A review of current arrangements for the operation of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

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Acknowledgements

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Lastly, particular thanks to those LSCB Chairs who have given their time and energy to this research – resources upon which there are many demands. Their generosity and commitment is a theme that runs throughout this research.
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Summary

The research offers a rich set of data, across a range of areas. The messages that are perhaps most striking to those engaged in debate around LSCBs and their effectiveness centred around four themes and can be organised as:

a) a lack of clarity on the role and expectations of LSCBs, linked closely to the perceived increase of responsibilities together with the emergence of new strategic bodies whose work interacts with that of LSCBs

b) the pressure on LSCB resources, in terms of funding, partner contributions, staffing capacity and the impact of SCRS; the widespread uncertainty around resources was seen to be having an impact on effectiveness

c) the dissonance between the degree to which LSCBs are held accountable and the level of power and authority they have to exercise their responsibilities and in particular hold partners to account

d) the pivotal importance of LSCB Chairs; the skills and qualities of the individual Chair is a vital element in determining Board effectiveness, which poses some risk in light of the limited amount of paid time available to Chairs.

These messages are intertwined, contextual and indeed may not be the experience of all LSCBs. LSCB Chairs come from a range of professional backgrounds, predominantly social work or policing, and many chair a number of Boards. Almost all Chairs routinely spend more time on their role than is remunerated; in a third of cases Chairs reported working twice as much as is paid for. Boards themselves are supported through a variety of staffing arrangements, with Board Business Managers deemed to be highly valuable.

Partner engagement varies; local authorities, police and probation were reported to be well-engaged. Health partner engagement is more mixed, with recent reorganisation of the health sector creating a degree of
confusion. The increased independence of schools was said to be having a negative impact overall on the engagement of education partners with LSCB business. A need to establish clarity in terms of LSCBs’ relationship with the myriad of other strategic bodies was identified, with some areas having achieved this to a greater extent than others. Partner contributions also varied, with local authorities often bearing a disproportionate responsibility, this was felt to perpetuate unhelpful perceptions that safeguarding is the responsibility of children’s social care, as well as undermining the independence of LSCBs.

Expectations upon LSCBs, and the accompanying increased workload, have risen in recent years – to an unrealistic level according to some. The breadth of LSCB focus, together with nationally identified priorities, was said by some to be stretching LSCBs’ ability to operate effectively. This was exacerbated by the widespread financial constraints on partners, which can impede both the individual agencies’ safeguarding efforts and their contribution to the LSCB.

Effectiveness of LSCBs was linked to one or more of these factors:

- the commitment and participation of partner agencies
- strategic coherence and agreed accountabilities
- effective performance management frameworks
- exercises such as task and finish groups, and appraisals with Board members
- sufficient resources in order to hold partner agencies to account

The most frequently cited factors that challenged LSCBs’ effectiveness were:

- the under-resourcing and turnover of staff in partner agencies
- a training offer that was not strong enough and could not be shown to demonstrate impact
- negativity / dissonance arising from conflicting cultures
- Failure / difficulties in reaching agreement on data sets

Effectively fulfilling LSCB responsibilities was considered to rely heavily on the interpersonal skills of Chairs. However it was also recognised that a Chair alone could not make a Board effective; it also needed a strong
group of members able to engage and contribute fully and who shared a vision of what the Board was there to achieve. At a time when partners were subjected to budgetary cuts, it was recognised that a great deal was achieved in no small part through the attributes and efforts of individuals.

Inspection was occasionally noted to bring some benefits to improvement activity, but was more often reported to be unhelpful, overly focussed on compliance, and the current model was not felt to be appropriate for the partnership arrangements embodied by a LSCB. It was suggested by many that LSCBs lack the resources and the authority to deliver against the expectations placed on them by Ofsted and national Government.

No evidence was found to support notions of structural or procedural reform to LSCBs; and indeed any reform activity would first require the establishment of shared and realistic expectations of LSCBs together with recognition of the many contextual pressures placed upon them. However, this study indicates that if LSCBs were afforded greater certainty and sustainability in their resourcing, alongside clear and proportionate expectations of their remit, they could act as powerful, galvanising forces for good – as indeed some do. If, however, they are to be expected to provide an independent scrutiny mechanism across the whole of children’s services then the purpose has outgrown the design.
Section 1: Background

The Children Act 2004 placed a statutory duty on local authorities (LA) to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to ensure at a local level key agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Over the years the nature and scope of their responsibilities have changed. Working Together (WT 2013) emphasised the role of LSCBs in ensuring effective local arrangements and in holding partners to account but it also added a number of significant responsibilities. These included oversight of early help arrangements, clarifying thresholds, and developing a local framework for learning and development.

The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned Research in Practice to conduct research into the current arrangements for the operation of LSCBs. The research was designed to:

- provide baseline data on how LSCBs are responding to the changes introduced by WT 2013
- establish the key criteria required for the effective operation of LSCBs
- examine current arrangements to provide a model that is fit for purpose in fulfilling the expectations of policy makers and regulators
- contribute to a national debate on future arrangements for the operation of LSCBs with a particular focus on funding, staffing capacity and workload
- provide reflections and considerations for local, regional and national bodies to enhance the effectiveness of LSCBs.
Section 2: Methodology and Analysis of Data

There were three phases of this mixed method research project:

1. a survey of all LSCBs in England plus Guernsey and Jersey
2. case studies conducted in three LSCBs
3. five discussion groups bringing together representatives from agencies and organisations that work with, or whose work is relevant to, LSCBs.

While ethical permissions were not needed for this study the work was conducted with regard to the British Sociological Association’s Code of Research Ethics (British Sociological Association, 2002).

2.1 Survey

The survey was designed to collect background information about LSCBs and the various aspects of their work. The draft instrument for the online survey was piloted with three current or former Chairs of LSCBs and one former Board Business Manager. Most respondents completed the survey on line but two asked for an off-line version of the instrument. Appendix 1 contains a copy of the survey and the quantitative data collected.

2.2 Case studies

Given the limited resources available for this project it was decided to conduct targeted case studies that concentrated on specific geographical areas and broad topics. The three LSCBs were sampled from a stratified framework designed to reflect three types of authority – a London borough, a shire county and a unitary authority – one of which would have had experience of an Ofsted inspection. The sample only contained those LSCBs where the Chairs had indicated that they would be prepared to participate in further research. A total of 37 interviews were conducted across the three sites. The schedules used are contained in Appendix 2.

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1 In autumn 2013, Ofsted introduced the new ‘single’ framework for inspection of protection, care, adoption and fostering, alongside a review of LSCBs.
The research was not designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the three LSCBs or to identify good practice. It was informed by four considerations. These were the:

- sustainability of current LSCB workload, and any action taken to address this. Including consideration of the impact of financial and staffing capacity
- extent to which partners are continuing to engage effectively with the Board, particularly in light of recent changes within key agencies such as health, probation, schools and third sector providers
- strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements, and possibilities for improvement
- consideration of what the role of the LSCB can and should be, and the extent to which this aligns with current expectations from Government and Ofsted.

2.3 Discussion groups

The discussion groups allowed the researchers to collect data from multiple participants in an efficient way (see Krueger and Casey, 2000). Participants were recruited through various channels including the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS), the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs (AILC), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Department of Health, the College of Policing, Children England, NSPCC, Research in Practice and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace), as well as through personal contacts. The groups were convened in Birmingham, London and Manchester. It had been intended to have

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2 ASSOCIATION of INDEPENDENT LSCB CHAIRS (AILC)
The VISION of the Association is to improve safeguarding outcomes for children, through supporting and strengthening Independent LSCB Chairs and LSCB partnerships. AILC’s AIMS are:

(i) Improving effectiveness of LSCBs through challenge, shared learning and peer support
(ii) Providing a forum through which the insights and views of independent LSCB Chairs can be disseminated in order to improve the safeguarding of all children
(iii) Acting as a national voice for Chairs, giving an informed response to government consultations and seeking to influence and respond to other national policy developments on LSCB related safeguarding issues
(iv) Supporting professional development of LSCB Chairs to undertake their statutory role
(v) Enhancing the contribution of independence in the chairing of LSCBs
(vi) Leading on LSCB matters in partnership with other safeguarding organisations
(vii) Strengthening the identity of LSCBs in local, regional and national governance structures
six groups, two in each city, but too few people wanted to attend the second Birmingham group to justify proceeding. Every group was facilitated by two researchers and those participating needed little encouragement to contribute.

There were three broad areas covered in the discussion groups:

- multi-agency relationships
- effectiveness, improvement, regulation/inspection
- sustainability and resourcing.

### 2.4 Analysis and reporting

Responses to the survey were analysed using statistical methods and the free-text responses were analysed thematically using the framework approach.

Thirty-seven interviews were conducted across the case studies; 30 face-to-face and seven on the telephone. Most of the interviews conducted for the case studies, and all the discussion groups, were digitally recorded and then transcribed. The data were sorted into analytical categories in order to undertake content analysis of the different points made, assess the frequency with which they were made and extract examples to illustrate points that were articulated. A Constant Comparison Analysis (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) has been found to be very appropriate for analysis of focus group data (see Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2007, 2008) and although these were not focus groups the method transferred very well. Because group data are analysed one group at a time according to Charmaz (2000) this allows a confirmation, or otherwise, of themes. Given the high level of agreement amongst the participants, the method also allowed the emergence of any differences to be captured.

The reporting provides an indication of the strength of feeling on specific issues but these can only reflect the views of those in the discussion groups. Though participants represented 38 LSCBs it should be noted that they were expressing their own views and not representing the views of all members of their LSCBs. They were, nevertheless, opportunities for those with a very good understanding of LSCBs to express their opinions.
and provide examples of how their Boards were addressing challenging issues. The reporting of the groups is designed to reflect this.

Deploying a mixed methodologies or data triangulation approach has produced findings that are, in a few instances, not always consistent – as one might expect when exploring a topic which invites diverse views by the very nature of its multi-agency nature. Nevertheless the study has produced a richer data set and a more comprehensive picture of the current state of LSCBs than any one method could have done alone. It is worth noting that this project was exploratory rather than purist in approach and it would be erroneous to force conformity across the data.
Section 3: Survey

Key findings

- Over half of Chairs felt that LSCBs had sufficient authority in relation to DCSs (55%). There was far less agreement over the extent to which LSCBs had the necessary statutory powers to hold partners to account or sufficient authority in relation to Chief Executives.
- Most Chairs (90%) were spending more time on Board work than they were paid for, with a third spending double the amount of time.
- Chairs were generally more confident in their Board’s performance in co-ordinating the work of partner agencies than ensuring the effectiveness of this work. The vast majority of Chairs felt that their Board was performing each of these functions at least “moderately well”, though only around half would rate this as “mostly very well” or “completely”.
- The factors most frequently mentioned by Chairs as contributing to Board effectiveness were:
  - commitment of partner agencies
  - strategic coherence and agreed accountabilities across the membership
  - performance management frameworks.
- The challenges to Board effectiveness most frequently reported by LSCB Chairs included:
  - uncertainties over the financial and other support they will receive from partners, particularly at a time of severe budgetary cuts
  - high level of turnover amongst members of partner agencies
  - limited operational support for the Boards.

3 With 89 Chairs completing the survey, it should be noted that percentages have been rounded up.
• Many more serious case reviews (SCRs) were being initiated than previously and 44 per cent of Chairs highlighted the impact of this on the work of their Boards.

• The uncertainties facing many Boards over resourcing led over three-quarters (78%) to report a preference for a defined national formula to determine the contributions of partner agencies.

• Most Chairs reported that partnership engagement had improved over recent years. However, a significant minority reported concerns in relation to the engagement of health partners, particularly NHS England, and representation of academies (including free schools) and independent schools was generally reported to be low.

• Nearly three-quarters of Chairs reported their Boards were taking account of frontline practitioners’ views to a reasonable extent or better. About half of Chairs thought their LSCBs were taking account of children and young people’s views to the same degree.

• Just under half of Chairs (47%) thought their Boards were ensuring that safeguarding and child protection training met local needs; over half (55%) noted difficulties in monitoring single agency training and half (50%) reported difficulties in getting some agencies to attend multi-agency training.

• The majority of Chairs thought that over the past two years:
  - the work of LSCBs was now afforded a greater profile (76%)
  - the workload of LSCBs had increased (91%)
  - LSCBs’ resources had not increased (63%)
  - local agencies valued the work of LSCBs (90%)

• Chairs were asked to say to what extent they agreed with a set of statements that related to current policy issues relating to the work of LSCBs:
  - Nearly three-quarters (73%) thought that regional collaboration had been helpful in addressing national priorities and that they had the data to enable them to identify local priorities.
  - Two-thirds (66%) thought that SCRs were useful in helping to improve safeguarding locally although many (60%)
thought there were insufficient specialists to undertake them.
- Opinion was divided over whether the current Ofsted inspection framework was helpful in driving up performance and increasing the profile of LSCB activity. However the majority (81%) thought that effective multi agency inspections had the potential to support and strengthen the work of LSCBs.
- Nearly three quarters (74%) thought that the increasing independence of schools and the reorganisation of the health service had made it harder to engage with those sectors.
- Three quarters (75%) of Chairs thought that the introduction of statutory safeguarding adult boards was a useful development that supported engagement with adult services for the benefit of children and young people.
3.1 Background

The survey was launched online on 14 November and stayed active until 8 December 2014.

3.2 Response rates and respondents

The Association of Independent LSCB Chairs lists 151 LSCBs; 146 in England with an additional five additional Boards covering the Armed Forces, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey and Northern Ireland. The survey was sent to the Chairs of all English LSCBs plus the Chairs of both the Guernsey and the Jersey LSCBs\(^4\) making a total sample of 148. Given that some Chairs oversee more than one LSCB, this produced a potential total of 103 independent Chairs covering these LSCBs. The Association for Independent Chairs of LSCBs shared the contact details for all Chairs of LSCBs in post at 14 November 2014. One LSCB did not have a Chair in place. The survey was sent to a total of 102 Chairs in post in November 2014.

By the close of the survey, responses had been received from 89 Chairs covering 130 of the 148 LSCBs. All but two surveys were completed online. The 89 responses from Chairs represent an 87 per cent response rate; and responses on 130 of the 148 LSCBs canvassed represent 88 per cent coverage. A few respondents (n=4) supplied details of their sub-groups but it was not possible to collect details across all LSCBs within the resources of this project.

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\(^4\) After consulting with the Chair of the Ministry of Defence Safeguarding Children Board it was decided to omit this board as it has a different role from other LSCBs as its main focus is children living overseas. The Chairs of LSCBs on Jersey and Guernsey were included as they belong to the Association and adopt the principles and guidance from England. Isle of Man and Northern Ireland were excluded as they do not adopt these principles.
3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Background on Chairs of LSCBs

3.3.1.i Professional background

Respondents were asked to provide details of their professional background and these are recorded in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Professional background of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Number of respondents *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>39 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>24 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachings and education</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one of above</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>12 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In view of total ‘n’ of being below 100, the percentages are rounded up and should be understood as such throughout this report where percentages in tables refer to Chairs.

Social work was the predominant professional background for Chairs (44%)\(^5\), with the next most common being a police background (27%).\(^6\)

The last national review of the professional backgrounds of Chairs (France et al., 2009) was conducted over five years previously, before the requirement for an independent Chair had been implemented across the country. At the point that France et al conducted their research most LSCBs were chaired by a Director of Children’s Services (DCS) or an assistant director, with as many of these having a professional

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\(^4\) In view of total ‘n’ of Chairs being below 100 i.e. 89 where percentages are provided they are for guidance only.

\(^6\) Other respondents did mention having held a senior role in children’s services departments, health or the police when responding to other parts of the survey; however, details have only been quantified where provided in response to this question.
background in education as in social work; very few Chairs in 2009 came from the police. By 2014 the situation had changed with over a quarter of respondents having a police background and only one having an education background.\(^7\)

**3.3.1.ii Number of Boards chaired by respondents**

Just over a third of respondents (n=31 of the 89) chaired more than one LSCB. The details of the numbers chaired by respondents are recorded in Table 2.

**Table 2: Number of LSCBs chaired by respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of LSCBs chaired</th>
<th>Number of Chairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>58 (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>89 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than a quarter of the 89 respondents (n=25) also chaired one adult safeguarding board (ASB). Of this group six, half of whom were in London, also chaired more than one LSCB.\(^8\)

**3.3.1.iii Length of time as Chair of their LSCB(s)**

Respondents were asked to say for how long they had chaired their LSCB(s). Given that a significant proportion of respondents chaired more than one LSCB, the data are reported in terms of the number of LSCBs. Forty per cent – or two-fifths – of LSCBs had Chairs who have served for between one and three years, and a third have a Chair who has been in position for less than one year. The remaining Boards (just over a

\(^7\) However comparison with the earlier research must be treated with some caution as it was conducted at a time when only two-fifths of LSCBs had an independent Chair.

\(^8\) Based on additional information received during the case studies and discussion groups it is likely that the number of such multiple chairing arrangements has already risen since the survey.
quarter) had a Chair with three years plus in that LSCB. Of course, many of the Chairs who had served for a short time may have had experience of chairing other boards. So the length of time in the LSCB(s) does not reflect their experience as a Chair of an LSCB per se, but rather their experience with those local conditions, personalities, processes and procedures.

3.3.2 Appointment and accountability of Chairs

WT 2013 restates that every LSCB should have an independent Chair who can hold agencies to account, but makes it the responsibility of the local authority Chief Executive to:

- appoint or remove the LSCB Chair with the agreement of a panel including LSCB partners and lay members
- hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB.

Chairs were asked to say how these arrangements were working in the 130 LSCBs represented and their responses are recorded in Table 3.

**Table 3: How arrangements on appointment/dismissal and accountability are working**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How arrangements are working on...</th>
<th>Appointments/dismissal</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working extremely well</td>
<td>63 (48%)</td>
<td>63 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working to a large extent</td>
<td>30 (23%)</td>
<td>30 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working ‘well enough’</td>
<td>24 (18%)</td>
<td>24 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working to a limited/very limited extent</td>
<td>13 (11%)</td>
<td>13 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority confirmed that they were reasonably or very happy with the arrangements as they were implemented:

*I am very happy that the Chief Executive of the lead agency should be the lead on hiring and firing, unless there is a radical change to the approach to LSCBs.*

*I think this is appropriate and have campaigned hard for this shift from the Director of Children’s Services to the Chief Executive.*

However, only a minority (16%) thought they had sufficient authority in relation to their Chief Executives. The minority who reported that the arrangements were working to a limited or very limited extent did so either because they were working in areas where there had been a failure to involve LSCB partners or because they believed that in reality power was ‘delegated’ to the Director of Children’s Services. The Chairs most critical of current arrangements offered additional comments such as these:

The accountability framework does not explicitly cover the complex relationship with the DCS – which is integral to the effective discharge of both the LSCB Chair and the DCS role. I agree that LSCB Chair should relate to the partnership and the CE, but the silence on the DCS relationship leaves potential room for unresolved issues. However, in practice this is not my experience with either of my Boards, where the working relationship with the DCS is strong, although different in each case. This is largely a result of mutual trust and respect rather than a defined set of roles.

The Chief Executive and lead member hold me to account for running of Board but [are] less willing to be held to account by the Board. This is not appropriately tested by Ofsted in my view.

The Chief Executive is not a member of the Board, so I feel it would sit better as an ad hoc panel of the Board involving the local authority, police and health.

Respondents were invited to suggest an alternative approach; only one did so, suggesting, but not necessarily proposing, the introduction of a ‘hiring and firing’ system controlled by central Government.
3.3.3 Regional networking

Chairs were asked to say how they would characterise links, relationships and interactions with other LSCB Chairs within their regions. As the data in Table 4 show, these were said to be in place across most areas.

Table 4: Contacts with other LSCBs at regional level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of contact</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little or no contact</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact through other regional forums</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspond/speak occasionally</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspond/speak regularly</td>
<td>35 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular structured opportunities for contact</td>
<td>75 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only a very small proportion had contacts that crossed regional boundaries. The data are reported at LSCB-level as there were differences in responses from Chairs in relation to different LSCBs that they chaired. These were sometimes explained as a response to a distinctive local way of working, usually because of a historical tendency to operate in isolation. There was, however, one comment that explained why networking was not happening in one particular area:

> Recently the arrangements for quarterly meetings were suspended by the DCS and a decision made not to pay for such meetings. Quarterly meetings should be held and should for part of the meeting include Board Business Managers.

Chairs were also asked to say if more regional networking would be useful. Chairs did not think this would be helpful in most LSCBs, however for 49 LSCBs it was thought that it would be and that this could be facilitated by:
more structured meetings with clear links to national association representation
joint conferences
greater involvement with sector-led improvement.

For those chairing two or three LSCBs, the work entailed a considerable amount of regional networking in the course of chairing duties. Comments on the time and resources involved provide further insight into why many respondents were not keen on increased regional networking:

*It is tempting to say yes but given time constraints and demands, the current quarterly meetings are enough. The benefits lie in close liaison with neighbouring areas.*

*There are limits to the time that can be devoted to regional work above the allocation for the LSCB role. Clearer expectations and the resources to support effective Board Business Manager groups alongside the Chairs are necessary.*

### 3.3.4 Time commitment and remuneration

Chairs were asked to say for how much time each month they were paid to spend on LSCB-related activities. The range of days paid was striking, with no consistency across type or size of authority. Paid time ranged between one and a half days in a unitary and ten days in a metropolitan authority – though this was very much an outlier, with a more frequently mentioned number of days being between three and four days a month.

Some people said they were working to a flexible contract to respond to a specific situation (usually being in intervention following an Ofsted inspection). There was not a strong correlation between the size of the area covered by the LSCB and the number of days allocated to the Chair’s role. So while a number of shire areas allocated four or more days to the role, so did some unitary and metropolitan authorities, as well as two London boroughs.

There were a number of requests for a review of the remuneration of Chairs. Although some Chairs thought that they were fairly remunerated, others did not. This Chair was not alone in wanting to see a more realistic approach adopted which reflected the actual demands of the role:
It is a privilege to chair a LSCB but it is also a very responsible position which most of us do not receive appropriate recompense. I don’t know any Chairs that were able to do it within the allocated days as it was, but the demands have increased enormously over the past two years. It is time for a review of how this role is resourced.

Overall, 80 of the 89 respondents were devoting more time than they were paid for the task; this ranged from half a day to six days a month in additional, unpaid time. One third of respondents were spending double the amount of time they were paid to commit to the role. Some were retired and said that it was easier to make time available; others said they accepted the gap and regarded it as a pro bono contribution. But there were also those who, while they wanted to do a good job, wondered how sustainable the role would be without considerably more resources and in the face of escalating demands:

*Figures reflect invoiced time and do not reflect time spent reading, emails, telephone. Figures quoted are an average and can increase with unexpected issues such as peer consultations, SCRs, Ofsted preparation. Priorities are determined from month to month and reflect ‘safeguarding’ and ‘political’ imperatives – and there are more national priorities.*

### 3.3.5 Fulfilling their statutory duties

Respondents were asked to identify the level at which their Board(s) were fulfilling their statutory duties to:

- coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board(s) for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area
- ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Boards for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.

Their assessments are recorded in Table 5.
Table 5: Fulfilling statutory duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board(s) for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area</th>
<th>Additional notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very poorly</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Poorly | 4 (3%) | All been inspected under the new Ofsted framework and been judged to be ‘inadequate’.
| Moderately well | 56 (43%) |
| Mostly very well | 66 (51%) |
| Completely | 4 (3%) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board(s) for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area</th>
<th>Additional notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very poorly</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately well</td>
<td>51 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly very well</td>
<td>57 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While most respondents reported that their LSCBs were fulfilling their duties in relation to coordination at least ‘moderately well’, with over half saying they were doing so ‘mostly very well’ or ‘completely’, there was slightly less confidence expressed about their ability to ensure effectiveness. Although the overwhelming majority said they were doing so at least ‘moderately well’, with just under half reported to be doing this
‘mostly very well’ or ‘completely’, 14 per cent were said to be doing so ‘poorly’ or ‘very poorly’.

3.3.5.i Factors contributing to effectiveness

Respondents were asked to identify up to three strengths contributing to the effectiveness of LSCBs. Nearly half of the 89 respondents mentioned at least one of the following:

- the commitment or participation of partner agencies, demonstrated by attending and contributing to meetings and pursuing improvement (n=43)
- strategic coherence and agreed accountabilities often supported by regular meetings between senior managers or Chairs of other strategic groups and the involvement of key Board members on sub-groups (n=41)
- performance management frameworks such as regular Section 11 multi-agency audits\(^9\) procedures to capture key performance and audit data, agreement on a clear set of priorities and outcome indicators and challenge/peer review arrangements (n=41).

*The Board has adopted a learning and improvement framework. That guides individual members on what are the key issues and we check on progress. So we are pushing members to go back to their agencies and act on the Board’s priorities.*

*We have work streams that involve agencies in those key priority areas and members of the work streams are not just Board members – it pulls in others and gives us a guide on how things are moving on.*

*A strong cohesive partnership, an experienced and competent Board Business Manager, a clear constitution which clearly describes the scope of the Board and roles and responsibilities of members and their organisations.*

Other facilitating factors included:

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\(^9\) Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
• processes to disseminate learning, particularly from national and local serious case review findings (n=26)

• advantages that arise from covering a small geographic area, especially in supporting communication and the development of relationships (n=13)

Good and consistent partnership working across LSCB members and member agencies. Being a small borough allows for easier monitoring and audit arrangements and a more connected workforce (across agencies).

• good support from elected members (n=8).

