

# Review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Consultation document

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This is a consultation document on proposals to review the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. We have already conducted a wider consultation about the contents of this review. This consultation is targeted at those who have a specific interest in, or expertise relating to, the effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

The closing date for the consultation is 23 October 2013.

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## About Ofsted

1. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

## Purpose and background to the consultation

2. This consultation seeks your views on the proposed new arrangements for the review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB). Your views will help to refine and develop the framework for reviewing these services.
3. In November 2013 Ofsted will introduce a single inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. We consulted on the framework for the single inspection between 14 June and 12 July. We also consulted on an early draft of our proposals to review the effectiveness of the LSCB at the same time.
4. Under statutory guidance and legislation<sup>1</sup> LSCBs have a key role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area and ensuring the effectiveness of the contribution of statutory partners. The Department for Education has consulted on changes in legislation<sup>2</sup> and regulations that allow Ofsted to review the effectiveness of LSCBs. Section 15A of the Children Act 2004 has been commenced. The underpinning regulations came into force on 9 October 2013.<sup>3</sup> We are undertaking a further targeted consultation so that interested parties can consider our proposals in light of the final regulations. We have also revised our proposals following the initial consultation and our experience of piloting the review of the LSCB as part of the single inspection framework.
5. We propose to conduct this review at the same time as inspecting the local authority, although the review and the single inspection can be undertaken independently. The review of the LSCB will include a graded judgement. This is a standalone judgement and will not in itself limit the overall effectiveness judgement of the local authority. We will produce a report on the effectiveness of the LSCB and we propose to combine our report on the effectiveness of the LSCB with our report on the inspection of the local authority at the pre-publication stage. We will publish this report on our website.
6. We are seeking views on the detail of how we intend to undertake the review. We will make the judgments using a four-point scale: outstanding, good,

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<sup>1</sup> Children Act 2004: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents); The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/contents/made); and *Working together to safeguard children*, Department for Education, 2013:

[www.education.gov.uk/about/dfes/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-secure-children](http://www.education.gov.uk/about/dfes/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-secure-children).

<sup>2</sup> Children Act 2004, Section 15A: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/15A](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/15A).

<sup>3</sup> The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2299/contents/made>

requires improvement and inadequate. We are seeking views and comments to help us to describe the judgements.

7. We will use the information gathered from the consultation to finalise the revised arrangements for the review of the LSCB and we propose to implement the changes from November 2013.
8. We will publish the main findings from the consultation on our website at the same time as we publish the outcome of the consultation about the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in November 2013. We will also re-publish the single inspection framework incorporating our final version of the review of the LSCB.

## **The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board**

9. Ofsted intends to undertake a review of the effectiveness of LSCBs at the same time as it inspects local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers:<sup>4</sup> the 'single inspection'. This review will be conducted under 15(A) of the Children Act 2004. It is not Ofsted's intention, at this time, to undertake reviews of LSCBs as a stand-alone inspection.
10. Inspectors will make their judgements on a four-point scale:
  - outstanding
  - good
  - requires improvement
  - inadequate.
11. Inspectors will use the grade criteria outlined in proposal (II) of this document to evaluate the effectiveness of the LSCB in meeting its statutory functions. Inspectors will make a judgement of 'good' where the characteristics set out in the description of 'good' are widespread and common practice. In addition, inspectors will consider how effectively the Board evaluates and monitors the quality and effectiveness of the local authority and Board partners in protecting and caring for children, and the quality of the Board's advice on improvement. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings. When considering the effectiveness of the LSCB inspectors will use the descriptors of 'good' as the benchmark from which to grade performance. A judgement of 'good' will be made where the inspection team concludes that the evidence overall sits most appropriately with a finding of 'good'. This is what Ofsted describes as 'best fit'.

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<sup>4</sup> *Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers*, Ofsted, 2013; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130216>.

12. The first proposal outlines how we intend to undertake the review: when we will notify the chair of the LSCB; the documentation we will review; and the people we will want to speak to during the course of the review. We want to know if you think we are looking at the right things and talking to the right people.
13. The second proposal outlines how we intend to make judgements against the four-point scale. We want to know if this is how we should review whether an LSCB is 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.
14. Proposal (I) outlines how we will undertake a review of the LSCB; this is followed by proposal (II), which sets out the grade descriptors for each of the four judgements. We want to hear your views on our two proposals. You can read about the consultation process on page 12.

## Proposal (I) How we will undertake a review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

The following paragraphs outline how we intend to undertake a review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

15. As we intend that the review of the LSCB will take place at the same time as the single inspection, it will take place over the same four-week period (as illustrated below). The LSCB chair will be notified of the start of the review at the same time as the Director of Children’s Services is notified of the start of the single inspection in week one, the day before the inspection team arrive on-site in the local authority.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Small inspection team on site in the local authority Wednesday to Friday (3 days)	Inspection team off site	Full inspection team on site in the local authority all week (5 days)	Full inspection team on site in the local authority Monday to Wednesday (3 days)

16. Inspectors will review:

- minutes of at least the last three Board meetings
- sub-group minutes as appropriate; for example, where there is a juvenile secure setting in the local authority area the inspector may review the minutes of the relevant sub-group to assess how the Board independently monitors and evaluates the response to the needs of this potentially vulnerable group
- any evaluation of multi-agency safeguarding training
- the policies and procedures produced in accordance with the LSCB’s statutory functions<sup>5</sup>
- the LSCB business plan
- the LSCB annual report.

