

Local Safeguarding Children Boards: A Review of Progress



Every Child Matters
Change For Children

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Foreword by Beverley Hughes



Keeping children safe from harm, and taking decisive action to help them where they are harmed, is a key priority for the public, the Government and for all organisations that work with children and young people. Our Every Child Matters reforms aim to help all children and young people achieve five outcomes: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing. Staying safe is vital to the achievement of all these outcomes. And it is vital that different agencies and organisations work together effectively to meet the needs of children and families – to raise standards, lift children from poverty, and improve health and wellbeing. It is clear this is a shared agenda that is far too broad for any one agency to deliver alone.

To achieve this, we have introduced many reforms to help keep children safe and we're starting to see these reforms make a difference. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are the single most important mechanism for ensuring that the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is thought through and reflected in service planning. Since April 2006 LSCBs have been responsible for coordinating the work of the key local organisations in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and making sure that work is effective. They draw in partners not previously involved in local safeguarding arrangements and move beyond what was traditionally viewed as child protection work to help local services to take a more proactive, preventative role. Without the joint working they deliver it is harder for any of those organisations to fulfil their responsibilities to children. It is vitally important that the spirit of cooperation set down in the Children Act 2004 informs the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards in every local area in England.

As part of our commitment to support and monitor the establishment of LSCBs, we carried out a national survey of LSCB funding and membership, and undertook a Priority Review of LSCBs' early progress to find out how they were meeting their new objectives and how LSCB partners were able to work together effectively to safeguard children.

This report sets what we found about LSCBs' progress from the Priority Review findings and the survey. It includes the recommendations from the Priority Review and sets out the plan of work that Government will undertake to support further the implementation of LSCBs.

LSCBs have provided a new energy and much clearer direction on child protection and safeguarding than there had been before. They have demonstrated already an ability to engage new partners and to establish a more authoritative role in speaking out and challenging organisations on safeguarding.

This is a promising start and LSCBs clearly have the potential to make a significant positive difference. To realise fully this potential, LSCBs need to ensure that they continue to evaluate their own progress, identify the challenges they still face, and commit to actions necessary to overcome these challenges and improve performance. In turn, we, as Government are committed to further support for LSCBs as set out in this report. In our forthcoming consultation document, *Staying Safe*, we will reiterate the key role that LSCBs play in improving children and young people's safety. We are committed to continuing to work with local partners to make further progress on this vitally important area of work.

**Rt Hon Beverley Hughes MP,
Minister of State for Children Young People and Families**

Executive Summary



Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have been in place since April 2006. While it is too early to see the full impact they will have, there is good reason to be optimistic about their potential to make a difference, especially if good practice is more widely shared.

1. The DfES undertook a Priority Review of LSCBs between September and December 2006. A Priority Review is a quick, non-scientific way of gathering evidence about how an important Government objective is being delivered at a particular point in time.
2. In order to collect evidence, the team conducting the Review met a range of stakeholders representing LSCBs' statutory partners and visited eight LSCBs. Some LSCBs are doing well and grasping their new agenda. Some have made less progress.
3. The Review found that statutory partners were generally represented on and showing commitment to their LSCBs although in some areas levels of engagement varied. The Review team found little evidence of Strategic Health Authority (SHA) involvement, but this was likely to reflect the fact that SHAs were in the process of substantial changes in role and a decrease in number from 28 to 10. The Review found that most LSCBs were chaired by the Director of Children's Services (DCS) or another local authority employee. Several LSCBs were considering appointing an independent chair. Our evidence suggested that the critical issue appeared to be having a chair with the right skills and attributes. Some of the accountability arrangements the Review team saw might limit the LSCB's ability to challenge the children's trust and some LSCBs were struggling to demonstrate their "independent voice".
4. The Review team found that although Lead Members were engaged with LSCBs in some areas there was scope to increase their role in terms of scrutiny and challenge. There was little evidence that Overview and Scrutiny Committees were yet taking an interest.

5. The Review found that the structures and arrangements that some LSCBs have adopted suggest they may currently be defaulting to an operational rather than a strategic role. Their plans show they are at varying stages in making the transition from child protection to the wider safeguarding agenda covering prevention and promotional activity.
6. The evidence from the Priority Review suggested that LSCBs' budgets were variable and all took a substantial amount of time to agree, potentially distracting them from the real business. The Review found no evidence of performance management arrangements for LSCBs. The review also found substantial variation over how individual LSCBs handled Serious Case Reviews.
7. This report contains the recommendations that the Priority Review team made based on their evidence to support LSCBs further. The recommendations were shared and discussed with: the DfES practitioners group; a subset of the partners the team met during the evidence gathering phase; and delegates at the LSCB national event held on 13 March 2007. The outcomes of these discussions informed this report and fed into the forward work plan.
8. The DfES undertook a further evidence gathering exercise in the form of a national survey of LSCBs. In December 2006 LSCBs were asked to take part in this survey which collated detailed data on: financial resources; non-financial resources; membership; and the relationship between the LSCB and the children's trust arrangements. The survey results were based on replies from 109 LSCBs and of these 93 Boards were included in all of the analysis (the remainder being excluded as key elements were missing). The survey found that overall LSCBs reported increased funding in 2005-06 and 2006-07. A more even pattern of funding is emerging across the country with less (though still significant) variation across the country. The survey also suggested that those partners who are consistent funding contributors make the most effort to attend LSCB meetings.
9. The quantitative evidence from the survey has been used alongside the Priority Review and the contributions gathered from the LSCB national event to design an implementation plan of work to support LSCBs further. The Priority Review and the national event contributions will be referred to in the main body of the text. The survey report is based on the quantitative data that LSCBs submitted and can be found at Annex B.

Background to the Priority Review

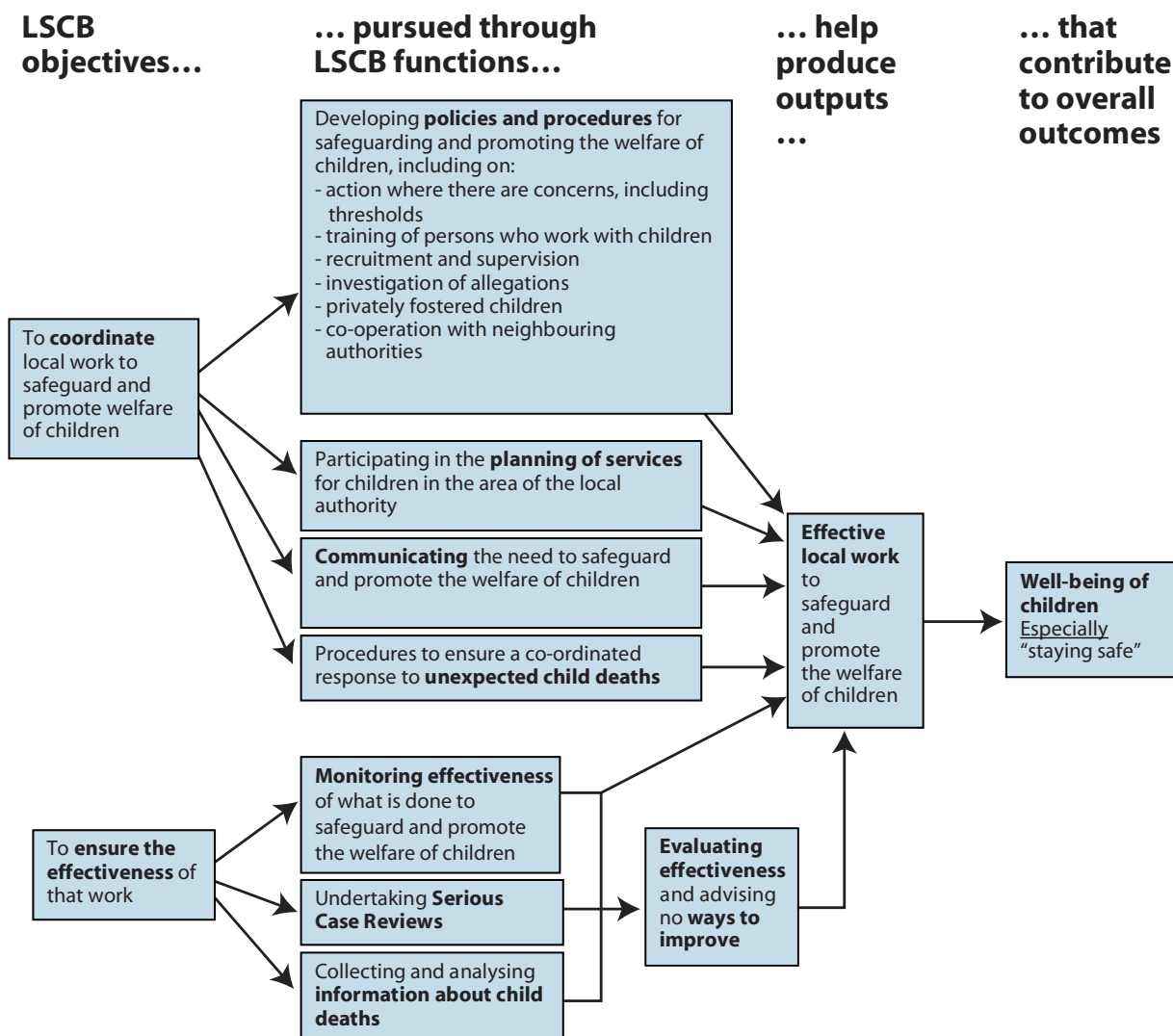


Priority Review context

1. From 1 April 2006, local partners have been working together in all 150 local authority areas in England as part of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). LSCBs are required under the Children Act 2004 and replace Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) which were not statutory bodies.
2. The primary functions of LSCBs are set out in S14(1) of the Children Act 2004:
“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 of the authority by which it is established.

To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.”
3. The functions are set out in more detail in *The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006*. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, the statutory guidance which covers LSCBs, explains that their role encompasses responsive work to protect particular children and young people, proactive work for children in need and vulnerable groups and preventive work, for all children and young people. The guidance makes clear that LSCBs should not focus on preventive or proactive work if they judge their responsive child protection work to be ineffective.
4. In order to fulfil their role, LSCBs are given a number of functions in the regulation and guidance which are summarised in the following diagram:

Figure 1: LSCB objectives and functions



- The core membership of LSCBs is set out in Section 13(3) of the Children Act 2004 as representatives of the local authority plus partners who have a duty to cooperate in the establishment and operation of the LSCB. Guidance sets out other organisations that should be co-opted onto the LSCB as non-statutory partners, and still others that the LSCB will need to cooperate with in its work.

The aims of the Priority Review

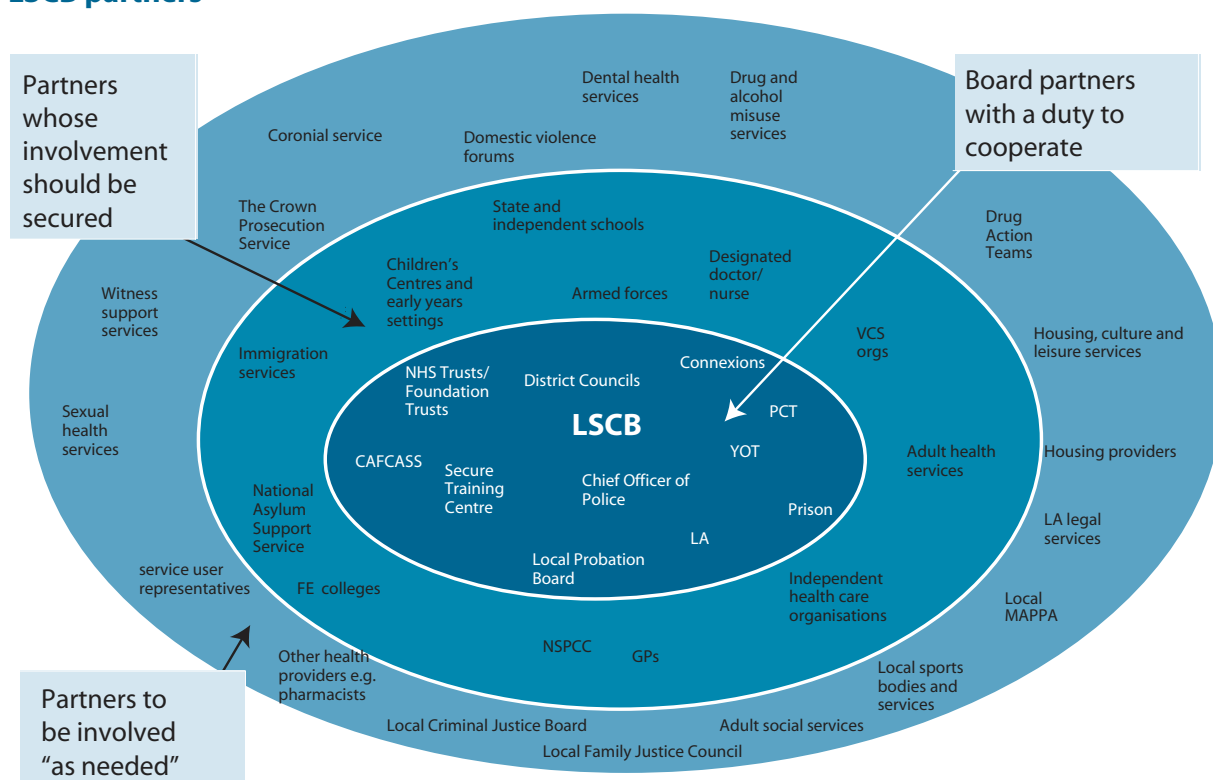
- LSCBs are new organisations but they have a very important role to play in improving safeguards for children as part of the Government's *Every Child Matters* reforms. The review sought to gain insights into how LSCBs were getting to grips with their new role; to find out about good and innovative practice that could be more widely shared; and understand whether there were any common difficulties

and what might best be done to support LSCBs further. The evidence from the Review complements evidence gathered in the survey of LSCBs during December 2006 and January 2007 (see Annex B).

