

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

## AGENDA ITEM: 7

**DATE OF MEETING:** 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2010

**REPORT AUTHOR:** JENNY COLES (HEAD OF AREA INTEGRATED SERVICES)

**SUBJECT:** ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDING IN LUTON

### PURPOSE:

1. The purpose of this report and accompanying presentation is to appraise the Scrutiny Committee of multi agency safeguarding arrangements in Luton.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

2. **Overview and Scrutiny Board is recommended to**
  - a) **Note and discuss the contents of this report with officers present**
  - b) **Agree a schedule of reporting on safeguarding arrangements to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. This is recommended on a 6 monthly basis.**

### BACKGROUND

- 3 The Scrutiny Board has chosen safeguarding as an area of focus in its work programme and requested a report and presentation detailing arrangements in Luton. This report details local arrangements which contribute towards meeting the duties of the council and its partners under legislation and national guidance. The report provides an overview of the responsibilities and role of the Luton Safeguarding Children Board; performance information regarding a range of safeguarding indicators; and the outcomes of the annual unannounced inspection of the initial assessment team by Ofsted in January 2010.
- 4 Multi agency safeguarding arrangements are established under the legislation of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the national guidance "Working Together to Safeguarding Children". Over the last year and following the report of Lord Laming "The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report" there have been various national initiatives which have included a review of the Working Together national guidance; the establishment of the Social Work Task Force and report of their work; changes to the Ofsted inspection process for children's safeguarding and children in care services; and implementation of the Independent

Safeguarding Authority and requirements relating to the employment of staff working with children. Alongside the Ofsted inspection framework for children's services and schools are the inspections carried out by the Care Quality Commission for health services; HMI inspections of Police and Probation Services.

## **REPORT**

### **The Role of Luton Safeguarding Children Board**

- 5 The Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will cooperate to safeguard children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The core functions of the LSCB are set out in regulations (The Local Safeguarding Childrens Boards Regulations 2006) and primary legislation (The Apprenticeships, Children, Skills Children and Learning Act 2009). This includes developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority e.g. agreeing interagency protocols for section 47 of The Children Act (1989) for child protection investigations; developing protocols on key areas of concern e.g. children living with domestic violence, forced marriage, children missing from home or education, children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm as a consequence of impact of parental drug and alcohol misuse or parental mental ill health; children abused through sexual exploitation and prostitution. It is the responsibility of the LSCB to ensure that single agency and interagency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided to meet local needs. This covers both training provided by single agencies e.g. Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, NHS Luton and multi agency training where staff from more than one agency train together.
- 6 The Luton Safeguarding Children Board has representation from both the statutory and voluntary sector. The Lead Member for children's services attends the LSCB and has regular updates from the Director of Children's Services on safeguarding issues and performance. The LSCB has an independent chairperson Michael Preston Shoot who also chairs the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board. There are four LSCB subgroups: Operational and Procedures; Training; Quality Assurance; and Serious Case Review. The LSCB Executive oversees the work of the subgroups and reports to the LSCB on progress on the business priorities and performance. In 2008 a Child Death Review Overview Panel was established jointly with Bedfordshire LSCB. This is a national requirement. This panel chaired by Jerry Taylor, Director of Public Health and all child deaths are reported to this panel.
- 7 The Luton Safeguarding Children Board has a multi agency budget to enable it to carry out its duties and this supports the employment of a business manager and 1.5 training officers to run a multi agency safeguarding training programme.
- 8 Within the wider Children's Trust governance arrangements the LSCB's role is to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The LSCB has an important role in challenging agencies and the Children's Trust regarding the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the local area.