3.3.6 Factors challenging effectiveness

In many instances, the factors challenging the effectiveness of LSCBs were, not surprisingly, the reverse of its enablers. There were three issues that attracted the most comments:

• severe budgetary constraints that agencies face in the context of austerity measures, which can make it difficult to ensure that partners contribute financial and human resources (n=58)

• turbulence and churn in partner organisations, alongside the fragmentation of services, lead to frequent changes in Board membership, which in turn aggravates situations where there is already a reduced commitment on the part of partners and can lead to a lack of openness about strategic and operational challenges (n=52)

• a Board’s limited or over-stretched infrastructure, including the time allocated to the Chair (n=51).

Statutory partners (health and police) cover multiple LSCBs and are unable to commit sufficient resource/attention to individual Boards. Staff/resources are in the main in the gift of the local authority. Statutory partners also act/speak on behalf of their agency and appear to find it difficult to acknowledge and act as a Board member charged with holding the system to account – often retreating into a defence of their own agency’s position.

The increasing size of the agenda and expectations on LSCBs. Chair and Board members are limited in the time available for LSCB work
In addition to these three, other challenges that were often reported included:

- failure to reach agreement on data sets, indicators and outcomes to measure effectiveness of partners’ safeguarding activity
- inadequate or weak training offer and/or failure to track learning outcomes
- negativity engendered by a culture of blame alongside conflicting agency cultures.

_The cultures of agencies are very strong and can be destructive of LSCB solidarity – I don't know how you reconcile the many conflicts between the aims of their agency and the aims of the Board._

### 3.3.7 Annual reports

WT 2013 requires the independent Chair to publish an annual report of the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area.

Respondents were asked if their LSCBs had published reports for 2012/13 and/or 2013/14. The 2012/13 reports had been published in 122 of the 130 LSCBs and the 2013/14 reports in 107 LSCBs. Many of the missing ones were in the process of being published.

### 3.3.8 Serious case reviews

#### 3.3.8.i Numbers of serious case reviews

Figures published by Ofsted show that 143 SCRs were initiated between April 2013 and March 2014 – a 53 per cent increase on 2012/13, when there were 93 (Ofsted, 2014a). Chairs were asked to say how many SCRs had commenced in the past 12 months and how this compared with the previous 12 months. The total of SCRs that had started since April 2014 across the 130 LSCBs was 150. Not surprisingly, these were not evenly spread. So while 17 LSCBs had no SCRs at the present time there were LSCBs conducting up to seven or eight (Table 6).
Table 6: Number of SCRs commenced by LSCBs in past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. SCRs</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>More than 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. LSCBs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one might anticipate, comments from these Chairs indicated that dealing with this number of SCRs concurrently was a challenge.

Most, but not all, respondents provided details of the number that had been conducted in the previous 12 months (April 2013-14), which means that it is not possible to compute a number to contrast with this figure. However, many did provide the total for 2012/13; with some exceptions, and in line with Ofsted’s findings (Ofsted, 2014), more SCRs are being conducted in the current year than previously.

**3.3.8.ii Impact and utility of Serious case reviews**

Respondents were also asked to comment on the extent to which SCRs impact on the ability of their LSCBs to conduct other business; their responses are recorded in Table 7. As Chairs were often assessing impact on more than one LSCB it was clear that there was a strong connection between their views on ‘impact’ and the ‘number of SCRs’ being conducted, supported by views such as this from a Chair who had responded that they were making no impact:

> We have had none this year but I have previously chaired another LSCB which undertook a number of SCRs, where I would have answered to a large extent.
**Table 7: Impact of SCRs on LSCB business**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very limited extent</td>
<td>11 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>48 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>130 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In just under a fifth of LSCBs, Chairs consider that SCRs are having either very minimal or no impact on their operations. In over a third of LSCBs SCRs were considered to be having a limited impact and in over two-fifths of LSCBs a considerable impact. Not surprisingly those with the most SCRs were most likely to say they were having a more significant impact.

However the correlation was not absolute. Of the 17 who had not had a SCR in 2013-14, nine reported that SCRs had had a limited impact, one a large impact and two a very large impact. This is likely to reflect the fact that SCRs have an impact beyond the year in which they are commissioned. Perhaps not surprisingly this was an issue that attracted a considerable number of comments from respondents.

There were also examples where a single SCR could put the LSCB under considerable strain because of the circumstances and the attention which it attracted:

> Some SCRs are not a problem – some are horrendously disruptive because of project management skills/time of Board admin may be lacking. The quality of SCR investigators and their ability to manage their business is very variable. Some SCRs bring family and legal challenge and therefore need considerable chair time on these peripheral issues. Some SCRs distract leaders in organisations from the longer-term improvement because of the distorted weight put on SCRs by Government, Ofsted and the media.

There was also an impact on the work of LSCBs in terms of the tasks that could not be undertaken as a result of staff time being diverted to SCRs.
This emerged frequently but seemed to be particularly acute where a systems approach to SCRs, as recommended by Professor Munro (2011), had been adopted. While the approach was seen to have benefits, it was not yet clear to many of those who have adopted it whether it would produce an overall improvement:

*We are seeking to adopt a systemic approach and have commissioned different lead reviewers to explore a range of systemic approaches. This has led to variable results. But we have sought to be inclusive of managers and staff in the process of undertaking the review. The object is that staff are part of the review rather than receive the result. The Board interrogates the different approaches, seeks to learn and use that learning in the future commissioning of SCRs and other learning events. It is not easy to find appropriate lead reviewers. They are very time consuming for the Board staff and do divert from some other core activity.*

*I am far from sure that the amount of time taken up with training and supporting the systematic approach is worth it. We need to review this and see if the lessons learnt are any different from what would have emerged anyway. Maybe we just had to get better at learning the lessons than overturning the process, which of course is within the spirit of Working Together.*

Despite the concerns that were expressed about the expertise, time and resources that had to be devoted to SCRs there was widespread commitment to a process that allowed partners to examine practice. The problems for many were:

- in relation to developing a learning culture in relation to SCRs while the Government’s emphasis was clearly still seen to be on accountability and even blame
- the extent to which the SCR process had become the focus of political scrutiny (described by some as ‘becoming politicised’).

What the responses indicated was that LSCBs continue to struggle to balance a rigorous approach to SCRs with available resources; Chairs were focused on supporting learning but challenged by the time taken to conclude reviews and by a shortage of authors perceived by Chairs to deliver high quality SCRs.
There were concerns expressed about the recent report from National Panel of Independent Experts on serious case reviews (2014). While there were those who thought that centrally commissioned SCRs would address the blame culture that still prevailed, others were concerned that without adequate resourcing and independence they would not lead to any improvement:

*The annual report of the National Panel and the criticism of LSCBs strictly applying criteria were unhelpful. Alternative methods of review and disseminating learning can be as effective but the Government is still fuelling a blame culture which the panel doesn’t seem to acknowledge. Also the real cost of reviews for statutory agencies already cutting frontline services including some early help services is not considered by Government. The suggested central commissioning of SCRs will be impractical and unlikely to engage local support... it removes the local independence. Perhaps the Independent National Panel could have a full time independent secretariat (instead of DfE) with a central budget to request funding from and hold a register of accredited lead reviewers and authors to allocate. This would require LSCB Chairs to submit a case for review and funding to the panel and the panel could decide.*

### 3.3.8.iii Funding for serious case reviews

Chairs were asked if their LSCBs received additional funding for SCRs. A very small proportion of LSCBs had received such support, 16 (12%) of the 130 Boards represented. In most cases it was not clear where this had come from as the source of additional funding was not provided; where it was made clear, additional funding had come from partner agencies in response to specific requests. Many of the additional comments referred to allocated or contingency funding that was used to pay for SCRs.

Concerns were expressed that local authorities were feeling very exposed as they were effectively underwriting a considerable financial commitment associated with undertaking the increased number of SCRs. The fluctuations in annual expenditure on SCRs make it difficult to forecast what they will cost and, while dependent on relationships across the partnerships, in the opinion of many, overspends were falling disproportionately on local authorities. There was a widespread expectation that at some point Boards’ resources would be challenged by
SCR activity and that partners would then be consulted about costs and contributions.

One Chair reflected that:

> The issue of funding is a major flaw as it is entirely in the gift of the local authority and statutory partners whether the Board has resources to fulfil its responsibilities. A formula-based allocation from central Government (DCLG or DFE) would provide greater assurance and independence.

The focus on funding did lead some to question the value for money aspect of SCRs. There were those who were not convinced that SCRs represented good value for money and that the outputs and outcomes could be achieved as efficiently by other methods. Others thought the process was basically sound but some elements were unnecessarily expensive:

> The author cost is currently between £7k and £15k for a relatively straightforward SCR, more in some cases. This is without factoring in the cost of those involved in the process, and legal costs in some cases. Multiple SCRs are financially problematic. The costs and time involved detract from other work that the Board could be doing in audit and practice analysis.

For the reasons described above it was evident that the majority of respondents, while committed to reviews in some form, believed it is time either for a thorough review of the process or of some of its constituent parts:

> I am completely committed to SCRs but [they are] disproportionate in time/resources and should be part of an active QA (quality assurance) continuum.

### 3.3.9 Support and human resources

3.3.9.i Board Business Manager

All the LSCBs covered by this survey had a full-time or part-time Board Business Manager post. The majority (n=106/82%) had a full-time post and the rest (n=24/18%) part-time. However, seven of the full-time posts

10 One LSCB also has a part-time (.5) strategic manager.
were vacant at the time of the survey. When the very largest and smallest authorities were excluded there were no significant differences between size of the child populations of those LSCBs with a full-time Board Business Manager and those with a part-time post. Many of those with part-time Board Business Managers commented on how inadequate the provision was and several were in the process of finalising arrangements to make the post full-time.

The comments made by Chairs about Board Business Managers served to underline the importance they attached to the post, including one who said:

*We stand and fall by our Business Manager.*

Chairs appreciated the challenges of the post, seeing it as a crucial and often quite an isolated one and where there are often unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved. In a number of LSCBs, even though the post had been recorded as *full time*, that person was often drawn into other work or, as in an increasing number of cases, shared with other services, including adult safeguarding boards (ASBs).

Some Chairs of LSCBs with vacant posts or interim managers were finding it difficult to recruit suitable candidates:

*Both Business Managers are interim. LSCB 1 has advertised twice for Business Managers without a sufficient field of applicants. LSCB 2 is temporarily (hopefully) between managers and using an interim consultant. Both of these situations are creating inefficiencies in Board working and carry risks for effectiveness. LA HR approaches and policies seem to exacerbate the situation – if the administration office was in a different partner or even privately run, I think the situations would have been much more speedily resolved.*

Another had decided that there was greater need of a Performance Manager than a Board Business Manager, so the post was being re-designated.

It was only in four LSCBs (3%) that the LSCB Chair had exclusive responsibility for line management of the Board Business Manager. In most cases (n=119/92%) line management was by a member of staff based in the local authority, usually at a very senior level such as a DCS,
assistant director or head of safeguarding, although Chairs often assumed a semi or unofficial joint management role. In the remaining seven LSCBs other arrangements were in place, including by a community interest company that managed all senior professionals for two Boards. Some Chairs commented on the advantages of having line management through the local authority in terms of being able to access support and resources, as well as helping to ensure that the LSCB has sufficient impact and visibility. Although one Chair did add that in reality line management could just as effectively be provided by a senior post in NHS (CCG) or police as long as it was able to direct Board business. Another added:

*I am really interested if anyone has an alternative arrangement, as I am keen to move away from local authority management as the person is often considered as its resource. The Clinical Commissioning Group would seem a good place to me.*

Other Chairs noted downsides of local authority line management arrangements:

- Board Business Managers being drawn into other local authority work
- positioning such a key role in the local authority sent a message to other partners and reinforced the unhelpful perception that ‘safeguarding is mainly the job of social care’.

Chairs were also asked to say if, in their opinion and where Board Business Managers were in post, those people had the necessary skill set to support their LSCBs effectively, 73 per cent thought they did. There were comparatively few additional comments attached to their responses and those that were, usually came from Chairs who chose to explore the issues that could not be summed up by answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’. There were a few who took the opportunity to say how much they relied on the skills of their Board Business Manager, particularly where that person had a relevant professional background and a good understanding of safeguarding. And there were two respondents who wondered if it was possible to find one person who could combine all the required skills:

*I think for both a ‘mostly’ answer would fit best! But there are difficulties as the role is a strange mix of partnership and business administration and I am not sure that many people are able to*
combine those skills effectively. I have worked with nine Board Business Managers across the three Boards I have managed and I think only one has been able to effectively combine these two parts of the job. At each change recruitment has been a real challenge.

The experience and skills of both post holders in LSCB 1 and 2 more than equip them for supporting the role of the LSCB and relationship with the Chair. It does mean that some of the attention to detail and more routine tasks need to be delegated and often there is either a skill gap and/or lack of resources to delegate this to. LSCB 3 has a dedicated Board Business Manager who has the relevant business skills and experience but can lack the more senior practice and safeguarding background.

In the end it was difficult to distinguish the comments of those who had answered that their Board Business Manager had the required skills from those who said, on balance, they did not think they had:

In a lot of ways I wanted to say ‘somewhat’ as the additional expertise that is now required to undertake data collation, analysis and audit functions is not within their skill set.

The difficulties of finding such a wide range of skills embodied in one person have led one LSCB to disestablish the post and seek another solution. A consultation was being conducted to realign the tasks. The business function is being moved to the commissioning service within the local authority where a member of that team will provide business support. The senior manager with responsibility for safeguarding and quality assurance will provide professional advice. The Chair identified the potential advantage of splitting the ‘role’ and extending the available skill set but was concerned that in reality it could mean ‘resource is being reduced not enhanced’.

3.3.9.ii Other LSCB staffing

Respondents were asked to provide details of other posts and then to comment on staffing capacity. A summary of the most frequently mentioned posts can be seen in the table below (Table 8).
Table 8: Posts typically attached to LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of post</th>
<th>Boards with this post attached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Business Manager</td>
<td>100% (82% fulltime)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Lead or equivalent</td>
<td>92% (69% full time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>34% (28% full time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Advisor</td>
<td>22% (5% full time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Training leads:** The majority of LSCBs (n=119/92%) had a training lead or equivalent. Ninety of the 130 (69%) had full-time training leads, with three of these posts being vacant. One LSCB had two full-time training leads who led the delivery or commissioning of all the Board’s training. A further 29 (22%) had a part-time post with five of these currently vacant. Part-time posts were sometimes ‘shared’ posts covering local authority training as well. A number of Chairs, including the one quoted below, were concerned that the permanent funding for the post had not been secured and the LSCB could move from a position of strength as far as training was concerned to a much weaker one:

> This is a temporary arrangement. Funding is from a local health grant and Munro monies – the latter runs out this year. No efforts are being made to secure ongoing funding and I fear the person and post may be lost to the LSCB.

Where a lead was not in post the most common reason stated in qualitative comments, from Chairs of the 11 LSCBs without training leads, was that the local authority funded and delivered all the LSCB training. This was not viewed as the best way of proceeding as there was the danger that it came to be viewed by partners as local authority training, which threatened to undermine a multi-agency approach.

**Administrator:** Far fewer LSCBs had a dedicated administrator (n=44/34%), most of whom (n=36/28%) were full time with one vacant post. Where they existed they were seen to be invaluable:
I have been very impressed at the quality of the administration of what is an incredibly difficult role both because of the importance of accuracy in recording complex meetings and dealing with a huge amount of sensitive information.

So when the level of support they provided was threatened there were significant concerns:

*In the future the admin post will be expected to support LSCB and sub-groups and ASB. This could stretch the resource to breaking point.*

In one LSCB the administrator was a local authority employee, and as a result of rationalisation and restructuring the post had twice been downgraded and was managed through a central business support service which itself created other challenges.

When administrators were not in place, Chairs often said it would be very useful to have one but there was not sufficient information to be able to judge how tasks were managed in their absence.

**Policy Adviser:** Only 28 (22%) of LSCBs had a policy adviser, six of whom were part time, with one of these vacant at the time of the survey. They were sometimes said to be relatively recent additions to LSCBs’ staff groups. In a few other LSCBs other roles, such as development officers, assumed responsibility for policy advice as part of a wider remit. Compared with training leads and administrators, very few comments reflected a need for advisors and one Chair wrote:

*I would be very interested to know how such a role supports LSCBs – some examples would be helpful.*

Another Chair considered that it would be preferable and a better use of scarce resources to have national policy advisers rather than have them employed at a local level.

While these data provide an overview of the situation, the comments made by some Chairs indicate staffing levels and arrangements are complex and varied, including shared posts across LSCBs and ASBs, as well as local authorities. These shared arrangements can bring
advantages (as well as the disadvantages described above) e.g. making it possible for LSCBs to access expertise in specialist areas.

In addition to posts described above, respondents provided details of other staff employed by LSCBs. It is not possible to quantify or to be certain about how unusual specific posts might be as they emerged in the additional comments made by Chairs. As well as references to additional administrative and secretarial support, specific posts that were mentioned are recorded below (Fig 1).

Performance analysts (two LSCBs)
Quality assurance lead (one LSCB)
A lead for schools and education (two LSCBs)
A lead for child sexual exploitation (one LSCB)
Two community development posts in relation to faith communities and young people (one LSCB) and a development office (one LSCB)
Young person to lead LSCB’s engagement with children and young people (one LSCB)
A lead in relation to a young witness support scheme

**Fig 1: Additional posts in LSCBs**

Chairs considered that the staffing capacity of just under two-fifths of their LSCBs (39%) was sufficient to allow them to carry out the range of tasks expected. Many of those who said staffing capacity was sufficient stressed that this response related to current levels of demand and that there was insufficient capacity to meet additional demands, particularly from SCRs, or to achieve improvements:

*The expectations are constantly increasing. I have answered yes – but I am not sure that we have resource to reach an Ofsted outstanding grade.*

*Currently yes but in the current climate of restructuring there is a risk of dilution with employees potentially being required to take on additional (non-LSCB) work.*

*LSCB 1 is managing relatively well but if there was more than one SCR, capacity to manage audit work would suffer. LSCB 2 has had budget cuts which reduced staffing this year. Next year more staff working for the Board will go (partner reductions of circa £60–£80k. This will impact on capacity, particularly if there are further SCRs.*
Where capacity was regarded as insufficient, specific challenges were identified in relation to data analysis and audit. However, most comments focused on the mismatch between the complexities of the tasks expected of LSCBs and the relatively modest resources allocated, which naturally overlapped with the issue of funding provided for LSCBs.

### 3.3.10 Funding arrangements

WT 2013 states that all LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCBs to be ‘strong and effective’. Members should share financial responsibility for the LSCB in such a way that a disproportionate burden does not fall on a small number of partner agencies.

Chairs were asked to rate how well the funding arrangements were working in their LSCBs on a four-point scale. Since only two LSCBs were reported to be faring ‘very poorly’ these results were merged with the ‘poorly’ response, resulting in just under a third (32%) of LSCBs where the funding arrangements were said to be ‘working poorly’ or ‘very poorly’. Funding arrangements were reported to be working ‘well enough’ in 60 per cent and ‘very well’ in 8 per cent of LSCBs. Where funding arrangements were working ‘well’ or ‘very well’, many Chairs pointed out that this depended on ‘generous partners’ and that the situation could change quickly if budgets were cut dramatically and/or safeguarding was not prioritised. A small minority had been able to secure a longer-term funding agreement; others reported outdated formulas leading to pressures on the local authority:

> The police and probation are constrained by some guidance which is really now out of date in relation to the amount we get. The clinical commissioning groups (on behalf of health) have more flexibility but can’t be generous. It all needs reviewing as it is the local authority which picks up the deficit.

Respondents were asked to consider three possible funding options plus the option of rejecting all of them. Their responses were collected in relation to each LSCB that they chaired to offer the possibility that a different set of circumstances would lead to a different conclusion. Their replies are recorded in Table 9.
Table 9: Funding options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding model</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain current arrangements (local partners deciding funding)</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding provided by central Government</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A defined national formula to determine the contributions made.</td>
<td>100 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the options</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a number of reasons why so many Chairs were keen on a nationally mandated formula:

- the desire to achieve funding parity across LSCBs. Several respondents referred to benchmarking exercises they had conducted which had exposed significant variations in the funding received by LSCBs
- to reduce the level of negotiations over partner contributions
- to reduce the significant financial risk which local authorities currently shoulder, particularly in the current fiscal climate.

As agencies continue to shrink, unless there is a defined national formula, there will always be pressure on agencies to reduce their financial (and non-financial) contributions notwithstanding overtly deeming safeguarding a priority.

Amongst those who supported a defined formula were those who viewed it as a way of achieving some equity without full Government control:

The Department for Education has so far adopted a very high-handed approach to LSCBs – why else introduce the National Panel? It would feel very uncomfortable to make them our direct paymasters.

Central funding would be a disaster – we would be straight in the line of the lasso. It is much safer to be at one remove in the chain.
A small number of Chairs (n= 8) said that while they would at one time have favoured a national funding formula, increasingly complex local commissioning arrangements would now make this immensely complicated. Others pointed to the difficulties in arriving at an equitable formula to address the diversity of LSCBs and the different territorial boundaries of agencies:

As many agencies in London cover a number of areas a formula would be difficult to work and the current spending cuts and restructuring of agencies means sustaining current levels is difficult.

It has proved impossible in my view to get a defined national funding formula as with youth offending services – large counties... are totally different than small unitaries. And the statutory bodies supporting each LSCB may have up to nine LSCBs in their area so it has to be locally negotiated in line with local need and priorities.

Eleven respondents said they would prefer central funding allocated by Government rather than a formula for partner contributions. One argument in its support was that it would be ‘infinitely better than the current grace and favour approach’. Another was that it would introduce a level of security that was absent under the current arrangements. This respondent would have preferred a local arrangement but had come to the conclusion that it was not working. Because too many partners had failed to contribute, or had not done so at a sufficiently high level, the responsibility to keep the LSCB functioning lay with a few large agencies which, in turn, meant that the LSCB was too dependent on how generous they were:

My own view is that ultimately a local solution is in the best interests of partnership/ownership and recognition of the role, authority and potential of the LSCB. ... (it is significant that a number of national statutory partners Cafcass, probation, NHS England do their best to minimise financial and practical contributions). This leaves the main triad of clinical commissioning group, the local authority and police. I tend to the view that a clearer specification in terms of what is needed (basic infrastructure etc.) and a percentage split between partners and central Government would support a more independent and sustainable solution.

There were clearly those who were in favour of central funding but even those who were not in favour of it wanted to see Government money
allocated to address identified priorities, such as child sexual exploitation, rather than leave LSCBs to find the means to respond.

Those Chairs who wished to retain the current local partnership funding were for the most part working in areas where the partner agencies had shown a strong commitment to LSCBs including financial support. Despite wanting to see local arrangements continue they were also fearful of the consequences in the long term of the impact of further long-term budget cuts.

A theme running through the responses was that as important as financial contributions were, ‘contributions in kind’ were also vital. In many cases they enabled LSCBs to function more efficiently – for example, by providing access to additional expertise and premises. As agencies reviewed their staffing and accommodation levels, these arrangements were being scrutinised and there was concern that in kind arrangements might not survive, placing additional pressures on LSCBs’ limited resources.

**3.3.11 Priorities**

Respondents were asked to list the three top priorities for their LSCB(s) in the current (2014/15) financial year. The eight most frequently stated priorities are set out in Table 10.

Three-fifths of LSCBs have child sexual exploitation (CSE)/vulnerable, exploited, missing, trafficked (VEMT) as a priority and just over a third have prioritised achieving improvements around their own operation and effectiveness. Other issues, such as early help and neglect, are being prioritised but far less frequently than CSE or improvement. There were many other issues identified but without the level of consistency recorded in Table 10. These priorities include a mix of practice knowledge and strategic development issues. Only one respondent mentioned that there was a separate set of business priorities for the LSCB.

**Table 10: LSCBs’ priorities**

---

11 A small number of respondents split their reply into those that related to a specific group or issue and those relating to the way the board operated. However, as the overwhelming majority did not make the distinction and often mixed these in their responses they have not been reported separately.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
<th>Proportion of responding LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and vulnerable, exploited, missing, trafficked (VEMT)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the way the LSCB works</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early help</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing effectiveness of the LSCB</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving multi-agency working</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of children and young people</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In most LSCBs (98 of the 130, approx. 75%) Chairs did not expect these priorities to change in 2015/16. Some anticipated they might be refined or supplemented, for instance in response to changes in approaches to child protection or rising numbers of children who are looked after\(^{12}\) or an Ofsted judgement. In five instances Chairs mentioned that priorities were set for three years and any changes would be determined by the point they were in in that cycle:

> The current priorities have been in place for three years and activity has embedded improvements. It is time to review what now matters for the next three years. It is important to note that just because something is of national significance (e.g. CSE, CSA within the family) it does not mean that the LSCB need to label that as a priority. It depends what matters to the LSCB in ensuring it is coordinating and being effective. So ‘voice of the child’ is a structural and cultural challenge that affects named themes. It is my firm view that priorities should relate to aspects that need real (structural/cultural/resource) change, not just a change of focus within normal working practices.

\(^{12}\) There were 68,840 looked after children at 31 March 2014, an increase of 1 per cent compared with 31 March 2013 and an increase of 7 per cent compared with 31 March 2010. (DfE 2014).
Whatever certainty respondents had about future priorities there was some hesitancy about the future in general and priorities specifically where a new Chair was about to be appointed or what might follow an Ofsted inspection.

3.3.12 Membership

The survey contained a series of questions designed to provide a detailed picture of the extent to which other agencies were engaging in the work of LSCBs.

