

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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| Date of Meeting | 19 January 2024 |
| Title | Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Annual Report 2022/2023 |
| Purpose of the report | To note the report for information |
| Report author | David Goosey |
| Job title | BWSCP Independent Chair |
| Organisation | Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership |
| Recommendations | That the report be noted. |

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC18) provides the statutory guidance for all safeguarding children partnerships in England. 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 co-ordinate the partners safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- 1.2. This Annual Report, required by WTSC18, is being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure members are informed about the work and achievements of the BWSCP for the 2022/2023 financial year.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. 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. Generally, the current policy position will set the parameters of the options available to consider.
- 2.2. For information on the published safeguarding arrangements and links to previous annual reports, follow this link:

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/about-the-scp/berkshire-west-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements>.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. A priority area identified for the Partnership was safeguarding children and young people from the risk of significant harm from outside the home, referred to as **extra familial harm**. A Thematic Review of services to young people in relation to serious youth violence was published during the year. The review was initiated following several serious incidents in early 2021, including the murder of a teenage boy and the murder of an adult in an incident that involved three young men. Both incidents were fatal stabbings. Following these incidents, and in line with the statutory guidance, BWSCP carried out rapid reviews of the circumstances of the young people concerned and of the services provided to them and

their families. The reviews considered the victim of one fatal stabbing and six young people who had been charged with offences in relation to the two incidents. At the time of the reviews all the young people were between the ages of 13 and 17.

- 3.2. There are regular multi-agency meetings in each of the three areas that discuss individual cases and separate strategic meetings to agree a joint agency response. These are routinely reviewed and changes to approach taken where necessary. In Reading, an Independent Reviewer was appointed to review the Child Exploitation Missing Triage and Review (CETAR) and Child Exploitation and Missing Operational Group (CEMOG) Meetings following a recommendation in the Thematic Child Safeguarding Practice Review.
- 3.3. In each area there is a continued drive to ensure processes and strategic direction are improving through evaluation and review. Whilst changes have been implemented, the Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews have highlighted that more is required. These recommendations need to be acted upon quickly, and the learning shared widely. The Safeguarding Executive should collaborate to improve aligned responses and understanding across our Berkshire West footprint. This strategic aim is a key goal for the Partnership and endorsed by the Chief Executives in the three local authorities although achieving it may take some time, given the complexities of the different governance arrangements in each place.
- 3.4. Another priority area was to align the threshold guidance across the three local authorities. In Berkshire West we had three locality-based **Threshold Guidance** documents, due to differences in relation to referral routes and service provision for each Local Authority Children's Services. However, a project was initiated towards the end of 2021/22 to fully align and standardise these three documents, which successfully concluded in the autumn of 2022.
- 3.5. There remains some awareness raising work to be considered with regards to the Threshold Guidance and support to be considered for education settings to enable them to feel more confident in working with some of their more challenging pupils recognising when referral to different agencies is required.
- 3.6. The BWSCP published six **LCSPRs** in the 2022/2023 year. These relate to two cases of known or suspected non-accidental injury of a young child (Reading 'Aiden' and West Berkshire 'Bobby'), one case of sexual abuse (Wokingham 'Aisha and Ciara'), two individual LCSPRs for two perpetrators of serious youth violence (Wokingham 'Harry' and 'David' and a Thematic Review into the same topic for Reading).
- 3.7. Some of the key areas of learning from the cases include:
 - The need for improved Assessments
 - Recognising and understanding patterns of behaviour through the use of chronologies.
 - Ensuring safe step down of intervention.
 - Improved information sharing at different stages in safeguarding processes
 - It is important to find out and understand if family members have any learning needs or borderline learning difficulties
 - The importance of Child Focused Practice - professionals should always try to understand and record children's views where possible
- 3.8. Recommendations and action plans are in place for these reviews; they are being actively monitored and acted upon through the Berkshire West Case Review Group and the locality based Independent Scrutiny and Impact Groups.

4. Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The work of the BWSCP aligns with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy by contributing to the Strategy's priorities of 'Help children and families in early years' and 'Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in children and young people'.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1. Not applicable

6. Community 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 2023.

7. Equality Implications

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

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Legal Implications

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. Not applicable.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Not applicable.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.