7. The Review set out to answer the following questions:
 - Are LSCB partners able to work together effectively to safeguard children? What could be done to improve partnership working?
 - How are LSCBs delivering their objectives and what are the options for improving their effectiveness? How do they measure the effectiveness of their work?
8. The Review concentrated on statutory partners and some of those partners whose involvement needs to be secured (schools, early years settings, the voluntary and community sector). The team looked at the balance of work planned across the three broad areas of activity described above: protection, proactive targeted work, and prevention.

Figure 2: LSCB membership

LSCB partners



What is a Priority Review?

9. A priority review is an approach that Government uses from time to time to look at how important priorities are being delivered on the ground. It is a quick way to see how a policy is being delivered rather than a rigorous, scientific or comprehensive way to secure evidence. The scope of the review is not fully representative but has provided a useful means of accumulating early anecdotal views on progress, practice and challenges faced by LSCBs. It is not an inspection.
10. This report presents the Priority Review's conclusions and recommendations and the findings of the LSCB survey, together with the Government's plans for how to take forward the findings. The report should be seen as the start of a process to both support LSCBs and help them to support themselves to function effectively.

Project Participants and Processes

11. The Priority Review was carried out by a team made up of the Department for Education and Skills policy officials, Government Office representatives and Allegations Management Advisers.
12. Evidence was gathered in the following ways: by talking to stakeholders in groups or individually; through fieldwork and other visits to LSCBs; by conducting a small telephone survey of some LSCB chairs; by analysing a small sample of LSCB business plans; by analysing coverage of safeguarding and partnership working in the relevant inspection frameworks and by reading previous reports and evidence. The findings in this report are based on the evidence gathered during the course of the Review, not on the basis of an objective test. The Review team made an undertaking that they would not attribute views or comments in any public report.
13. Throughout the Review the team gathered external input from LSCBs, their partners and other stakeholders. In addition the team carried out fieldwork in five local authority areas including one unitary authority; one London Borough; one Metropolitan area; and two rural shire areas. On these visits the Review team met with the local authority and LSCB chair in the morning and then separately with other LSCB members in the afternoon. They also visited three other areas to: observe an LSCB meeting; attend an LSCB launch event and to run through our emerging findings with a Director of Children's Services and a number of LSCB members.
14. Finally the findings of the Priority Review and the resulting recommendations were shared with: the DfES Practitioners Group; two other partners the team met during the evidence gathering phase; and in a summary version with delegates at the LSCB

national event held on 13 March 2007. The final report and action plan to support LSCBs further reflect their helpful comments.

Next Steps – Implementation of the report

15. There are implications and recommendations in the report for the Government and the Government's plans as a result are set out below.
16. These findings are of course also relevant to LSCBs themselves and their partners and they will wish to consider how they relate to their own situation and plans.

Key Findings

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is very early days for LSCBs but the Review found that there is already good reason to be optimistic about their potential to make a difference.
- 1.2 The evidence emerging from the Priority Review suggests that the launch of LSCBs has given local co-operation on safeguarding a new energy. In some areas the statutory footing for LSCBs appears to be raising the profile and ownership of safeguarding across local agencies. It is also being used locally as a lever to ensure statutory partners provide resources and attend board meetings.
- 1.3 There is evidence of an improving understanding about the wider safeguarding agenda e.g. some existing ACPC members were questioning whether they remained the right representatives for the LSCB or whether the LSCB would benefit from more senior representation.
- 1.4 The Review team heard how a number of LSCBs were tackling their new responsibilities. For example, one LSCB had undertaken audits of the new duty on partners to safeguard and promote welfare¹. The team also found that some LSCBs are collaborating with each other in order to increase their effectiveness.
- 1.5 A range of delivery partners are contributing to LSCBs' development:
 - the Healthcare Commission's annual health check will include a new opportunity for LSCBs to comment on the self assessment declarations of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), NHS Trusts and NHS foundation Trusts;
 - the Association of Police Authorities is producing guidance for its members on safeguarding having identified some gaps in police authority engagement; and

¹ Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

- the National Centre for Policing Excellence, on behalf of ACPO, has produced *Guidance on investigating child abuse and safeguarding children*.
- 1.6 One LSCB was reported as developing a multi-agency peri-natal mental health protocol.
 - 1.7 The Review team found that awareness of the need to prepare for the new responsibilities for Child Death Review Panels was generally good (although there are some concerns about resourcing for this work). One authority intended to have a one year trial of their panel for 0-5 year olds from April 07 before rolling it out to 0-18 year olds from April 2008.
 - 1.8 The Review found that in some LSCBs, agencies had successfully challenged other agencies' decisions. For example, in one area, the police had been concerned about a health protocol, had raised this at the LSCB and reached agreement after a "free and frank" discussion.
 - 1.9 Alternatively several of the people interviewed by the Review team spoke of a need for Government to emphasise a clear and joined-up vision for LSCBs and to draw together a menu of support and challenge.
 - 1.10 During the course of the Review one stakeholder said that safeguarding needed to run like a "golden thread" through performance and inspection frameworks. Others said more could be made of the potential impact LSCBs could have on shared (multi-agency) target areas and cited domestic violence as an example.
 - 1.11 The Review found a wide consensus about LSCBs' need for practically focused support.

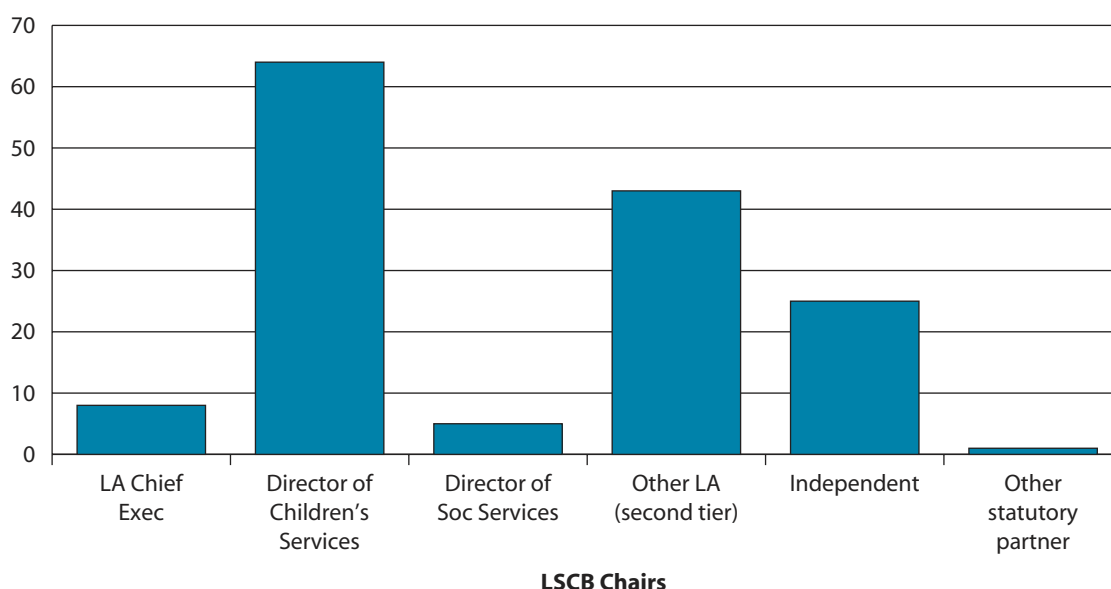
2.0 Accountability relationships

2.1 Chairing

2.2 It is the responsibility of the local authority (after consultation with LSCB members) to appoint the Chair.

2.3 The review found that LSCB Chairs have a range of 'day jobs', as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Who chairs the LSCBs?



2.4 The Review team found that the most common chairing arrangement is for the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to chair the LSCB. This is seen by some local authorities to demonstrate their commitment to, and leadership of, the safeguarding agenda. Although some people said that DCSs with an education background had too steep a learning curve to chair LSCBs effectively, others said they were more open to support and challenge. However, some people the Review team spoke to thought that having the DCS as chair also raised questions about scrutiny and accountability because the chair should secure an independent voice for the LSCB. Eight LSCBs were chaired by the LA Chief Executive where some similar issues might apply, though the Chief Executive would be further removed from the day-to-day service delivery.

2.5 When this review was carried out just over 40 LSCBs were chaired by a second or third tier LA officer. Some suggested that it may be difficult for an LA officer who reports to the DCS to challenge the DCS about the safeguarding practices and policies of the LA or to challenge senior managers from other agencies effectively.

The review spoke to Assistant Directors who chaired LSCBs and they were less able to provide examples of where they had challenged partners than DCSs or independent chairs.

- 2.6 There were 25 independent chairs at the time of the review and the number appeared to be increasing. Independent chairs can provide external challenge and scrutiny where they have the required skills, experience, and local credibility. However some of those the Review team spoke to thought independent chairs might be influenced by the DCS to whom they remain accountable, and others that their position meant that they may not be as well placed to effect change locally. There are also resource implications as independent chairs are typically paid from the LSCB budget.
- 2.7 In light of the experience of LSCBs, the Government believes that, resources permitting, there are advantages in appointing independent chairs to avoid conflicts of interest and provide independent scrutiny.
- 2.8 **Views from the LSCB National Event**
- 2.9 At the LSCB national conference on 13 March attendees had different views about whether independent chairs could promote better challenge and reduce the scope for conflict of interest. Some said that giving LSCBs a choice and allowing what worked locally was best. No strong views were recorded either for or against the Government encouraging LSCBs to use independent chairs.
- 2.10 So, in conclusion views were mixed about who was best placed to chair LSCBs but many people argued that it was more to do with skills and knowledge, leadership and personality than job title. Those consulted during the Review thought it would be useful to share good practice about job descriptions for chairs which emphasised the skills and attributes a chair should have (e.g. the ability to manage complex partnerships and difficult relationships), whatever their background or current role. It was suggested that a training package would be useful for chairs.
- 2.11 **Securing an “independent voice”**
- 2.12 During the course of the Review several people interviewed expressed uncertainty about the accountability relationship between the children’s trust Board/Partnership and the LSCB and responsibilities to improve safeguarding standards and outcomes for children. The guidance in *Working Together* was perceived to be unclear on this point.

- 2.13 The Review team found that the DCS often chaired the children's trust and the LSCB. This could limit the potential for real challenge of local authority services. Some LSCBs are sub-groups of the children's trust, notwithstanding the guidance in *Working Together* and this might not enable them to have a sufficiently independent voice. Some interviewees said that an advantage of being a sub-group was the ability to escalate issues about non-attendance to the children's trust board to exercise leverage. Alternatively an LSCB which is a sub group would find it more difficult to challenge the children's trust.
- 2.14 One LSCB the Review team spoke to had demonstrated a very clear understanding of their relationship with their children's trust. The children's trust had ten priorities and there was a clear separation between those that were the responsibility of the children's trust and those that were the responsibility of the LSCB.
- 2.15 **Scrutiny**
- 2.16 *Working Together* says that Elected Members should not be members of an LSCB. They should hold the local authority to account for the effective functioning of the LSCB and for the local authority's own contribution to the LSCB's work.
- 2.17 The Review heard of some good examples of close scrutiny by the Lead Member. One fieldwork authority interviewed said the new legislation made the lead member take the issue very seriously. Their lead member was monitoring the implementation of Serious Case Review recommendations.
- 2.18 However, some interviewees spoke about LSCBs where Elected Members were not closely involved. The LSCB were distancing Elected Members possibly because they had misinterpreted the Elected Member's role as set out in *Working Together* or because officers felt their members had little understanding of the Every Child Matters reforms. This meant that Elected Members were not exercising this scrutiny role. Other interviewees said that Elected Members were unhappy about their exclusion from membership of LSCBs. One stakeholder said *Working Together* had not addressed this point well.
- 2.19 The Review team found little evidence of Overview and Scrutiny Committees taking an active interest. It was felt that closer scrutiny could help tackle some issues of defensive practice by statutory agencies that seemed unwilling to escalate safeguarding concerns.