- 9 The LSCB Business Plan for 2009-2012 has the following agreed priorities:
- i. Early Identification – to identify the most vulnerable children and young people and target support to enable their safety and well being
  - ii. Prevention – to safeguard children and young people from abuse, neglect, crime, anti social behaviour, accidental injury, domestic abuse, substance misuse and bullying
  - iii. Scrutiny and Challenge – to scrutinise and evaluate the effectiveness of local delivery to safeguard children in line with statutory guidance and recommendations from the Laming Report
  - iv. Participation and Communication – to engage key stakeholders (parents, carers, young people, adult services and the community) in the wider safeguarding agenda.
- 10 Work is now underway to identify areas of focus for each of these priorities informed by performance information and the review of Section 11 regulations undertaken by agencies (see below).
- 11 There is now a national requirement for the LSCB to produce an annual report by April 2011 and this report will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee and the Council Executive.
- 12 The LSCB recently undertook an audit of key safeguarding arrangements in partner agencies under Section 11 of The Children Act 2004. In Luton Borough Council the Children & Learning Department, Housing and Environmental Health (Licensing) took part in auditing against the Section 11 standards. These standards include arrangements for referring and taking action on safeguarding concerns; training in safeguarding policies and procedures; safe recruitment; commissioning, procurement and contract arrangements to promote safeguarding. Key areas for improvement for the council are increasing the take up of safeguarding awareness training across divisions and teams who work with children across the council and member awareness training, monitoring the implementation of safe recruitment processes and ensuring all contracts where appropriate have clear safeguarding requirements built in to service specifications and monitoring arrangements.

### **SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

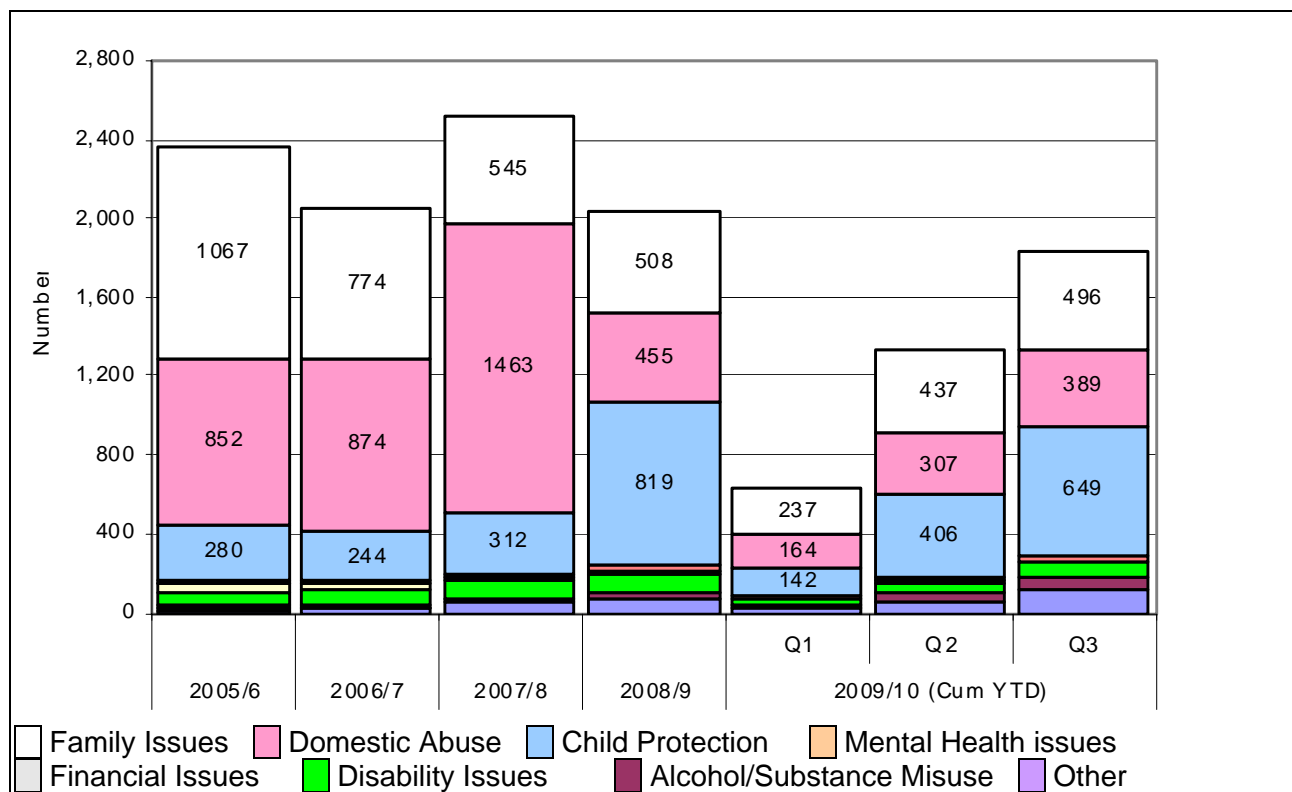
- 13 The following indicators are key performance indicators for safeguarding. The trend over the last year has shown an increase in the number of child protection investigations, child protection referrals and children subject to child protection plans.

