

## READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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| <b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> | January 2021   |                |   |
| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b>    | Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Annual Report 2019/2020 |                |   |
| <b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>   | Esther Blake   | <b>TEL:</b>    | X73269                                      |
| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>       | BWSCP Partnership Manager  | <b>E-MAIL:</b> | Esther.blake@brighterfuturesforchildren.org |
| <b>ORGANISATION:</b>    | Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership                                 |                |   |

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance disestablished Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), replacing them with a requirement for a flexible equitable safeguarding partnership. From March 2019, the LSCBs across the west of Berkshire (Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham) merged to become the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP). BWSCP is the key statutory partnership whose role is to oversee how the relevant organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Reading (and across Berkshire West) and to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.
- 1.2 This Annual Report is being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure members are informed about the work of and achievements of the BWSCP for the 2019/2020 financial year.

### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the attached annual report.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 As required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the BWSCP is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding arrangements and promotion of the welfare of children in Berkshire West, detailing the work and progress undertaken within the year, giving an account of how it has discharged its duties against statutory guidance. This is a Berkshire West report, but information in relation to Reading is included within it.
- 3.2 In recognition of the benefits of working collaboratively with our neighbours, in May 2018, the three separate LSCBs in Berkshire West (Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire) began a trial year operating as a single Board, as part of the transition to our new partnership arrangements.
- 3.3 In July 2018, a revised Working Together to Safeguard Children was published, which removed the statutory requirement to have an LSCB, but required that the three Local Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Police) must take a shared and equitable responsibility to agreeing, funding, operating and publicising their local safeguarding partnership arrangements. There is no longer a statutory

requirement to have an Independent LSCB Chair, plus there were a number of other changes relating to the Case Review and Child Death review arrangements that have also been implemented locally and across Berkshire.

- 3.3 As an early adopter, our new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were published on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019, ahead of the national deadline and they were formally implemented in June 2019. The published safeguarding arrangements document and a child and young people's version can be found via this link:  
<https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/about-the-scp/about-the-bwscp>.

## 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Partnership working and scrutiny underpin an effective safeguarding partnership and this report contains information on some of the activities and achievements which have taken place that demonstrate this and the impact this has on practice. BWSCP members have championed and led the safeguarding agenda within their agency, plus brought to partnership meetings issues regarding safeguarding that relate primarily to their own agency, but which have implications for the co-operation between agencies and the monitoring role of the statutory partners.
- 4.2 The report provides information regarding our first year formally operating with a Berkshire West approach, work and progress made against the BWSCP priorities, plus updates from various sub groups which are either local, pan Berkshire West or pan Berkshire.
- 4.3 Our first annual report as the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership focusses on the work we have undertaken together as a partnership rather than as single agencies or areas. In our first year we have some significant achievements detailed within this annual report that have been achieved by being open to new ways of working in a tri-borough arrangement. This includes:
- A clear and effective Rapid Review process that provides detailed and comprehensive learning for cases at an early stage, which has been recognised by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel as best practice.
  - A new website for Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership that brings together all the key information from the previous LSCB websites and makes the location of information for practitioners and families clearer and easier to access.
  - The locally devised and produced 'Be Brave - Speak up' online campaign which reached 81,824 (with a total number of impressions being 522,445 being watched an average 6.3 times) and shared 207 times on Facebook.
  - A committed Strategic Partnership ensured the best plans were in place to identify and respond to risk to help protect vulnerable children and support practitioners during the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Collaborative working across multi-agencies captured the views of practitioners that resulted in the production of the first partnership Business Plan under the new arrangements to focus our priorities
  - Local learning and key information from 5 Serious Case Reviews was delivered to 167 practitioners as an opportunity to participate in multi-agency safeguarding discussions.
- 4.4 Each section within the report provides an overview of key achievements, which includes activity undertaken but also impact where we have evidence. There is also 'Learning and Challenge' that we will use as a focus in the forthcoming year as the new arrangements settle. Throughout the report we have also included comments made by the Independent Scrutineers, both in supporting work we have undertaken and the progress made, but also challenging when further work is required or progress has not been as quick as expected.
- 4.5 It is important to realise that bringing three different areas together in one partnership has great benefits but does come with significant challenges. We will continue to work

with all the statutory and non-statutory partners to revise and develop our arrangements over time to ensure we have an effective, coherent and efficient set of partnership arrangements. Pages 29 and 30 of the annual report describe how we have evaluated and adapted our multi-agency arrangements for the year ahead, to better suit our needs and the way we work locally.

- 4.6 Governance - attached below as appendix 1 is the updated structure chart for the current BWSCP multi-agency partnership arrangements. Although not explicit in this chart, there are and will continue to be links to other multi-agency partnerships such as the Safeguarding Adult Board, Health and Wellbeing Boards, and the Community Safety Partnerships in all three areas. In Reading in particular, there is a strong link to the One Reading Children's and Young People's Partnership. The statutory safeguarding partners are key members of these groups and will ensure that priority areas of work are not duplicated, and that good practice or areas of concern are shared, as appropriate.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The work of the BWSCP aligns with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy by contributing to the Strategy's priority to 'Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people'.
- 5.2 The report also supports the fact that Reading's 2017-20 Health and Wellbeing Strategy is built on three foundations - safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, recognising and supporting all carers, and high quality co-ordinated information to support wellbeing.

## **6. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The Annual report has been written with contributions from all BWSCP partners and circulated to and agreed by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. It was disseminated to all partners and published on the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership website in November 2020.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out for this report however, equality and diversity continue to be a key theme for the safeguarding partnership arrangements.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications with this report. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires that the statutory safeguarding partners produce an annual report.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None

Appendix 1:

