly being delivered flexibly, (bite size/twilight/on line). One practitioner, commenting on the partnership nature of training said:  
*'LSCB multi-agency training creates a sense of everybody having a responsibility for children'*
- Practitioners make good use of LSCB materials and processes. For example, in our observations of the Duty Team, we heard about and saw LSCB early help procedures being referred to and the LSCB website being used as a tool for staff and referrers.
- Practitioners have appreciated engagement in the case audit programme and the opportunities this brings to increase Board visibility, engage with partners and offer/receive challenge.
- There is a strong line of sight from LSCB priorities to front line practice, which practitioners understand and welcome, seeing a direct and positive correlation between the priorities and the pressures and challenges on the front line

#### Areas for Development

- Consider how to increase GP/police engagement in multi-agency training activity. As with some other areas for development, this challenge might equally be applied to other LSCBs. There may need to be discussion to understand reasons for lower levels of engagement than is desirable and a consideration of whether more flexible models of delivery might address the disadvantage of not having a comprehensive engagement of partners in learning and development.
- Undertake further activity to help practitioners across partners agencies understand better the early help offer, processes and thresholds. There may be an inevitability in the introduction of major developments, and early help would fall into this category, that there will be mixed levels of understanding and engagement across partners at an early stage. An audit of need and then differentiated responses to partners might be a way of bringing the whole system in line in the implementation of early help.
- Explore opportunities to develop impact evaluation for training. We understand how challenging this is, but your investment in learning and development is such that it warrants further work to assess whether, beyond initial and highly positive responses to your training offer, practitioners and managers are applying learning and understanding in a way that makes a difference to the quality of safeguarding in North Lincolnshire.
- There is a potential for partner agencies to take on a more active role in training delivery. Which currently is provided predominantly by local authority staff. This would spread expertise, further demonstrate a multi-agency commitment to learning and development and increase capacity.

## 4. Next Steps

You and your colleagues will now want to consider how you incorporate the Peer Challenge team's findings into your improvement plans. We hope that you find our reflections helpful.

It is important that this letter describes accurately what we have observed and analysed and that it provides you with an appropriate summary to facilitate change. If this letter contains any factual inaccuracies, please do not hesitate to contact me and amendments will be made as appropriate. If you have any concerns or comments about the analysis or recommendations, do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance. If we are unable to resolve any issues, there is a mechanism for

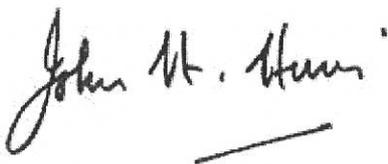
escalating concerns, which is to the Chair of the Sector Led Improvement (SLI) Executive group. A sub group of the SLI Executive will consider any concerns you may have.

Once again, thank you for agreeing to receive a Peer Challenge and to everyone involved for their

THEMES	POSSIBLE QUESTIONS
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participation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John H. Harris". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

John Harris, LEAD for LSCB Peer Challenge in North Lincolnshire

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The overall effectiveness of the Board and evidence of positive partnership working, including that with other strategic groups, and appropriate challenge at all levels</li> </ul>	<p>Tell us about the effectiveness of the Board Has the Board's effectiveness improved Why? How do you judge effectiveness? Describe 'partnership working' What links does the Board have with other strategic groups? Describe 'challenge' in the Board – has this changed in nature? How? Is the level of challenge about right? How might challenge be improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effectiveness of governance arrangements and leadership in relation to the safeguarding children agenda, particularly in agreed Board priority areas, i.e. CSE, Early Help and Neglect (n.b. North Lincolnshire is already working with Kirklees on a peer review of its approach to CSE, so peer challenge to have a lighter touch on this priority area)</li> </ul>	<p>Describe the efficiency of your governance arrangements Describe the effectiveness of your governance arrangements Describe how governance arrangements join up Describe the link between Board priorities and governance arrangements How could governance arrangements be further improved? How is the Board led?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of feedback from children and young people at service delivery and Board levels including the extent to which their needs are at the centre of Board thinking</li> </ul>	<p>How are children engaged in the Board's activities (e.g. Section 11/consultation) Provide examples of Board decisions/direction that have been influenced by feedback from children</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of, and extent to which audit (within agencies and at Board level), and performance information impacts on service improvement</li> </ul>	<p>How effective is audit activity? Why? How could audit activity be improved? How are the results of audit utilized? (links to L&amp;I framework) How is the Board sighted on audit activity?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effectiveness of work being done to embed learning from Serious Case Reviews in practice</li> </ul>	<p>How is the Board sighted on SCR activity and learning?(local/regional/national) How is SCR learning applied? Does the Board monitor SCR action plans?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the Board's activities on front line practitioners</li> </ul>	<p>Do practitioners know about the Board? How does the Board communicate with practitioners? What difference does the Board make to front line practice? What more could the Board do to engage with front line practitioners? (Why?)</p>

ANNEX 1

WHOLE SYSTEM ASSURANCE QUESTIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING BOARDS