3.3.12.i Statutory members

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires LSCBs to include at least one representative of the local authority and range of senior representatives from key statutory and other agencies. The survey collected information on the engagement of these agencies with LSCBs by asking respondents to say which of them had been represented at LSCB meetings over the past 12 months, how frequently and at what level of seniority. These data are reported in Table 11. Representatives of most of these agencies were attending LSCB meetings regularly and were represented at a sufficiently high level to be able to commit their agencies to action when required. Perhaps not surprisingly in view of the level of commitment of local authorities to LSCBs in so many ways, their representation was very high across the Boards. Clinical commissioning groups, NHS provider trusts, youth offending services and police were all reported to have strong regular representation at sufficiently senior level across at least four-fifths of LSCBs.

Amongst the statutory partners, probation was the service that was most strongly represented after local authorities, with a senior representative attending regularly in three-quarters of LSCBs. However, in 15 per cent of LSCBs probation’s representation was said to be sporadic or irregular.

In just under three-fifths of LSCBs NHS England’s representation was said to be consistently strong. There was a small number of LSCBs where NHS England’s representatives attended regularly but either did not always or never have the required level of seniority, but of most concern was the
one-fifth of LSCBs where NHS England attendance was irregular or sporadic and the one-fifth where no NHS England representative ever attended. This may help to account for the fact that, despite the high level of engagement of some parts of the health sector, three-quarters of Chairs believed that the restructuring of public and national health delivery since 2013 had meant significant challenges in maintaining engagement with local health partners.

However, overall, Cafcass’ representation was the lowest. Its representatives attended regularly and at a sufficiently senior level in just under half of all LSCBs; in a quarter of LSCBs Cafcass representatives only attended irregularly or sporadically and in 14 per cent no one attended from that agency.

The comments accompanying these responses focused on three main areas:

- the pressures in some areas on police and health to attend multiple LSCBs because their boundaries did not match those of the local authority and, in some cases, they may cover many Boards. The situation was aggravated by staff turnover and moves which Chairs believed was outside their ability to influence. A Chair of a Board based in a small unitary wrote:

  Health and police cover multiple LSCBs which impacts on their ability to attend regularly and to be full Board members. NHS England has written to say that clinical commissioning group (CCG) will represent them. However given CCG stretched across three LSCBs so that is hardly practicable.

- the engagement of the probation service was beginning to prove more difficult following its reorganisation

- the poor level of engagement shown by Cafcass in many LSCBs.

  My experience has been that people understand the importance of engagement – with the exception of Cafcass. I have found that as an agency it fails to prioritise LSCB work.

  Cafcass only attends once a year to present information and does not engage in any of the work of the LSCB outside of this.

3.3.12.ii Schools and education
All schools – including independent schools, academies and free schools – have duties in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. WT 2013 states that local authorities should take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB includes representatives from all types of school in their area.

Respondents were asked about the representation of schools at LSCB meetings over the previous 12 months and their responses are recorded in Table 1.

Local authority schools are regularly represented at a senior level on over four-fifths of LSCBs, which stands in sharp contrast to the representation of other types of schools. There was a very high non-response rate from Chairs in relation to academies, free schools and independent schools. The data indicate non-local authority schools are represented in under half of all LSCBs, and academies are represented at a senior level on only one-fifth of Boards.

The comments from Chairs were, in most cases, more positive than the data would have suggested. A great deal of effort was reported to be taking place to re-think arrangements and support engagement following the major shifts in responsibility for schools away from local authorities and the introduction of new types of schools such as academies and the sub-group of free schools. Achieving real representation of schools has always proved difficult because of the number and diversity of provision (see Baginsky, 2007). In some areas all schools continued to be represented by associations and other groups that had done so over the years. Elsewhere, as in this LSCB, new arrangements were being put in place to address poor representation and raise awareness about ways of engaging with LSCBs.

_There is no simple way to get true representation for all schools without making the LSCB so large it is difficult to engage everyone. We are considering an education reference group similar to the model used in Sheffield._
Whilst representation is proving difficult, LSCBs were finding different ways to engage with schools:

We have done extensive work on engaging schools and are doing this through an education sub-group. We have also focused on independent schools and free schools and academies undertaking 175 and 157 audits to hold all educational establishments to account. We are also holding an independent school seminar. Next year we will publish in the annual report those schools from those sectors not responding.
Table 11: Engagement of statutory partners in LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Named senior representative attends regularly</th>
<th>Senior representative attends regularly but not always the same</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but does not always have required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but without required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representation at any level is sporadic/irregular</th>
<th>No representative attends from this agency/group</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>120 (93%)</td>
<td>10 (7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>83 (64%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>69 (53%)</td>
<td>29 (22%)</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth offending service</td>
<td>84 (65%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS clinical commissioning groups</td>
<td>96 (74%)</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS England</td>
<td>54 (41%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS provider trusts</td>
<td>86 (66%)</td>
<td>25 (19%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafcass</td>
<td>43 (33%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>31 (24%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure training centre in the area</td>
<td>6 (-)</td>
<td>3 (-)</td>
<td>2 (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison/secure facility</td>
<td>8 (-)</td>
<td>3 (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 12: Engagement of schools in LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Named senior representative attends regularly</th>
<th>Senior representative attends regularly but not always the same</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but does not always have required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but without required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representation at any level is sporadic/irregular</th>
<th>No representative attends from this agency/group</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority schools</td>
<td>88 (68%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>17 (13%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies in area</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>50 (38%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free schools in area</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>57 (44%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>61 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent schools</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>59 (45%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>50 (38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.12.iii Lay members

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 amended sections 13 and 14 of the Children Act 2004 and provided for the appointment of two representatives of the local community to each LSCB in England. WT 2013 requires the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB does this. Lay members should operate as full members of the LSCB, participating on the Board itself and on relevant committees. Chairs were asked to say to what extent lay members influence the work of the Board (Table 13).

Table 13: Influence of lay members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of influence</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>16 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>36 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>49 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that it is a reasonably new initiative probably accounts for only 13 per cent of Chairs assessing the influence of lay members on their LSCBs as being to a ‘large’ or ‘very large’ extent. In these Boards the success was usually linked to the skills and experience which individuals brought to the role, particularly in scrutinising the work of the Board:

*Lay members provide a unique role, they require support and engagement but in my experience are invaluable.*

*We are appointing new members – the retiring members played a significant role including one who was Chair of a sub-group. I regard this as a continued priority as lay members assist me in ensuring we can see things and relate the output of the Board to the person in the street.*

In many areas the appointments were still reasonably recent and the contribution which lay members could make was not yet clear, although
some Chairs were enthusiastic about the potential of the role and individuals:

\[\text{We have two fairly new lay members and they are growing in confidence, they do bring a frontline perspective and some challenge which is helpful.}\]

One recurring problem was the difficulties many had faced in recruiting, and in some cases retaining, lay members:

\[\text{We have made considerable attempts to recruit and support lay members, managed only to recruit one and [they have] resigned. Will think again in 2015 about other ways of doing this.}\]

\[\text{It has been variable in terms of recruitment and it is hard to get those who are really 'lay' rather than retired professionals as the commitment is substantial.}\]

These and similar problems led some to question the value of the role and whether a different approach might be more useful:

\[\text{The lay members are generally disadvantaged as they operate in an arena where the experts on the Board are both member and provider. The lay members should be more akin to the non-executive director on a health board – appointed for their expertise and remunerated. They might then be able to be more effective in supporting the Chair to hold the system to account.}\]

3.3.12.iv Other agencies

Respondents were asked to say if any of the following agencies were represented on their LSCBs and/or any sub-groups. The agencies were mostly those found by France et al. (2009) to be most frequently represented on LSCBs. The results are recorded in Table 14. The extreme right hand column records the percentages of LSCBs where these agencies were mentioned in 2009 (where appropriate). Because of the different methodologies and possibly different definitions that were applied, the comparison must only be taken as a guide and not to reflect accurate trend data.

Although it is interesting to re-use instruments and compare results, the development of LSCBs in the intervening period meant the list was not as
helpful in 2014 as it might have been in 2009. While there were only two comments that criticised the list, it is important to take account of these. For example, one Chair said:

*Health commissioners cover dental health services, as well as adult mental health but not in all instances. To some extent links with these are addressed through relationships/other reporting mechanisms/Board member role pulling these key roles/functions into sub-groups is an ongoing challenge and some agencies will be represented in, for example, case review functions, if this was applied then ticks could be in most boxes.*

It points to the importance of any future research constructing a more accurate list. Nevertheless, in spite of its shortcomings, it contains some useful information.  

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13 If time had been available it would, of course, have been preferable to construct a tailored list for this project rather than using one that had been used five years previously.

14 In Section 3.2 there is an explanation of why sub-groups are not examined in more detail in this study. They clearly deserve more attention and it is hoped that as a result of this study they will be explored in more detail in the near future.
Table 14: Other agencies involved in LSCBs and sub-groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 68 (52%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 42 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult mental health services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 61 (47%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 46 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire and rescue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 49 (38%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 22 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAPPA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 48 (37%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 29 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs and alcohol misuse services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 41 (32%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 58 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drug action teams</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 21 (16%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 39 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence forums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 17 (13%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 72 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local sports bodies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 3 (2%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dental health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 3 (2%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 7 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 2 (2%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronial services</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 1 (1%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 16 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs: 12 (9%)</td>
<td>Sub-groups: 2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes military, faith groups, community safety links, ambulance service

---

15 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
16 Crown Prosecution Service
Fig. 2 summarises the relative increases and decreases in the representation of these agencies on LSCBs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Domestic violence forums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire and rescue</td>
<td>Local sports bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPPA</td>
<td>CPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and alcohol misuse services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug action teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 2: Relative increases and decreases

### 3.3.12.v Other professionals/agencies

LSCBs should either include on its Board or be able to draw on appropriate expertise and advice from frontline professionals from a range of agencies from all the relevant sectors (WT 2013). Chairs were asked to say how this was achieved in their LSCBs. The replies are recorded in Table 15. The highest level of engagement across LSCBs was with designated nurses and designated doctors, followed by Directors of Public Health and children’s trust boards. In over a third of LSCBs, arrangements with the voluntary sector were either not yet working well or were still being established. It would be interesting to know if this was as a result of a failure to engage in general or as a result of the difficulty of representation given the breadth and diversity of that sector. A similar pattern emerged in relation to principal child and family social workers (PCFSWs) and adult safeguarding boards (ASBs) but this was likely to be because both are relatively new phenomena. That may also be the explanation for the relatively low level of engagement between LSCBs and health and wellbeing boards (HWBs), especially as in nearly a third of LSCBs, arrangements for HWBs were reported to be in place but not yet fully operational. The 46 local family justice boards (LFJBs) are arguably relatively new, having been introduced in 2012 as a result of the Family Justice Review in 2011 (Norgrove, 2011). So again it is perhaps not surprising they were not fully engaged with the majority of LSCBs,
although they were in 14 per cent of cases. But it was surprising that there were no arrangements in place to engage with FJBs in 42 per cent of Boards. Community safety partnerships (CSPs) have been in existence for over 15 years, yet arrangements between LSCBs and CSPs were only reported to be working well in fewer than two-fifths of areas. There were very few comments from Chairs to explain the ways in which these relationships were or were not working or being developed, although most of those that were, focused on the work required in relation to CSPs and FJBs. It was evident that work was being undertaken to address the challenges to bring about greater coherence but the limited time available for Chairs to undertake this work was said to be a major reason why the pace of change could be slower than desired. In a few cases reference was made to other ways in which LSCBs were in contact with other agencies other than by formal arrangements, particularly the wider voluntary and sports sectors.

3.3.12.vi Lead members

The lead member for children’s services should be a participating observer of the LSCB (WT 2013). Chairs were asked if this was happening in their LSCB. In 94 per cent (n=122) of Boards, lead members were reported to be actively involved and, on the basis of the additional comments that were made, in many cases they were viewed as an asset to the work of LSCBs:

Lead member engagement is helpful and reflects the relationship they have with the DCS as well as their personal take on safeguarding – managing participant observer status can be a challenge at times.

We either have the lead member or Chair of safeguarding scrutiny at the Board. There are quarterly meetings in place between CE/DCS/leader of the council and lead member for children. I also attend safeguarding scrutiny committee.
A few Chairs suggested in additional comments that the Chair of Scrutiny for children’s services could be a useful additional member of LSCBs, whose role is to hold others to account rather than hold responsibility for the delivery system. In the remaining six per cent of LSCBs lead members were either not involved or there was no response to the question.
Table 15: Engagement of professional voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional/professional group</th>
<th>No arrangement in place</th>
<th>Work in progress to establish arrangements</th>
<th>Arrangements in place, not fully engaged</th>
<th>Arrangements in place, working well.</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designated doctor</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>96 (74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated nurse</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>119 (92%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Public Health</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td>80 (62%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Child and Family Social Worker</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
<td>70 (54%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and community sector</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>34 (26%)</td>
<td>78 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Family Justice Board</td>
<td>54 (42%)</td>
<td>28 (22%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellbeing Board</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>41 (32%)</td>
<td>58 (45%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults Safeguarding Board</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
<td>68 (52%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Trust Board</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>80 (62%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety Partnership</td>
<td>17 (13%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
<td>49 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.12.vii Changes in partner engagement

Chairs were asked to reflect on whether partner engagement had changed over the past two years and their responses are recorded in Table 16.

**Table 16: Partner engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most agencies better engaged</td>
<td>56 (43%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some agencies better engaged</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement largely unchanged</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some agencies less well engaged</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most agencies less well engaged</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know – not been Chair for the whole period</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 54 per cent of Chairs who had been in post for at least two years and so able to assess any change.

One fifth of Chairs had not been involved with the Board for the whole period so were not able to comment. Given the reported pressures on the Boards and on other agencies it is interesting that in over 50 per cent of LSCBs overall partner engagement was said to have improved and in another 15 per cent it was largely unchanged, although of course it is not possible to know what their starting points were. Respondents mentioned specific efforts that they had and were making to sustain and improve the level of engagement. In addition, changes at national level both helped and hindered as these contrasting views indicate:

> The political and national landscape has given LSCBs a greater scrutiny role, the inspection of LSCBs has heightened their profile across member agencies and the publication of SCRs has harnessed and focused member activity. Overall in each area, in addition to the fact that the independent Chair is directly accountable to the CEO, there is a much greater understanding and common engagement across the organisations of the work of the LSCB.
Engagement is in my view directly related to how partners see and understand the LSCB, as well as the extent to which the local authority reflects a wider view of partnership. One of the challenges for a Chair is to bring in all partners even when items on the table may not seem to be of direct relevance. In this respect the current focus of Ofsted has made it harder to maintain wider engagement.

Two practical challenges to engagement were once again said to be restructuring exercises across partner agencies alongside the numbers of LSCBs that some statutory partners have to cover.

### 3.3.12.viii Frontline practitioners’ views

Chairs were asked to comment on how effectively their LSCBs engaged with frontline practitioners’ views (Table 17).

**Table 17: Engagement with the views of frontline practitioners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Level</th>
<th>Count (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>25 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>68 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>33 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With only a fifth of LSCBs said to be engaging well or very well with frontline practitioners’ views there is clearly room for development. Where it was working well it was said to be as a result of similar activities to those described below by these two Chairs, which required considerable effort on their part and on that of other staff:

All the LSCBs [this person chairs a number of LSCBs] organise:

1. Board walkabouts for members to frontline settings
2. Meetings between the Chair and practitioners in different frontline settings regularly
3. Questionnaires to frontline
4. Audits involving frontline staff
5. Learning lessons workshops to frontline staff

This [type of activity] must be the focus for the LSCB but does require engagement at a strategic level to endorse this sort of involvement.
Both LSCBs have had practitioners come to Board meetings – one for joint audit exercise (worked well) and one to report on the integrated domestic violence team’s work. Both have had conferences and events led by the Board and both have regular newsletters for practitioners.

Just over half of LSCBs were reported to be engaging at a reasonable level and in some areas similar activities to the ones described above were also happening:

_However there has to be some degree of reality about how this can be made to work well. We hold an annual stakeholder day that allows for some, albeit limited, engagement. We are trying to have thematic meetings that allow for direct feedback from frontline workers although this isn’t yet working as well as I would hope. It is a start though._

And there were those who did not think all the responsibility for capturing and engaging with frontline practitioners’ views lay with LSCBs:

_We can go so far but we cannot nag them to come to meetings and host events when all we hear is the pressure they are under. We need to keep at it, maybe introduce a newsletter and get out more but the managers in other agencies also need to prioritise engagement and be proactive in inviting us in for informal chats and inviting us to their events._

### 3.3.12.ix The voices of the children and young people

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the voices of the children and young people influence their LSCBs, echoing the Munro recommendation for a greater emphasis on child-centredness and the development of a culture of listening and engaging with children and taking account of their wishes. Their assessments are recorded in Table 18.
Table 18: The influence of the voices of children and young people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of children’s voice</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>47 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>55 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In only 13 per cent of LSCBs were the voices of children and young people said to be influencing the Boards to a ‘large’ or ‘very large extent’; they were doing so to a ‘reasonable extent’ in 36 per cent and a ‘limited extent’ in 42 per cent. In nine per cent of LSCBs it was said not to be happening at all. Such responses indicate that there is a long way to go in this regard. The comments that accompanied the assessments indicated very different views on how engagement could be achieved and, if indeed, it should be. As recorded in Fig. 1, one LSCB has a young person to lead the LSCB’s engagement with children and young people, and elsewhere there were shadow youth LSCBs or young people were members or co-opted members of the Boards or sub-groups:

_We do have a junior Board which has done work on knife crime, domestic violence and currently on child sexual exploitation. They attend the Board once a year. In relation to children and young people directly affected by child protection issues this is more limited. However children are better represented through contract arrangements with a representation support provider and use of electronic data._

_More is needed here. We have used surveys and involved young people in section 11 challenge. Young people have attended the Board to present issues they have worked on. We need to continue to find imaginative ways to hear their voices – not pay lip service! One of the Boards has challenged the Children’s Trust to work on this._
While there were many references to the need to improve and set the issue as a priority there were also those who questioned what should and could be achieved:

This is difficult to answer – in Board 1 we do not expect the Board to work directly with young people – that is the job of the agencies, the commissioners of providers and other partners. It is then the role of the agencies etc. to ensure that they are taking views on board in improving services and the role of the Board is to make sure that this is happening in all aspects of safeguarding. In Board 2 they are spending time doing participation, which seems laudable but is actually distracting them from focusing on their core roles of coordinating and ensuring safeguarding. I think many Boards are trying to ‘do’ operational safeguarding and consultation rather than ensuring it’s being effectively done by others. Some Chairs disagree with me on this (quite heatedly).

What does this actually mean? Agencies demonstrate hearing voice etc. but the LSCB? There was a conference workshop...but when I asked what had actually happened the only example was that bullying stayed as a priority. I think we kid ourselves on this.

Perhaps rather than decry the low level of participation it would be more helpful to explore what is being achieved by LSCBs in this area, how effective it is and how models might be disseminated.

### 3.3.13 Training

LSCBs have a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection training is provided that meets local needs. Chairs were asked to say to what extent this was proving achievable in their areas (Table 19).

**Table 19: Ensuring training meets local needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training meeting needs</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>45 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>57 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They were also asked to say which of the following statements reported in Table 20 applied in their LSCBs.

**Table 20: Statements on training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to monitor single agency training</td>
<td>72 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB has developed some of its own training</td>
<td>105 (81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB provides specialist training on specific issues</td>
<td>112 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to get some agencies to attend multi-agency training</td>
<td>65 (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under half of LSCBs were reported as being able to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection training was provided that meets local needs. There was a strong correlation between those areas where this was not happening or only happening to a limited extent and the areas where it was proving difficult to monitor single-agency training. While some of the reasons provided for this lay in the resources available within LSCBs and the fact that the children’s workforce was spread across large areas, they were also dependent on information provided by other agencies:

Some key agencies are very good at providing information about the number of staff that have attended single-agency training but are unable to say how many SHOULD. Thus it is impossible to gauge compliance. Very few GPs access multi-agency training and it is difficult to gauge how many undertake single-agency training. Schools are currently proving difficult in this regard especially academies and independents.

It was not always easy for Boards to do anything about the quality of the training even if they are able to collect data on numbers:

Health agencies say that they have too many staff to release to our Board multi-agency training courses at basic awareness level and provide their own, but there has been some debate about fitness of match to the Board’s training!

\[ p = 0.002 \]
Half of all Boards were finding it difficult to get staff from partner agencies to attend multi-agency training, in some cases citing the challenges and pressures operating in these agencies, sometimes expressing concern that multi-agency training was falling lower down the list of priorities and off some agendas. At many points in the survey the impact of restructuring and new arrangements were referenced and so it was with training. One Chair provided considerable insight into the changes, developments and challenges occurring across their Boards, which is reported in full as it captures the experiences of many other replies:

Transition is occurring in terms of how this is seen as a key function/responsibility with an increased focus on identifying how this impacts on the quality of practice and joint working. All three Boards are starting to develop a wider strategic agenda and two Boards have a strong track record in delivering responsive programmes which reflect needs and priorities as well as incremental development. All are reliant on dedicated and specialist time. One has had to address a question as to whether or not this is sustainable and whether alternative models need to be considered. In all three Boards this is seen as critical delivery commitment and features within risk management arrangements. I think this sums up some of the challenges around the LSCB being able to identify both the resources and the leadership to have a strategy in place. To some extent the variable in this is whether or not the wider function in terms of replacement for the children’s trust workforce development role have found effective place and voice in changing governance arrangements and the extent to which this has reverted to a local authority focus. There is an emerging debate locally about the role of the LSCB in this debate. All three LSCBs have a comprehensive direct offer of multi-agency training and partners see this as one of the benefits of and evidence for the effectiveness of the LSCB and their contribution.

The expertise, time and resources involved in developing specialist and general training were frequently referenced. The importance of training leads/advisors was explored in the section on LSCB staffing (3.3.9ii) and emerged strongly in these replies. Not only were some able to design and deliver training, their engagement with agencies meant that the impact was judged to be beyond that where training was commissioned without specialist input:
We are fortunate to have an excellent trainer who has been quite innovative in designing and delivering new training approaches including lunchtime drop-in sessions on topical issues that have proved very popular. We regularly run development days with other key boards, for example the ASB and the children’s trust. We run day seminars on key subjects, the most recent being a regional conference on SCRs.

Where a training post had been cut or was under threat the future of training provision was being reviewed, so the more optimistic picture that emerged from the survey where 81 per cent of LSCBs were developing their own training and 86 per cent were providing specialist training on specific issues may not be sustainable.

3.3.14 Overview of LSCBs and role of Chairs

3.3.14.i Role of Chairs of LSCBs

Chairs were asked to say to what extent they agreed with a set of questions that related to their role and that of their LSCBs. Their responses are reported in Table 21. Nearly all Chairs reported that the work of LSCBs had grown over the past two years, three quarters saying that this had been ‘to a large extent’:

There has been an exponential growth in the work of Chairs as a result of the changes to the Ofsted inspection programme, the desire for improvement through peer review, the expectations of Chief Executives and their need for reassurance on national issues such as CSE, FGM etc. The introduction of the National Association of Chairs has also considerably increased the burden for the conscientious Chair.

The role of LSCBs has changed considerably in the period of 2008 to 2014 that I have chaired. I am very happy to provide evidence of how but the areas that have changed are governance and accountability; scrutiny functions and public engagement.

Ofsted inspections were also believed by some to be changing the nature of LSCBs:

The impact of Ofsted inspection on LSCBs has had the unintended consequence of distracting focus away from its core functions. LSCBs could if supported effectively and with a realistic remit do the job they were meant to do, but the ever increasing and unrealistic expectations of central Government to continue to do more with less and less makes the job feel at times impossible. Having said
that there is good evidence that when at its best LSCBs can promote effective working across safeguarding and provide a conduit for better and more effective practice.

There were also those who were concerned that the role of the Chair was evolving in a way that would threaten its independence:

There are real questions to be answered about the recruitment of independent Chairs – should they become ministerial appointments like the one I hold as an independent member of the parole board for England and Wales. Because we are accountable to the Chief Executive this does compromise our independence though fits well with the localism agenda.
Table 21: Role of LSCBs and LSCB Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a limited extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the work of LSCBs been afforded greater local profile in the past two years?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the workload of LSCBs increased in the past two years?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the resources (financial and/or staffing) of LSCBs increased in the past two years?</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LSCB Chairs have the necessary statutory powers to hold partners to account?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LSCB Chairs have sufficient authority in relation to the DCS/s?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LCSB Chairs have sufficient authority in relation to the Chief Executive/s</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do local agencies value the work of the LSCB and share its priorities?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These figures demonstrate very clearly the large increases in workloads and absence of increases in funding over the last two years.

3.3.14.ii Skills required of LSCB Chairs

Respondents were also asked to consider the key skills, knowledge and attributes that they considered were needed to support effective work as a Chair. They were provided with the list (see Table 22) and they were asked to identify the four they considered to be most important. A clear divide emerged between the top four and the rest, with leadership skills emerging as the most necessary, followed by the ability to challenge others, establishing and maintaining good relationships across agencies and independence.

Although Chairs were offered the opportunity to suggest other skills, very few took the opportunity to do so. Those that were suggested included confidence, performance management, communication skills, the motivation to make a difference and a willingness to abide by the Nolan principles of public life. One Chair wrote:

_I would concur that the list is a helpful description, and would point out that I would probably choose different ones for each Board I chair as the different challenges call in different application of a wide skill and knowledge base, as a well as a capacity to listen and learn._

Table 22: Required skills for Chairs of LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>80 (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to challenge others</td>
<td>71 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing and maintaining good relationships across the range of agencies</td>
<td>68 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>67 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>39 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what the role involves</td>
<td>37 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of specialist safeguarding issues</td>
<td>34 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and guidance</td>
<td>33 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to operate politically</td>
<td>33 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management expertise</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.15 Policy and practice issues

Respondents were asked to say to what extent they agreed with a set of statements that related to current policy issues that impinged on the work of LSCBs (Table 23).