### **Number of Referrals to Children's Social Care by Reason**

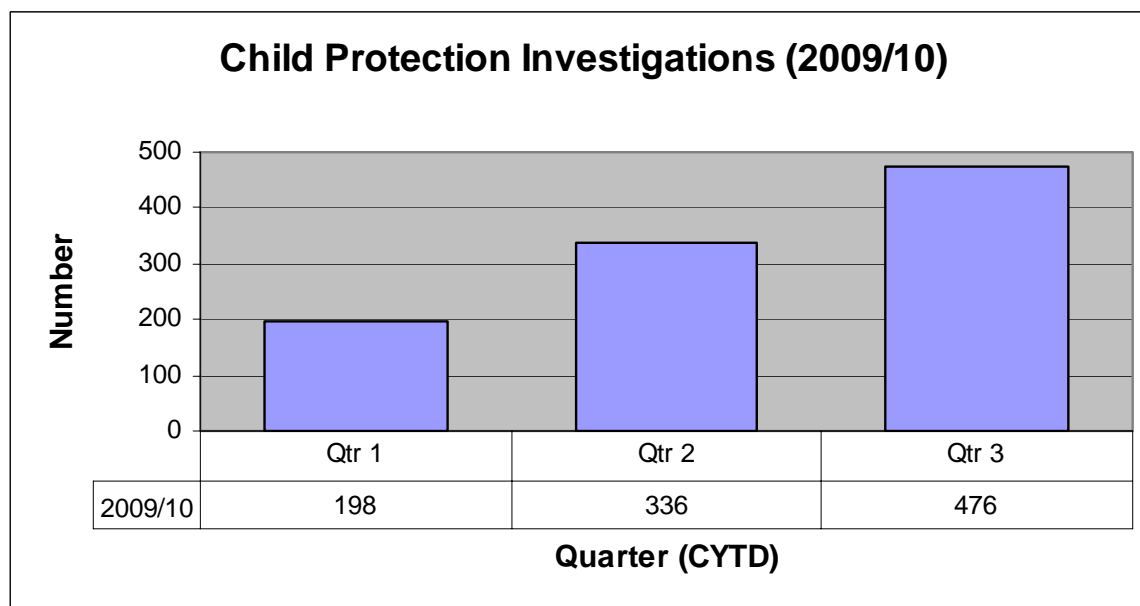
- 14 This chart is showing the number of referrals to children's social care including Child Protection. From 2008/09 the recording of domestic abuse notifications changed in line with statutory guidance. These are now classed as either a notification or a referral for services whereas previously all notifications were recorded as referrals. This therefore does affect the year on year comparison on numbers of referrals to children's social care before 2008-9. However, the

projected total number of referrals is likely to be similar to last year and a continuing high number of child protection referrals.

- 15 There is a clear protocol between Bedfordshire Police and Luton Borough Council to risk assess and screen all notifications of domestic violence. This was identified as a strength in the recent Ofsted unannounced inspection (see details later in the report)

