

# **Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board**

## **Annual Report 2017-2018**



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### Welcome to the Reading Local Safeguarding Board Annual report 2017/18.

I was delighted to be appointed as Independent Chair of Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in September 2017. This annual report provides an account of the work undertaken by the LSCB and its multi-agency partners from April 2017 to March 2018. The report evidences overall good progress against our priorities to further promote the wellbeing and safeguarding of children in Reading. Summaries of the activities, performance and impact of this work are contained within this report and we have outlined the areas where we still need to make improvement.

I was appointed as the Independent Chair of Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire LSCBs with the expectation that further work would be undertaken across the three Berkshire West LSCBs with the intention of merging them into one LSCB. Agreement was reached by the three statutory partners to merge for a transitional year in May 2018 and in July 2018 the Berkshire West LSCB were successful in its first merged Board.

In May 2016 an Ofsted inspection found that RBC Children's Services were inadequate and the recommendations were developed into the Children's Services Improvement Plan. An independently Chaired Children's Services Improvement Board, which includes senior members of partner agencies alongside Children's Services, was created and continues to meet monthly to review and challenge progress. On behalf of the LSCB I have routinely reported to and attended this Board and the LSCB are involved in key actions and priorities within the Improvement Plan, specifically focussing on thresholds, child sexual exploitation and auditing activity. Ofsted carried out three monitoring visits in 2017/18, each one focussing on a different area of the child's journey through services. The outcomes of these visits have varied with some positive messages regarding the new Children's Single Point of Access and Early Help Services from the visit in October 2017. However, the visit in February 2018, which focussed on children in need of help and protection, was particularly challenging and included some partnership difficulties (understanding of thresholds, involvement in partnership meetings such as core groups and conferences). In response the LSCB initiated a project by an independent author to look at these issues, identify the barriers and suggest some workable solutions led by the partners. This work has resulted in a report to the LSCB and Improvement Boards, with actions identified for both the Improvement Plan an LSCB Business Plan.

The DfE published at the end of October 2017 revisions to the guidance to reflect the legislative changes introduced by the Children & Social Care Act 2017. The Consultation period closed on 31st December 2017 and the new Working Together guidance was published in July 2018. The significant changes relate to the new requirements of the three Safeguarding partners-the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to establish revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The LSCB will continue to have the current statutory responsibility and function until the new arrangement is published and implemented by September 2019 and we will be supporting this new arrangement for partners to work together to continue to protect and safeguard children in Reading.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and offer my thanks to the members of the Board and subgroups for their work to safeguard children; and to all those staff and volunteers within the local workforce and community for their commitment, to safeguarding children and young people in Wokingham. I am looking forward to the opportunity provided by this role as Independent Chair to support and maximise the collective responsibility we all share to secure improvement for the effective safeguarding of children.