In addition a number of Chairs commented on the issues that were, in their opinion, impacting on LSCBs and their partners:

- One of the most significant was the reorganisation of the NHS, schools and probation and the number of parties that, as a result, must be involved in LSCBs that covered large geographical areas. In large shire areas there are multiple CCGs, several hundred schools, many GP surgeries and numerous VCS organisations:

  *However, I think it is possible to navigate the local landscape and make the LSCB work but it has a huge impact on making the LSCB effective compared to a smaller unitary where boundaries are coterminous.*

- Another issue was workforce capacity and the level of vacancies in frontline services which was reported to be having a major impact on the ability of social workers, police officers and some health professionals to attend single and multi-agency training.

- A third area was the perceived conflicting expectations of supporting and coordinating partners while auditing effectiveness of safeguarding processes, with one Chair adding that there had been insufficient opportunity in the survey to discuss this issue.

- A fourth issue was the over-reliance of LSCBs on local authority structures and personnel.

- The final issue was political interference that was changing the nature of both LSCBs and the role of the Chair. Some respondents believed that LSCBs was changing from an enabling organisation that challenged all agencies to work together and gain an understanding of the local issues to an auditing and quasi-inspectorial body; they feared this would lead to being distrusted rather than trusted. In turn they considered the role of the Chair was in danger of becoming more of a political role which would not provide better protection or support for frontline staff.
It is illuminating to conclude the report on the survey by considering the closing comment of one Chair. These ideas and many others informed the approach taken and areas explored in the case studies and discussion groups which followed the survey:

_I welcome the opportunity to take part and this has helped with my own review and thinking. I am struck by the fact that some aspects of the survey clearly touch on some areas of valid current debate. I think there is a need to consider ways of understanding, valuing and how we achieve a more balanced measurement of what constitutes an effective LSCB. It seems to me that one of the secrets of successful safeguarding at any level is attention to detail and knowing what to look for, so in this respect further investment in the current WT 13 frameworks around PMQA and L&I Frameworks will ultimately produce stronger local arrangements, which in turn take us in my view to the significance of achieving independence. I take the view there is an in-built dichotomy between the role and responsibility of the LA, the extent to which the Chief Executive delegates to the DCS/DAS and the capacity of the Board and partners to be able to challenge._
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant policy and practice issues</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs could be more effective if the work was confined to a narrower child protection focus</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs should focus on safeguarding using the principles outlined in the <em>Working Together</em> statutory guidance and avoid being distracted by every new national news story</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is helpful when specific issues are highlighted as a national priority (e.g. CSE/FGM/Neglect) as it challenges LSCBs to focus efforts locally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional collaboration on specialist areas (e.g. CSE/FGM/Neglect) has proved helpful in addressing issues of national priority</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have limited/no data to identify local priorities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking serious case reviews is a useful means of improving safeguarding locally, providing valuable learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are insufficient specialists with relevant skills to undertake serious case reviews available to local areas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The current Ofsted inspection framework of LSCBs is helpful in driving up performance and increasing the profile of LSCB activity</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective multi-agency inspection would support and strengthen the work of LSCBs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The increasing independence of schools has made it harder to engage the education sector in the work of LSCBs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transfer of responsibility of public health to local authorities has yielded benefit to LSCBs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The health and wellbeing Boards are a useful development that bring benefits to the work of LSCBs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction of statutory safeguarding adults Boards will be a useful development that supports engagement with adult services for the benefit of children and young people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remit for LSCBs has the right amount of focus on monitoring and evaluation of training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remit for LSCBs has a focus on monitoring and evaluation activity but this requires knowledge and skills not available to most LSCBs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restructure of public and national health delivery since 2013 (e.g. the introduction of health and wellbeing Boards, clinical commissioning groups and new public health responsibilities for local authorities) has meant significant challenges in maintaining engagement with local health partners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of fit between the configuration of clinical commissioning groups and LSCBs creates significant challenges for monitoring and influencing safeguarding practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4: Case Studies

4.1 Key points emerging from case studies

The interviews in the three areas produced remarkably similar views from Chairs and Board members in three very different LSCBs. There was a high level of agreement on the factors that were considered to contribute to an effective Board – which overlapped with what emerged from the survey – and focused on six areas, not listed in priority order:

- active engagement with and involvement of partner agencies
- a context where challenge, scrutiny and support are balanced
- strong leadership by the Chair and all members
- stakeholder involvement particularly by children and young people
- secure and adequate financial and personnel resourcing
- a robust performance management framework.

There were, however, concerns expressed around the last two factors on the list. All partner agencies were facing cuts in their budgets which raised questions over how much they would be able to contribute to support the Boards. No one who was interviewed spoke in terms of their priority areas being threatened but there was a great deal of uncertainty about the future. The interviewees were taking steps to make sure their organisations were operating as efficiently as they possibly could, but it left them with very little flexibility – particularly where their budgets had not increased for many years and where one or more serious case reviews could eat into any surplus. They were also committed to maintaining a focus on broader safeguarding, but several pondered whether resource constraints, national and local priorities will mean LSCBs might be forced to narrow their focus towards child protection.

All three Boards placed a great deal of importance on developing a robust performance management framework, partly in response to Ofsted requirements but mainly as a part of their own plans to achieve improved levels of services for children and young people. The time allocated for analysts to support this work varied across the Boards but in all three it was proving difficult to secure the time needed to ensure robust data sets
were in place. It was also recognised that even if it were possible to make progress across the statutory agencies it would be extremely difficult to achieve this across the voluntary sector, where there is very variable involvement in and response to auditing and performance management processes.

As noted, a number of interviewees felt that they were expected to achieve a level of scrutiny and challenge that was beyond their resources and what other partners would possibly tolerate. Yet if they failed to do so they could be found lacking.

4.1 Overview of the case study sites

4.1.1 Caveat

This section reports the findings of three LSCB case studies. Each Board operated in very different contexts, local conditions and arrangements that dictated the available support and resources. The case studies reported below explore some of the many issues impacting on LSCBs.

4.1.2 Unitary authority of Buffton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>‘Buffton’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Unitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>300,000 (of which 24.1 per cent are children and young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>90 per cent white, mainly British origin (the proportion of children and young people from minority ethnic groups is 18 per cent of the school population).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Expected to grow over the next 20 years but at a slower rate than the national average rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation levels</td>
<td>Differ little from the national average but there are areas of severe deprivation and significant health inequalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16s living in poverty</td>
<td>Higher percentage (23.1%) in comparison to the average percentage in England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free school meal entitlement</td>
<td>18 per cent. 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 The national average for primary schools is 18 per cent and for secondary schools 15 per cent.
The Chair of the LSCB is the first independent Chair and had held that position since mid-2013, having previously been in the police force. The Board was described as being in transition. Over the last 12–18 months the focus had been on reviewing the Board’s membership, structure and terms of reference and it had just gone through a process designed to reduce the number of Board representatives, sometimes moving people from the Board onto sub-groups. Buffton LSCB had agreed its three-year strategic priorities 2015–2018, the strategic/business plan for 2015/16 was being finalised. The expectation is that each sub-group would have its own business plan and be held to account for its implementation in the first instance by the Executive Group and in time by the full Board.

Three broad strategic priorities had been agreed for April 2015 onwards. These were to:

- ensure children and young people are safe from harm in the home, outside of the home and online
- ensure children and young people have access to the right service, at the right place and at the right time
- improve the effectiveness of partnership working and accountability to improve safeguarding outcomes for children young people and their families.

There are four sub-groups:

- Vulnerable Young Persons Strategic Group (which includes CSE, Toxic Trio Issues, Online Safety, Gang Prevention)
- Review (SCR and CDOP)
- Participation (engagement with children young people)
- Workforce Development (includes training, policy and procedures and safer recruitment)

The work of the sub-groups was directed and coordinated by an Executive Group called Quality Assurance and Communications.
## 4.1.3 London Borough of Marston

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>‘Marston’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>London borough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>260,000 (of which 22.5 per cent are children and young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>59 per cent white, just over half are of British origin (the proportion of children and young people from minority ethnic groups represents 52 per cent of the school population). Children and young people from minority ethnic groups make up 70 per cent of all children living in the area, compared with 21.5 per cent nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Expected to grow over the next 20 years at a faster rate than the national average rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation levels</td>
<td>It is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country and 31.9 per cent of the local authority’s children are living in poverty\textsuperscript{19,20}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16s living in poverty</td>
<td>Higher percentage (31.9%) in comparison to the average percentage in England.\textsuperscript{21,22}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free school meal entitlement</td>
<td>26 per cent in primary schools and 33 per cent in secondary schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chair of the LSCB had been in post for less than a year and had public and voluntary sector experience. According to most of those interviewed, in the past the LSCB had tended to focus on child protection rather than safeguarding because of the attention it had received over some cases. It was facing some challenges in shifting to a more general safeguarding focus even though most of those interviewed believed it was the right way to proceed. As a consequence in the last year the LSCB had focused more on prevention and early intervention.

The local authority is paying a great deal of attention to early help, hoping that this would lead to a reduction in the number of children coming into care and who are on child protection plans. Again there was agreement across the LSCB that this is the right way to go but there were also

\textsuperscript{19} In 2011-12, 2.3 million UK children (17\%) lived in homes with substantially lower than average income. See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2
\textsuperscript{20} According to an estimate by End Child Poverty in late 2014 on ‘after housing cost’ calculation 42 per cent of Marston’s children are living in poverty (End Child Poverty, 2014)
\textsuperscript{21} In 2011-12, 2.3 million UK children (17\%) lived in homes with substantially lower than average income. See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2
\textsuperscript{22} According to an estimate by End Child Poverty in late 2014 on ‘after housing cost’ calculation 42 per cent of Marston’s children are living in poverty (End Child Poverty, 2014)
concerns that the shift would carry significant risks, particularly at a time of increased demand and a reduced level of resourcing. As a result significant attention was being paid to auditing cases in an attempt to make sure that where children had been stepped down this was appropriate and that frontline practitioners across the relevant agencies had a good understanding of thresholds.

In addition to prioritising early help the LSCB is also concentrating on using data more effectively and it is working with another London borough to address the high level of gang activity. That work is focusing on interface between gangs and other problems such as violence against women and girls associated with sexual exploitation by gangs. In this area child sexual exploitation (CSE) has been linked more to peer on peer violence and gangs than to adult males preying on vulnerable children.

The Board has an Executive Group and has six sub-groups:

- Serious case review
- Best practice and quality assurance
- Training, learning and development
- Child death overview panel
- Disabled children policy and practice
- Vulnerable children sub-group with a focus on CSE.

4.1.4 Midshire County Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>‘Midshire’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>County council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>800,000 (of which 23 per cent are children and young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>96 per cent white, British origin (the proportion of children and young people from minority ethnic groups is 8 per cent of the school population).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Expected to grow but at a slower rate than the national average rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation levels</td>
<td>Lower than the national average but there are areas of severe deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 16s living in poverty</td>
<td>Lower than national average with 15 per cent living in poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free school meal entitlement</td>
<td>13 per cent in primary schools and 10 per cent in secondary schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chair of the LSCB has a professional background in the health service and has been in that role for three years; this person was also the Chair of the ‘sister’ unitary’s LSCB for eight years and also chaired Midshire’s adults safeguarding board. In October 2012 a meeting was held between Midshire’s Executive Group and that of the unitary’s LSCB to explore how both Boards could strengthen their working relationship. The two Boards now work together on performance management; sharing learning from reviews; quality assurance processes; training; communication; and policies and procedures.

At the point of becoming Chair the LSCB also adopted three-year priorities. It was agreed that it would make sense for these to be similar in the two LSCBs, given the close geographical and demographic connections and the additional synergy created by having the same Chair. CSE and domestic abuse had also been priorities in the unitary and continues to be so; the county had previously also prioritised neglect and this is continuing but they have also committed to CSE. In addition to these topics both LSCBs have performance management as a priority, directly linked to attempts to measure outcomes for children and young people.

At the time when the research was conducted the priorities for the next three years were being discussed. There was a consensus that CSE was
too narrow a focus and led to needs being missed and connections not always being made. As a result a Child Sexual Abuse Forum had been established which brought the Executive Groups of both LSCBs together and was chaired by an assistant chief constable. Its remit covered street and online grooming, familial abuse, FGM, forced marriage and sexual violence in gangs. The intention was to develop one action plan across the partners in both LSCBs.

Another priority agreed in outline was the so-called ‘toxic trio’ of domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse and their links with neglect of children. Again at the time when this work was being done both LSCBs had accepted the area as a priority but had not reached agreement on the detail of what should be included.

The Board has an Executive Group (chaired by an assistant director of children’s social care) and:

- Joint policy and procedures sub-group
- Joint child death overview panel
- Serious case review sub-group
- Learning and development sub-group
- Performance and Evaluation sub-group
- District sub-group.

At the time of the research a great deal of attention was focused on child sexual exploitation and agencies’ response to this. The three Boards were conscious of their responsibilities to address the issue and ensure that they were gathering and analysing intelligence on CSE and taking appropriate action. However as can be seen from the brief descriptions above they were also determined to ensure that their responses were developed to meet local needs rather than being shaped by national headlines.

4.2 Interviewees
A total of 37 interviews were conducted in the three Boards; 32 were conducted face to face and five over the telephone. These were with Chairs, as well as members and employees of these Boards. A chart providing further information is included in Appendix 3.

## 4.3 Key findings from case studies

### 4.3.1 Role of LSCBs

Most of those interviewed identified the dual roles of the LSCB in terms of interpreting the legislative framework and guidance on safeguarding and child protection alongside an understanding of their local needs in these areas. They usually went on to explain how this was operationalised in terms of one or more of the following:

- making sure all the agencies were working together to keep vulnerable children and young people safe
- ensuring all partner agencies carry out their statutory duty to protect children and do this to the best of their abilities
- providing appropriate challenge and scrutiny of all relevant agencies.

Since the formation of LSCBs, there had been a debate over whether LSCBs have the capacity to engage in a broader safeguarding role as opposed to a more specific child protection one (see France et al., 2010; Munro and France, 2012). Most of those interviewed favoured a broader safeguarding response, even though there was some questioning of how far their Board could stretch itself to do this well. So while there was a widespread commitment to protecting children and young people from abuse or neglect to providing the right support in place as early as possible and creating an environment in which all children and young people feel safe and healthy, this was often seen to be a big ask, given the number of agencies that would be involved and the limited resources available to the Board.

The minority that took the view that LSCBs should concentrate on their responsibilities for child protection feared that the alternative would mean they would be pulled in directions that exposed the Board to too many
agendas and priorities. The debate was more active in Marston than it was across the other two LSCBs because the shift to safeguarding was taking place at a time when the children’s social care budget was facing cuts:

_The LSCB has to advise and monitor the role of all the relevant agencies in terms of child protection. A few years ago we took a pragmatic decision that safeguarding in a wider sense was not feasible to manage, but this is now changing. I think safeguarding is not something the LSCB can do as it is too broad and the resources are not available. The LSCB is moving into prevention which is good, but it cannot get into universal prevention._

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

It opened up discussions about another potential role for the LSCB. In view of the impeding reductions in the available budget there was a suggestion that the LSCB should examine whether local authority children’s service departments would then be able to function at a level that enabled it to keep children safe:

…it probably haven’t delved deeply enough into this yet…. But we have a live issue at the moment in asking is there enough resource at the front door to ensure that it remains operating in a safe, secure way and that assessments are actually processed timely?

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

The same concerns were around in discussions in the other Boards, sometimes motivated by concerns over funding but definitely by concerns over capacity, with one Buffton Board member wondering if some of the ‘lower end’ of safeguarding responsibilities would sit more appropriately with health and wellbeing boards. This colleague also thought that the expectations placed on LSCBs were unrealistic, wishing to see a vision in place that reflected the role they actually played:

_I want to dispel the notion of the Board as a strategic animal that only does blue sky thinking and comes up with a strategy and doesn’t delve in the operational arena._

(Board member, Buffton LSCB)

So what started out as a straightforward question on the role of the LSCB began to uncover some fundamental questions about their nature. The
expectation that an LSCB is, in essence, a strategic arrangement that influences and improves performance in the safeguarding and protection of children led some informants to question a) if they can do this when the power to determine the resources that will be devoted to this lie elsewhere and b) what their role should be in ensuring the adequacy of those resources.

4.3.3 Workload and support

When the three Chairs were asked if the workload of their LSCBs had changed over the previous two years, Marston’s Chair, who had only been in this role for eight months, unsurprisingly did not feel able to answer. The other two, who had served throughout this period, were clearly of the opinion that it had risen mainly as a result of having to respond to national and local issues. Expectations were said to have increased each year specifically in relation to monitoring looked after children, monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, and monitoring and encouraging an effective local multi-agency response to CSE. A good Board Business Manager, with adequate administrative support, was regarded as a key component of an effective Board.

The level of business and administrative support for the three LSCBs was reasonably consistent over this time, although at the time of the research Marston’s LSCB’s full time and very experienced Board Business Manager had left for another job five months previously and had been replaced by temporary workers; first for one day a week and then three days a week until a permanent appointment would be in place in seven months after the vacancy had occurred. In the meantime this meant that additional work had fallen to all Board members including the Chair. Marston also had a part time training officer and two administrative posts. Midshire had a full time Board Business Manager who was an experienced social worker, supported by administrative and training officers, while Buffton

23 Soon after the case study work was concluded a decision was taken to merge the business units of the LSCB and ASB.
had two part time managers - one who dealt with management tasks and communication and one with management tasks and training - both of whom were qualified social workers.

Marston’s Chair was trying to secure resources to employ someone who would be able to focus on policy and practice. It was intended that they would work across all the partner agencies, and by helping to refine processes they should contribute to saving time and money. Discussions were taking place but the Chair was finding the argument around to invest to save, a very hard one to make at a time when people were being told to make substantial cuts.

**4.3.4 Resourcing LSCBs**

The Children Act 2004 places an obligation on statutory LSCB partners to support the operation of the LSCB, either through direct funding or through the provision of staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources. LSCB member organisations are together responsible for determining what resources are needed and how they will be provided. Across the three LSCBs the perceived failure of national bodies to provide an acceptable response on resourcing LSCBs was a matter of great concern. While the 2004 Act says there is a statutory responsibility to contribute to the Board, this may not always be a financial contribution and some partners provided support in kind. While this was appreciated, too often it was said to be either insufficient or not what was required. The lack of consistency and security that accompanied each year’s requests for support were unsettling and described by one Board member as akin to ‘taking a begging bowl around the agencies’, when the time taken in negotiating and making the requests was needed for other activities. It also left them feeling very exposed at a time when the partner agencies were facing reduced budgets.

The guidance for LSCBs contained in WT 2013 states that the budget and contributions made by each member organisation should be agreed locally and as a consequence there is no standardised formula. Given that funding is fundamental to LSCBs being able to function effectively there was a strong belief across all the LSCBs involved in the case studies that it
should be based upon more equitable contributions, probably calculated using a national formula. This is not a new suggestion (see France et al, 2010 and Davies and Ward, 2012), but despite previous recommendations it is one that has not been implemented by any Government.

The challenge of in the current situation was well illustrated by the discussions that took place in Buffton, where the LSCB has not had an increase in contributions from partners for five years a representative of a partner agency pointed to the pressures on his agency’s budget:

*It is a conflict of interest really, as a member of [the] Board we sit saying we need more resource but last week we handed out 200 job losses. How do I balance that?*

(Partner representative, Buffton LSCB)

In Midshire there had not been an increase since 2006:

...every year when we’ve come to review there’s been austerity cuts; there’s been changes from a national perspective that’s meant there’s been a tighter squeeze on agencies. We’ve seen whole agencies go, that once would have contributed to the Board. We’ve seen changes because of the commissioner - provider split. What we have done is try to be smart by increasing the fees we charge for training to cover some of that deficit, but we can’t sustain that because, actually, everybody’s getting squeezed.

(Board Member, Midshire LSCB)

Nationally police, social care and health were facing further significant reductions in their budgets. The cuts that were hitting partner agencies did not only threaten financial support. Marston, for example, is strongly committed to multi-agency strategy meetings but there had been a substantial increase in the number of times partner agencies were saying they could not provide a member of staff for a meeting or to conduct an audit. Many of the cuts were leading to reductions in management and coordination roles in order to keep frontline services resourced, meaning that the posts affected by the cuts were often those who contributed to multi-agency work:

*If this continues for one and two years based on current budget projections the LSCB will have to refine priorities and scale down*
expectations of how rigorously we can operate because of partners will not be able to put in the time.

(Board Member, Marston LSCB)

Another angle on the resourcing debate relates to that of Chairs themselves – something that was raised as problematic in the survey phase (see Section 3), with the majority of Chairs working well beyond what they were paid for. The mismatch between the demands upon Chairs and the time allocated was highlighted by one Chair:

From national perspective of the Government and everybody, you the independent Chair, you’re the face of the LSCB and the driving force, the responsible individual, then to expect anyone to do that on 20 days a year, as is the case in some places, is ridiculous.

(Chair, Buffton LSCB)

4.3.5 Chairs’ relationships with Chief Executives

The 2013 version of Working Together (Department for Education, 2013) makes local authority Chief Executives responsible for the appointment or removal of the LSCB Chair. This has to be done with the agreement of a panel including LSCB partners and lay members and, drawing on LSCB partners, the Chief Executive is charged with holding the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB.

The three Chairs approved of this development so long as key partners were actively involved in the process. They all took the view that the decision had to lie somewhere and Chief Executives had a significantly high level of responsibility for what happens across the authority. Marston’s Chair had been appointed since this arrangement had been introduced and the interview panel had made it clear that its responsibilities were confined to the appointment stage, to providing the resources to support the role and to ensuring that the Board carried out its statutory duties. They confirmed the Chair’s understanding that the Chief Executive had no control over what the Chair said or decisions made by the LSCB and since assuming the role the Chair said they had received nothing but support from the Chief Executive.
4.3.6 Dealing with Statutory responsibilities

Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:

(a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and

(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes. Regulation 5 of the local safeguarding children boards Regulations 2006 sets out the functions of the LSCB, in relation to these objectives (see Appendix 4).

The approach to, and feasibility of, fulfilling these responsibilities were examined in the three LSCB where they were considered to require both challenge and collaboration. To focus only on the former was thought to risk confrontation and defensiveness that would damage working relationships and ultimately impede effectiveness. To fulfil their responsibilities the three LSCBs were deploying a combination of Section 11 auditing, learning reviews of critical incidents, case reviews, annual reports from partner agencies and monitoring of training statistics. In Midshire, Section 11 auditing was organised over a two-year cycle. In the first year, partners themselves completed them and in the second year peer-audits were conducted. Although the Chair and representatives of partner agencies referred to the challenges when discrepancies had been unearthed, they believed that they had also led to a much higher level of trust, alongside greatly improved knowledge of how each other operates.

In the past year, Marston had adopted a more rigorous approach to auditing cases than it had previously used. Reflecting the shift towards intervening earlier and more effectively at a lower level, it was designed to scrutinise the appropriateness of decisions that had been made where children have been stepped down – or up – through service levels. It included an examination of threshold documents, as well as an examination of the understanding of thresholds amongst frontline practitioners across the relevant agencies. The local authority employed one person in children’s social care who specifically audited cases, while
staff from health and police occasionally contributed staff time. However, the analysis that followed was always undertaken by a multi-agency team. The Chair also wanted to embed an even more ambitious programme of auditing cases but while the Board had found it easy to agree what needed to happen, it proved harder to secure the time and resources to do it.

While Buffton employed the same processes as Marston, far more reliance has been placed on agencies’ annual reports and other reports to the Board. Although more attention was being paid to auditing, the absence of a dedicated post had slowed down the rate at which it could be conducted. As in the other areas, there was a quality assurance sub-group overseeing the implementation of the business plan but the LSCB was continuing to find it difficult to secure the resources to oversee the process.

In all three areas there were references to the challenges of establishing a performance framework when the data sets needed to inform it were incomplete and/or did not contain comparable information. In order for data to inform any performance management exercise, the data should record the same items and be collected in a uniform way. It was frustrating to many of those interviewed because they knew that partner agencies – sometimes their own agencies – held relevant information about vulnerable children and young people that was not being captured by their data processes or shared with the LSCBs. This is mirrored by Ofsted’s assessment of ‘weaker Boards’ where they note that:

*Weaker Boards did not share clear performance data about children and young people who were missing or who were subject to or at risk of child sexual exploitation, despite this being a requirement of statutory guidance. These Boards were less able to challenge how services were being delivered and consequently were not effective enough.*

(Ofsted, 2015a)
However, agencies have different drivers for their collections; children’s social care was considered to have a much more comprehensive approach to data than any other agencies, driven by the requirements of central Government. So, for example, Midshire’s dashboard of the top 20 indicators had 12 that were informed solely by social care data. While the level of analytical drill-down by other partners was not considered to be as extensive, of even more significance was the fact that they had not even been able to agree a shared data set. While efforts were being directed to trying to achieve overall improvements in data collation and analysis, in the meantime it was proving difficult to hold agencies to account:

_In my view the Board has some way to go to hold partners to account for their performance based on evidence from data. They would have to collect and analyse in a different way and we have not charged them with the job of producing those data for the Board. An example would be police attendance at and contribution to case conferences. Local authorities have to produce data on that – the police could not do it. We need to be able to hold partners to account on these areas._

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

The time allocated for analysts to support this work varied across the Boards but in all three it was proving difficult to secure the time needed to ensure robust data sets were in place. It was also recognised that even if it were possible to make progress across the statutory agencies it would be extremely difficult to achieve this across the voluntary sector, where there is very variable involvement in, and response to, auditing and performance management processes.