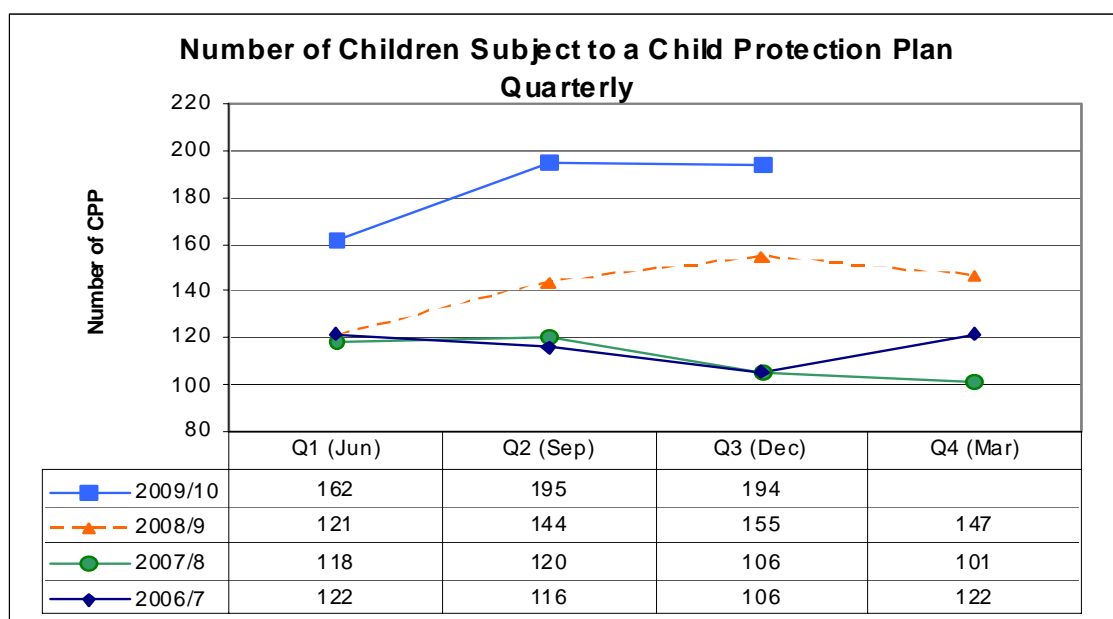


### Number of child protection investigations



- 16 The number of child protection investigations has increased on the 2008-9 figures (to be presented at the Scrutiny meeting)