3.0 Representation, commitment and engagement among statutory partners

- 3.1 On the whole, statutory partners are demonstrating commitment to LSCBs. However, the evidence collated by the Review team suggests that in some areas, some statutory partners are not yet committed to their LSCB.
- 3.2 One LSCB the team visited had 100% attendance rates at Board meetings. One LSCB had introduced written agreements setting out roles and expectations for individual members to sign. Two LSCBs had an attendance register with a “three strikes and you’re out” policy. Continuity of membership is important for an effective board. This can be adversely affected when agencies are restructuring.
- 3.3 The Review found that some LSCBs were finding it difficult to secure the full engagement of partners leading, in a small number of cases, to statutory partners not attending meetings. One fieldwork local authority said “some partners ebb in their commitment.” On occasion, partners were attending meetings but with limited understanding about their role. The evidence the Review team gathered suggested attendance on its own does not guarantee effective activity between meetings.
- 3.4 In general the Review team found that these issues of engaging partners seemed to be driven by the local circumstances of particular LSCBs with most partners engaging with most LSCBs. LSCBs seemed to be having difficulty engaging with Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), and this is likely to have been affected by the reorganisation they were undergoing. Annex D has a steer on how SHAs and LSCBs can work together effectively following the restructuring and refocusing of SHAs.
- 3.5 In many areas, there is good engagement with LSCBs. Stakeholders across agencies said that the profile and ownership of safeguarding was increasing. However, a few people the team interviewed said there were issues about the level of seniority of representation with some members attending but unable to speak for their organisation. The Review heard that some LSCB Chairs were negotiating with local partners to address this.
- 3.6 If statutory partners do not share responsibility for safeguarding there is a risk that the local authority will shoulder more of the burden than it should. The Review team did hear that in some areas, partners thought the board was unbalanced with too much of the lead role falling to the local authority and to its children’s social care function in particular.
- 3.7 The Review team also found examples of straightforward steps taken by LSCBs to engage members and maintain their engagement.

"I meet with new members before they attend their first meeting."

(LSCB business manager)

3.8 The team also heard about small group work within LSCB meetings, induction packs, away days and regular one-to-one visits by the Chair.

3.9 However, the team also found some examples where engagement could be better supported. Some partner agencies said they found it a challenge to speak to what they said were social care dominated agendas and had difficulty understanding the language.

3.10 **Data from the LSCB national survey**

3.11 The evidence collected in the national survey suggests that the most significant partners in terms of their funding contributions were also those who had the highest rate of engagement as measured by average attendance at LSCB meetings: Local authorities, PCTs, Police and NHS Trusts all had over 80% average attendance.

3.12 **Views from the LSCB National Event**

3.13 At the LSCB national event there was a view that Government should clarify the involvement of schools, and should be clearer in general with statutory partners about what was expected of them in terms of engagement. *Working Together* highlights the need for consistently named representatives to sit on the board but attendees at the conference felt that practice in this area was inconsistent.

4.0 The expansion of LSCBs' remit from child protection to the wider safeguarding agenda

- 4.1 The majority of LSCB business plans that the Priority Review team looked at appeared to be consistent with the local Children and Young People's Plan and some seemed to relate directly to the local needs analysis. It was not clear that other LSCBs knew which data to interrogate or how to go about it. One professional the Review team spoke to said that in her opinion LSCBs hadn't yet got the full benefit of having statutory partners in terms of their data collection or the depth of analysis. In her view public health analysis skills could be much better utilised in children's services.
- 4.2 The Review found a wide variation between the detail and breadth of work covered in the business plans. However, LSCBs remained significantly involved in delivering training and did not seem to have remitted this to the local workforce strategy, which was an option set out in guidance.
- 4.3 The Review team found that the way partners had been engaged in developing the work plan was variable. Some partners didn't understand how priorities had been set or agreed or what they were. The review did not come across any LSCBs where social care thresholds had yet been set out in policies and procedures as required in regulations and guidance.
- 4.4 Whilst some LSCBs in the Review sample were planning significant amounts of work across all three broad areas of activity (preventative, proactive and responsive) in *Working Together*, the team found that others did not yet appear to be planning activity beyond their core responsive work for child protection. This may reflect a wish to get child protection right before moving on to the wider agenda as required by *Working Together*. One professional the Review team spoke to commented that some LSCBs were still getting to grips with the difference between safeguarding and protection.
- 4.5 The Review team were told that the LSCBs that had successfully grasped the wider safeguarding agenda would be those which strategically planned in accordance with their local issues.
- 4.6 It was evident that many LSCBs were spending a lot of time writing their own policies and procedures. There are some examples where groups of LSCBs have joint procedures. The variation between different LSCBs' policies on the same issue was difficult for stakeholders covering more than one LSCB. The majority of people the Review spoke to said they would welcome detailed national templates that they could adapt locally for policy and procedures.

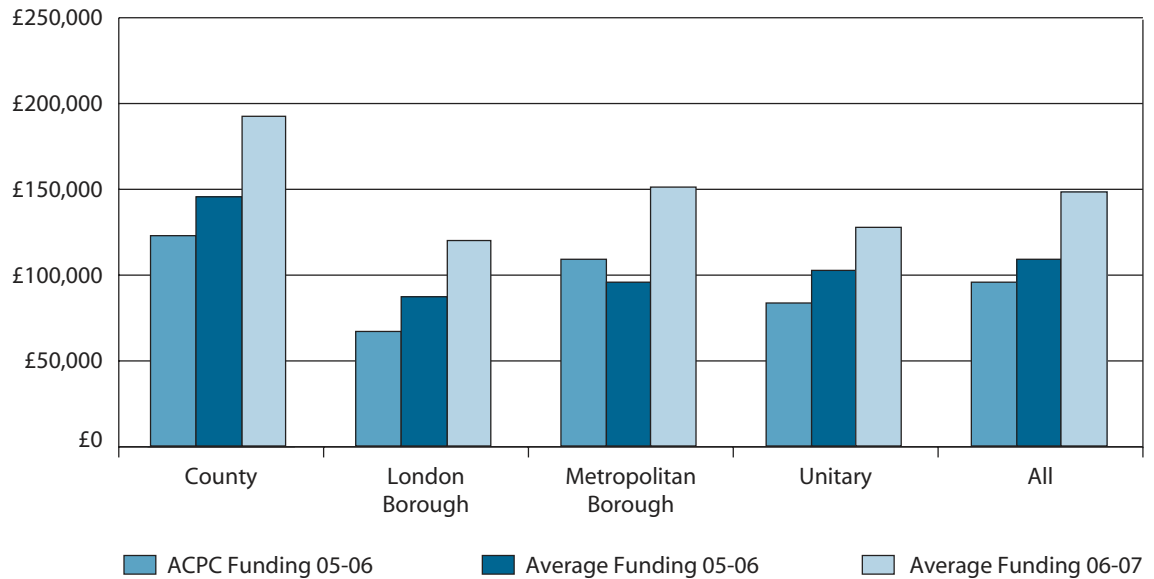
4.7 **Views from the LSCB National Event**

- 4.8 Some of the LSCB members and delegates that attended the national event felt that Boards were finding it challenging to define their role and balance a broader safeguarding role with the need to continue the focus on child protection. Some thought a better performance framework would in itself help to resolve the issue. Some thought Government should give clearer guidance on the role of LSCBs and what aspects of the agenda they should lead on.

5.0 Resources

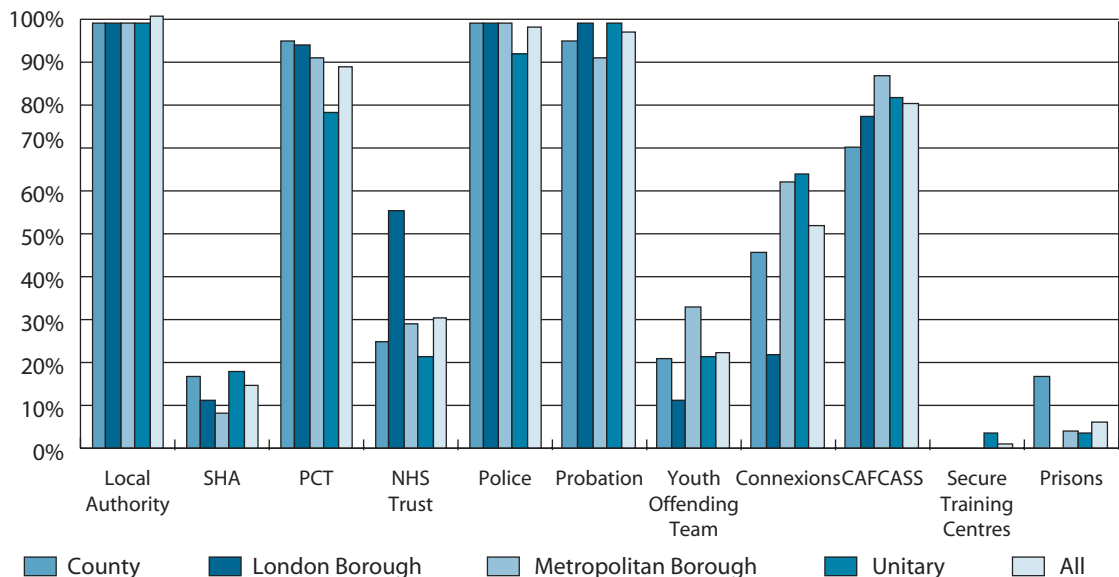
- 5.1 The Review team found that the levels of resource available to LSCBs varied substantially between and within regions.
- 5.2 Some interviewees suggested that the LSCBs that had taken over from well funded ACPCs would have been better placed to agree sufficient financial contributions and/or resource in kind with partners for 2006-07. The Review found that some LSCBs were still working to gain funding agreement between partners for a budget for 2006-07 even though the financial year was well underway. Several people interviewed said agreeing the budget was very time consuming for LSCBs. Half of the business plans in the sample analysed by the Review did not contain information about a budget for the current year.
- 5.3 Some partners that the Review interviewed felt they did not have enough influence within the LSCB because their organisation did not contribute enough.
- 5.4 There was a widespread view amongst those interviewed that it would be helpful for the Government to be more prescriptive about LSCB funding, not just from local authorities but from other agencies too, including PCTs and police forces. Some agencies had formulae for their LSCB contributions (e.g. the Metropolitan Police and CAF/CASS) but on the whole the Review suggested that partners were not yet recognising their “shared responsibility for determining how the necessary resources are to be provided [for the LSCB]” as set out in *Working Together*. Some LSCBs felt they only had the resource to concentrate on their child protection work and not to cover their wider remit.
- 5.5 It was suggested to the Review team that some LSCB Business Managers were focusing on operational activity – such as help with audits and delivery of training – which helped to secure resources from members.
- 5.6 **Data from the LSCB National Survey**
- 5.7 The diagram below shows that LSCBs in all types of local authority area are on average reporting a very significant rise in funding over the last two years from the level of the previous Area Child Protection Committees.

Diagram 2 of Annex B: Average Funding by type of authority



5.8 The evidence from the survey suggested that the funding of LSCBs has risen and become more consistent but it also highlighted some of the disparities between members' contributions. In all cases the local authority was a contributor whilst other frequent contributions come from PCTs, the police, probation and CAF/CASS.

Diagram 4 of Annex B: Proportion of LSCBs with a contribution to funding from partners, 2006-2007



5.9 The survey shows that the bulk of LSCB expenditure has been on staff and then training. It is notable that expenditure on staffing has risen sharply between 2005-2006, whilst most other expenditures have risen a little.

5.10 **Views from the LSCB National Event**

5.11 Resource issues were addressed by the main speakers at the national event. Lord Laming's opening presentation argued that there was not a general problem of a lack of resource. Beverley Hughes stressed the need for resources to be determined at local level and the importance of local discussion in determining what resources were needed and where they should come from to deliver the work of each LSCB. Some delegates said they had secured adequate resources. Others found what they could do was limited. Some agreed with the Minister that local discussion was the best way forward and was a key part of local joint working. Some continued to call for national prescription or national funding. Those who expressed a view largely rejected the idea of children's trusts setting funding levels as they thought this would undermine LSCBs' independent voice and distinct role.

6.0 Monitoring and evaluation

- 6.1 The Review team analysed a sample of LSCB business plans. It found that all the LSCBs in the sample planned to carry out at least some monitoring and evaluation activities. These ranged from apparently comprehensive arrangements in one case involving auditing, user experience surveys, toolkits and self-assessment standards to more limited work e.g. an assessment of agency compliance in safe recruitment practice.
- 6.2 The people that took part in the Review agreed that LSCBs would not necessarily know when they were doing a good job or what good performance would look like. They thought that it would be useful if there were some nationally set criteria or standards against which LSCBs could assess themselves or compare performance.
- 6.3 The Review found that a small number of LSCBs were beginning to develop their own performance measures, usually based on short term social services process indicators.
- 6.4 The Government Office based Allegations Management Advisers assess LSCBs' and local authorities' work on handling allegations against those who work with children, but there did not seem to be a mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of LSCBs' other work or for providing systematic support and challenge. Joint Area Review (JAR) reports published until recently were based on inspections when ACPCs were making the transition to LSCBs and have therefore contained little evidence about LSCB performance. This is starting to change as LSCBs are more firmly established.
- 6.5 On the whole, the Review found that the emphasis on safeguarding and partnership working varied between inspection frameworks. It has not yet been possible to gain a national picture about the effectiveness of LSCBs as a whole or to identify good practice through inspection reports or other monitoring arrangements.
- 6.6 **Views from the LSCB National Event**
- 6.7 It was clear from discussion at the event that LSCBs were adopting a range of different approaches to quality monitoring and improvement. The majority of delegates said that they would welcome a steer from Government about how LSCBs can tell how well they are doing both in terms of their processes and by measuring other indicators, which might amount to a national data set for LSCBs.