LSCBs are part of a wider system where far greater emphasis is now placed on evidence-based practice. Professor Munro (2011) was clear that improving outcomes for children and young people should be central to all service provision. Evidence of changed outcomes relies on comparing the situation before and after. Even with good outcomes information, it is often difficult to demonstrate causality (i.e. that the outcomes are a result of intervention/s). It would be a challenging task to establish the extent to which improvements in outcomes for children and young people were due
to a specific intervention by the LSCB when there are so many other factors operating across the system. It becomes an impossible task without good data. While data were collected in all three LSCBs, only one - Midshire – had it as one of the Board’s priorities to begin to evaluate its impact on services and outcomes to try to evidence if it was making a difference.

One of the responsibilities of LSCBs is to promote the welfare of children by ensuring that there are appropriate training and learning opportunities for people who work in services that contribute to the safety and welfare of children. This responsibility covers the training provided by individual agencies for their own staff, as well as multi-agency training for staff from different agencies to train together. All three LSCBs planned, organised and delivered multi-disciplinary safeguarding training and events.

In Marston, there were many discussions about how best to monitor training outcomes. While partner agencies regarded the quality of the input as very good, the Board had wanted to establish realistic proxies of improved outcomes linked to training. There had been an initial attempt to try to measure impact by sending a questionnaire after training and sometime later. While this was said to be very useful it was also regarded as being too time-consuming and so it was unlikely to be repeated. In Midshire, it was standard practice for the training officer to issue a questionnaire straight after a session and then follow this up six months later which meant the LSCB has access to a great deal of data. In Buffton feedback was collected immediately after sessions. However, it was not clear how these data were being used to inform practice development.

Throughout these discussions the importance of establishing and sustaining relationships across the partners emerged as a crucial factor in fulfilling the Boards’ statutory responsibilities and a significant part of this was said to lie with the Chair. Although the Chair was new to Marston it was widely recognised that s/he had worked very hard to establish contact at all levels within the partner agencies and this was said to be paying dividends in terms of motivation and engagement. Since being
appointed eight months previously this Chair had made a point of meeting the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of all partner agencies, even if someone else from that agency attended the Board. In Buffton, where there had not previously been an independent Chair before 2013, the person in that role was valued for the independence that they brought and for the regional and national perspective on safeguarding that they shared with the Board – and this supported good relationships. However, the clearest and most detailed example of a Chair proving to be a cohesive thread running through the partnership emerged in Midshire. Here the Chair had vast experience of safeguarding, LSCBs and the local and regional areas. When they became Chair they were already well known to partners and, from all accounts, widely respected. The fact that they also chaired the sister unitary’s LSCB reduced the number of communications that were required:

*Because the police and a lot of the health partners cover both Boards – all three Boards, in fact – if I’m talking to them, I’m talking on behalf of all three Boards. Also, I’ve been able to drive a lot of shared working and shared learning.*

(Chair, Midshire LSCB)

The critical importance of relationship building came through clearly in the case studies – and is a theme that is revisited in the discussion group section of this report (see Section 5).

### 4.3.7 Serious case reviews

LSCBs are expected to carry out a serious case review (SCR) when:

- a child sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of physical and/or mental health and development through abuse or neglect
• a child has been seriously harmed as a result of being subjected to sexual abuse
• a parent has been murdered and a domestic homicide review is being initiated under the Domestic Violence Act 2004
• a child has been seriously harmed following a violent assault perpetrated by another child or an adult
• the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes inter-agency and/or inter-disciplinary working.24

Buffton had not commissioned any SCRs over the past 12 months but had contributed to three from other areas where it had direct involvement. In both Marston and Midshire the number of SCRs, alongside the demands made by them, were matters of great concern. Marston was said to have a history of commissioning a high number, although – largely because of delays of court cases – none were published in 2014. In Midshire, there had not been any SCRs during the Chair’s first two years but this has changed in the last 18 months, with most involving very young babies in the care of very young parents.

All partner organisations and agencies of a Board are responsible for identifying cases of concern that may meet the SCR criteria and bringing them to the attention of the LSCB. The Board should decide whether a notified incident meets the criteria within one month of notification. It is the Chair, however, who is ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not to conduct a SCR, usually taking into account the advice of a scoping panel. In Midshire, the Chair said that if the panel said there was very little learning to be gained from a SCR, even if it meets the criteria set for a review, s/he would be prepared to go along with that recommendation. The Chair did, however, admit to being ‘slightly nervous’ about the

24 Regulation 5(1) (e) and 5(2) of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 set out a LSCB’s function in relation to SCRs.
reaction this might elicit from the Department for Education and/or the National Panel of Independent Experts on SCRs.  

Across both Boards that had conducted SCRs, interviewees expressed the view that the same lessons usually emerged from SCRs and that what was missing was a way of disseminating and understanding the messages in a more intelligent and analytic way than was current practice. In interviews, the term ‘industry’ was used repeatedly to describe the processes that surrounds SCRs— as it was across the five discussion groups (see Section 5). While some of those interviewed thought that specific methodologies, such as the systems model developed by Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) 26 and the Welsh Government (Welsh Child Practice Review model) were helpful, others thought that the systems model, in particular, led to unnecessary delays.

There were some disagreements over the appropriate approach to be taken as can be seen from the different views of members of the same Board:

I think they’re really awful….they don’t really act as learning devices because by the time you get to publishing them it’s so long after the original incident. I think they’re another opportunity for the media to give us a bashing, regardless of whether that’s warranted or not….and we need to do things faster and slicker… I did a piece of work on looking at the practice of the rail accident investigation people, the marine people and the aviation people and, it just seemed to me that, they have got some really good models for learning fast and sharing that experience quickly with the sector, with very crisp, very clear recommendations.

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

It is right and proper to review a child’s death but I am not sure this is the right way to go about it. The difficulties in doing a root cause analysis type is that it is complex where cases that have gone over years so the analogy with air traffic cases is not appropriate and that model does not equate with multiagency working…. Here we have not made it happen as quickly as it should

25 In June 2013 the then Education Secretary Michael Gove today established a new independent panel to help ensure that lessons are learned when a child dies or is seriously harmed and there are signs of abuse or neglect.

26 The Learning Together model for case reviews which uses a systems approach (Fish et al., 2009)
– fatigue sets in. The analysis should be narrower. Our latest one has 14 terms of reference and some of these are made up of three questions.

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

Of considerable concern to interviewees was the shortage of reliable authors of reviews who could write well. As an illustration of this, there were a number of examples of drafts having required very basic corrections of grammar and spelling by LSCB staff in order to reach the standard required for publication. Given the high costs associated with SCRs, this was understandably frustrating.

It follows that neither the Chairs nor other Board members were convinced that SCRs were necessarily the best way to support learning from practice, with some referring to a survey by the British Association of Social Workers (2013) that suggested the majority of social workers did not read serious case reviews. This did not come as a surprise to interviewees in light of what they regarded as SCRs’ invisibility unless they were reported in the media or conducted in a practitioner’s own authority. It was also suggested that the more SCRs there were, the less likely it was that learning would be applied, presuming an associated dilution of their impact.

Most people considered a well-conducted learning review to be as useful as a SCR with the criteria relating to learning lessons to improve practice and away from a culture of blame. While no one questioned the premise that people had to be held to account for poor practice and avoidable mistakes at any level, the consensus was that the emphasis should be on improving service delivery and learning from that experience. Interviewees wanted Government and the media to remember that SCRs are not inquiries into how a child died or was seriously harmed, nor are they investigations of culpability; those issues are decided by elsewhere.27

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27 According to the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 the purpose of a SCR is not to reinvestigate or apportion blame, but to establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result; and improve cross agency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
But to those who were interviewed this did not always seem to be the case:

*I think learning lessons has to be the legacy of case reviews, as opposed to hanging somebody out to dry. And that’s not been my experience of case reviews ....I do think, if people are being held to account, I don’t think the serious case review process, in whatever guise, is the place to do that. But in conversations around any review process, parallels are drawn with a disciplinary process. The serious case review process needs to be about improving learning and I think we’ve got to be absolutely clear about that.*

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

In both Marston and Midshire, members of LSCBs were also concerned about the cost of conducting SCRs. In Midshire, particularly, the budget required for SCRs was described as 'phenomenal'. Up to this point they had been financed by having reached an agreement with partners that any underspend was not returned, but as the number escalated this did not seem to be a long term solution:

*Too many SCRs will eat up our budget – it is really serious at the moment. I have said to Board that they cannot place too many demands on partners as they are already struggling..... At the same time there is an increase in adult reviews. The situation is not sustainable.*

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

[the systems approach] is very expensive and that is one methodology; so you’ve got, for example, our recent quote is £15,000 .... a comparable review for a SILP\(^28\) would be about £5,000; it’s £2,000 for the child practice review and, actually, the outcome at the end is the same. So if you think of the lack of increase in resources, the austerity measures, the cuts of whole organisations; £15,000 for one review when we are getting unprecedented amounts ... that we have to take [to] serious case review, it will sink Boards.

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

At the moment, Midshire LSCBs’ income from the safeguarding training that it provides helps it to pay for the SCRs it has commissioned, but this

\(^{28}\) Significant Incident Learning Process
is not considered guaranteed income in the future. As a contingency, it has commissioned training to increase capacity and grow its reviewers and possibly generate income from other boards to mitigate the impact of any reductions in contributions from partner agencies.

Marston’s Chair intends to cost all elements of a current SCR to inform the Board and allow the members to take stock:

...at times of stretched budgets it may mean an authority has to lose a social worker to pay for one (SCR). The cost of the external author is visible but all the other costs, such as people’s time, can go uncosted.

(Chair, Marston LSCB)

The Government has announced plans to commission some SCRs centrally rather than leave it solely to LSCBs. In the two Boards where the rising number of SCRs had become a real concern, most of those who were interviewed did not want to see SCRs driven by central Government or any other national body. They believed in the importance of it remaining a local process owned by partners. There was very little clarity about how a national commissioning process would work, but there were concerns expressed that a centralised process had the inherent danger of becoming detached from reality and, as a result, produce recommendations that were neither relevant nor applicable. Despite some apprehension, a few interviewees could see the potential benefits of increased independence afforded by centrally conducted SCRs but they also argued that it would have to be informed by a good understanding of the local context. Some support from Government was welcomed by all those interviewed if it came in the form of a central fund to cover the cost of SCRs and a bank of names of trusted high quality authors.

4.3.8 What makes an effective LSCB?

There was considerable agreement amongst all those interviewed about the factors and conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of LSCBs. One of the most important was considered to be an explicit sign-up from each of the partner agencies at the highest level; another was strong
leadership not only from the Chair but also from those attending the Board.

Another contributory factor to effectiveness was linked to establishing a culture of challenge and scrutiny, alongside a strong performance management system, which allowed the progress of decisions taken by the Board to be monitored. This, in turn, was said to depend on having representatives of sufficient seniority who were able to make sure Boards’ decisions were actioned and who were able to oversee their implementation at strategic and operational levels.

*I think the effectiveness of the partnership is about who we’ve got sitting round the table, their seniority, because, actually, if they’re not able to make a decision on behalf of your agency it is very difficult to make progress.*

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

One challenge around this was a Board’s collective ability to be able to understand and work with individual partner agencies’ priorities which were not always the same as those of the LSCB.

This perspective bears some similarity to that of Ofsted’s view:

*LSCBs have limited authority and do not have powers to require agencies to act. Each of the partner organisations that make up the LSCB has its own accountability structure and is inspected separately. There is no obligation on partner organisations to take account of the advice of the LSCB or to carry out any recommendations given by the LSCB. Evidence from Ofsted reviews suggests that their effectiveness continues, therefore, to be hampered.*

(Ofsted, 2015a)

In the absence of statutory ‘obligation’ upon partners as mentioned by Ofsted or the power to sanction partner agencies, LSCB colleagues in these three areas highlighted the importance of the ability to persuade and cajole:

*I think there is a tension in the LSCB getting involved in what some of the providers would call ‘the more nitty-gritty stuff’ and they sometimes want the LSCB to back off – sometimes this makes for conflict and the only way forward is to use persuasion.*
(Board member, Marston’s LSCB)

Although it was agreed that a LSCB has limited powers to enforce its decisions, it is accepted that they do have a key role in scrutinising local safeguarding arrangements to examine how effectively partners work together to safeguard children. In this respect a number of interesting developments were described that would seem to contribute to LSCBs’ effectiveness. These included the greater use of Task and Finish groups and identifying expertise inside and outside the Boards that could be deployed to support their work. Another example involved one Chair meeting with every member of the Board, in a process akin to an appraisal, to examine what they thought they contributed and could contribute to the Board, how they intended to achieve this and what their targets should be for the next year.

Not surprisingly, another factor linked with effectiveness was adequate financial and personnel resources. In almost every discussion in the three LSCBs, the feeling was expressed that if they were to hold partner agencies to account for their safeguarding work, and to do so effectively, they had to have sufficient and reliable resources, which they all feared might not be the case in the future.

In terms of drawing on children’s voices to drive forward effectiveness, there were reports from all the LSCBs about the steps taken to involve children and young people in their work and how this was beginning to make a difference and, in turn, contribute to effectiveness. In Buffton, for example, the voluntary and community sector was said to be very vibrant and they had ownership of the participation/engagement agenda. Young people were increasingly playing a very active role and had recently been closely involved in the Board’s development day. In Marston, the Board has used the Viewpoint system to communicate with children and young people about a range of safeguarding issues and, in addition to other initiatives, it has commissioned an audit of the range of methodologies

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29 Viewpoint Interactive is a computer based tool used widely by local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1995 for obtaining the views of children and young people.
currently employed across its area to capture the voice of children and young people. In Midshire, the LSCB worked closely with a consultation and participation project that aimed to ensure the voices of looked after children, young people and families were taken into account in services across the county.

4.3.9 Views on Ofsted

Ofsted introduced new arrangements for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and for the review of LSCBs in November 2013 within a single inspection framework. Both Marston and Midshire had been inspected by Ofsted since the introduction of the framework. Marston LSCB had been judged to ‘require improvement’ and Midshire’s LSCB was judged to be ‘good’. Amidst numerous comments highlighting the demands and pressures created by an inspection, the consensus in both areas was that the judgements were the right one. Marston had a previous judgement of inadequate and although both Chair and members thought that very significant progress had been made, and that it was realistic to think that they would be able to achieve a ‘good’ in the not too distant future, they agree there were still some issues that needed to be addressed. They thought this journey would be helped by the quality of the partnership working that had developed and the willingness of partner agencies to engage. But they also considered that it could be hindered by the lack of capacity to deliver the amount of work, data and evidence required. Interviews in Midshire referred to the strength of their partnerships having played a significant part in the judgement decision:

*Ofsted complimented us on partnerships. If we had been a less cohesive partnership some of probes would have exposed fissures. Issues tend to arise over practical operational things. Strategies and policies work effectively – it is [harder] when you are down at some aspects of operational issues.*

(Board member, Midshire LSCB)

There were two questions that ran through the discussions. One was whether it was appropriate to attach the same judgement labels –
‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘requires improvement’ and ‘inadequate’ – to LSCBs as to children’s social care agencies and views were divided over this. The second question was whether it was feasible for a LSCB to receive a judgement that was different from the partner local authority’s children’s services department. Some of those interviewed thought that this may have already have occurred and that it was right (though unusual) that this could happen. A slight sense of injustice was detectable, with some arguing that LSCBs did not have the remit or resources to provide independent scrutiny mechanisms nor the ability to correct failings that are identified in inspections indicating that safeguarding arrangements are not working effectively, but that LSCBs may well be held accountable.

4.3.10 Views of level of engagement of agencies /partners

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires LSCBs to include at least one representative of the local authority and range of senior representatives from key statutory and other agencies. In the three areas, the interviewees explained how they viewed the engagement of the different partners; some of those defined in Section 13 were not mentioned without further probing. Most of the discussions focussed on the relationship with the local authority, police, health and schools and educational establishments. There were also a few mentions of probation and Cafcass.

In all three areas, the close working relationship that existed between the LSCB and their corresponding local authority was reflected in the comments referring to the high level of engagement between them, not least because the local authorities were the major funders and the administrative body whose work was seen to be most closely aligned with that of the Boards.

In these three LSCBs, the police were seen to be an involved partner but one that had, more than with any other agency, a strong alternative chain of command which meant the representatives also had to comply with instructions from their superiors and take account of other priorities at a level that made it harder to hold them to account. One police representative who was interviewed in Marston confirmed this:
Obviously, you know, from the police’s point of view, we are also monitored by our own organisation, our own bosses, and, you know, if we’ve got to go one way or the other, we’re going to respond to our own organisation.

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

Such challenges are not only particular to police colleagues. While there was an evident commitment to partnership working across the three LSCBs, in discussions with representatives of partner agencies it was hard not to conclude that in many instances they were more focused on their own agencies priorities, often speaking of contributing to the Boards’ work or reporting to the Board, rather than of owning the work or acting on the Boards behalf. This is exactly the point made by this interviewee:

Board members need to be aware that they are actually supposed to be holding their own agency to account, not protecting it – first and foremost they are members of the Board.

(Board member, Buffton LSCB)

Another member of the same Board said that improvement was being made in this direction precisely because members were realising that:

It is not just an opportunity to turn up. For it to be true representation the more you do the more you improve the future of the Board. We now have more senior leaders than operational staff and that’s really effective.

(Board member, Buffton LSCB)

The Boards’ relationships with health and education were recognised as having challenges. However, in Marston the clinical commissioning group (CCG) was reported to be very engaged, aided by both the close involvement of a key individual in the work of the LSCB and the fact that the CCG was based in the same building as the LSCB. Marston’s positive relationship with the CCG was also helped by coterminous boundaries. In Midshire the relationship with health was described as a ‘bit of a nightmare’ as a result of boundary issues. Even though the representatives from the health sector were commended for trying hard to be ‘good Board partners’ the reorganisation of the health service meant
that there was a level of uncertainty and unpredictability that did not serve the LSCB well. Discussion of health reorganisation also prompted comments from interviewees in Buffton and Midshire that the number of health representatives now attending Board meetings had increased considerably and this needed to be reviewed. On the other hand, one Board member in Midshire thought this had made a positive difference because it led to the right people being involved in decision-making.

Where agency boundaries were not coterminous there were additional difficulties with which to contend and this affected the three Boards to a greater or lesser extent. There is much research that highlights the challenges of working in areas with non-coterminous boundaries (Perkins et al, 2010; ODPM/Department of Transport, 2006). In some instances health ‘footprints’ had not yet been fixed. Representatives were sometimes still establishing their responsibilities and were sometimes not even sure what others from the same professional group did. Non-coterminous boundaries also meant some remits, including those of health and the police, spread across more than one LSCB so partners would have to be represented on multiple bodies. The Marston LSCB has two representatives from the police – one a detective chief inspector (DCI) from the child abuse investigation team (CAIT) and the other the borough commander. The DCI explained that his/her role was as the head of four of the 19 London CAIT teams and that these teams covered seven boroughs which meant s/he attended the executive and main Board meetings for seven LSCBs. It brought advantages:

> I know people in key agencies across the seven areas. I can walk into a room and I can identify the people that I need to speak to and I have a working relationship with them. They know me as a person; they know how approachable I am; I know how approachable they are; I understand a lot more about their organisations than I would have previously and they understand a lot more about my organisation than they would previously, and that is really important.

But it also brought challenges:

> There are four people in my role across London and we all feel the same. We can’t put the commitment in that is needed and expected ....and there’s an expectation that police should be chairing some of
the sub-groups. I’ve made it very clear and discussed with the Chair that I just can’t do that – I have seven boroughs – I would never do my day job.

As far as other partners were concerned, engagement varied across the LSCBs. The creation of the National Probation Service operating alongside Community Rehabilitation Companies had yet to be implemented in Buffton or Midshire where probation was said to be an active partner, although in Buffton questions of continuity and representation were being raised. However, in Marston the changes had been introduced and the situation was described by the Chair of the LSCB as having been very disruptive to the service and with consequences for its engagement with the Board. Cafcass was another service where attendance varied in all three LCBs but one Chair thought it was not a particularly good use of public money for agencies like Cafcass and the ambulance service to be expected to attend meetings when there were other ways that could be found to engage.

The decentralisation of schools was said to have brought additional problems to all the LSCBs, especially in achieving an appropriate level of representation and dissemination of messages from LSCBs. In the three areas it had become harder to engage schools when local authorities ceased to be responsible for all state schools and their role in school improvement was significantly reduced as it left them and, in turn, LSCBs with very few levers to pull. Although representatives of schools on the LSCBs were recognised as very experienced people they were often viewed as a rather inefficient conduit between the LSCB and a large number of schools. Many of those interviewed thought the representatives did not have the time and opportunities to do all that was necessary. However, in discussions with representatives of schools, a somewhat different picture emerged. One head teacher in Marston had been involved in explaining to schools what would be involved in a Section 175 audit of 16 schools. In doing this, s/he had found a lack of awareness amongst

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30 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There is a statutory requirement for each governing/responsible body to ensure that their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding are robust and fit for purpose. The method of demonstrating this is a Section 175 Audit.
Board members of the safeguarding auditing that takes place in schools by school improvement officers and by Ofsted:

*It has really surprised me that the LSCB appears not to be aware of how seriously schools take safeguarding.*

The dissonance between these views clearly needs to be addressed and underlines the importance of regular meetings between the Chairs of LSCBs with secondary and primary head teachers (as one LSCB Chair described). These events provide an opportunity for each to flag issues to the other, as well as to draw attention to areas where they might work together more closely. The importance of this relationship building was seen to have increased as traditional LA-led hierarchies are dissolved:

*In old days you could tell, now you have to persuade. There may be many advantages to greater delegation but [better] partnership working is not one of them.*

(Chair, Marston LSCB)

Some might argue that this quote illustrates that what had gone before had not been partnership working but, in fact, was direction. In any event it highlights that collaboration with schools is experienced as more challenging now.

In all three areas, schools were seen to be a key provider of early help but the point was made that their policies and procedures needed to be updated to reflect the contemporary agenda:

*They are not alone [in this] as an agency but they do need to modernise their safeguarding policies, which are a little bit historic when you look at them ...they’re not reflecting the modern agenda and some of them wouldn’t know how to make a referral if they had some concerns about a young person going off to Syria.*

(Board member, Marston LSCB)

In Midshire, the problems were compounded by a commissioner - provider split for schools which had led to a lack of clarity and a great deal of
ambiguity about responsibilities, both of which are key when determining aspects of safeguarding.

There were similar problems in relation to representation of the voluntary sector. Even where someone represented the sector, for instance by virtue of coming from an umbrella body, the sector was so diverse and widely distributed that in reality it would be impossible to achieve true representation.

A number of interesting issues about the relationship between LSCBs and partner agencies emerged in discussions across the three Boards. One of these was how to achieve continuity when there was inevitably some turnover amongst those representing the partner agencies. A high turnover had not been at an unsettling level in any of the Boards. This was definitively seen to be a strength, as much of what an LSCB is able to achieve is through trust which takes time to build up and needs to be sustained. One member of Marston’s Board described it as to a working situation that hinged on ‘compliance through reputation’, which was the situation which balanced the reality of the LSCB having ‘very little clout’ but where members round the table did not want to be seen as the ‘weak link’. At a time when partners were subjected to budgetary cuts and other restrictions, and when in reality LSCBs could not force agencies to do anything, there was still a great deal that was achieved because of a moral imperative to do the right thing.

In all three Boards, attempts were underway to draw agencies closer to the their agendas by making sure their representatives lead on some pieces of work that required partnership input, such as work on CSE and chairing key sub-groups. But a recurring problem was the one raised earlier in this section, namely how to ensure that Board members took the role of feeding back to their agencies and then feeding back from their organisations to the LSCBs. Partners were there by dint of working for their ‘home’ agency and, although as a Board member the priority ought to be to establish robust multi-agency partnership arrangements, it can be hard to set aside organisational responsibilities. The Chair of one LSCB reflected on the challenges of this:
I do think it’s a real challenge to make sure that the safeguarding voice is heard throughout an organisation. I think it’s a lot less of a challenge now than it was previously but... I think now, of some of our people, and I won’t say it’s like turning a barge, but it’s very challenging. So I wouldn’t for one minute say we’ve got a divide in terms of people who get it and people who don’t, but there are still people who want to protect their own organisations. I do think there’s a lot of work to do in terms of raising awareness of safeguarding issues.

4.3.11 Independence of LSCB

All LSCBs now have had an independent Chair but it was not clear to what extent the Boards were able to be independent of their constituent agencies. The agency it is closest to, and from which it effectively emerged on the demise of Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs), is the local authority and specifically the children’s services function of authorities. In Marston, the Chair and other partners did not see any challenge to its independence referring to a strong desire across all agencies for independent scrutiny. The same confidence was not evident in Midshire or Buffton. The Chair of Buffton’s LSCB was its first independent Chair when they were appointed in 2013 and s/he thought the partner agencies were still on a journey as far as ‘independence’ was concerned even though they had made good progress. In Midshire, the Chair believed that the Board was now more independent than when s/he was appointed three years previously, but s/he was beginning to hear that some partners feared that this could be reversed when they (the Chair) left. The Chair believed it was his/her responsibility, with the Board, to stop that happening, but recognised that it was impossible to uncouple issues of independence from the question of finance. In his/her view the absence of specific guidance from Governments on the details of how LSCBs should be funded created a dependence on local authorities, and on children’s services specifically, that was unlikely to be challenged at a time of spending cuts.

There was a strong feeling across all three Boards that real independence could only be achieved when two conditions were met. The first being when all members felt accountable and responsible for their Boards and made this a reality by providing adequate resources to support their work
rather than, as currently happens, leaving children’s social care to pick-up any shortfall. The second was to match calls for independence with giving LSCBs more powers. There was, however, less appetite for the type of independent body advocated by the Chair of Buffton’s LSCB, although they were not the only one who wanted Boards to be independently constituted.