**Chart showing number of children subject to a child protection plan**

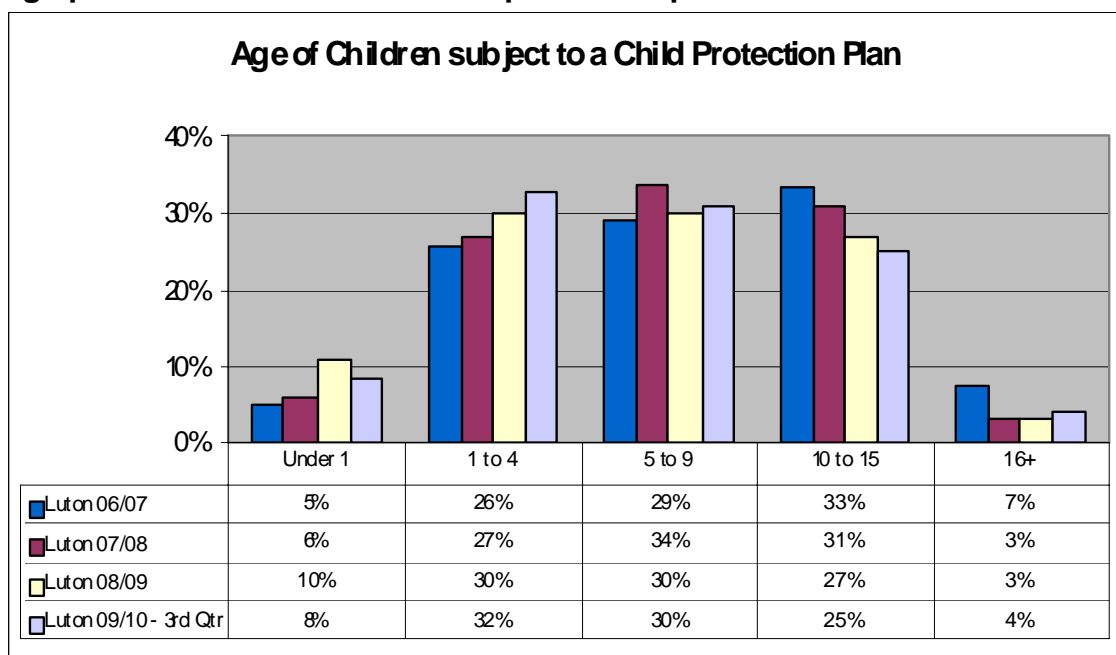


- 17 The number of children subject to a child protection plan has increased significantly over the last year. A significant number of children at end of 3rd quarter 2009/10, 86.3% of children in child protection became the subject to a child protection plan for the first time. During 2008/09, 87.0% of children in child protection became subject to a child protection plan for the first time so the numbers of new protection plans are similar to last year.

**Number of children with a child protection plan who have a qualified social worker**

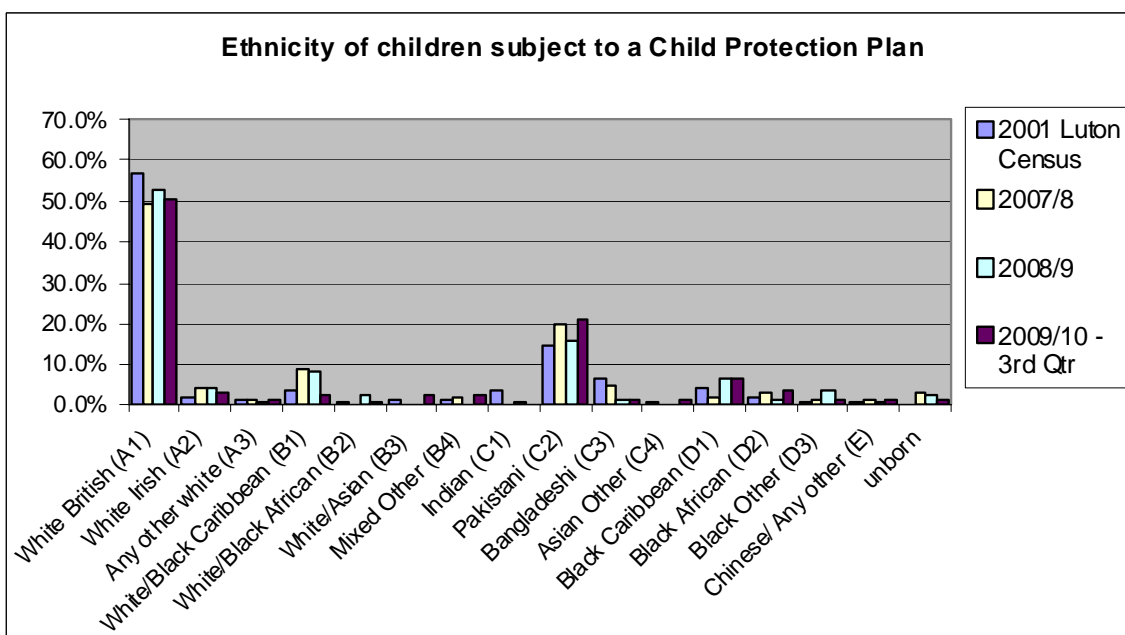
- 18 Of the 194 children subject to a child protection plan, 194 children have a qualified social worker as at end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (100%).
- 19 This trend is unchanged from historic data. In 2008/09 of the 147 children subject to a child protection plan at end of year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2009), 147 children had a qualified social worker (100%).