7.0 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)

- 7.1 The Review team found that the number of SCRs conducted seemed to differ depending on the approach taken by different LSCBs, as they interpret the guidance on when to hold an SCR set out in *Working Together*.
- 7.2 The Review found that LSCBs and partners were not always confident about their capacity to conduct these reviews which are very resource intensive.
- 7.3 In some cases it was clear that LSCBs had only undertaken SCRs after a long delay, and some took a long time to complete. Interviewees said that the recommendations from SCRs were not always followed up by the agencies concerned and that, consequently, in some cases lessons had not been properly learned.
- 7.4 A number of stakeholders told the Review team that they would welcome more frequent dissemination of information from the national summaries of SCRs that the Department for Education and Skills is responsible for completing.
- 7.5 The Review found that LSCBs were at varying stages in their preparation for Child Death Reviews. Some had made a good start e.g. investigating a regional or sub-regional approach. Others were concerned about how they would fund them and engage key personnel such as paediatricians.
- 7.6 There was some confusion about the relationship between SCRs, Child Death Reviews, Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews and Serious Untoward Incident Reviews. It was suggested to the Review team that duplication could be avoided between the different reviews if common structures, processes and reporting templates were introduced.
- 7.7 **Views from the LSCB National Event**
- 7.8 Whilst some delegates attending the LSCB national event thought that the right processes were in place, others felt the Priority Review had identified an important issue of inconsistency in Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). Many of those who commented said they would welcome more frequently disseminated information arising from SCRs in addition to the two yearly overview reports which the Department for Education and Skills commissions. There was a suggestion that there should be a system to distribute immediately the recommendations from SCRs to all LSCBs. One view though was that too much time was spent on SCRs rather than learning the lessons from good practice elsewhere.

8.0 Findings around particular agencies

8.1 The review concentrated on statutory partners and some of those partners whose involvement needs to be secured (schools, early years settings, the voluntary and community sector). The statutory agencies are required to co-operate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions.

8.2 Local Authorities (LAs)

8.3 Local authorities are statutory members of LSCBs. They may at times find it hard to strike the right balance between exercising their statutory duty to convene the LSCB and being willing to accept challenge from other LSCB members.

8.4 The Review found that local authorities are the single biggest contributor to LSCB budgets and spend a lot of time negotiating with other agencies about their contributions. In some cases the Review found the local authority was carrying the whole financial burden for the LSCB. Some local authority officers had the LSCB work added to their day job. The evidence from the LSCB national survey also recognised that local authorities are the most consistent contributors and responsible for the largest proportion of the costs.

8.5 The Review found that practice varied between LSCBs over whether to employ a Business Manager. When a Business Manager was employed roles and rates of pay varied. Business Managers in one region were perceived to be isolated from each other and from LSCB members. Elsewhere, informal contacts were being made on an ad hoc basis and/or regional networks were in the process of being set up. The evidence from the national survey highlighted the rise in expenditure on staffing between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. This suggests there is a move towards more dedicated and more jointly owned staffing for LSCBs.

8.6 NHS

8.7 PCTs and SHAs underwent reorganisation as part of "Commissioning a Patient Led NHS" leading to a reduction from 303 to 152 PCTs by October 2006 and 28 to 10 Strategic Health Authorities by April 2007 with subsequent changes in their roles and functions. Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts are all statutory members of LSCBs. The Review found that the profile and priority given to safeguarding by most health agencies had increased under LSCBs from ACPCs.

- 8.8 The Review found that recent work by the National Safeguarding Children Association for Nurses (NSCAN) demonstrated that PCTs and Trusts were represented on the vast majority of LSCBs.
- 8.9 Interviewees told the Review team that PCTs were clear about their roles and responsibilities. Clear job descriptions or agreements that set out the expectations of LSCB members helped to secure sufficiently senior representation from PCTs, NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts. These findings were supported by the national survey which found that PCTs had a high rate of attendance at LSCB board meetings.
- 8.10 A number of areas had a clear mechanism for LSCB members to take messages back to their parent organisation. For example, one hospital trust had a children's steering group and had appointed a staff nurse to lead on safeguarding; in another, the PCT Board received a quarterly report.
- 8.11 Some of the NHS stakeholders that the Review team spoke to said that the profile of safeguarding within their organisation was highly dependent on 'championing' by senior individuals. They said that the Government needed to give better joined up messages and send a clear signal that safeguarding was a priority for the NHS.
- 8.12 Some of the stakeholders the Review team spoke to said that PCTs found it difficult to provide funding and sufficiently senior representation – and that this had been exacerbated by the recent restructuring. Some PCT representatives told the Review that they would welcome being given an indicative range (dependent on population) for their financial contribution to LSCBs. The national survey found that PCTs were regular contributors of funding to LSCBs and picked up the highest share of the costs after LAs.
- 8.13 The Review found that lack of co-terminosity affected some NHS partners.
- 8.14 Altogether the Review team visited eight LSCBs in six of the nine Government Office Regions. According to the evidence collected, Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) were not attending or engaged with LSCBs except in one of those regions. The LSCB survey supported this finding indicating that on average SHAs only attended 38% of LSCB board meetings. This is likely to reflect the restructuring and change in role they were undergoing at the time. Annex D has a steer on how SHAs and LSCBs can work together.
- 8.15 Some stakeholders the Review team spoke to expressed the view that designated doctors typically had no time or training and were not well supported by peer networks. Some PCTs were not appointing them. The Department of Health has

commissioned an extensive programme of support for designated and named safeguarding health professionals.

8.16 The Review found variability in the engagement of designated nurses and some confusion about the role of designated professionals, including whether they should or should not sit on the Board. Nonetheless, NSCAN's survey shows that designated nurses are represented on 94% of LSCBs and designated doctors on 86%.

8.17 **Police**

8.18 The chief police officer for a police area of which any part falls within the area of the local authority is a statutory member of LSCBs. According to the information gathered during the course of the Review, police engagement in LSCBs varied from excellent to marginal.

8.19 Relationships between police and local authorities also varied. In one area, partnership working was excellent at every level and, for example, the Police Divisional Commander had been involved in the appointment of the Director of Children's Services. In another area, senior police officers reported a perception that the local authority was dominating proceedings.

8.20 The Review found a number of issues arising from the difference between police and local authority boundaries particularly when one police force covered numerous LSCBs. It is very resource intensive for the police to be represented at a sufficiently senior level, it is difficult to provide adequate funding and it is hard to switch between LSCBs' different polices and procedures.

8.21 During the course of the Review there were calls for a centrally brokered financial agreement for police force contributions to LSCBs. Various police partners told the Review team that practical guidance, national targets, central monitoring, performance indicators, or an increased emphasis in inspections on safeguarding would help local police engagement.

8.22 **LSCB links with Probation Services and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs)**

8.23 Probation boards are statutory members of LSCBs. The Review team found a mixed picture in terms of probation services and their engagement with LSCBs. Whereas one Senior Probation Officer attended the LSCB but was unclear about their role, in another case we heard about the Probation Service's increased involvement and how they were providing insight into processes such as safer recruitment issues and information sharing. The survey results found that on average representatives from

probation boards would only attend LSCB meetings 68% of the time. This supported the review team's assertion that the engagement of probation boards with LSCBs was variable. However, the survey also recognised that Probation boards consistently provided LSCBs with funding even if in most cases the actual amount of money given was less than 5% of the total LSCB budget.

- 8.24 The Review found that arrangements between LSCBs and MAPPA were being embedded. For example, the MAPPA in one county council had funded a post on safeguarding which included attendance at the LSCB. The Home Office has specified that MAPPA business plans must demonstrate their strategic link to LSCBs. The Ministry of Justice (NOMS), which now leads on MAPPA policy will quality assure a sample of business plans and annual reports.
- 8.25 However, the Review team also heard that links between LSCBs and MAPPAs could be improved and a recent SCR in the South East found a lack of understanding between MAPPA and local authority staff of one another's responsibilities.
- 8.26 **LSCB links with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Youth Offending Institutions (YOIs)**
- 8.27 YOTs and the Governor or Director of any prison that ordinarily detains children are statutory members of LSCBs. The information collected over the course of the Review gave a mixed picture in terms of YOT engagement with LSCBs. The Review heard from two YOTs where colleagues felt enabled and supported to be active partners on the LSCB; and another where a colleague felt confused about the LSCB's remit and unclear about the LSCB's priorities.
- 8.28 The Review visited two Youth Offending Institutions (YOIs). One reported that their LSCB was "very willing to engage" with "extremely good" working relationships. This was demonstrated by a recent case where the LSCB had provided support after a young inmate made an allegation against a member of staff. The second YOI that the Review team visited clearly prioritised safeguarding issues, but the early stage of development of the LSCB meant that progress in joint working had been limited.
- 8.29 The LSCB national survey found that overall YOTs' attendance rate at LSCB meetings reached 69% and that the average financial contribution of YOTs to LSCBs is small.
- 8.30 **LSCB links with Connexions Partnerships**
- 8.31 The Connexions service operating in any part of the area of the local authority is a statutory member of LSCBs. The Review team spoke to the National Association of Connexions Partnership members who were positive about their engagement with LSCBs and were involved in various activities. Examples of these activities include

sub-group membership, writing guidance, and consulting children and young people. The evidence from the LSCB survey shows that the attendance rate of Connexions Partnerships is 74%. Most Connexions services contribute to the funding of LSCBs.

- 8.32 The Review found that Connexions partnerships were used to dealing with numerous local authorities – and the lack of co-terminosity did not appear to be as much of a practical problem as it was for some other partners.
- 8.33 Connexions colleagues in two of the fieldwork areas that the Review visited painted very different pictures about their engagement. In one, Connexions was very actively and enthusiastically engaged; in the other, the Connexions representative felt isolated partly because they felt the language used at Board meetings was social services dominated.
- 8.34 One Connexions stakeholder the Review team spoke to said they were disappointed that the Department for Education and Skills had not issued guidance for Connexions partnerships about safeguarding.
- 8.35 **District Councils**
- 8.36 District councils in local government areas that have them are statutory members of the LSCB. The Review found that some LSCBs covering shire councils had just one district council member who represented all the other districts in that area; on other LSCBs all the districts represented themselves. Some delegates at the LSCB national conference commented that district councils were sometimes hard to engage effectively and there were calls for stronger messages to district councils from Government.
- 8.37 The Review found that district councils' financial contributions towards LSCBs varied. For example, in one area the districts had been asked for £1000 each but had not yet agreed to pay whilst in another, the LSCB were clearly not anticipating any financial contribution from district councils. In a third example, however, the district and borough councils were signed up to provide £10,000 each.
- 8.38 **The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)**
- 8.39 The VCS are not a statutory partner but *Working Together* describes them as partners whose involvement should be secured.
- 8.40 Whilst the large, national voluntary organisations e.g. NSPCC appeared to be well represented, the Review found examples of some LSCBs that had no VCS

representation. Other LSCBs were finding it challenging to engage the VCS meaningfully: “if one comes, all the others want to too” said one stakeholder.

- 8.41 The Review found that engagement was particularly difficult in areas where there were numerous, disparate small groups. One local authority said that they had over 200 different faith groups alone in the borough.
- 8.42 It was clear, though, that LSCBs were actively seeking to engage the VCS and one had developed an independent county-wide infrastructure for engaging the VCS. In addition, some LSCBs were providing funding to the VCS for training and for raising awareness of safeguarding.
- 8.43 **Early years settings and schools**
- 8.44 Like the VCS, early years settings and schools are not statutory partners but *Working Together* describes them as partners whose involvement should be secured.
- 8.45 The Review team did not hear evidence that suggested LSCBs were routinely engaging the early years sector. The team were told that some clear, simple guidance and/or case studies on their role in safeguarding would help raise awareness.
- 8.46 Partners reported a mixed picture on the involvement of schools. The Review found that in the majority of areas, schools did not appear to be active participants in LSCB arrangements. In a small number, there was good involvement and one area had secured financial contributions from schools. The LSCB survey found a more optimistic picture with on average state schools attending 61 % of full LSCB meetings and Independent schools attending 49%.
- 8.47 The team were told that schools felt “pretty well supported” on child protection issues although there was evidence that relationships between social services and schools was variable and could be improved by, for example, a shared understanding of referrals.
- 8.48 LSCBs did not seem to have involved themselves significantly with independent schools. Nonetheless, one fieldwork authority the Review visited reported good engagement with the independent sector including attendance at training.
- 8.49 **Involving parents, children and young people**
- 8.50 The review team did not come across much evidence about the engagement or otherwise of parents and carers with LSCBs. However, we heard from LSCBs about examples of work to support parents e.g. a Safer Parenting Handbook, parenting programmes and a proposal to develop a service user evaluation including parents.