4.3.12 Other bodies

LSCBs are one structure amongst many that exist in local areas. There is a complex framework of partnerships and other structures including health and wellbeing boards (HWBs), community safety partnerships, children and young people’s partnerships (CYPP) and where they still exist, Children’s Trusts. In her review, Professor Munro (2012) recognised that the proposed HWBs may fulfil a similar role to that of Children’s Trust boards. Four years after the review and with the HWBs in place, many of those interviewed struggled to reach a clear understanding of how these strategic bodies all related to each other and, of course, where the LSCB fitted. In all of the three case study areas, interviewees said they were unclear about aspects of the relationships and about expectations of what the relationships should be. It was considered that it was relatively early days in the life of HWBs and so there was still some attempts being made to work out where its remit interfaced with that of LSCBs. In Buffton a protocol had been recently agreed between the LSCB, the safeguarding adults board (SAB), the HWB and the Community Safety Partnership to define roles, responsibilities, relationships and priorities in order to improve clarity. A similar protocol had been developed in Midshire. In Marston things were becoming somewhat clearer because the Chair of the HWB was clear that its strategy should be confined to issues that only its members can drive forward. It was apparent that in all three areas relationships were being defined amid concerns that the end result could still be multiple bodies without clear responsibilities. The situation was further confused if many of the same people sat on multiple Boards (though this also brought some benefits). Sometimes steps were being taken to minimise the burden or to use their multiple Board roles as a way of making sure the LSCB agenda was firmly planted in other Boards.
Section 5: Discussion Groups

5.1 Summary

The details of how the participants were recruited are recorded for the five discussion groups are set out in Section 2. The groups were held in Birmingham, London and Manchester. Sixty people participated in the groups representing a total of 38 LSCBs (see Appendix 3 for further details). Where quotes are used from these groups the locations are numbered from 1 to 5 to avoid any individuals being identified by default.

Three broad areas of exploration were covered in the discussion groups:

- multi-agency relationships
- effectiveness, improvement, regulation/inspection
- sustainability and resourcing

The views of those attending the groups could not be taken to represent the views of their LSCBs. The report of the discussions below reflects the experiences of those in the group and even where there was a consensus in the groups they are still merely indicative of the actual picture.

5.2 Multi-agency relationships

5.2.1 Partner representation on LSCBs

In her report Professor Munro (2011) identified LSCBs as being ‘uniquely positioned within the local accountability architecture’ to monitor the work of professionals and services in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In order to be able to do this, they emphasised the importance of the relationship between the LSCB and partner agencies.

While no one disagreed that joint working and multi-agency practice are effective ways of contributing to better outcomes for children and young people, it was clearly a challenge to move from a group of agencies meeting round a table, to a position where all relevant services were informed by a principle of continuum of need leading to the provision of appropriate and responsive support. There were clear and positive examples of agencies working together but there were also accounts of ‘missing agencies’ in terms of engagement and commitment.
Across the discussion groups, participants considered that the right combination of partner agencies were *usually* involved in their Boards, though there were concerns about specific aspects of attendance, explored below. It is interesting that not all the statutory agencies noted in the 2004 Act were mentioned while some others were referenced. The core agencies were identified as being health (in its many guises), education, police, probation, social care, voluntary, community and faith sectors and, although not an agency, children and young people were mentioned by many as essential stakeholders.

The question of appropriate representation of agencies was a major concern in some areas specifically in relation to health, education and the voluntary sector – mirroring the messages from the case studies (see Section 4).

The reorganisation of the National Health Service, with the introduction of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and other bodies, had led to confusion across LSCBs over a number of issues including how responsibilities were divided between CCGs and NHS England area teams. This reorganisation had also resulted in the number of representatives from the health sector having grown considerably over the past two years:

*If any organisation dominates our Board, I would say that is health, because we haven’t grappled with representation in terms of commissioners within health and provider services within health, so out of the 28 members, eight or nine of them are from health.*

(Discussion group 1)

This imbalance had yet to be addressed, though some Boards were clearly looking for ways to do just that and were testing out possible solutions. One obvious one was to ask the health representatives to agree amongst themselves who should attend, though how these representatives then disseminated information arising from the Boards and how they then provided feedback was seen to be a vital component that was often difficult to get right across the Boards’ partnerships. Another approach was to establish a health sub-group; in the instance reported this was chaired by the LSCB’s deputy Chair who also worked within the CCG.
While attempts were being made to rationalise representation of this major part of the health system, another part of the health service continued to concern many LSCBs for its under-representation. Although individual general practitioners (GPs) often attended and participated in LSCBs, this failed to translate into a wider participation by GPs in child protection training or – as far as the other frontline professionals were concerned – attendance at child protection conferences and other meetings. Those attending the groups identified this as a common problem but so far had failed to find a solution.

The challenge of establishing and maintaining the engagement of schools has been documented over previous years (see Baginsky 2003, 2007) and appears to have continued – and from the perspective of many discussion group participants, worsened with the increased independence of schools from local Government. Since 2010 there have been significant reforms in the education sector. As a result schools are able to acquire greater independence from the local authority (LA) by converting to academy status. While this does not change their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children the feedback from many of those attending the groups was that it had made a difficult situation even more difficult. Ofsted make no comment on the ‘academisation’ agenda in their Annual Social Care Report, but they do note that in LSCBs found to be requiring improvement:

*Partners, particularly schools, were generally less engaged in the Boards’ work.*

(Ofsted, 2015a)

Discussion group participants, however, drew an explicit link:

*I think the problem is that, when you had a local authority, with local responsibility, you could talk to schools and school governors about their required response, in terms of the safeguarding and wellbeing of children agenda and, unfortunately, the academies programme, the independence from local authorities, I think, has weakened that link.*

(Discussion group 3)
When you deliberately break down local authority boundaries, you break down the ethos of that local authority. You used to have primary heads’ associations, secondary heads’ associations, often independent of the national teacher unions and head teacher bodies, who would engage with the local authority on a regular basis developing an authority ethos, which people talked about and identified with. (Discussion group 5)

The most usual pattern was for representatives of the different sectors (primary/secondary/independent) to attend meetings with the intention that they would then report back to their ‘constituencies’. The success with which this happened was said to vary considerably. However, it is fair to say that in some areas representation of schools was said to be working well, and possible solutions were emerging. In one area, schools had decided to fund a dedicated safeguarding post through its Direct Schools Grant budget; elsewhere a local authority was funding a similar post and was planning to extend the support:

They fund one post already and they’ve just agreed to fund a second post. One post provides direct advice to schools around safeguarding issues and the person also organises the Section 175/157 audits, which are done extremely thoroughly. The second post will be to work more widely with schools over multi-agency working and also to support when something’s hit the fan and schools suddenly find themselves in the middle of (a regional news programme), or whatever, you know, which doesn’t happen infrequently in our area, so there’s a lot of commitment and that works pretty well.

(Discussion group 2)

One local authority was considering funding a similar post largely as a result of the primary and secondary representatives resigning from a Board because they did not think they could continue in their roles, even though it was said that the expectation had been they would provide an educational perspective rather than represent their sectors. In a number of areas, the Chairs of LSCBs were also attending head teacher forums a

32 Section 175 of the Education Act places a duty on local authorities in relation to their education functions, the governing bodies of maintained schools and the governing bodies of further education institutions (which include sixth-form colleges) to exercise their functions with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are either pupils at a school or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools (which include Academies and Free Schools) by virtue of regulations made under Section 157 of this Act. In order to fulfil this requirement, education establishments are required to undertake a full self-assessment and declare their compliance with Section 175/157.
number of times each year to explain Board business, listen to concerns and explore ways of keeping the communication channels open and effective.

Representation of the police on LSCBs did not appear to be an issue as far as attending meetings or contributing more widely to the work of the Board, according to group participants. However, police were one of the agencies where its boundaries and those of the LSCBs were often not coterminous, which— as noted in the case studies—brings challenges. Police colleagues at the discussion groups explained it was sometimes difficult to provide enough officers of sufficient seniority for the number of Boards and sub-groups covered by their force. In two groups, the challenge of securing the most appropriate police representative to attend was raised. It was suggested that the issue would become even more acute as forces responded to reorganisations and budget cuts:

*In my force ... the big challenge that we have is around understanding that safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility, so there tends to be this perception within the police that it fits into public protection. I mean, I am from public protection, so my job is safeguarding, child protection, and we are currently going through a whole restructure and we’ve got four LSCBs all who have executive boards; the person that sits on that is a divisional commander who is a uniformed officer of the rank of Chief Super but, come April, that will no longer be in existence and so the view in the force is, well, LSCBs, that’s public protection; you can go to all the meetings. But a lot of the sub-group meetings within our LSCBs, such as prevent strategy, safer school partnerships, things like that, are more community-based and we are going through a real battle at the moment about who should go, at what level and in which role within the police.*

(Discussion group 1)

There were many areas where the boundaries were not coterminous, not just between local authorities and police forces and local authorities and health, both of whom were seen to be vital members of LSCBs, but also with ambulance and fire services, housing providers and commissioners. One ambulance service in the Midlands, for example, covered 26 LSCBs. This led participants to question both the expectation and the practicalities of sending informed representatives to so many meetings and to suggest that it was time to look at other ways of engaging with these services.
other than through membership of LSCBs and their sub-groups. It was also suggested that this would make the task of rationalising and reducing the membership of some Boards, to make them 'slimmer and fitter', a great deal easier.

The children and young people’s voluntary and community sector is not only large but it is also diverse and dispersed, which presents challenges in terms of engagement and representation. Engagement with this group was reported to happen usually through an umbrella body. Not one person in any of the groups came up with an alternative model but the limitations of the current arrangements were widely recognised, not least as any umbrella group or forum will represent only part of the voluntary sector. However effective the individual representatives are in sharing best practice and disseminating information, and there were positive testimonies to this effect, there are limitations to what they can do and what can be expected of them. This point was made very strongly in the discussion group:

> We’ve had to be quite assertive about not being held to account... we don’t have any authority. I’m the Chair of the forum, but I don’t have authority over any of the other forum members. They come from different organisations, and I have no influence over those who are not part of the forum, nor over the whole of the rest of the voluntary sector who don’t belong to the forum. We do have, as part of our terms of reference, that each member is to disseminate information within their networks, so not just their organisation, so that can spread their capillaries a little bit further, but it is... it’s a very large elephant sitting in the middle of the room that nobody seems to really have any solution [for].

(Discussion group 4)

The views expressed in the groups about the voluntary and community sector did not just link with the problems of representation but also reflected wider concerns at how little oversight LSCBs and others bodies had of a sector that was labelled ‘the unmanaged and unregulated economy’.

There were very few mentions of other partners in the groups. Some referred to uncertainties arising from changes to the delivery of probation service and how the two providers – the National Probation Service and
Community Rehabilitation Companies – might be represented in the future. The contributions made by lay members since the requirement to have these local representatives was introduced was also flagged as being broadly positive. The fact that Cafcass often appeared to be hard to engage and/or appeared at meetings irregularly also came up – as reflected by the survey data (see Section 3). This was not necessarily seen to be a problem but did lead to participants questioning the need for that agency to be at LSCB meetings at all, with some calling for other ways of communicating and engaging to be explored.

The importance of seniority and continuity amongst those attending LSCBs has long been an issue (see France et al., 2010) but within the discussion groups the former appeared to be far less of a problem than the latter. The turnover of staff in senior positions in children’s service departments in particular was generally regarded as approaching - or already being at – ‘crisis levels’ which was believed to get worse if the number of local authorities children’s services being placed in intervention continued at rise.

In some groups, the discussion on representation led to a debate on whether the model on which LSCBs were founded is now defunct given the decentralisation of key partners. There was some sympathy for the argument that some partners were not engaging because those agencies were so different from their previous form (when LSCBs were designed) that it could be said that they no longer existed in any recognisable form:

*In effect there’s no such thing as an education system and we are getting close to that with health …the concept of partnership has been strained beyond breaking point so maybe we don’t have an appropriate model to achieve what we need.*

(Discussion group 5)

All of this was thought to point to a need to look at Board membership from time-to-time to make sure that the agencies needed at the table – and in the sub-groups were given the opportunity to be there, and those that were not needed were engaged differently. This is an issue picked-up again in the next sub section.
5.2.2 Size of LSCBs

The number of members attending Board meetings is alluded to above in terms of the growing number of representatives of the health sector and the challenges of representation of sectors where there is a very diverse membership. The number attending meetings, the frequency of meetings and the extent to which members engage in LSCB business were linked with the importance of all Board members understanding their role and their responsibilities which had to go beyond ‘picking up papers and strolling into the meeting’. It had led some Chairs to conduct a root and branch review of their Boards. This Chair had recently completed the first stage of such a process:

There were people on the main Board that I did not hear speak [for] my first 18 months – it was a kudos thing of being on the Board. There was a huge imbalance as far as health and the local authority were concerned – six or seven members each. It is not good for partnership working if 14 people are from two agencies when police have two people. I needed to achieve a balance without sacking people but I did say what a good Board should look like which is about 24-25 members and I went on to suggest the membership – may be one from local police and one from specialist policing; three or four from local authority and may be four or five from health and asked them to give their nominations. They wielded their own axe and others joined sub-groups. We have reflected on all this and we are about right size, but now need to hitch up a next level of seniority.

(Discussion group 5)

France et al (2010), perhaps unsurprisingly, found that the larger the main LSCB group, the more difficult it was to manage the meeting and get through the business. Those attending the groups gave examples of Boards with large numbers of attendees, where meetings lasted for many hours and with very long agendas, all of which served to impede meaningful engagement by both the extent of the business to be transacted and the intimidating atmosphere that was sometimes created. In order to counter this many LSCBs were reported to be examining ways of improving their efficiency while still involving a large number of partners. The way in which this had usually been addressed was by establishing sub-groups which were attended by some agencies that had
previously attended the full Board but who were happy, or at least agreed, to move to this arrangement. There were also reports of large Boards now working much more effectively by changing the way they were structured. There are a number of examples in the next section (5.2.3).

There was clearly no single solution. The size and nature of the meeting was determined by a configuration of local circumstances, personalities and feasibility. This topic was discussed in great detail in most of the groups with participants agreeing that it was important to review the size and membership of Boards from time to time, taking into account a number of issues. These included examining alternative structures and who needed to be involved in the LSCB’s work, what was needed to address priorities, who needed to attend a full meeting, and how often they needed to come together, as well as who did not need to be there. This streamlining sometimes would involve stepping people down, and this was deemed useful where attendance had come about as an entitlement by virtue of the position held rather than what that person could contribute. This linked with a widely held view that there was little point in attempting to engage partners who were not prepared to devote energy to LSCB priorities, and a number of participants shared the view that if LSCBs could not engage the majority of necessary partners then it was failing.

5.2.3 Executive Groups and sub-groups

When the discussions explored the advantages of LSCBs having an Executive Group, opinions were divided. In some areas, they were said to work very well and drive the work of the LSCB more effectively. So, for example, in one area the fact that the sub-groups reported to the Executive Group meant that most of the detail of the business could be conducted there and the full Board was able to take note of what had been progressed but then engage in more detailed discussions of items than had previously been the case:
We are now able to have proper debates, even to the point of rearranging the way that we have the room and who sort of sits with who….we were concerned as a partnership about the connection between the LSCB and children and young people and how much each knew about one another and that has been helped by the way we do things.

(Discussion group 1)

One LSCB had recently carried out a radical review of its membership to respond to external and internal demands for greater accountability and engagement. Here, as elsewhere, they wanted to reduce the number attending the Executive Group in an attempt to make it more efficient. But they then received too many requests be included once agencies thought they would be missing out if they were not there:

…and so we have had some painful negotiations with health colleagues around which CCGs are going to be there, which providers are going to be there … We’re going to have a newspaper-type communication that will go to everyone so it is clear how and why decisions were made, but you’ve got to have the right people to actually drive business forward and… so that’s a much tighter way of doing it. And there will be performance management of every member, to hold them to account; they’ll have an appraisal with the independent Chair and the Chief Executive.

(Discussion group 5)

A very different approach was adopted when this LSCB in a unitary authority undertook a review:

We did a review about 18 months ago. We had an Executive Group; we got rid of it because there was conflict between what the Executive Group did and what the Board did. We actually went back to working together, and we looked at all of the objectives and all of the responsibilities of the Board and we apportioned and delegated all the responsibilities to three core sub-groups and we increased the frequency of the Board meetings … and it’s been working very well for 18 months.

(Discussion group 5)

There were those, who were more vocal if not more numerous, who thought that the existence of an Executive Group stifled engagement. If the Executive Group was effectively doing the business of the Board, it
raised questions about the role of the main Board in relation to its statutory duties. It exposed a lack of clarity over what issues should or had to be submitted to the Board:

I think, in my position as a Board Business Manager, it’s not always clear as to who is actually driving that work. Is it the Executive Group? Or, actually, should some of the work the Executive Group, be undertaken by the main Board?

(Discussion group 1)

The experience of someone who currently chaired one Board with an Executive Group and one without had been that it served to create considerable frustration at two levels. Those not on the Executive Group thought decisions had, in fact, already been made and many amongst the Executive Group complained of having to sit through some discussions twice. Other experiences of abolishing an Executive Group were that it had produced more effective and engaged Boards:

I think the issue in relation to partners is very much around getting some ownership and getting them to take responsibility, so all of the sub-groups of the Board that I’m involved in, they’re all chaired by different people, different agencies, and I think that’s a fairly deliberate, and the make-up of those sub-group is also, you know, so there’s... so that sort of engenders engagement and ownership, so therefore there is more discussion. I can see the difference now; there’s a lot more discussion in the Board now than there was previously.

(Discussion group 2)

We got rid of the Executive Group because there was such a desire to be engaged, that nobody wanted to not be on the Executive, so in terms of managing the agenda a bit more successfully and giving people the opportunity talk, every Board is part business and part developmental, so where we’ve a main agenda items to discuss, we use that in a developmental session so Boards are very rarely now around a table, but more in café-style, so that, actually, everybody has the opportunity to discuss the papers. We have increased to six Boards a year to get through the agenda, because it takes a bit longer, but there’s been a huge willingness to do that.

(Discussion group 1)

There were also examples of Executive Groups disappearing to be replaced by a different type of body. In one area an Executive Group was
replaced by a business management group made up of the Chairs of the separate task and finish groups:

...so we come together as Chairs with responsibility to do whatever that piece of work is and so we don’t have huge great big agendas any more, we deliver specifically the work on our themes.

(Discussion group 3)

In another Board, a decision had been taken to have a very small Executive Group comprising the CCG, police and the local authority as the key statutory partners, mainly to set the agenda. The view was that this group guided the work of what was described as ‘a very engaged membership’, who could then focus on the priorities in the strategic plan.

Unlike Executive Groups, sub-groups featured in nearly all LSCBs represented in the discussion groups and they were judged to fulfil a valuable role, contributing to the effectiveness of the LSCB, whether they reported directly or through an Executive Group. It was usual for sub-groups to be chaired by someone from partner agencies and for a range of agencies to sit on them to ensure that different professional backgrounds were represented and that one partner was not seen to lead on everything.

5.2.4 LSCBs and other strategic boards/bodies

The groups also discussed how their Boards were working with other strategic bodies such as health and wellbeing boards (HWBs), Children’s Trusts, or their successor partnership arrangements, and Community Safety Partnerships.33 The picture that emerged was a confusing one. Sometimes arrangements appeared to be working reasonably well but more often they were described in terms similar to that used in discussion group 1 ‘as an accountability mosaic which is actually a muddle’. A key

33 From 31 October 2010 the Department for Education withdrew statutory guidance on Children’s Trusts, but the requirement for local authorities and partners to have a Children’s Trust Board and the wider duty to cooperate to improve children’s wellbeing, as set out in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, remains in place.
part of unpicking the confusion was for Chairs to meet to sort out respective responsibilities and accountabilities:

*It is very interesting to get that right! One of my first experiences of going to a meeting with the police and crime commissioner was presenting the annual report and the challenges to the police. But the police officers present were very unclear because they thought their job was to hold the Chair of the LSCB to account for what the safeguarding board was doing. So I think getting it clear when you have the conversations with Chairs from other groups or other essential people about what is the relationship between them and the LSCB is really important.*

(Discussion group 4)

While HWBs were said to have enormous potential to strengthen partnership arrangements around children’s safeguarding, it was thought that they needed time to mature and reach their full potential. LSCBs were seen to have that maturity so it was suggested that they should work closely with HWBs to design and commission services that were needed to meet local needs and LSCBs priorities. In a further illustration of the complexity, sometimes Children’s Trust arrangements were said to be more significant than HWBs and in other places they were described as irrelevant. There was also great deal of cross-representation on the different bodies, although rationalising this was also identified as something that was being, or needed to be, addressed very soon.

In an attempt to bring greater clarity to the respective roles and responsibilities of the various bodies, local authorities in one region had developed a performance framework tool to chart all the strategic bodies, their responsibilities and their priorities. This was widely felt to be a necessary endeavour by discussion group participants, who added that along with aligning priorities, effective Boards needed to have time to put into forming good relationships. This is echoed by Ofsted who noted:

*Good Boards tend to be characterised by mature partnerships that have been the basis for agreeing priorities and sharing resources. In these Boards, responsibilities have been clearly articulated among the Chair, the local authority Chief Executive and the Director of Children’s Services. There are good strategic links between partners’ objectives and priorities and those of other key decision making bodies, such as the local health and well-being boards.*
(Ofsted, 2015a, p 20)

These ‘strategic links’ were not interpreted by the groups as meaning the LSCB Chair must sit on the HWB; indeed there was a degree of bemusement at the fact that several recent Ofsted reports had criticised LSCBs on the grounds that the Chair was not a member of the HWBs even though the LSCB was represented in other ways. There did not seem anything that could be done other than conform to the directive, however it did represent at least half a day of a Chair’s time which was a considerable proportion when they were generally paid for so few:

*We did not know where that came from....it’s not specified anywhere that the LSCB Chair should sit on the HWB. The issue of cost is important because, for every day the LSCB Chair is there we obviously have to pay for that – so it is an additional cost or we get less of [his/her] time as a result – or should [s/he] do more for free?*

(Discussion group 3)

And one of the Chairs who had been directed to do so said:

*Three very strong members of my Board sit on the health and wellbeing board; I don’t have a shadow of a doubt that if there were issues about children they would deal with them effectively. I have a protocol that says I have an open door, if I want to take and issue to the HWB I can take it. All Ofsted said was, was I sitting at the table? So I rang the Chair of the [HWB] to say I think I’d better come and sit at your table. You know, it is totally ridiculous.*

(Discussion group 4)

The issue of resources once again surfaced as achieving greater clarity over the responsibilities of the various Boards was said to be becoming increasingly important when all budgets across the public sector were being cut:

*My authority had a 38 per cent budget reduction across the lifetime of the coalition Government, and that would be replicated to a greater or lesser extent around all of the partners. So, actually clarifying the interfaces, simplifying the interfaces between all of these bodies that hold some remit for the social and economic issues is absolutely imperative.*
5.3 Effectiveness, Improvement and Inspection

5.3.1 What makes for an effective LSCB?

France et al (2010) examined in some detail the necessary components of an effective LSCB and they also refer to some of the literature on the factors that make strategic partnerships effective. Read as a whole, the findings from our study confirm the importance of most, if not all, of those components and factors. However, the issues identified in this section were the spontaneous responses received when the question ‘what makes an effective LSCB?’ was asked in the groups. The participants in all the groups were in agreement that a ‘strong’ Chair was an essential component of an effective Board. When asked what was meant by ‘strong’ it comprised an ability to hold the partnership together by persuasion and negotiation; being able to move people from one position to another by argument and evidence rather than threat and exposure, as well as confident and fair leadership. Effective Boards were seen as being dependent on effective Chairs – described as those who are able to work sensitively, tenaciously and confidently across the partnerships, as well as having the skills to manage complex meetings and relationships. These expectations were then compared with the number of days available for Chairs, which in one case was only two days a month, although this was recognised to be at the low end of the range. It seemed to those in the groups that the expectations of Chairs were identical even if the time they were afforded differed quite considerably.

However good a Chair was, he or she could not succeed without a strong group of members who were prepared, in the words of more than one participant, ‘to roll their sleeves up and do the job’. The level of commitment that this required had to be spread across the membership and not confined to a few people:

34 Ward et al., 2004; Percy-Smith 2006, Horwath and Morrison, 2007, Warmington et al., 2004)
I have recently come from another Board where all the work seemed to be done by a very small cohort of people, who would be recycled for whatever task and finish work there was to be done but you need to get people involved that are willing and able to do the work.

(Discussion group 2)

The third factor associated with effectiveness, and which was identified in all the discussions in some form, was the importance of a shared vision that was underpinned by a performance framework that reflected the complexity of the task. This was said to require the strategy and priorities to be clearly focused, matched with a clarity on what was needed:

- to produce the required results
- to hold agencies to account
- to plan how learning and improvement would be disseminated.

I think that’s one of the most important factors; if the Board is well organised, it understands what it’s doing, what its vision is and expectations are, then I think improvement comes out of that. I think it’s when it’s slightly chaotic and people aren’t sure what’s expected of them or how we’re going to demonstrate this, so that, for me, is one of the most important factors for improvement.

(Discussion group 1)

In addition to these three enabling factors, two other themes emerged from discussions in all the groups. These were the importance of:

- a well-resourced infrastructure accompanied by concerns about the extent to which staffing levels varied greatly across LSCBs:

  From speaking with all the Board Business Managers across the region one of the things that they seemed more concerned about was that they were trying to run the Board with themselves and sometimes with a part-time admin and a part-time training coordinator. Some had extra pots of money because they’d been found inadequate, so they had got quality assurance officers and the like but in other situations most manage on a shoestring.