## Age profile of children with child protection plans



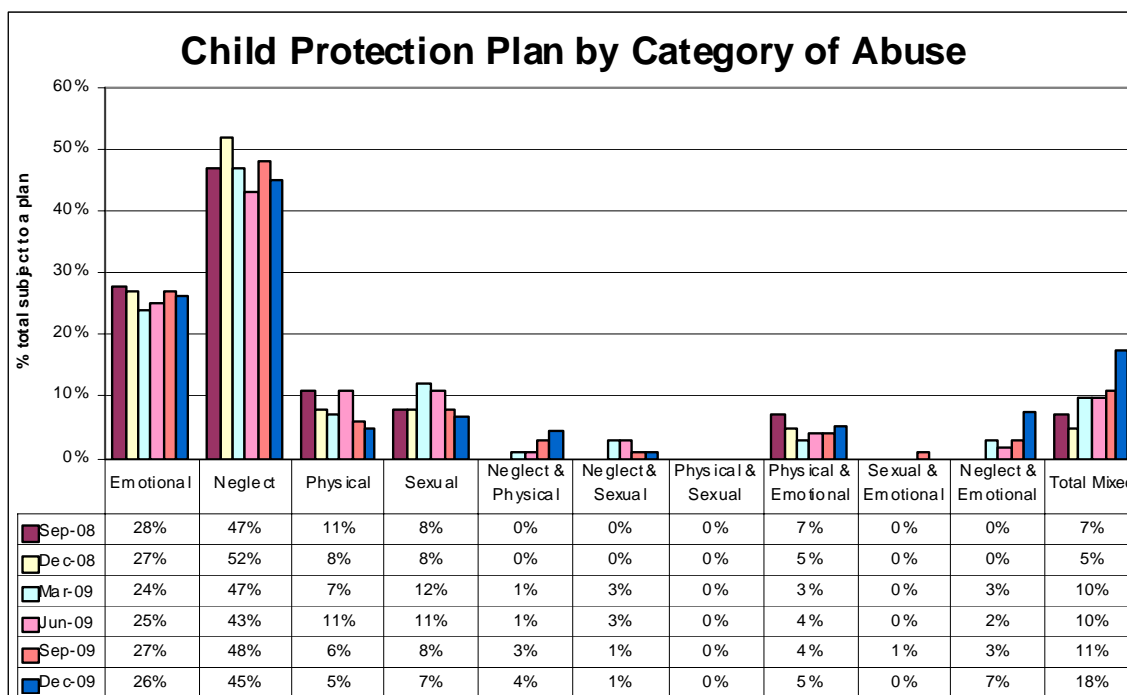
- 20 This chart shows a growing number of children aged 4 years and under being subject to child protection plans and a reduction in the number of 10 to fifteen year olds.

## Ethnicity of children with a child protection plan



## Category of Abuse

- 21 Chart of the Category of Abuse children subject to Child Protection Plan fall under. As at end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter in 2009/10, 83% of children subject to a child protection plan are categorised under emotional abuse, physical abuse or neglect. 45% of child protection plans were for reasons of neglect which reflects the focus in Luton on identifying the issues of neglect. This is similar to the national trend on category of abuse.



## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups and Reported Incidents**

### **Number of 0-15 and 16-25 year olds seriously injured or killed in road traffic incidents**

- 22 The number of 0-15 year olds seriously injured or killed in road traffic accidents is in line with 2008 (10) and so far this year there have been 6 young people killed or seriously injured so far.
- 23 Since 2005, the number of 16-25 year olds who were injured or killed in road traffic accidents has been falling. So far this year 5 young people in this age group have been seriously injured or killed in road traffic accidents in Luton.

### **Number of private fostering arrangements (where a parent has placed a child under a private arrangement to live on a full time basis and not with a close relative)**

- 24 Where a private arrangement has been made by a parent for their child to live with someone who is not a close relative this should be reported to the Local Authority so an assessment of these arrangements and monitoring visits can be carried out. There are only 3 private fostering arrangements known to social services in quarter 3 of 2009/10. Action to increase awareness of private fostering include actively raising awareness in the community, media articles, distributing leaflets promoting private fostering has been an ongoing campaign over the last 18 months. However, the low number of private fostering arrangements known to the local authority and the likelihood that there are a far larger number of private fostering arrangements shows the need to continue this campaign.