- 8.51 Interviewees suggested that LSCBs were finding it difficult to engage children and young people in a meaningful way. However, the team did hear of some good practice e.g. one authority had held a learning day for the council's senior management which was focused on safeguarding and the participation of children and young people, and was chaired by young people themselves. It was suggested that LSCBs could benefit from practical guidance on this subject.
- 8.52 The Children's Rights Director carried out consultation work on behalf of the Review to seek the views of children and young people on safeguarding generally (rather than LSCBs specifically) – his findings are summarised at Annex A.

Next Steps



9.0 Priority Review recommendations

9.1 This section shows the recommendations made by the Priority Review in the light of its findings. These include recommendations to Government but also recommendations to LSCBs themselves and to others.

9.2 Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1. There needs to be clarity about the relationship between LSCBs and children's trusts. Good practice on chairing arrangements needs to be shared. Effective scrutiny by Elected Members should be encouraged.

1.0 To meet this recommendation Government should:

- a. issue a vision statement for LSCBs clarifying which partnership does what and how the two relate. The vision statement should explain how LSCBs can both challenge others and be open to challenge itself, how it can demonstrate independence and when they should do so.
- b. set out expectations about the skill set, experience and role of LSCB chairs.
- c. agree how to promote and increase effective challenge of LSCBs including by Lead Members.

1.1 To meet this recommendation LSCBs should:

- d. review/agree chairing arrangements at least every two years.
- e. and, where the chair is a local authority officer below DCS level, the LSCB should consider carefully whether the officer will be able to challenge effectively.

1.2 To meet this recommendation local authority and Elected Members should:

- f. review their scrutiny of LSCBs.

9.3 Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2: Statutory partners have joint responsibility for LSCBs. This responsibility should be re-emphasised. Good practice on managing attendance and business should be shared more widely.

2.0 To meet this recommendation, Government should:

- g. re-emphasise collective responsibility for safeguarding;
- h. publicise examples of, for example, members' agreements; job descriptions; induction packs; deputising and communication arrangements (for example with district councils and the voluntary and community sector); and structures.

2.1 To meet this recommendation, LSCBs should:

- i. set attendance targets and publicise attendance records in annual reports.

2.2 To meet this recommendation, the Department for Education and Skills should:

- j. consider with the Department of Health how Strategic Health Authorities can properly and most usefully fulfil their statutory role in relation to LSCBs. (See Annex D for the results of this exercise).
- k. consider with the Home Office how to reinforce police engagement with LSCBs.

9.4 Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3: LSCBs need to be adequately resourced and to spend less time discussing budgets.

3.0 To meet this recommendation the Government should:

- l. clarify the minimum requirements should be in terms of outcomes/tasks, staff needed to undertake these and their roles
- m. regularly collect and publicise robust information about LSCBs' financial arrangements through an annual survey following those carried out in 2005 and 2006; and
- n. discuss agencies' contributions and agree how LSCBs can increase leverage on statutory partners locally.

3.1 If necessary, in the medium term Government should:

- o. investigate, develop, cost and publicise models of effective LSCBs for different types of local authority; and consider other options for funding the work of LSCBs such as for example:
 - i) using a funding approach similar to that used for Youth Offending Teams;
 - ii) suggesting children's trusts should agree LSCB budgets;
 - iii) publicising a funding formula; or,
 - iv) providing examples of different budgets linked to needs analysis

9.5 Recommendation 4

Recommendation 4: LSCBs need to know how well they are doing and what good looks like.

4.1 To meet this recommendation the Government should:

- p. produce a basic effectiveness checklist or toolkit for LSCBs linked to outcomes and spread good practice through conferences, materials and regional networks; and
- q. develop a performance management and assessment framework for LSCBs.

4.2 *In the medium term, Government should consider how to build support and challenge for LSCBs through the Every Child Matters improvement cycle, including by improving links between Government Offices and LSCBs.*

9.6 Recommendation 5

Recommendation 5: LSCBs need further help making the transition from an operational child protection board to a strategic safeguarding board. The time LSCBs spend writing and agreeing protocols should be reduced.

5.1 To meet this recommendation the Government should:

- r. publicise good examples of LSCB business plans and accompanying materials which demonstrate the role of LSCBs across the safeguarding remit;
- s. publicise good protocols on different issues (e.g. children living with domestic violence, substance abuse or parental mental illness) and recommend their wider consideration by LSCBs who have not yet agreed their own protocols;
- t. and, the next time national safeguarding guidance is produced, Government should issue a national template, in sufficient detail for front line staff, for policies/ procedures to be adopted by local partners.

9.7 Recommendation 6

Recommendation 6: LSCBs should carry out Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) when required.

6.1 To meet this recommendation the Government should:

- u. consider whether further guidelines or measures are required to ensure SCRs are undertaken whenever necessary or appropriate;
- v. consider how to make sure SCR recommendations are acted on and monitored locally, regionally or nationally – for example through DfES/ Government Office follow up or inspection; and
- w. investigate, and if necessary, address the variation in rates of SCRs, possibly through guidance setting out clear expectations and a serious case review self assessment tool for LSCBs.

10.0 Government action plan on LSCBs

10.1 This section sets out the Government's plans to support and strengthen LSCBs, in the light of the recommendations. The table at Annex C summarises the actions.

10.2 Clarify how LSCBs can best fulfil their responsibilities, in the light of experience so far

10.3 The Priority Review identified several areas where LSCBs and their partners did not find the statutory guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* a sufficiently clear guide to action.

10.4 The framework of statutory guidance in *Working Together* explains the essential requirements for LSCBs, building on the statutory provisions in the Children Act 2004 and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006 and aligning LSCBs with the parallel guidance on the 'duty to co-operate' in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and the guidance and regulations on the Children and Young People's Plan.

10.5 The experience of LSCBs so far does not demonstrate a need to change the statutory guidance or the legislation. What we do plan to do is to issue non-statutory practice guidance drawn up in the light of the review and the experience of LSCBs so far to help LSCBs implement the requirements effectively. Our plan is that this practice guidance should cover:

- *Governance*, including effective chairing arrangements – the benefits, other things being equal, of independent chairs and learning from LSCBs about their role and the required skills and experience.
- *Effective relationships*. How LSCBs can work closely with wider children's trust partnership arrangements. Their working relationships with other partnerships. Learning so far on how LSCBs can challenge others, be open to challenge itself, how it can demonstrate independence and when it should do so.
- *LSCBs' contributions to planning*. In light of the new Children and Young People's Plan regulations and guidance.
- *Scrutiny and challenge of LSCBs* by lead members and others.
- *Engagement of partners including how specific partners can best be engaged*. How arrangements for liaising with a range of members can work.
- *LSCB work planning*. How LSCBs can make best use of their time in looking at protocols etc.

- How *LSCBs' analysis of data and other local information* fits alongside/feeds into needs analysis by the children's trust more generally.
- *Resourcing the work of the LSCB.*
- *Ensuring effectiveness.* How LSCBs' role fits into the developing wider context of indicators and measures of safeguarding. How LSCBs are assessing and strengthening the safeguarding work of local services.
- *Clarifying expectations on serious case reviews* and their relationship with other review arrangements.

10.6 **Emphasise the importance of participation in LSCBs**

10.7 The Priority Review report made clear the need for the Government to continue to repeat and reinforce the importance of all the statutory partners to take part in LSCBs and to play a full, appropriate role in supporting them. It is also important to ensure that non-statutory partners also have a clear encouragement to take part, given their important to the work of LSCBs. These include schools, the new Border and Immigration Agency, and the voluntary and community sector.

10.8 To emphasise this commitment from across Government the Secretaries of State for Education and Skills, Health, Communities and Local Government, and the Home Secretary have written jointly to statutory LSCB partners emphasising the need for those partners to take part in LSCBs. The Government will continue to publicise the role of LSCBs and support LSCBs in securing the cooperation of non statutory partners.

10.9 **Define the framework for measuring LSCBs' progress – understanding 'what good looks like'**

10.10 A key message from the LSCB Priority Review is the need to help LSCBs know how well they are doing. Ultimately this will depend on a better measurement of progress on safeguarding outcomes. The Government is seeking to address this by looking at the scope for national and local measures of safeguarding. This will be considered in drawing up the new framework of Public Service Agreements and indicator set for local government for the period from 2008-2011, building on the work carried out in 2006 on behalf of Government by the NSPCC in 2006. Over time we hope to see a move towards more outcome-focused measures of safeguarding, rather than processes or inputs.

10.11 In the shorter term the Government plans to make sure LSCBs have access to a benchmarking toolkit which helps them to think through their own effectiveness.

This will help LSCBs to understand and to think through ‘what good looks like’ and to measure themselves against statements of practice which complies with guidance and which helps them towards effective delivery of their functions and achievement of the safeguarding outcomes.

10.12 The Priority Review found that in some areas – including the creation of policies and procedures – not all LSCBs were yet complying with the regulations and guidance. LSCBs should by now have put this right but this tool should also be able to help them pick up any remaining points.

10.13 **Provide support for better LSCB practice**

10.14 The Government has already provided some support to LSCBs in networking with one another and sharing practice examples. There is an online discussion forum for LSCBs available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/lscbforum/> The forum allows LSCB Chairs and business managers to talk directly to each other. To register for membership LSCB employees need to email child.protection@dfes.gsi.gov.uk stating their job title, organisation and contact details.

10.15 Government Offices in several regions have been working to build networks of LSCBs and to provide opportunities for them to come together to discuss issues of common interest. The national event for LSCBs on 13 March 2007, hosted by Government, provided an opportunity for LSCBs to hear and discuss examples of practice as well as to learn about current safeguarding issues. More work is planned to gather and share examples of LSCB practice in a way that helps LSCBs grapple with common issues. We are considering how Government Offices can best support LSCBs and ascertain the resources they need to do this effectively.

10.16 **Clarify the place of LSCBs in the performance cycle**

10.17 The Priority Review drew interesting conclusions about the performance cycle. Local authorities are part of a clearly defined process of performance review, challenge and support. The guidance for LSCBs makes clear that they should be challenged and scrutinised by their members and held to account by the local authority and in particular the Lead Member for Children’s Services. But in the current system LSCBs do not receive the sort of external engagement local authorities do. In looking at how to strengthen local performance improvement work we will consider the need for more direct engagement of LSCBs in the performance improvement cycle.

10.18 **Undertake a further stocktake of progress**

10.19 The Priority Review and the 2006 survey of LSCBs have provided a snapshot of early implementation of LSCBs. This report shows the findings of those exercises and outlines what Government plans to do in order to provide further support to LSCB implementation.

10.20 It will be important to take stock on progress with LSCBs at a later date. By the end of 2008 there should be:

- further information from another survey of LSCBs, if these are carried out annually.
- further practice examples and intelligence via networks of LSCBs and their partners.
- the 2008 Joint Chief Inspectors' Report which will provide a further update on progress on safeguarding children, including the contribution made by LSCBs.

10.21 This would be an appropriate time to take stock of progress and this is what the Government plans to do. The exact nature of the stocktake would need to be planned nearer the time.

10.22 **Trial the development of national templates for local protocols**

10.23 The Priority Review considered how LSCBs could be helped to spend less time in writing policies and procedures that would need to be substantially similar in each local area. It recommended that the Government should issue a national template for policies and procedures to be adopted by local partners. At the same time of course LSCBs need to own their own policies and procedures and be confident that they fit their local circumstances. Some believe that working through a policy, locally, helps the local agencies come together and jointly understand the issue.

10.24 To help us find the best way forward we plan to trial a national template – still able to be customised to meet local needs – in a forthcoming piece of guidance. We will then follow up to see if this is genuinely helpful to LSCBs. In the mean time, as part of best practice sharing we will encourage LSCBs to publicise and share their policies and procedures, to learn from one another and save unnecessary work.

10.25 **Clarify how SHAs can engage with LSCBs**

10.26 One specific recommendation from the review was about the engagement of Strategic Health Authorities with LSCBs. The review and survey took place at a time Strategic Health Authorities were restructuring down to 10 and this may have

resulted in temporary under-representation of SHAs on LSCBs. However there is a need to be clear about how SHAs can most effectively engage with LSCBs given their new role and structure. Annex D provides a steer on how SHAs can engage and this will be reiterated and if necessary amended in the planned practice guidance.