  (Discussion group 2)

- a focus on outcomes – where there was a consensus in the groups that effectiveness went hand in hand with improved outcomes for
children and young people and that more effort should be directed towards demonstrating the impact of a Board’s actions on outcomes, even if that started with assessing theirs experience of working with services designed to keep children safe:

We agreed as part of our constitution that there would be an annual review contribution from our partners to say what they did, why they did, what outcomes could evidence and impact of their work in relation to safeguarding children. This is an aspiration rather than a reality but it means we are focused on achieving more in the future.

(Discussion group 5)

It was notable that there was such a high level of agreement across the five groups on the necessary components of an effective LSCB, despite the diverse professional perspectives of participants and regardless of whether they deemed their own LSCB to be effective.

5.3.2 Improvement – facilitators and challenges

The Groups were asked to consider what role, if any, LSCBs were playing in terms of supporting improvement across children’s services and other agencies. It was difficult at times to keep the discussions focused on improvement such was the draw of the next topic to be covered, namely Ofsted. There was firm agreement across the groups that many of the areas where Ofsted would identify LSCBs as needing improvement were linked with issues beyond the power of LSCBs to effect change. So, for example, caseloads and rates of turnover of social workers have a significant impact on practice and, in turn, on outcomes for children. While a LSCB may express concern at high caseloads and unacceptable turnover rates it is powerless to do anything to address these challenges.

This is a perspective that is echoed to an extent by Ofsted, who noted:

Evidence from our reviews suggests that the impact of LSCBs continues to be hampered by their inability to ensure that partner agencies take decisive action when weaknesses are identified. It is clearly the LSCBs’ role to identify poor practice and advise the appropriate agency, but they do not have the authority required to ensure that action is taken; ... The LSCB may well continue to report its concerns, but they do not have the teeth to make sure things improve.
There were three areas most frequently identified in the groups where LSCBs could contribute to improvement. These were:

- supporting the development of joint working and multiagency practice
- providing challenge and scrutiny
- involving children and young people in Boards’ activities.

In a number of the groups it was said that the LSCB’s role was to model what this involved for practitioners by working as a group to analyse issues and develop solutions, based on a shared understanding of what was happening in practice and the mechanisms to identify and disseminate best practice. There were also a number of references to the importance of strategies and plans being based on a shared understanding of agencies’ accountabilities which also made explicit how and when they needed to work with others:

> *If there is a tendency to see a problem as lying with one agency, or one that will be sorted by one sub-group, things will not move on. Somehow we need to find a way of working together at all stages and all levels.*

(Discussion group 4)

No one mentioned that they were using an evidence based framework to achieve a more coherent approach to multi-agency work at a strategic level but one participant said her LSCB was looking at adopting the Standard Self-Assessment and Improvement Tool (SAIT) that was widely used in Wales.

As noted in other parts of the research, the importance of good performance data and quality assurance processes were highlighted, particularly where these were at a multi-agency level. It was evident from the discussions that in some areas performance data were analysed and reviewed carefully, and the results used to identify where improvement in services was required. Elsewhere, while this may be an aspiration, it was very difficult to achieve because of the failure of agencies to collect
consistent data, and the fact that the Board did not have access to someone with the time and skills to analyse them:

Section 11 audits\(^\text{25}\) seem to take a lot of time and energy and I’m not sure that we know how to use them properly, so I think that’s work in progress in terms of accountability of all the different bodies and organisations and where are they in terms of safeguarding. I think they do have a lot of influence in terms of organisations needing to say what they’re doing right and what their gaps are, so I do think that they have a purpose, but it’s such a big task.

(Discussion group 2)

Although there were exceptions, such as those where there were specific posts to support schools (see section 5.2.1), most schools did not have the time or skilled personnel to devote to a multi-agency audit or to what followed. So while schools were seen as key to the improvement process they were usually on the periphery of what was required to support it:

So where we used to have a local authority that would often be able to do all of that work and support the school, at the moment we are not getting the best of learning from schools. When we’ve done reviews in schools, they just don’t know where to start. We’re starting from scratch with them, it leads to some delay, so it’s not just about the membership, it’s about how it all hangs together.

(Discussion group 3)

One other area which participants linked to achieving improvement was the inclusion of children and young people. The groups provided the opportunity for participants to discuss how they were involving children and young people in their activities, which covered the range from one-off consultations and surveys to participation in Board meetings. When the activities that were mentioned were mapped against Hart’s Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992) while there were fewer at the upper end, it was evident that it was an area of work that was attracting a great deal of attention. Task focused and advisory groups were mentioned and – albeit

\(^{25}\) Section 11 of Children Act 2004 puts a legal duty on a range of organisations to ensure that their functions – and any that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 11 audits are designed to allow LSCBs to assure themselves that agencies placed under a duty to co-operate by this legislation, are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
less frequently - parallel boards had been established and in some places children and young people were members of LSCBs.

The examples were varied, and demonstrated the commitment of LSCBs to better engage children and young people:

*We had a LSCB wedding, where [we] all joined together in matrimony and decided on the key areas of focus that they were going to do in terms of moving forward, so I know young people presenting at the Board were really conscious of around, yes, we have a statutory requirement to keep young people safe, but what does ‘safe’ feel like for young people? So we’ve got young people involved in the Board now. We’ve got two representatives that have a 15-minute slot who they go out and speak to other children and young people about it, what the key issues are for them, and present them back to the Board every two months.*

(Discussion group 1)

Other accounts show much that is positive but also highlight the challenges and detailed operational considerations involved in taking participation to the level of Board membership:

*So we went out to the agencies to recruit young people that they thought may fit the picture and the youth services did a programme of induction, but then the young people fell away over the summer and we probably only got six young people on Board. But it did mean that they all attended their first Board meeting in September, so that was by way of introduction. We’d also undertaken some work on child sexual exploitation strategy and they were able to give us some feedback on that, their view. It was quite powerful to hear that... Then we tried to agree terms of reference and we said that if we have six executive Board meetings a year and they attend three of them, it’s actually a huge amount of work in terms of preparing them for it and debriefing them. So we’ve agreed a work plan with them which seems proportionate. They are an older group this time and we are going to use a similar model to involve some younger children as well. We shall do a similar induction and then hopefully we’ll have a younger group and an older group. We are going to have to speed up on what we do because the younger group may be more demanding and we’ll have to think about how they come to and from meetings and we may have to meet later in the day so they can attend after school.*

(Discussion group 3)

**5.3.3 Inspection**
Since 2013, Ofsted has undertaken an inspection 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. In view of the pressures and tensions that are well-reported around Ofsted inspections, it is perhaps not surprising that the messages that emerged from the groups were broadly negative. In general it was felt that the language used by Ofsted was very ‘unhelpful’ and ‘destructive’ as were the summary judgements attached to children’s social care and LSCBs in isolation from the context within which they operated. It is worth noting that even those who had been through the process and had been judged to be ‘good’ did not think it was the most appropriate way to go about an external quality assurance process.

There were many references to Ofsted’s own report on the early implementation of the single inspection framework (Ofsted, 2014b) and to Professor Munro’s review of the first 11 inspections (Munro, 2014). Both reports were felt to be helpful although they were both criticised for failing to address how inspections linked with improved outcomes, and for not exploring what methodology could be employed to determine a link between activity and outcome.

All the groups debated the emphasis that inspections placed on compliance. Some people thought this happened at the expense of examining the outcomes that had been achieved and the indications that progress was being made. This person was not the only one who alluded to the resource implications of ‘doing Ofsted’ well:

...what bothers me a little is that I get a sense that quite a lot of the high level gradings are based on an ability to offer a lot of QA and audit evidence and we haven’t got the resources to do that, and certainly all everybody else that we talked about, the individuals that make the Board, they haven’t got the time to take out of their day job to continuously be doing in-depth audits, so I don’t think we’ll be able to evidence that and therefore we’ll not be seen as good enough.

(Discussion group 1)
However, more positively, there were those who were able to point to what had been achieved by improving audits and processes precisely because they had to face an inspection. There were also a few who mentioned, somewhat apologetically, that they had been able to improve practice in other agencies by ‘waving the stick’ that Ofsted was coming or by pointing to a criticism in an inspection report and using this to leverage action.

A question that was raised in most groups was whether it was/should be possible for a LSCB to receive a different rating from that of its corresponding authority. There was at least one inspection where this had been the case. However, in the groups there was a consensus that it would be very difficult for this to happen and there were anecdotal, possibly unfounded, reports of inspectors going to considerable lengths to avoid it happening. A more common concern was that a LSCB could only be judged to be as successful as its weakest partner which introduced an element of unfairness in some minds:

So… we missed getting a good judgement because it wasn’t felt that across the locality early help was as embedded as it needed to be. So I think that what you might find is that you get a mixture of judgements about the agencies but, actually, if they’re not all good at safeguarding has the Board failed? The reality is that you can jump up and down until you’re blue in the face but you can’t make some things happen. So is the LSCB to be judged on what it’s doing and how it’s doing it, or is it to be judged on the quality of service delivery across the piece in safeguarding children? We might decide one way or the other but we need to recognise that those are two very separate things.

(Discussion group 2)

Overall the feeling in the groups seen to coalesce around a belief that Ofsted was struggling to understand, and reach reliable judgments, when faced with what is, in effect, a partnership framework. The problem was said to arise in the main because Ofsted inspected LSCBs as if they were a ‘single organisation joined at the hip’ with the children’s social care – despite the clear imperative for Boards to be independent.

An alternative arises for the inspection of LSCBs to be part of a multi-agency inspection. At the time when the groups met, two pilot “integrated
inspections” had been concluded, but the results were not available and neither were the results from the consultation exercise that accompanied the pilots. However, there was little optimism amongst participants that this integrated approach, whereby separate inspections\textsuperscript{36} would be conducted of each individual agency during the same two week period, would work. This was largely because of concerns that the complexity of the issues facing LSCBs – and other agencies – could not be solved by single agency inspections. Ofsted (2015b) have since reached the same conclusion:

\emph{Delivering up to five separate inspections of local agencies at the same time as a joint inspection of the LSCB was difficult and challenging for the inspectors and those being inspected. It created competing demands on both.}

Ofsted now proposes to introduce a programme of “short, sharp, targeted” multi-agency inspections with the CQC, HMIC and HMIP from April 2016, which will be closer to the principle of multi-agency inspections supported by the focus groups\textsuperscript{37}.

\section*{5.4 Sustainability and resourcing}

\subsection*{5.4.1 Resources}

The discussion in the five groups covered general issues around funding rather than concentrate on the situation in specific Boards. LSCBs are funded by key partner agencies on the basis of a local agreement with the local authority, health and the police as key funders. In most areas funding was agreed annually but there were a few instances where Boards had negotiated budgets for two and three year periods, but – as with one of the areas in the case study phase - there were also examples of Boards that had not had any increase for five or six years. One of those in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons).
\item \textsuperscript{37} The intention is to complete six targeted inspections in a locality area before March 2016. These targeted inspections will evaluate how local agencies work together to protect children, focused on specific areas of concern such as the sexual exploitation of children and young people.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
former category appeared to have gained some security almost by default and provided details of her experience:

*I started just as the discussion about cutting or reducing some of the local authority contribution was happening. I quite naively wrote out to all Board partners saying how very difficult it was to plan a year in advance for training, so I’d like them to commit to three – that would take us to the end of our business plan, and they all agreed. Now, I don’t know if it’s worth the paper that it’s written on, if something happened tomorrow, but I haven’t had to chase any contributions; they’ve all been paid as we’ve invoiced and we’ve just sent them out for next year without having to have any of the discussions because they agreed it in writing that we’d get that contribution for two years.*

(Discussion group 2)

This testimony was highly unusual within the experience of the groups – and attracted some envious reactions.

Ever since the inception of LSCBs, the issue of resourcing had been a contentious issue, with some partners contributing funding routinely, while others contribute expertise at an agreed level or in response to a request. As a result there are considerable variations in the funding available to LSCBs. Davies and Ward (2012) drew attention to the time that was taken-up discussing and negotiating partner contributions and the impact that the uncertainty surrounding this had on strategic planning. The same issues emerged in all the discussions but the aggravating factor was a deep sense of uncertainty created by the significant cuts to budgets that partner agencies were facing.

Despite the reorganisation of the health service which had created some problems over representation (see previous sections) there was generally less concern that contributions from health partners would fall. In some cases, CCGs were actually increasing their contribution which led to speculation on how the Boards might be seen in the future:

*In both my areas the increased CCG contribution seems to be producing a sense from CCG representatives that the Board cannot be dominated by the local authority in the future....They will not be able to go on regarding it as an arm of the council, as they seem to do now.*
(Discussion group 5)

It is interesting to consider this alongside the concerns that were expressed about further cuts to local authority and police budgets in the coming year. The LGA has estimated that the 1.8 per cent cut to councils’ spending power translates into an 8.8 per cent cut to Government grant. Similar concerns have been expressed after a reduction of £299m in the overall 2015-16 police funding budget, compared with 2014-15 was announced. It has been suggested that more deprived areas and those that have experienced rapid population growth are expected to experience the largest cuts (see, for example, Innes and Tetlow, 2015). So it is not surprising that many of those attending the groups were nervous about how local authorities would be able to sustain the same level of support. There were similar concerns about the support Boards may receive from the police where forces are facing a five per cent cut in funding in 2015/16 and further cuts over the next years.

Steps were being taken to mitigate some of the impact of the cuts. A few Boards were planning to merge their administrative function with that of the safeguarding adult board or another part of the local authority to save money. Though it was acknowledged that this could bring some benefits, these changes were not usually being approached with any degree of optimism; rather there were concerns that already over stretched staff would not be able to absorb additional work. Other Boards were reviewing the charges they made for training and were reluctantly contemplating increasing the cost where they levied a charge, introducing a charge for training that was currently free or charging for non-attendance at training that was provided. To the bemusement of those in one discussion group, one Board member reported how demand for training had actually increased when charging had been introduced.

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38 See http://m.lgcplus.com/5077826.article
39 See http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/December%202014/17%20December/12-Home-PoliceGrant.pdf
40 See Budget statement issued by Home Office in September 2012.
One contributor gave an account of a recent discussion that had taken place with partner agencies, which also reflected the demands made of Boards, particularly in response to current agendas:

_We involved young people in the recent Board away day. They have a right to say what they want which included more support around CSE, more attention to open space safety and list went on and on. The Board were impressed but I had to introduce the question of how much it would all cost. Did they want a CSE coordinator? Yes. Did they want to replace the quality assurance officer who left last year and who was not replaced – yes to cope with the audits needed. The budget last year was £200k – the wish list budget for next year would need to be nearer to £300k. A tinge of realism kicked in._

(Discussion group 5)

Many of those attending the groups had recent experience of multiple SCRs and, as in the case study areas, the word ‘industry’ was frequently attached to the process. Not only did they take up a great deal of staff time and take many months (or longer), the costs attached to an independent report author and an independent panel Chair, without accounting for staff time, made them very expensive exercises. Although the more reflective approach embedded in the systems methodology was viewed positively by some participants, SCRs more generally were often viewed as an ineffective way of learning lessons and a guaranteed way to slow down the Board’s work:

_We [police] see the impact of serious case reviews across the local authority areas we work across, certainly within the city where they had three last year within a couple of months …in terms of the other work that is undertaken by the Boards, there’s not a lot going on. In the county where there has not been a SCR we see new websites, a lot of engagement work, fantastic campaigns on CSE, because they’re not busy, not bogged up with undertaking serious case reviews, it really does impact on the resource base._

(Discussion group 1)

The feelings ran so strongly in most groups that it is not surprising that this comment attracted considerable support:
The serious case review system has burnt-out in my view. It’s getting to the point where it’s a waste of public money and [they are] getting in the way of safeguarding and protecting children.

(Discussion group 2)

In view of the concerns about future cuts and the demands being made of LSCBs, it was not surprising that the representatives in the five groups were in favour of nationally agreed formula to determine contributions. Many were aware that the idea of a formula had been around for some time and seemed to have been too hard to implement. It was recognised that it might be difficult to find the right combination of variables, and that early attempts may also be criticised, but there was a real desire for a renewed attempt. Not only would it help to remove at least some of the annual uncertainties facing many LSCBs, it would help partner agencies, such as this police force, to distribute available funding:

Because there is no national formula to guide us on how much we should give, a decision was made rightly or wrongly, that we pull together four amounts of money and split it four ways, so that each Board got exactly the same amount. We have a city with a high level of deprivation and we have a relatively affluent rural area but that was a decision that was made because we did not know how else to go about it.

(Discussion group 1)

5.4.2 The future

At some point, in all groups the discussion touched on the future of LSCBs. Sometimes this came from concerns about the impact of any cuts they may face, sometimes in reference to media or policy rhetoric and sometimes out of a discussion on the meaning of ‘independence’. It was evident that there was no appetite for an additional layer of bureaucracy that would add to the plethora of boards that already exist. A minority of participants would, however, have liked to see a different model, possibly one which brought police, health and social care together as equal partners to support a similar infrastructure to the existing one. It was
suggested that such an arrangement would distance it from what might be seen to be an over identification with children’s social care. Some participants in one group suggested that this could also be achieved by relocating the Board to the office of the Chief Executive, although when that suggestion was tested with other groups it did not attract much support. One Board Business Manager explained how the LSCB had responded to the Department for Education’s invitation for LSCBs to look at different models of how to operate:

_We put a proposal to the Department of Education which we can’t really go into, but it’s about looking at separating it and acquiring a charitable status. We’ve got a meeting next week with chief officers and chief execs to say, if we are going to do this we need separate legal services, separate premises, HR, IT etc. …all of that stuff and when I looked at the figures the … budget for the Board trebled._

(Discussion group 5)

Overall the majority thought it wiser, at a time of so many changes in the architecture surrounding health and other agencies, to leave the Boards where they were, but to direct efforts to making sure they were on a secure financial footing.
Section 6: Overview

This research, commissioned by the LGA, was designed to produce contemporary data on LSCBs that provided an accurate picture of what was facilitating and challenging their effectiveness. The guidance that was issued when the Boards were established made it clear that they were expected to provide a policy framework for all agencies with a role in safeguarding and protecting children to operate within and to co-ordinate work in this arena. While Working Together (2013) clarified aspects of the responsibilities of LSCBs it also emphasised the critical role they play in strengthening local safeguarding arrangements. Government expectations and the introduction of inspections of LSCBs by Ofsted had raised questions in terms of whether partnerships of local agencies - designed to work together and to hold each other to account under the chairing of an independent person - were able to meet all that was expected of them.

As outlined in Section 2, there is an expected degree of divergence in the findings from this research – reflecting the plurality of perspectives around LSCBs and the range of professionals’ views that were sought. Nonetheless, there are a number of key themes that emerge, which will be described here.

One area where there was considerable agreement at all stages of the research was on what contributed to a Board’s effectiveness. The three contributory factors that emerged at all stages were:

- a high level of commitment and engagement from partners
- a focus on outcomes achieved through a culture of challenge and a robust performance framework
- an adequate level of consistent resourcing.

Those who contributed to the case studies and groups identified the importance of a ‘strong’ Chair to any Board’s effectiveness. When what was meant by ‘strong’ was unpacked it hinged on an ability to hold the partnership together by persuasion and negotiation; by moving people from one position to another by argument and evidence rather than threat and exposure.
Overall partners believed their LSCBs worked very well. It was evident that the Chair was a crucial element in creating an atmosphere of trust in which s/he and other members of the Boards could challenge each other. While Board members were in agreement that the Chairs played the crucial lead in translating ‘challenge’ into action, they were also conscious that the powers that lay behind this were very limited, and to a large degree, hinged on engagement and persuasion. In the survey a small majority (55%) of Chairs thought they were coordinating the work of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across their areas very well, although just under the majority (47%) thought that they were ensuring the effectiveness of what was done. Connected to this, there were much divided views amongst Chairs on the extent to which LSCBs had the necessary statutory powers to hold partners to account or sufficient authority in relation to Chief Executives. This highlights an area worthy of further examination; the extent to which LSCBs can influence or exert control over issues for which they are ultimately held accountable – see below.

In terms of how structures and processes could affect LSCBs’ effectiveness, there emerged no one-size-fits-all solution. Different arrangements – for example the use of an Executive Group and sub-groups – are being implemented across the country and depend on local context. The discussion groups in particular highlighted how the split between the work of the Executive Group, and in some cases sub-groups, and that of the full LSCB could challenge cohesion, shared understanding and engagement. The issue was how to balance efficiency against democracy/shared ownership; how to get the Board’s business concluded without distancing some Board members and without making full LSCB meetings so repetitive of the other meetings that members did not think it worth attending.

There was clear evidence of good partnership working and a commitment to sustaining and building relationships from the survey and the fieldwork, but the tension for some members between their role on the Board and as a representative of their own agencies emerged in the course of the case studies and the discussion groups. This tension may be unavoidable and
possibly reflects a more fundamental issue that links with how LSCBs are constituted.

The importance of data, and the difficulties faced by LSCBs in this respect, was another theme that was visited several times throughout the research. Despite the many references to data collection and analysis in the course of the study, there was very little information that could be quoted on outcomes, either in the case studies or in the discussion groups. LSCBs struggled to evidence how their work was improving outcomes for children, though they recognised this to be extremely important. A number of colleagues suggested that it would be very helpful if agreement could be reached about a shared data set at national- and LSCB-level that all agencies would be required to populate. This could then be analysed and converted into information so the data then attracted a wider meaning (see Moynihan, 2008). Without this in place, there is limited information about how the work of the LSCB is impacting on safeguarding outcomes for children and young people. Neither is it possible to see how LSCBs would be able to take the lead on challenging and scrutinising practice, or to fulfil their strategic objectives, without these data.41 Similarly while there were many references during both phases of the fieldwork to multi-agency training and the quality of provision it was not being evaluated rigorously and systematically – particularly in terms of impact – because resources and expertise were not available to do so. Unless these data are captured effectively, it is impossible to ensure that training is meeting the needs of staff and that it is having an impact on practice and outcomes.

Unsurprisingly, resource pressures were a consistent theme throughout the research. LSCBs rely heavily on local authorities to fund their activities, and a number of participants recognised the tension between a desire to ensure the LSCB was (and was seen to be) truly independent of its corresponding local authority and the recognition that in most cases it was the local authority contributing the lion’s share of resources, both

41 The limitations of the research meant that it was not possible to attend the quality assurance/performance sub-groups to see how LSCBs use the outcomes of audits to learn and improve practice and inform the processes around challenge.
financial and in-kind. For those other partner agencies that do contribute to LSCBs, in most cases the amount was agreed annually or it was based on a formula decided some years previously. This is not desirable and may not be sustainable. It certainly serves to perpetuate the idea that LSCBs are the responsibility of local authorities and encourages a notion that support to the LSCB is perhaps optional. Health contributions were an exception to this picture in some areas. If LSCBs are to function effectively there must be secure and appropriate levels of funding and resourcing to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. A number of participants supported the suggestion of a nationally agreed formula for contributions. Connected to the issue of resources is the issue of SCRs. At the present time one of the biggest demands (in terms of difficulty, and in some cases in terms of actual cost) made on LSCBs’ budgets comes from the costs of conducting SCRs. Participants at all stages of the research raised the significant resource challenges (financial and personnel time) associated with conducting SCRs, and a not insignificant number questioned whether they were even useful at all. The response from participants prompts us to ask whether this mechanism, designed to examine problems and learn from them, has now become a problem in itself – a mistaken endeavour which we need to learn from.

As well as insecure financial arrangements and arguably insufficient authority, one of the major challenges facing LSCBs is around the expectation on Boards. Over the years more and more has come to be been expected of LSCBs and very many participants across all phases of the research expressed concern about how these expectations could be met in the current context of stretched resources. Further challenge exists in relation to LSCBs’ ability to control some of the issues they are held accountable for – several participants highlighted the need to remember that Boards are not responsible for service delivery and do not have the resources to support it. The research indicates a concern about the extent to which LSCBs are now being held to account by Ofsted and by Government for the practice of all agencies working with children and families; some participants felt that it seemed they were expected to take on an inspection function. This was not a role for which they were
established and would seem to transform them into a local arm of Ofsted. They are, as everybody recognised, required to 'ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes', but this is a phrase that is open to wide interpretation.

The research strongly suggests that, put simply, LSCBs have not been resourced to fulfil a role that means they can be held to account for any failure in the system. That would require powers to scrutinise and intervene at a level that was not envisaged when they were established. One researcher (Horwath, 2010) suggested that LSCBs were or could become 'toothless tigers'. Participants were clear that this perceived impotence risks undermining the effectiveness of Boards.

Relatedly, while there has been more emphasis placed on holding partner agencies to account it is not necessarily clear how they will be able to do so, particularly with the greater level of decentralisation of services such as education and the considerable flux in health and social care agencies.

In terms of the role the Boards believed they were designed to fulfil, the research indicates there is reason to believe that the majority meet most if not all expectations (or are making demonstrable progress against doing so); it also showed that a minority are not able to do so, and in most of these cases Ofsted had already identified the same concerns.

Throughout the research there were examples of excellent and committed partnership working, of strong leadership and of local partners doing their level best to mitigate the impact of reduced resources. The role of the Chair, and the centrality of them as individuals to the overall effectiveness of LSCBs, came up repeatedly throughout the research. There were numerous examples of Chairs providing good role-modelling, of working far beyond their remunerated hours and of being creative and tenacious in the face of challenge. The huge value of an effective Board Business Manager was also recognised, as well as the significant impact of other LSCB staff, on a Board’s effectiveness.