17. Inspectors will

- interview the LSCB chair, business manager and other Board partners where possible
- scrutinise any recent auditing undertaken by the Board
- evaluate the progress, learning, practice improvement and impact of any serious case reviews

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<sup>5</sup> Thresholds, training, recruitment and supervision, investigation of allegations, safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered and how local authorities and Board partners co-operate.

- evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the child death overview panel
  - evaluate the Board's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of local multi-agency practice, the effectiveness of their monitoring and evaluation and how well they have identified areas for improvement.
18. A draft report of the review will be sent to the chair of the LSCB within 12 working days of the end of the inspection. The chair will have five working days to report any factual inaccuracies. A pre-publication report will be sent to the chair of the LSCB and their partners.
19. This report will be combined with report of the inspection of the local authority at the pre-publication stage.<sup>6</sup> The combined report will be published on the Ofsted website. In any instances where the review does not take place at the same time as a single inspection, the report of the review will still be published on the Ofsted website.

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<sup>6</sup> Ofsted's power to combine reports is set out in section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## Proposal (II) Undertaking a review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

**That the following grade descriptors describe the characteristics we should take into account when reviewing the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.**

The text box below describes the overall scope of the review.

**The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004<sup>7</sup> and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006.<sup>8</sup> The LSCB is able to provide evidence that it coordinates the work of statutory partners in helping, protecting and caring for children in its local area and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements. Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact on management and practice. The LSCB checks that policies and procedures in respect of thresholds for intervention are understood and operate effectively and identifies where there are areas for improvement. Challenge of practice between partners and casework auditing are rigorous and used to identify where improvements can be made in front-line performance and management oversight. Serious case reviews, management reviews and reviews of child deaths are used by the local authority and partners as opportunities for learning and feedback that drive improvement. The LSCB provides robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance that influence and inform the planning and delivery of high-quality services.**

20. The LSCB is likely to be judged to be good if:

- The governance arrangements enable Board partners (including the Health and Well-Being Board and the Children’s Trust) to assess whether they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to help (including early help), protect and care for children and young people. The Board effectively prioritises according to local issues and demands and there is evidence of clear improvement priorities identified that are incorporated into a delivery plan to improve outcomes.
- Regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of multi-agency front-line practice to safeguard children identifies where improvement is required in the quality of practice and services that children, young people and families receive. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of early help.

<sup>7</sup> The Children Act 2004; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>.

<sup>8</sup> The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/regulation/5/made>

- Partners hold each other to account for their contribution to the safety and protection of children and young people (including children and young people living in the area away from their home authority), facilitated by the chair. Safeguarding is a priority for all of the statutory Bboard members. All Board partners make a proportionate financial and resource contribution to the main Board and the audit and scrutiny activity of any sub-groups.
- The LSCB has a local learning and improvement framework with statutory partners. Opportunities for learning are effective and properly engage all partners. Serious case reviews are initiated where the criteria set out in statutory guidance are met and identify good practice to be disseminated and where practice can be improved. Serious case reviews are published.
- The LSCB ensures that high-quality policies and procedures are in place (as required by *Working together to safeguard children*) and that these policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness and impact and revised where improvements can be made.
- The LSCB uses case file audits including joint case audits to identify priorities that will improve multi-agency professional practice with children and families. The chair intervenes and works with the local authority where there are concerns that the improvements are not effective. Practitioners and managers working with families are able to be involved in practice audits, identifying strengths, areas for improvement and lessons to be learned. The experiences of children and young people are used as a measure of improvement.
- The LSCB is an active and influential participant in informing and planning services for children, young people and families in the area and draws on its assessments of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice. It uses its scrutiny role and statutory powers to influence priority setting across other strategic partnerships such as the Health and Well-being Board.
- The LSCB ensures that sufficient, high-quality multi-agency training is available and evaluates its effectiveness and impact on improving front-line practice and the experiences of children, young people, families and carers. All board members support access to the training opportunities in their agencies.
- The LSCB, through its annual report, provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness and the causes of those weaknesses, and evaluates and where necessary challenges the action being taken. The report includes lessons from management reviews, serious case reviews and child deaths within the reporting period.

## Outstanding

- The LSCB is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements for a good judgement, it provides evidence of being a highly influential strategic arrangement that directly influences and improves

performance in the care and protection of children. That improvement is sustained and extends across multi-disciplinary practice with children, young people and families. Analysis and evaluation of performance is exceptional and helps the local authority and partners to properly understand the impact of services, the quality of practice and the areas for improvement. There is a comprehensive range of training for managers and practitioners that is directly related to multi-agency improvement priorities.

### **Requires improvement**

- The LSCB is likely to require improvement if it is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.

### **Inadequate**

- The LSCB is likely to be inadequate if it is not demonstrating that it has effective arrangements in place and the required skills to discharge its statutory functions set out in *Working together to safeguard children*, the Children Act 2004 and the LSCB regulations 2006.

## **The consultation process**

You can find this consultation document on our website at:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130222](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130222)

### **Length**

This consultation will open on 10 October and close on 23 October 2013.

### **Sending back your response**

There are two ways of responding to our proposals.

#### **By email**

Send your comments to us by email at: [socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk).

#### **Print and post**

Send your comments to us by post at:

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