Annex A

Summary of Evidence from Children and Young People



1. The Children's Rights Director carried out some consultation work with children and young people² on behalf of the review team about their views on staying safe from harm, living away from home or getting help from social care services. The key messages from the 83 children and young people of most relevance to this review were:
 - Being housed in a safe area was important to keep young people safe from harm by other people, safe from being robbed and safe from getting themselves involved with others who encouraged them into wrongdoing.
 - One way that was making it easier to tell other people about being harmed were befriending schemes where young people selected by the council spend time getting to know and trust other young people in care.
 - 86% of children said that they have to repeat their story to different people working with them at least sometimes. However, well over half (57%) thought it was OK to do this, 12% thought it was actually a good thing and 31% thought it was a bad thing.
 - Nearly 6 out of 10 (59%) said that the adults who work with them make them feel safe. Over a third (39%) said that the adults working with them made no difference to whether they feel safe or not.
 - Over half (55%) said that adults sometimes disagreed on what they thought children should do to keep safe.
 - Amongst other things, messages for Government action included: tougher punishments, tougher on bullying, safer streets and the importance of family and friends.

² The sample included English children and young people who were: living away from home (e.g. in boarding schools or children's homes); receiving help from children's social care services) and care leavers.

Annex B

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

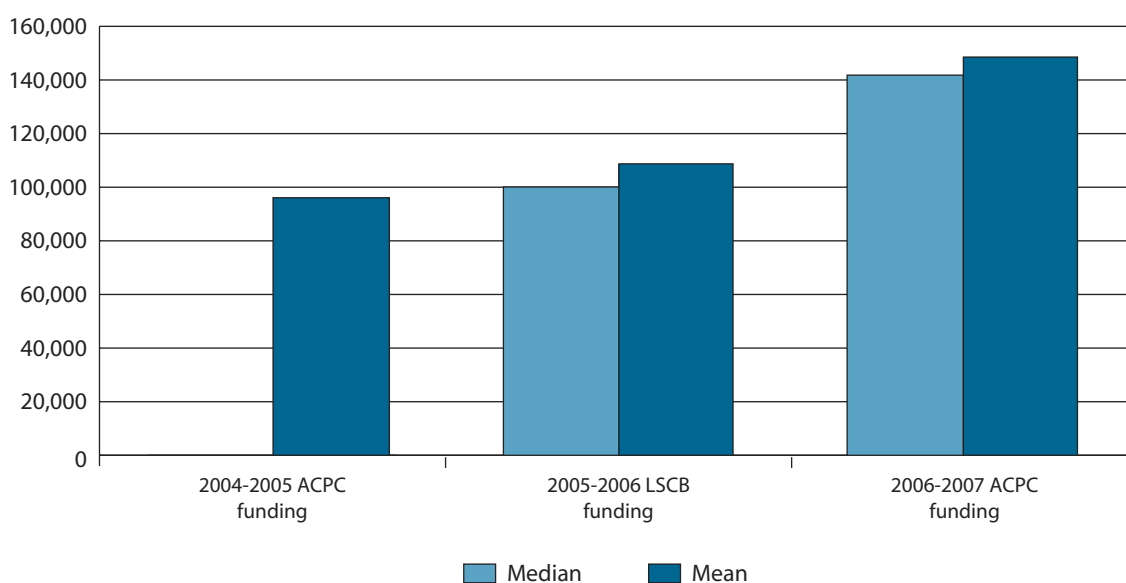
2006-2007 Survey Results

1	Executive Summary	00
2	Who was covered by the survey?	00
3	The level and spread of funding	00
3.1	What were the average funding levels?	00
3.2	What was the spread of funding levels?	00
4	What are the levels of the partner contributions?	00
4.1	Who makes a contribution?	00
4.2	What is the overall share of contributors?	00
5	Who oversees the Boards?	00
5.1	Who tends to chair the Boards?	00
5.2	What are the attendance rates at board meetings?	00
6	How the funding is spent?	00
7	What are the staffing levels?	00
8	Correlation of funding levels with population and IMD	00

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The results of the 2006 survey of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are presented in this report.
- 1.2 Spending has risen over the period from an average (mean) of £95,000 in 2004-2005 through to £145,000 in 2006-2007. This latter figure is based on the returns from 97 respondents. The median³, which ignores the effect of particularly high or low numbers, is just over £140,000.

Diagram 1 Average funding level



- 1.3 The distribution of funding has narrowed somewhat and so it can be concluded that a more even pattern of funding is emerging across the country. The sources of funding are consistent with local authorities providing the lion's share (normally about 55%).
- 1.4 The majority of spending has been on staff and training and most of the growth in expenditure in the last year has been on staff.
- 1.5 The survey provides an overview of the average attendance rates finding that they reflect the funding contributions in that those partners who are consistent contributors will also be consistent in attending board meetings.
- 1.6 The data shows that in 70% of cases LSCBs are chaired by local authority officers.

³ The median of a set of numbers can be found by arranging all the observations from lowest value to highest value and picking the middle one.

1.7 The data from the 2006-2007 survey included questions on the 2005-2006 expenditure and these are presented for comparison. Where possible, data from the 2005 survey of Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs), which asked about financial year 2004-05, was also included.

2.0 Who was covered by the survey?

2.1 The survey was sent out to all the LSCBs in England. 109 replied and of these 93 authorities are included in all of the analysis (the remainder being excluded as key elements were missing). The numbers in brackets in table 1 are the number of respondents from each type of authority used in this analysis.

2.2 In the survey respondents were asked to apportion the funding in terms of source and usage. These numbers were entered as percentages and did not, in all cases, add to 100. Consequently the percentages, in sections 4 and 6, do not always sum to 100 either.

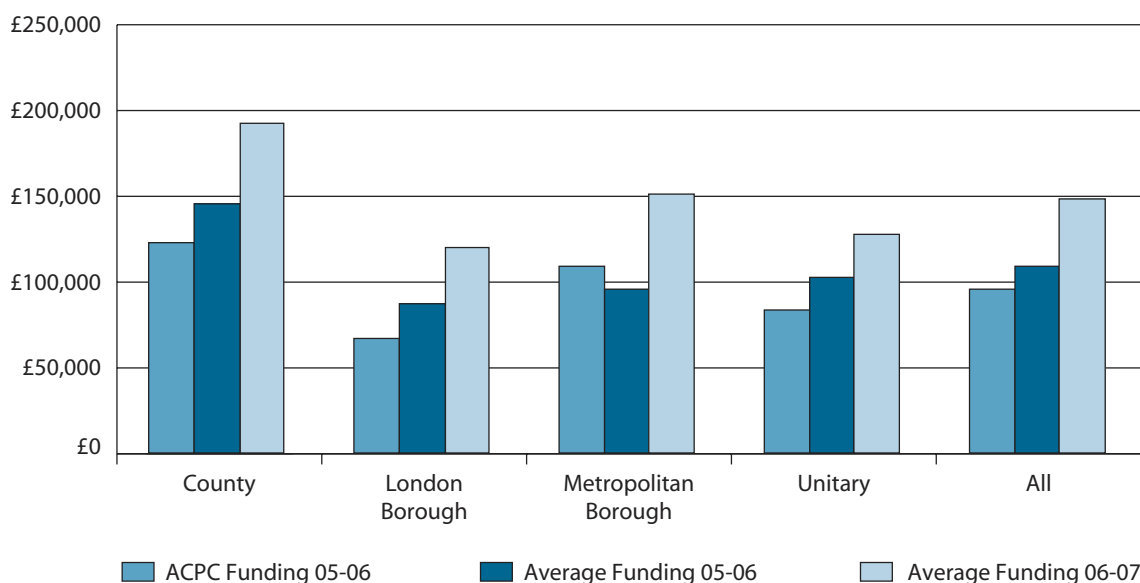
2.3 Respondents were asked to provide information on the sources of funding, expenditure, staffing and board meeting attendance. In addition a number of open ended questions were asked to provide more background to some of the responses.

3.0 The level and spread of funding

3.1 What were the average funding levels?

3.2 In 2006-2007 the average funding level for LSCBs was approximately £150,000. This compares with about £95,000 for the old ACPCs in 2004-2005 and £110,000 for the ACPCs / LSCBs in the year before the requirement to have an LSCB came in, 2005-2006. The breakdown of these averages is shown in figure 1.

Diagram 2 Average Funding by type of authority



3.3 The figure demonstrates that funding has been rising over the last two years regardless of type of local authority. The only exception is that funding in metropolitan boroughs seemed to go down between 04-05 and 05-06. This may be result of one particularly high value in 2004-2005. The same data is shown in table 1.

Table 1 Average funding by type of Authority

Local Authority Type	ACPC Funding 04-05	Change	Average Funding 05-06	Change	Average Funding 06-07
County (23)	£123,303	118%	£145,819	132%	£192,431
London Borough (18)	£66,410	132%	£87,754	137%	£120,284
Metropolitan Borough (24)	£109,273	88%	£95,813	157%	£150,735
Unitary (28)	£83,613	122%	£102,237	125%	£127,917
All	£96,205	113%	£108,554	137%	£148,283

3.4 What was the spread of funding levels?

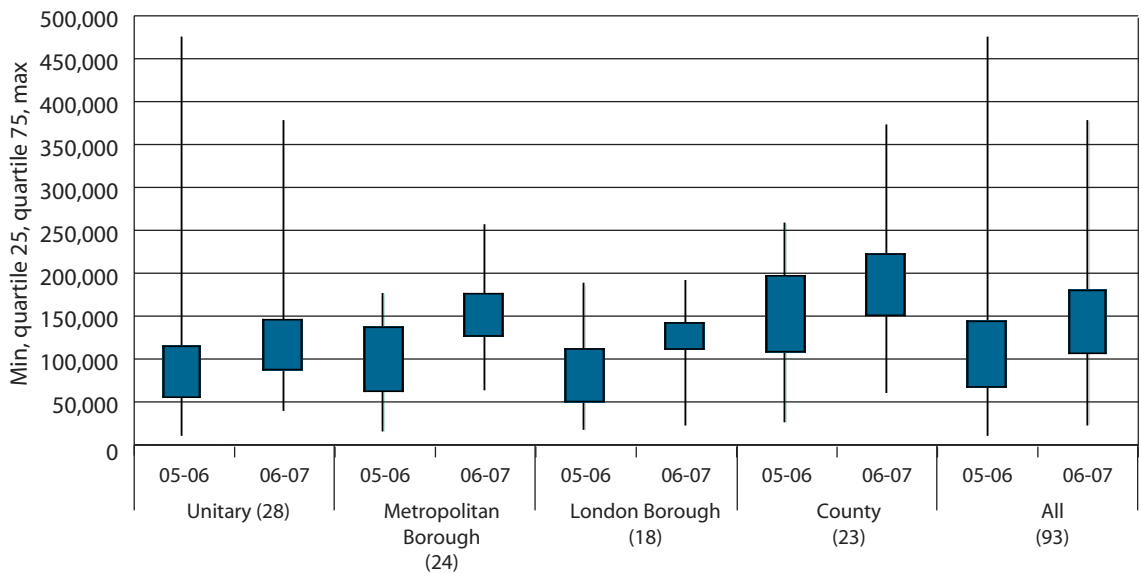
3.5 The arithmetic mean can be distorted by particularly high values in one area. (In the same way that average income is higher than one might expect because of the effect of a small number of very high earners, in technical terms positively skewed). A median is often a better measure of the average (in that half of the organisations will have higher and half lower values). Table 2 displays the minimum, 1st quartile, median (or 2nd quartile), 3rd quartile and maximum values.

Table 2 Distribution of funding levels

	Min	Quartile 25	Median	Quartile 75	Max
Unitary	£39,427	£84,894	£121,663	£144,866	£376,559
Metropolitan Borough	£63,178	£124,504	£148,202	£176,743	£255,000
London Borough	£22,500	£109,500	£128,354	£141,317	£189,577
County	£60,000	£148,725	£182,071	£222,594	£371,000
All	£22,500	£104,000	£141,400	£179,850	£376,559

3.6 Figure 2 shows the same data displayed in a box and whisker diagram. This illustrates the minimum and maximum funding levels (top and bottom of the line) but the box displays the range funding levels of the middle 50%. In other words the bottom of the box shows the funding level of the authority 25th out of 100 (Quartile 25) and the top shows the 75th (Quartile 75).