Whilst Boards clearly face many challenges, the research indicates that if LSCBs were afforded greater certainty and sustainability in their resourcing, alongside clear and proportionate expectations of their remit,
the experience and expertise that they have accumulated mean that they could act as powerful, galvanising forces for good – as indeed some do. If, however, they are to be expected to provide an independent scrutiny mechanism across the whole of children’s services then the purpose has outgrown the design.

At the present time there is a lack of shared clarity over their purpose which is producing an unhelpful level of insecurity across the sector and which must be addressed cautiously. The research offers no evidence to suggest that a radical change in the current model will yield better results – albeit this was not explored in detail – and in fact, the more pressing issue seems to be that there is not a universally agreed and realistic set of results for LSCBs to achieve. There is a fear, expressed by a number of participants in this research, that a dominant discourse may prevail that ‘there is a problem with LSCBs’ (with no universal agreement as to precisely what the problem and what its causes are) and that this will be addressed through structural/procedural reform activity. It seems imperative that any efforts to support improvements in effectiveness acknowledge factors beyond simply the form LSCBs take. Broader considerations include a) the widely held view that the expectations on LSCBs have increased significantly without accompanying additional powers and resource b) the context of reduced resources and subsequent pressure on agencies in relation to safeguarding and c) the critically influential role of human relationships and personalities.

On that last point, one important message from this research is that where things are working well and/or improving, this often seems to rely on the purpose and passion of the individual people involved – personal qualities that are quite separate from issues of structure or procedure, and are very hard to inspect, but may be hugely salient in the discourse around LSCBs and their effectiveness.
References


Ofsted (2014a) Serious incident notifications from local authority children’s services. London: Ofsted

Ofsted (2014b) Inspecting local authority children's services: the framework. London: Ofsted

Ofsted (2014c) Consultation on integrated inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and joint inspection of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. London: Ofsted


http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/research/proj/liw/publications
Summary of quantitative data collected in the survey

Data covers 89 chairs and 130 LSCBs

SINGLE / MULTIPLE CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS

Chairing more than one LSCB
Yes 58 (65%)
No 31 (35%)

Where yes, the number chaired
1 58 (65%)
2 20 (23%)
3 9 (10%)
4 2 (2%)

Number of areas where chair also chairs the Local Safeguarding Adult Board
19

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND OF CHAIRS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Number of respondents *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>39 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>24 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachings and education</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one of above</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>12 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Length of time as chair of each LSCB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSCB 1</th>
<th>&lt;1yr</th>
<th>1-3yr</th>
<th>3yr +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long have you chaired this LSCB?</td>
<td>43 (33%)</td>
<td>53 (41%)</td>
<td>34 (26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIEWS ON NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN RELATION TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) to appoint or remove the LSCB Chair with the agreement of a panel including LSCB partners and lay members.

The extent to which this reflects the realities of arrangements re appointment / removal of their board(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very limited extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely well / to a very large extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chief Executive, drawing on other LSCB partners and, where appropriate, the Lead Member will hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB.

The extent to which this reflects the accountability structure of their Board(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very limited extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely well / to a very large extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Views on links / relationships with other LSCB Chairs in your region(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have very little / no contact with other LSCB Chairs in this region</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see LSCB Chairs at other regional forums intermittently</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I correspond / speak to / meet with some of the other LSCB Chairs occasionally</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I correspond / speak to / meet with other LSCB Chairs regularly</td>
<td>35 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs have regular structured opportunities for regional discussion and collaboration</td>
<td>75 (58%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would more regional networking be useful?
Yes – 49 (38%)  No – 81 (62%)

FUNCTION OF LSCBs

The Local Safeguarding Children Board’s primary function is to bring together representatives from agencies and professionals responsible for safeguarding children.

The opinion of chairs at the level the Board(s) is / are fulfilling its / their statutory duties (Percentages refer to number of LSCBs)

Co-ordinating what is done by agencies represented on the board

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very poorly</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately well</td>
<td>56 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly very well</td>
<td>66 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by agencies represented on the board

Very poorly 3 (2%)
Poorly 15 (12%)
Moderately well 51 (39%)
Mostly very well 57 (44%)
Completely 4 (3%)

**VIEWS ON SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do SCRs impact on ability of LSCB to conduct other business?</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very limited extent</td>
<td>11 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>48 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did the LSCB receive additional funding for SCRs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 (12%)</td>
<td>114 (88%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Publication of an annual report for 2012/13 and / or 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>122 (94%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>107 (82%)</td>
<td>23 (18%)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Many were in the process of being prepared for publication

**SUPPORT AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

Support staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In post full time</th>
<th>In post part time</th>
<th>Vacant full time</th>
<th>Vacant part time</th>
<th>No post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business manager</td>
<td>99 (77%)</td>
<td>24 (18%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training lead</td>
<td>87 (68%)</td>
<td>24 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>35 (27%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86 (66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy adviser</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>102 (78%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of the business manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the Chair line manage the business manager exclusively?</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>126 (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In which service / agency is business manager managed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority:</td>
<td>119 (92%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, does your business manager have the necessary skill set to support your LSCB effectively?</td>
<td>95 (73%)</td>
<td>35 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the staffing capacity of your LSCB sufficient to carry out the range of tasks expected?</td>
<td>51 (39%)</td>
<td>79 (61%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESOURCING LSCBs

Working Together (2013) states that all LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCB to be strong and effective. Members should share the financial responsibility for the LSCB in such a way that a disproportionate burden does not fall on a small number of partner agencies.

The extent to which funding arrangements are working in LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSCB 1</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very poorly</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly</td>
<td>40 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well enough</td>
<td>78 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>10 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferred funding arrangement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding arrangement</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current arrangement (i.e. local partners decide on funding contributions)</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding to be provided by central government</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A defined national formula to decide on contributions to be made by local agencies</td>
<td>100 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRIORITIES OF LSCBS
(Chairs listed the three top priorities for their LSCB(s) in 2014/15 financial year?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and vulnerable, exploited and missing children (VEMT)</td>
<td>78 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the way the LSCB operates</td>
<td>46 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early help</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing effectiveness of the LSCB</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving multi-agency working</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of children and young people</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Working Together (2013) sets out the statutory requirements in relation to membership of an LSCB. Membership must include at least one representative of the local authority and each of the other Board partners set out below. Working Together (2013) also makes it clear that members of an LSCB should be people with a strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisation. They should be able to speak for their organisation with authority; commit their organisation on policy and practice matters; and hold their own organisation to account and hold others to account.
Over the past 12 months chairs were asked to say which of the statutory members *regularly* attended LSCB meetings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Named senior representative attends regularly</th>
<th>Senior representative attends regularly but not always the same</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but does not always have required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but without required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representation at any level is sporadic / irregular</th>
<th>No representative attends from this agency / group</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>120 (93%)</td>
<td>10 (7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>83 (64%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>69 (53%)</td>
<td>29 (22%)</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth offending service</td>
<td>84 (65%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS clinical commissioning groups</td>
<td>96 (74%)</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS England</td>
<td>54 (41%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS provider trusts</td>
<td>86 (66%)</td>
<td>25 (19%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafcass</td>
<td>43 (33%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>31 (24%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure training centre in the area</td>
<td>6 (-)</td>
<td>3 (-)</td>
<td>2 (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison/secure facility</td>
<td>8 (-)</td>
<td>3 (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research commissioned by the Local Government Association
Working Together (2013) states that the LSCB should either include on its Board, or be able to draw on appropriate expertise and advice from, frontline professionals from all the relevant sectors and names the following people / groups.

**Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Named senior representative attends regularly</th>
<th>Senior representative attends regularly but not always the same</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but does not always have required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representative attends regularly but without required level of seniority</th>
<th>Representation at any level is sporadic/irregular</th>
<th>No representative attends from this agency/group</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority schools</td>
<td>88 (68%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>17 (13%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies in area</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>50 (38%)</td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free schools in area</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>57 (44%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>61 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent schools</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>59 (45%)</td>
<td>50 (38%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other professional groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional / professional group</th>
<th>No arrangement in place</th>
<th>Work in progress to establish arrangements</th>
<th>Arrangements in place, not fully engaged</th>
<th>Arrangements in place, working well.</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designated doctor</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>96 (74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated nurse</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>119 (92%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Public Health</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>26 (20%)</td>
<td>80 (62%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Child and Family Social Worker</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
<td>70 (54%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and community sector</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>34 (26%)</td>
<td>78 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Family Justice Board</td>
<td>54 (42%)</td>
<td>28 (22%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellbeing Board</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>20 (15%)</td>
<td>41 (32%)</td>
<td>58 (45%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding Adult Board</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
<td>68 (52%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Trust Board</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>80 (62%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety Partnership</td>
<td>17 (13%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>38 (29%)</td>
<td>49 (38%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>LSCBs</th>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>LSCBs Subgroups %</th>
<th>Subgroups Subgroups %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>68 (52%)</td>
<td>42 (32%)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult mental health services</td>
<td>61 (47%)</td>
<td>46 (35%)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and rescue</td>
<td>49 (38%)</td>
<td>22 (17%)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPPA (^1)</td>
<td>48 (37%)</td>
<td>29 (22%)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs and alcohol misuse services</td>
<td>41 (32%)</td>
<td>58 (45%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug action teams</td>
<td>21 (16%)</td>
<td>39 (30%)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence forums</td>
<td>17 (13%)</td>
<td>72 (55%)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sports bodies</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental health</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS (^2)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronial services</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>16 (12%)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes military, faith groups, community safety links, ambulance service

\(^1\) Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements  
\(^2\) Crown Prosecution Service
### Lead members’ engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active involvement</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actively involved</td>
<td>122 (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not actively involved</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lay members’ engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of influence</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>16 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>36 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>49 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extent of LSCB engagement with front line practitioners’ views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement level</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>25 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>68 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>33 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Any changes in partner engagement has changed over the past two years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement change</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most agencies better engaged</td>
<td>56 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some agencies better engaged</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement largely unchanged</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some agencies less well engaged</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most agencies less well engaged</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know – not been Chair for the whole period</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The extent to which the voices of the children and young people influence LSCBs
The influence of children’s voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of children’s voice</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>47 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>55 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRAINING**

LSCBs have a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection training is provided that meets local needs.

The extent to which this is proving feasible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training meeting needs</th>
<th>Number of LSCBs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very large extent</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>14 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a reasonable extent</td>
<td>45 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a limited extent</td>
<td>57 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which the following statements apply in LSCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to monitor single agency training</td>
<td>72 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB has developed some of its own training</td>
<td>105 (81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB provides specialist training on specific issues</td>
<td>112 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to get some agencies to attend multi-agency training</td>
<td>65 (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OVERVIEW OF LSCBs AND THE ROLE OF CHAIRS (n=89 chairs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a limited extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the work of LSCBs been afforded greater local profile in the past two years?</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>10 (11%)</td>
<td>37 (42%)</td>
<td>31 (35%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the workload of LSCBs increased in the past two years?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>15 (18%)</td>
<td>66 (73%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the resources (financial and/or staffing) of LSCBs increased in the past two years?</td>
<td>56 (63%)</td>
<td>22 (25%)</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LSCB Chairs have the necessary statutory powers to hold partners to account?</td>
<td>12 (13%)</td>
<td>32 (36%)</td>
<td>24 (28%)</td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LSCB Chairs have sufficient authority in relation to the DCS/s?</td>
<td>6 (7%)</td>
<td>26 (29%)</td>
<td>31 (35%)</td>
<td>24 (27%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do LCSB Chairs have sufficient authority in relation to the chief executive/s</td>
<td>15 (18%)</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
<td>29 (32%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do local agencies value the work of the LSCB and share its priorities?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
<td>30 (34%)</td>
<td>50 (56%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Views on key skills, knowledge and attributes that support effective work as a chair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill / Attribute</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>80 (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to challenge others</td>
<td>71 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing and maintaining good relationships across the range of agencies</td>
<td>68 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>67 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>39 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what the role involves</td>
<td>37 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of specialist safeguarding issues</td>
<td>34 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and guidance</td>
<td>33 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to operate politically</td>
<td>33 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management expertise</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## VIEWS OF CHAIRS ON POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES AFFECTING LSCBs (n=89 chairs)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>观点</th>
<th>强烈反对</th>
<th>反对</th>
<th>无意见</th>
<th>同意</th>
<th>强烈同意</th>
<th>未回应</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs could be more effective if the work was confined to a narrower child protection focus</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>31 (35%)</td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>23 (26%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCBs should focus on safeguarding using the principles outlined in the <em>Working Together</em> statutory guidance and avoid being distracted by every new national news story</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>13 (15%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>48 (53%)</td>
<td>8 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is helpful when specific issues are highlighted as a national priority (e.g. CSE/FGM/Neglect) as it challenges LSCBs to focus efforts locally</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>51 (57%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional collaboration on specialist areas (e.g. CSE/FGM/Neglect) has proved helpful in addressing issues of national priority</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (11%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>55 (62%)</td>
<td>10 (11%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have limited/no data to identify local priorities</td>
<td>8 (9%)</td>
<td>57 (64%)</td>
<td>9 (10%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking serious case reviews is a useful means of improving safeguarding locally, providing valuable learning</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>15 (17%)</td>
<td>14 (16%)</td>
<td>51 (56%)</td>
<td>8 (9%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are insufficient specialists with relevant skills to undertake</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>16 (18%)</td>
<td>16 (18%)</td>
<td>47 (53%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serious case reviews available to local areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The current Ofsted inspection framework of LSCBs is helpful in driving</td>
<td>11 (12%)</td>
<td>22 (25%)</td>
<td>20 (22%)</td>
<td>32 (36%)</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up performance and increasing the profile of LSCB activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective multi-agency inspection would support and strengthen the work</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (13%)</td>
<td>59 (66%)</td>
<td>13 (15%)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of LSCBs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The increasing independence of schools has made it harder to engage the</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (11%)</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
<td>42 (47%)</td>
<td>24 (27%)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education sector in the work of LSCBs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transfer of responsibility of public health to local authorities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 (7%)</td>
<td>44 (49%)</td>
<td>38 (43%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has yielded benefit to LSCBs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The health and wellbeing boards are a useful development that bring</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>22 (25%)</td>
<td>35 (39%)</td>
<td>25 (28%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefits to the work of LSCBs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction of statutory safeguarding adults boards will be a useful</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>60 (67%)</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development that supports engagement with adult services for the benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of children and young people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remit for LSCBs has the right amount of focus on monitoring and evaluation of training</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (13%)</td>
<td>18 (20%)</td>
<td>56 (63%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remit for LSCBs has a focus on monitoring and evaluation activity but this requires knowledge and skills not available to most LSCBs</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>32 (36%)</td>
<td>13 (15%)</td>
<td>34 (38%)</td>
<td>6 (7%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restructure of public and national health delivery since 2013 (e.g. the introduction of health and wellbeing boards, clinical commissioning groups and new public health responsibilities for local authorities) has meant significant challenges in maintaining engagement with local health partners</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>15 (18%)</td>
<td>8 (9%)</td>
<td>42 (47%)</td>
<td>23 (26%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of fit in between the configuration of clinical commissioning groups and LSCBs creates significant challenges for monitoring and influencing safeguarding practice</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>25 (28%)</td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>33 (37%)</td>
<td>11 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Occasionally as a result of using normal conventions for rounding figures up and down the sum does not equal 100
Interview schedule for Chairs

Section 1: Background on chair

1.1 How long have you been chair of this LSCB? Any previous and concurrent experience of LSCBs / chairing LSCBs?

1.2 Does your professional background contribute/impact upon your role with the LSCB?

Section 2: Background on LSCB

2.1 a Would you give me an overview of the work of the LSCB including any priority areas?

Check that SCRs, training, co-ordination, monitoring effectiveness covered. Then check for reaction to Professor Munro’s statement that Local Safeguarding Children Boards are: ‘...well placed to identify emerging problems through learning from practice and to oversee efforts to improve services in response.’

2.1 b How are these priorities set? Are they sufficiently focussed on local need, or are LSCBs unduly influenced by national priorities?

2.2 What, if any, aspects of those areas prove to be relatively easy and why?

2.3 (If any difficulties already mentioned add 'May be in addition to xxx” ) What, if any, aspects of those areas prove to be more difficult to conduct and why? If anything mentioned – cover any steps taken to address the named problem(s)

Make sure you have covered the statutory duties to:
* coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the board(s) for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.

* ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the boards for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area

And obtain Chairs feedback on feasibility of LSCB to do this in relation to:

* Assessing the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help

* Assessing whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations
2.4 a) What has been the trend in the numbers of SCRs locally over the past three years? Check number and methodology.
- If the number has fallen or remained constant – this would seem to buck the national trend. Is there a reason for this?
- If the number has risen has this impacted on the ability of the LSCB to conduct its business / on budget?

b) Views on government plans to commission some serious case reviews centrally, rather than leave responsibility with LSCBs

2.5 In relation to the workload of LSCB in general has this changed in recent years? If YES in what way(s) and what are the main drivers behind that?

2.6 Do you feel that there are greater expectations of your LSCB? If so are these appropriate / realistic?

2.7 WT 2013 requires the chief executive to hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB. How does this work in your LSCB? Do you think it is an appropriate requirement?

2.8 After WT 2013 the chief executive is required to appoint or remove the LSCB Chair with the agreement of a panel including LSCB partners and lay members. Have you had any experience of this? If YES what is your opinion of the process?

2.9 Overall, how would you summarise the way this LSCB is currently operating? (If not covered prompt for partner engagement, facilitators and challenges)

Section 3: Sustainability

3.1 How is the LSCB supported to conduct its business? (Make sure all personnel engaged in providing support are covered and it is clear if LSCB / other agency or agencies cover(s) the cost plus any other resources provided in kind and by whom).

3.2 Is the current level of resourcing / staffing sufficient to allow the LSCB to function effectively in relation to its statutory duties? If NO does this impact on the effectiveness of the LSCB in any way? (Link to the responses obtained to questions in Section 1.) If YES we know that other LSCBs find functioning within current resources a challenge, what specific things (e.g. funding sources, arrangements, shared staffing???) support the LSCB’s ability to function within resource parameters.
3.3 Are partner contributions equitably distributed across the partners? If NOT does this imply the need for some realignment? enforcement? Check to see if - and how - resources have changed over time i.e. more or less funding that 2 years ago? How do you see the situation developing in the coming years in relation to more / less resources and spread across partners.

3.4 In addition to the level of resourcing can we explore the quality of the resources and skills available to LSCB? Are there areas of work where additional skills are required? If YES obtain details. If NO what/where/who are the key resources/skills drawn on for effective LSCB activity? (e.g. specific skills of business manager; QA skills of LA colleagues ??)

3.5 If additional resources were to be made available would it enable the LSCB to undertake additional or supplementary work? If YES explore what this might be and the consequences of it not currently happening.

3.6 a) Check number of days allocated to Chair to carry out role. Is that sufficient? If NO how many days would you think would be appropriate? If YES do you in reality work more/less days than allocated?

b) Is there a case for some form of standardisation? If so do you have any suggestions for how this could be achieved?

3.7 In your opinion and in summary what conditions are needed for effective working (key criteria for effective working)?

Section 4: Partners

4.1 In your opinion how engaged are individual agencies /partners in a) meetings? b) more generally in LSCBs?

b) Are the levels of engagement sufficient? (for example attend meetings regularly; contribute to funding; ensure that children’s safeguarding is a strategic priority)

c) Are the levels of engagement equal across all partners? If not are some better engaged than others? (Explore possible reasons for this – and check specifically re NHS England and CAFCASS.)
Check following have been covered:

- Statutory representation: local authority, police, probation, YOS, NHS England, NHS clinical commissioning, Cafcass, Any secure facility / prison
- Schools / education
- Voluntary sector
- Others

4.2 What, if anything, has been the impact of structural changes on engagement and representation in:
- Education?
- Health?
- Probation?
- Other?

4.3 Is it possible to achieve an equitable representation of schools / voluntary sector agencies?
If YES how? Has this been tried in your LSCB?
If NO are there any consequences of any skewed representation?

CHECK THAT FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN COVERED AND IF NOT PROMPT FOR VIEWS ON LOCAL:
- accountability mechanisms
- representation/seniority/participation/ turnover (if appropriate)
- roles and responsibilities of agencies
- inter-agency working/communication (strategic and operational levels)

4.4 Do you think the LSCB is ‘independent’ of the constituent partners?
Prompt: Is it closer to some than others? If YES obtain details and seek views on possible ways of achieving greater independence.

Section 5: Impact

5.1 In your opinion:
- what impact is the LSCB having on improving safeguarding outcomes for children locally? How is this known?
- does the LSCB add value to local safeguarding arrangements?
If YES in what ways?
If NO what stands in the way to it doing so?

Section 6: Strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements Matching expectations, role and arrangements

6.1 At this point interviewer needs to sum up main issues that have emerged and go on to ask - on balance what would you say are the main:
- strengths of the current arrangements?
- weaknesses of the current arrangements?
6.2 Leaving aside [refer to any major issues] resources and membership do you think the functions of LSCBs are appropriate/the right ones to ensure safeguarding?

- If YES – Do you think the current model supports/fits the LSCB functions? why? Is there an alternative that you think would be better?
- If NO - why not and if given a blank sheet what might be an alternative?

6.3 To what extent is your response influenced by the expectations of LSCBs of:
   a) Government?
   b) Ofsted?

Explore responses that have been provided through the interview in relation to these expectations?

6.4 Is there anything we have not covered on which you wish to comment?

Thank interviewee and leave contact details
Interview schedule for Partners

Section 1: Background of interviewee / LSCB

Explore:
1.1 Interviewee’s role in relation to LSCB
1.2 Length of time on LSCB
1.3 Any previous and / or concurrent experience of LSCBs and obtain relevant details

Section 2: Responsibilities and accountability of LSCB

2.1 At this point, it might be interesting to ask partners what they see as the key functions of the LSCB – to see whether there’s widespread understanding and agreement amongst partner agencies of what the LSCB is actually there for.

2.2 Ask interviewee to sum up strengths, challenges and opportunities facing the LSCB.

2.3 LSCBs have responsibilities to:
   a) co-ordinate and
   b) monitor the effectiveness of agencies represented on the Board to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area.

To what extent do you think the LSCB is able to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help
- Assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Pick up responses and explore reasons for these – seeking specifics of barriers/enablers to achieving these functions from individual agency perspective

2.4 Go on to explore responses in relation to co-ordinating and monitoring the agency represented by interviewee and the feasibility of meeting this requirement.

2.5 At the moment LSCBs commission serious case reviews (SCRs):
   a) What. If any, are the implications and consequences for this LSCB?
   b) What do you think of the proposal for the Government to commission some SCRs centrally, rather than leave responsibility with LSCBs?
Section 3: Sustainability

3.1 a). To what extent are you aware of the resourcing requirements of the LSCB and how these are met? (Cover personnel and other resources)
   b). Do you know if these resources are sufficient?
   If NOT is it a general under-resourcing or are there deficits in specific areas of work - or both? If specific in what areas?
   If YES we know that other LSCBs find functioning within current resources a challenge, what specific things (e.g. funding sources, arrangements, shared staffing???) support the LSCB’s ability to function within resource parameters.

3.2 Do you know how much your agency contributes? How is this agreed? Do you feel this is the right amount?

3.3 In your opinion what conditions are needed for effective working (key criteria for effective working)?

Section 4: Partners / representation

4.1 How engaged are individual agencies/partners in:
   a) meetings?  more generally in LSCBs?
   b) Are the levels of engagement sufficient? (i.e. attend meetings regularly; contribute to funding; ensure that children’s safeguarding is a strategic priority)

Check (as appropriate) for:

- Statutory representation:  local authority, police, probation, YOS, NHS England, NHS clinical commissioning, Cafcass, Any secure facility / prison
- Schools / education
- Voluntary sector
- Others

4.2 Are you aware of any impact of the structural changes on engagement and representation in:
- Education?
- Health?
- Probation?
- Other?

4.3 (If not emerging from above)
   a) Has your agency’s interaction with the LSCB changed in recent years? If so in what way?
   b) Do they have sufficient capacity to contribute meaningfully?
Section 5: Impact

5. In your opinion:
   a) what impact is the LSCB having on improving safeguarding outcomes for children locally? How is this known?
   b) does the LSCB add value to local safeguarding arrangements?
      If YES in what ways?
      If NO what stands in the way to it doing so?

Section 6: Strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements Matching expectations, role and arrangements

At this point interviewer needs to sum up main issues that have emerged and go on to ask:

6.1 Leaving aside [refer to any major issues] resources and membership do you think the functions of LSCBs are appropriate/the right ones to ensure safeguarding?

   ➢ If YES – Do you think the current model supports/fits the LSCB functions? why? Is there an alternative that you think would be better?
   ➢ If NO - why not and if given a blank sheet what might be an alternative?

6.2 To what extent is your response influenced by the expectations of LSCBs of:
   a) Government?
   b) Ofsted?

Explore responses that have been provided through the interview in relation to these expectations?

6.3 Do you think the LSCB is ‘independent’ of its constituent bodies?
   If NO why not?

Is there anything we have not covered on which you wish to comment?

Thank interviewee and leave contact details
## Case study interviewees

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Buffton</th>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>Voluntary sector Lay member Head community safety</td>
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<td>Additional informants across Boards</td>
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## Background of participants in focus groups

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<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
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<td>Fire officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay member</td>
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A total of 38 LSCBs were represented.
Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are as follows:

1(a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:

   (i) the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;

   (ii) training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;

   (iii) recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;

   (iv) investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;

   (v) safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;

   (vi) cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;

(b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;

(c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;

(d) participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and

(e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

Regulation 5 (2) which relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 which relates to the LSCB Child Death functions are covered in chapter 4 of this guidance.

Regulation 5 (3) provides that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.