

## READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	21 January 2022	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Annual Report 2020/2021		
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<b>ORGANISATION:</b>	Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance requires that a flexible equitable safeguarding partnership is established in each local authority area. From March 2019, the safeguarding partners across the west of Berkshire (Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham) joined 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 2020/2021 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 July 2018, a revised Working Together to Safeguard Children was published, which 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. In recognition of the benefits of working collaboratively with our neighbours, the statutory safeguarding partners within the three local authority areas of Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire agreed to become a tri-borough partnership.
- 3.3 For information on the published safeguarding arrangements and links to previous annual reports, follow this link:  
<https://www.berkshirwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/about-the-scp/berkshire-west-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements> .

## 4. CONTENT OF 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 locally 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 second year formally operating on a Berkshire West footprint, the work and progress made against the BWSCP priorities, our case review work, plus updates from various sub groups which are either local, pan Berkshire West or pan Berkshire.
- 4.3 This report focusses on the work we have undertaken together as a partnership rather than as single agencies or areas. We have continued to build on the achievements and strong relationships formed during our first year, faced some considerable challenges as the pandemic progressed, however used this to strengthen our 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 committed Strategic Partnership ensured proactive plans were in place to identify and respond to risk, to help protect vulnerable children and support practitioners during the Covid-19 pandemic, and directly influenced changes to services provision and the way front line practitioners worked with families. For example, the joint project between Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and the three Children's Services ensured vulnerable families continued to be seen face-to-face via a coordinated response.
  - Production of the #Be Brave Speak up social media campaign, which encouraged communities to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect they may have concerns about in their neighbourhoods during lockdown. This covered children and adults safeguarding and was rolled out across all agencies in both domains. It was also shared as part of a targeted Facebook campaign with over 80,000 views and was shared hundreds of times.
  - A Covid-19 specific BWSCP web page created to share a multitude of resources for families, young people and communities. There were nearly 10,000 views from 01.04.2020 to 21.03.2021.
  - Concerns around serious youth violence have led to:
    - the funding of a Navigator Programme within the Emergency Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital where volunteers are available for young people to talk to and they can signpost them to other support at critical moments.
    - revision of the Pan Berkshire Exploitation Screening Tool to include identifiers of serious violence and changes language to be trauma informed.
    - initiation of a large independent Thematic Child Safeguarding Practice Review in Reading into serious youth violence, which should conclude in early 2022.
  - Joint funding by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group, Brighter Futures for Children, Wokingham Council and West Berkshire Council for Kooth, an online counselling service for young people and adults offering information, blogs and interactive sessions with trained therapists. In the first 9 months of availability (to April 2020) over 2200 children and young people have registered to use Kooth and 82% have returned to use the offer.
  - Alignment of the threshold guidance documents across the three local authorities supports and provides continuity for practitioners and schools who work across the area to make informed decisions when assessing the needs of the child.

- 4.4 Each section within the report provides an overview of key achievements and the impact of partnership working. There are also boxes for ‘Scrutiny and Challenge’ that identifies where 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. Page 2 of the annual report reflects the constant evaluation and scrutiny that the Statutory Partners (as the Executive Safeguarding Group) undertake to ensure our multi-agency arrangements are flexible and adapt to become more effective. This year, in particular, we recognise the need for increased Independent Scrutiny, and plans are in place to address this gap.
- 4.6 Governance - page 18 of the report is the current structure chart for the BWSCP 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, the Community Safety Partnerships, and the newly formed Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards 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.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO READING’S HEALTH AND WELLBEING 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. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

## **7. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 7.1 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 2021.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not applicable, however, equality and diversity continue to be a key theme for the safeguarding partnership arrangements.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Not applicable

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Not applicable

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None