Diagram 3 Distribution of funding



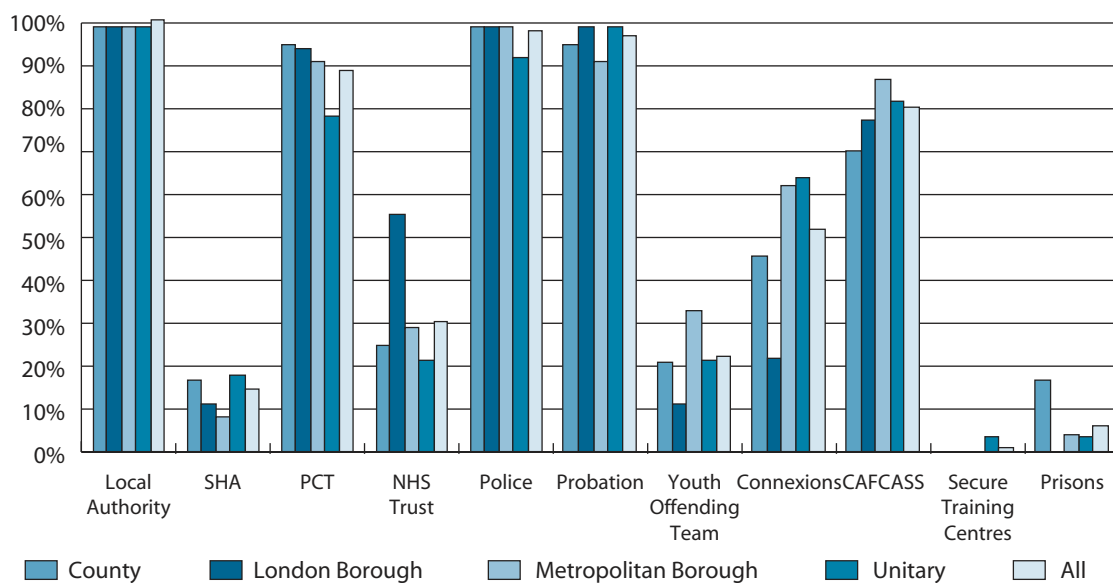
3.7 This figure demonstrates that the range of funding for the middle 50% has narrowed as the absolute levels have risen as well. The funding of the Boards has become more consistent and has risen, although with significant variation remaining. This is most clearly shown on the 'All' columns. Both extremes (the min and the max) have moved towards the middle (median).

4.0 What are the levels of the partner contributions?

4.1 Who makes a contribution?

4.2 Not all the possible partners do contribute to the funding of the LSCB. In all cases the local authority is a contributor (as would be expected). The other regular contributors are the PCT, the police, probation and CAF/CASS. There are other frequent contributions, especially Connexions. Figure 4 shows these contributors broken down by the type of authority.

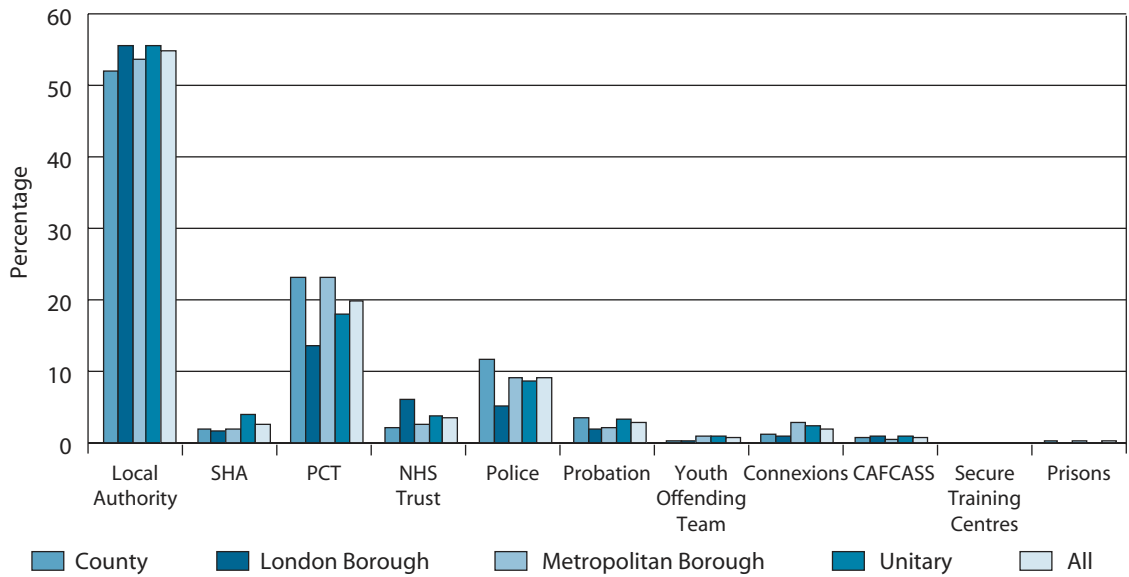
Diagram 4 Proportion of LSCBs with a contribution to funding from partners, 2006-2007



4.3 What is the overall share of contributors?

4.4 As well as being the most consistent contributors, the local authorities are also picking up the majority of the costs, followed by the PCTs and then the police – as found in the 2005 survey of ACPCs. There are no major differences between the types of Authorities, except that in London Boroughs the PCTs and the police do pick up less of the cost. Some of this is covered by the NHS trusts.

Diagram 5 The overall share of funding, 2006-2007



4.5 In terms of the average contribution to the costs, table 3 shows the level of funding provided by each partner. As we have noted the local authorities pick up the majority of the funding, with major contributions from the health bodies. The overall figures for 2005-2006 are also shown to illustrate the changes in funding. It should be remembered that the numbers of contributors from SHAs, Youth Offending Teams, Secure Training Centres and prisons is small and so these averages should be viewed with extra caution.

4.6 While the first column has the average contribution of each partner, including occasions when they make no contribution at all, the final column of the table 'All 06-07 (non-zero)' shows the average contribution of each partner when they do contribute. For example an SHA, when they do make a contribution to the funding, averages about £24,500. But because SHAs contribute relatively rarely the overall average is just above £3,500.

Table 3 Average and average non-zero levels of funding by partner, 2006-2007

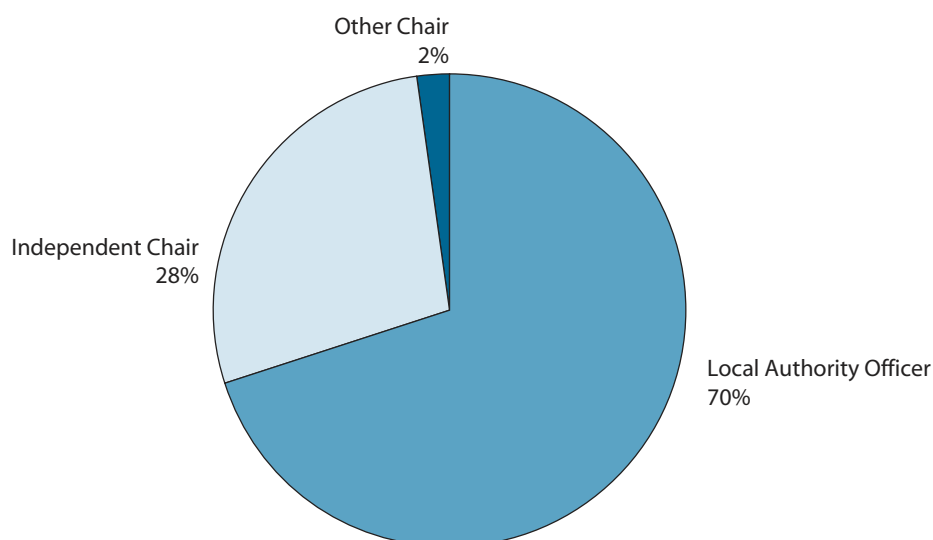
Funding levels	All (06-07)	All (05-06)	All 06-07(non-zero)
Local Authority	£80,828	£58,825	£80,828
PCT	£30,082	£21,318	£34,118
Police	£13,788	£11,096	£14,091
NHS Trust	£4,977	£2537	£15,961
Probation	£4,000	£3,229	£4,133
SHA	£3,687	£1,727	£24,494
Connexions	£2,600	£767	£5,038
CAFCASS	£1,079	£682	£1,357
Youth Offending Team	£801	£530	£3,548
Prisons	£353	£31	£5,466
Secure Training Centres	£48	£154	£4,510

5.0 Who oversees the Boards?

5.1 Who tends to chair the Boards?

5.2 Figure 6 shows the usual chair of the board. In 70% of cases the chair comes from the local authority.

Diagram 2 Chair of the Board



5.3 What are the attendance rates at board meetings?

5.4 The survey also asked respondents about attendance rates at the board and other meetings. It should be noted that not all respondents answered this question and so these responses should be treated with some caution but they do provide an

overview of the attendance rates. Those partners who make the most contribution in terms of funding are also those who most consistently attend Board meetings.

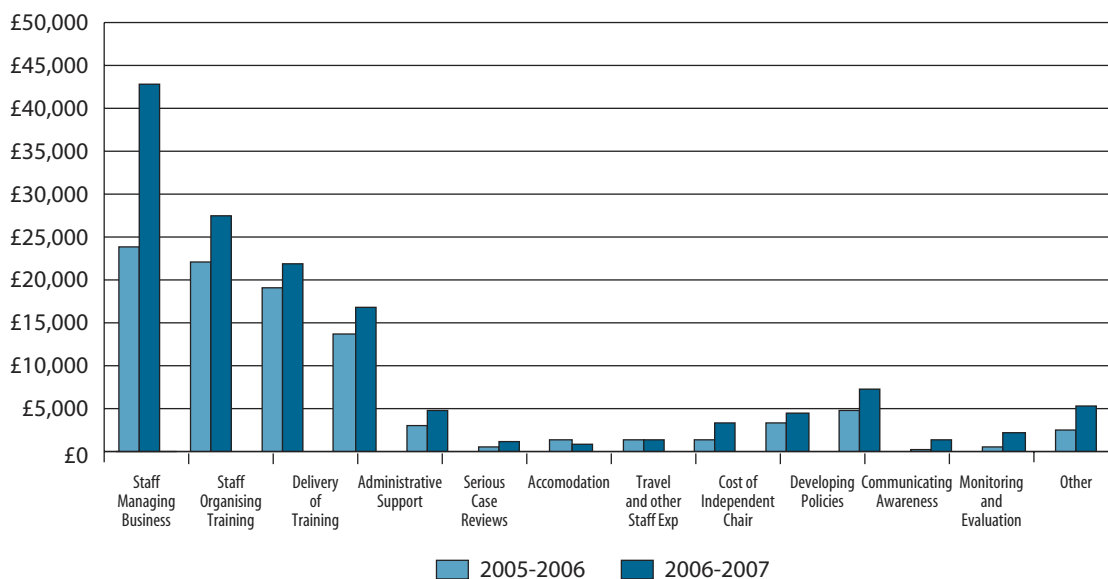
Table 4 Attendance rates at meetings

Organisation	LSCB	Management Policy	Sub Groups
LA	92%	54%	81%
PCT	89%	47%	89%
Chief Police Officer	86%	42%	61%
NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts	83%	33%	61%
Connexions	74%	17%	39%
YOT	69%	14%	40%
CAFCASS	68%	15%	29%
Probation Board	68%	20%	39%
State Schools	61%	20%	45%
District Council	58%	26%	39%
Others (please specify):	55%	15%	42%
Governor or Director of Prison	49%	6%	14%
Independent Schools	42%	0%	27%
SHA	38%	3%	8%
Further Education	35%	13%	32%
Faith Groups	21%	8%	23%
Secure Training Centre	19%	17%	0%

6.0 How the funding is spent?

- 6.1 Diagram 7 illustrates very clearly the distribution of expenditure on the different categories. The bulk of expenditure is on staff and then training. It is notable that expenditure on staffing has risen sharply between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, whilst most other expenditures have risen a little.

Diagram 7 Expenditure levels by category, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007



6.2 Table 5 shows the data in more detail, illustrating the distribution, once again by type of authority. Note that the columns do not sum to 100% due to the nature of some data errors. Notable is the fact that the London Boroughs spent a lower proportion on staff organising training than other areas.

Table 5 Percentage distribution of expenditure by category, 2006-2007

Category of expense	County	London Borough	Metropolitan Borough	Unitary	All
Staff Managing Business	24.8	31.6	26.7	31.7	28.9
Staff Organising Training	26.4	8.1	21.2	14.6	18.1
Delivery Of Training	15.8	20.4	11.4	14.6	15.3
Administrative Support	12.8	10.4	16.7	9.0	12.2
Serious Case Reviews	3.9	8.7	2.3	2.1	3.9
Child Death Reviews	1.9	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.6
Accommodation	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.6
Travel and Other Staff Exp	0.6	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.0
Cost of Independent Chair	3.0	0.3	1.2	3.3	2.2
Developing Policies	4.8	2.6	3.7	3.5	3.7
Communicating Awareness	5.1	10.8	2.8	3.8	5.3
Monitoring and Evaluation	1.6	–	1.8	0.5	1.0
Planning and Commissioning	1.2	1.4	2.3	0.4	1.3
Other	1.9	11.7	0.9	2.8	3.8

6.3 Table 6 shows the proportions in terms of absolute expenditure and includes the 2005-2006 figures so that comparisons can be made on the proportions.