## **Unannounced Safeguarding Inspection**

- 25 In January 2010 Ofsted undertook the annual unannounced inspection of Luton Borough Council's contact, referral and assessment arrangements (the Initial Assessment Team). The following is a summary of the inspection findings: Satisfactory arrangements for receiving and screening referrals, child protection cases responded to promptly and appropriately, eligibility criteria is clearly set out; managers provide accessible support; regular auditing by a senior manager, training and development needs of staff identified; the emergency out of hours service liaises effectively with the initial assessment team.
- 26 Strengths: child protection strategy meetings are well attended by partner agencies and result in effective planning; a clear protocol exists between the Council and Bedfordshire Police resulting in effective evaluation and follow up action; Forced Marriage Protection Orders are used effectively to protect young people.
- 27 Areas for Development: Staff supervision to include more evidence of challenge and reflection; core and initial assessment are of variable quality in analysis and plans; service users views need to be more evident in assessment documents; delays in allocation and completion of assessments lead to delays in delivery of services to some families; management information systems do not enable managers in monitoring performance in a timely manner; performance against the national indicator of cases re-referred is too high (2008-9).
- 28 Area for Priority Action: significant delays in allocating some cases could result in potential risk to children and young people. This priority action came from some initial assessments of children in need cases not being allocated in what the inspectors concluded was a timely manner. The inspectors agreed that referrals were risk assessed before decisions of allocation were made.
- 29 An action plan is in place to address the areas for development and the priority action. This action plan focuses particularly on reducing the delay in allocating assessments as the team is now fully staffed; improving use of management information systems; revising assessment documents to focus more significantly on analysis; and auditing reasons why families have been referred more than once over the last year.

## **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

- 30 It is the responsibility of the Local Authority scrutiny process to scrutinise multi agency safeguarding arrangements and performance by the Council and it's partners under the Luton Safeguarding Children Board. It is therefore proposed that the Scrutiny Board members consider the following options available to them:
- i. To request further information/presentation on a particular safeguarding topic or topics in order to undertake a more in depth study for example arrangements for investigations against adults working with children; safe recruitment systems; multi agency responses to domestic violence.
  - ii. To request 6 monthly reports on key safeguarding performance areas, quality assurance processes and action plans including the LSCB annual report which will be completed at the end of this year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**



- 31 The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, The Local Safeguarding Children's Boards Regulations 2006 and The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 provide the legislative framework for safeguarding arrangements across key partners in children's services and also set out the responsibilities of the Local Authority. This report was agreed by Mary Cormack in Legal Services on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 32 The work of the LSCB and all partner agencies in promoting the safety of children and young people must take into account equality implications in service development, planning and delivery. In Luton this takes into account arrangements for safeguarding potentially more vulnerable children who are asylum seekers, children and young people with disabilities, young people who may be at risk of forced marriage and current work developing safeguarding arrangements with mosques and madrassas.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 33 The LSCB has a multi agency budget to support carrying out it's duties. The Children and Learning Department has undertaken a review of resource provision following the move to neighbourhood teams, analysis of child protection work demands in 2009-2010 and a work load management review. The conclusion of this work is that two more full time social workers are required to ensure children's social care work is allocated in a timely way. Funding is being pursued to satisfy this requirement. The Finance Manager, Children and Learning confirms this financial position.
- 34 Alongside this NHS Luton has increased the recruitment of health visitors and Bedfordshire Police has reorganised it's public protection services which include the child abuse investigation team in Luton.

## **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 35 There is a clear procedure in place to meet national requirements in investigating safeguarding allegations made against staff working with children. These procedures include the employment of the Local Authority Designated Officer post to coordinate and monitor the investigation of allegations to ensure procedures are followed.
- 36 Safe recruitment processes are in place for employing staff who work directly with children and their families in the Council and in schools. These are regularly updated and have taken into account the Independent Safeguarding Authority requirements. This report has been agreed by the Human Resources Manager, Children and Learning Department.

## **CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 37 The LSCB has undertaken consultation on developing it's business priorities for 2010-2011 with staff across partner agencies. Over the next year the LSCB will increase communication and consultation with the public parents and carers and children and young people as highlighted in the business priorities.

- 38 The Children & Learning Department regularly appraise Cllr Tahir Khan and Cllr Sheila Roden of safeguarding arrangements and key performance indicators. Cllr Khan is a member of the LSCB.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

Report to Council Executive on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Multi agency Child Protection Arrangements

Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny 8 January 2009 Multi agency Child Protection Arrangements