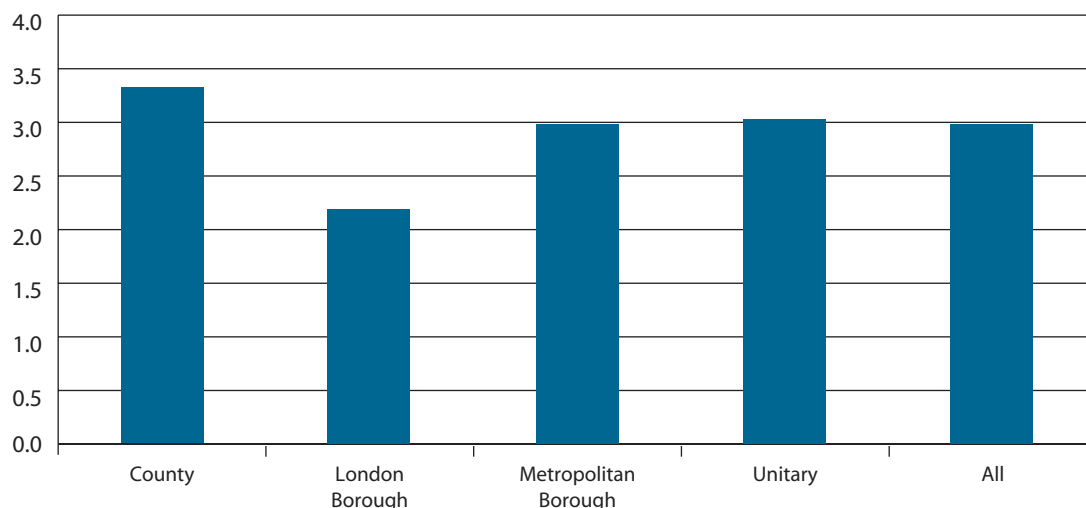
Table 6 Expenditure levels by category, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007

Category of expense	Expenditure 2005-2006	Share of expenditure	Expenditure 2006-2007	Share of Expenditure
Staff Managing Business	£23,724	19.3	£42,993	28.9
Staff Organising Training	£22,034	19.1	£27,417	18.1
Delivery of Training	£18,956	19.0	£21,813	15.3
Administrative Support	£13,628	13.1	£16,744	12.2
Serious Case Reviews	£2,960	3.0	£4,764	3.9
Child Death Reviews	£463	0.3	£931	0.6
Accommodation	£1,343	1.3	£787	0.6
Travel and Other Staff Exp	£1,445	1.4	£1,302	1.0
Cost of Independent Chair	£1,274	1.1	£3,213	2.2
Developing Policies	£3,330	3.3	£4,440	3.7
Communicating Awareness	£4,698	4.6	£7,158	5.3
Monitoring And Evaluation	£273	0.5	£1,418	1.0
Planning And Commissioning	£551	0.7	£2,174	1.3
Other	£2,501	4.4	£5,288	3.8

7.0 What are the staffing levels?

7.1 Average staffing levels are shown in figure 8. Data were not collected for 2005-2006. The average staff level is 3, with more in the counties and less in the London Boroughs.

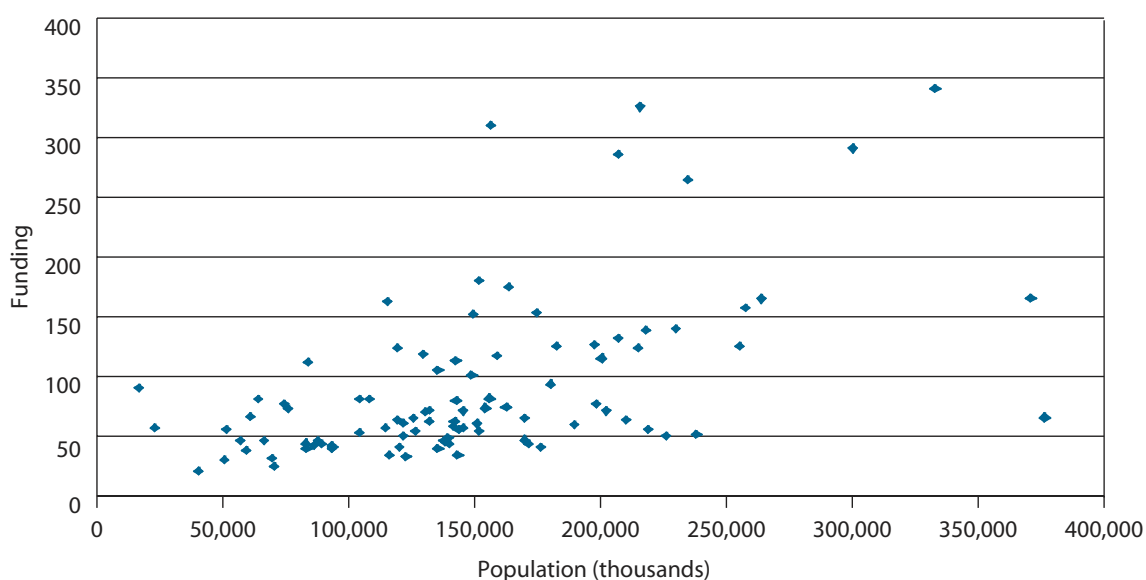
Diagram 8 Average staffing levels, 2006-2007



8.0 Correlation of funding levels with population and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

8.1 As well as noting the levels of funding and expenditures, we are also interested in the relationships between the population and levels of deprivation in different authorities and the funding levels. The scatter plot in figure 9 shows how funding does, in fact, rise with population levels although clearly other factors are important as well. Indeed in carrying out a regression or correlation⁴ we can demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Diagram 9 Scatter plot of funding by population

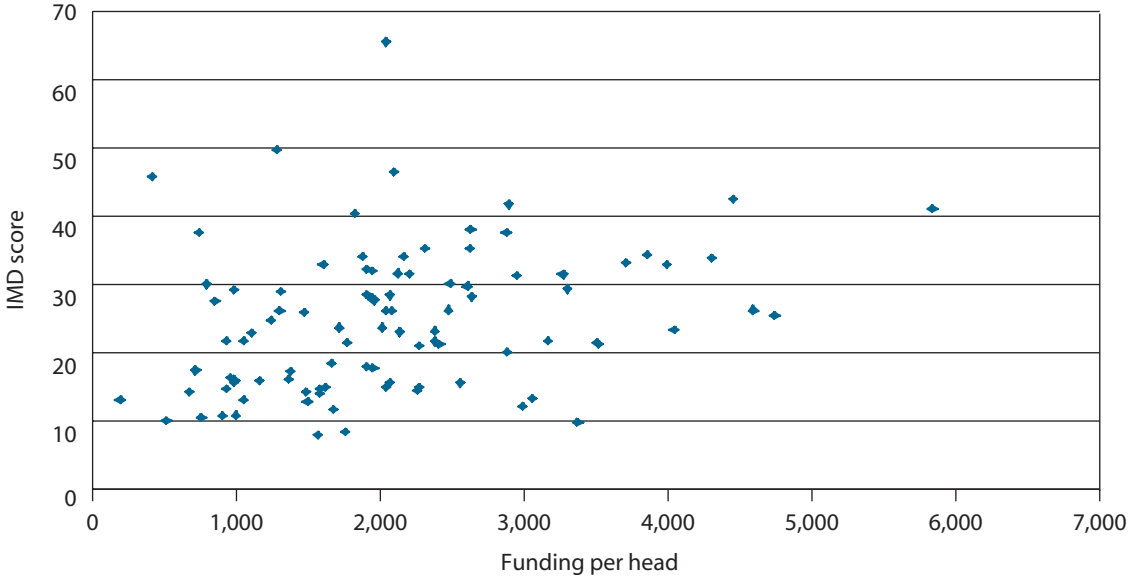


8.2 Further to the relationship between funding and population, we are interested to know whether the IMD score does have an effect on the funding levels. Because higher IMD scores tend to occur in the London and metropolitan boroughs which have smaller populations than the counties in our data, we would expect that a higher population would be correlated with a lower IMD score. To get round this problem, we calculated the funding per head of the <20 population. When we generate a scatter plot of this against the IMD score we do observe a positive correlation.⁵

4 The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.54 and significant at the 99% level

5 The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.30 and significant at the 99% level.

Diagram 10 Scatter plot of funding per head by IMD score



8.3 This positive relationship indicates that those areas with higher deprivation are, on average, spending more per head on the LSCB than those with lower IMD scores, although clearly with a good deal of variation as the figure demonstrates.

Annex C

Summary of the Forward Work Plan



Implementing the Priority Review – draft of key deliverables to implement the recommendations.

Deliverable	Addresses recommendations Comments	Lead responsibility	In support	By When
<i>Emphasise the importance of participation in LSCBs</i>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>LSCBs indicated they would welcome further emphasis by Government on the importance of engaging with LSCBs. A Joint Secretary of State letter has been issued to LSCBs and their members. The letter will introduce the Priority Review report and emphasise the importance of effectively engaging with and adequately resourcing LSCBs.</p>	DfES	<p>Department of Health (DoH)</p> <p>Home Office (HO)</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)</p>	June 2007
Clarify how LSCBs can best fulfil their responsibilities, in the light of experience so far	<p>Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6</p> <p>The experience of LSCBs so far does not demonstrate a need to change the statutory guidance or the legislation. DfES do plan to issue non statutory practice guidance drawn up in the light of the Priority Review and the experience of LSCBs so far to help LSCBs implement the requirements effectively.</p>	DfES	<p>Government Departments</p> <p>LSCB Practitioner advisory group</p> <p>LSCBs</p> <p>Government Offices</p>	Summer 2007

Deliverable	Addresses recommendations Comments	Lead responsibility	In support	By When
Define the framework for measuring LSCBs' progress – understanding 'what good looks like'	Recommendations 4 and 6 LSCBs emphasised the need for ways in which LSCBs can measure their own performance. This will be considered in drawing up the new framework of Public Service Agreements and indicator set for local government. In the shorter term the Government plans to make sure LSCBs have access to a benchmarking toolkit which helps them to think through their own effectiveness.	DfES	LSCB Practitioners Advisory Group Other Government Departments	Draft for consultation Summer 2007
Provide support for better LSCB practice	Recommendations 2, 4, and 5 LSCBs indicated the need for examples of good practice. The Government and Government Offices have already provided some support to LSCBs in networking with one another and sharing practice examples. More work is planned to gather and share examples of LSCB practice in a way that helps LSCBs grapple with common issues.	DfES	Government Offices DfES consultative group Other Government Departments.	Ongoing
Clarify place of LSCBs in the performance cycle.	Recommendations 4 and 6 In looking at how to strengthen local performance improvement work the Government will consider the need for more direct engagement of LSCBs in the performance improvement cycle.	<i>DfES</i>	<i>Other Government Departments</i>	<i>Agree way forward by Autumn 2007</i>

Deliverable	Addresses recommendations Comments	Lead responsibility	In support	By When
A further stocktake of LSCB	Recommendations 3 and 4 The stocktake will be undertaken in light of the 2008 joint Chief Inspectors' report, research into LSCBs and performance monitoring of LSCBs. To assess progress and consider if further action needed.	DfES	LSCBs Other Government Departments Government Offices	Autumn 2008
Trial the development of national templates for local protocols	Recommendations 5 Government plan to trial a national template for policies and procedures – still able to be customised to meet local needs – in a forth coming piece of guidance. In the short term we will encourage LSCBs to learn from one another.	DfES Safeguarding Group and OGDs to consider in development of future pieces of guidance.		Agreement by Summer 2007
Clarify how SHAs can engage with LSCBs	Recommendation 2 Annex D of the Priority Review report provides a steer on how SHAs can engage with LSCBs. This will be reiterated and if amended in the planned practice guidance necessary.		DfES DoH	By summer 2007

Annex D

The engagement of SHAs and LSCBs



Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) are statutory Board partners of Local Safeguarding Children Boards with duties under sections 13 to 16 of the Children Act 2004 and under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006. SHAs underwent reorganisation as part of “Commissioning a Patient Led NHS” leading to change in their roles and functions and a reduction in their numbers from 28 covering England to 10 by April 2007.

Given these numbers and the redefined role of SHAs, it is unlikely that many SHAs will be able to engage with LSCBs in the way of more locally based partners, with a senior member of staff present at LSCB meetings. However it remains important for SHAs to engage effectively with LSCBs and thus play their part as members. In order to do this effectively we recommend the following steps:

- 1) SHAs should open communication with all the LSCBs in their area. They should explain their role to the LSCBs, how they will operate as an LSCB partner, and how the LSCB should approach the SHA if there is a particular issue to raise.
- 2) The LSCB regulations allow for one individual person to represent two or more Board partners on the Board. This flexibility could be used by SHAs who by agreement might nominate someone who represents a PCT to additionally represent a SHA on a LSCB. This needs to be explained clearly to the other Board partners and the SHA and PCT need a clear agreement on the role of that individual, to avoid any potential conflict between their role as PCT and as SHA representative.
- 3) SHAs can usefully have collective discussions directly with LSCBs in their region to talk about overall issues of concern and any specifics that arise.
- 4) Regional partners of SHAs may act as intermediaries helping to gather views and convey intelligence. For example, the children and learners teams within Government Offices may play this role in their work to support and challenge LSCBs.

- 5) LSCBs should be able to contact and involve the SHA when necessary, for example to raise individual cases or to discuss with the SHA matters that fall within its remit and which impact on the LSCB's safeguarding work, e.g. about the safeguarding performance of a Primary Care Trust (PCT).

This is non-statutory practice guidance for SHAs and the other LSCB board partners.

We would welcome feedback on how this is working in practice and will reflect on this in the more comprehensive practice guidance to be published later in the year.

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