**Alex Walters**  
**Independent Chair of Reading LSCB**

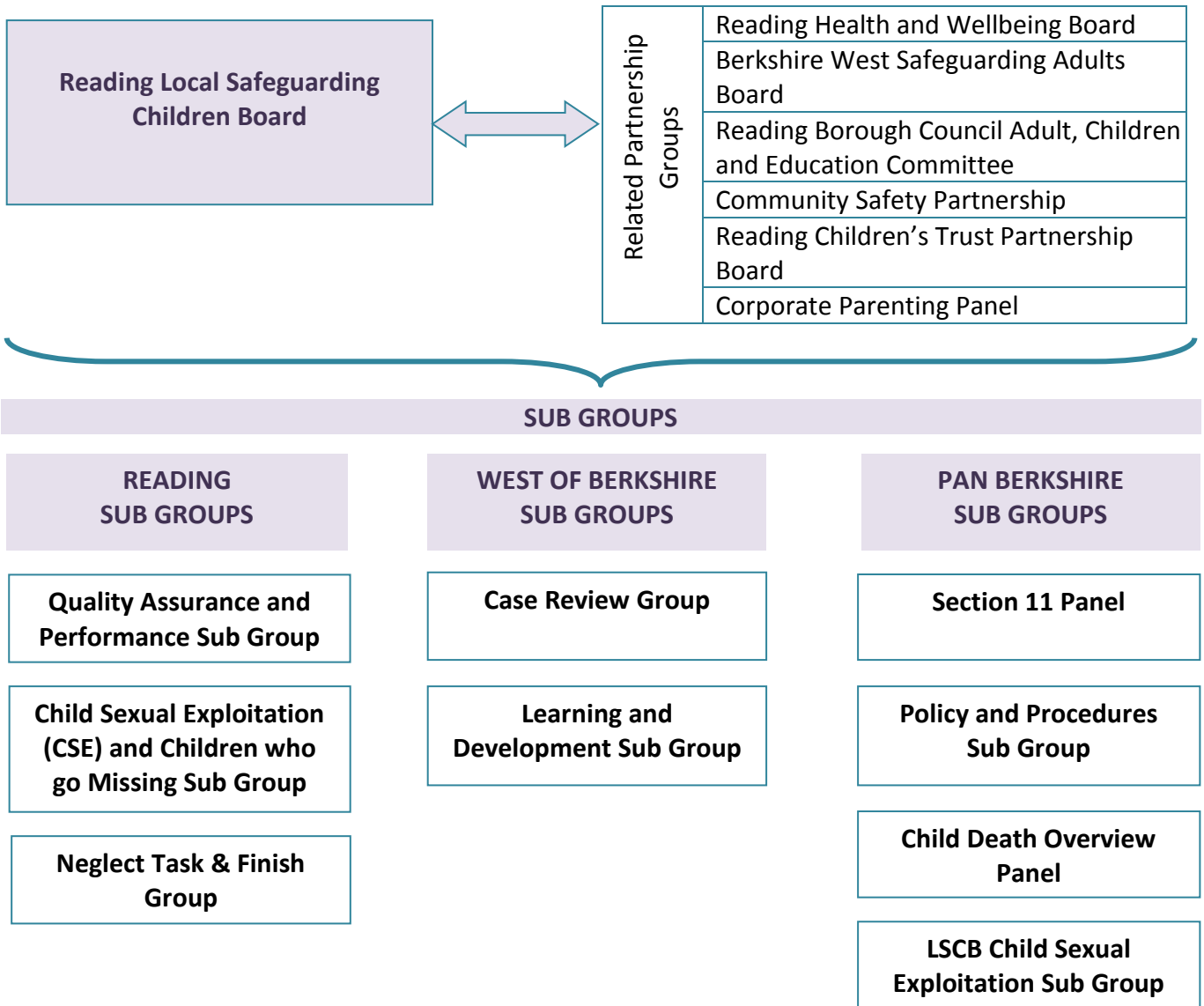
Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the key statutory body overseeing multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements across Reading. The work of the Board is governed by statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

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

- To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area; and
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Reading LSCB has an independent chair and members who are senior representatives from a range of agencies. The Board is collectively responsible for the strategic oversight of local safeguarding arrangements. It does this by leading, co-ordinating, challenging and monitoring the delivery of safeguarding practice by all agencies across Reading. Our current membership is listed in the appendices.

**Structure of Reading LSCB in 2017/18**



### Day to day, the LSCB:

- Undertakes multi-agency audits to review the effectiveness of services and make recommendations. Details of the audits from 2017/18 are given throughout this report.
- Reviews and analyses partnership data to ensure the LSCB understands the needs of the local population.
- Provides a multi-agency safeguarding training programme based on the needs of our local workforce.
- Ensures partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisations.
- Undertakes serious case reviews or partnership reviews of cases to ensure that we learn and improve services as a result.

Reading LSCB meets up to six times per year for standard Board meetings, where evidence on the delivery of work streams against priorities by the sub-groups is considered; performance and audit information is reviewed and emerging issues discussed.

### Joint working:

Reading is one of six unitary authorities and LSCBs in Berkshire and the Board works collaboratively with our neighbours to ensure a more joined up approach to safeguarding. This is particularly important where agencies deliver services across, and are represented on, a number of LSCB areas and in agreeing a common approach and response to specific safeguarding and child protection issues such as child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

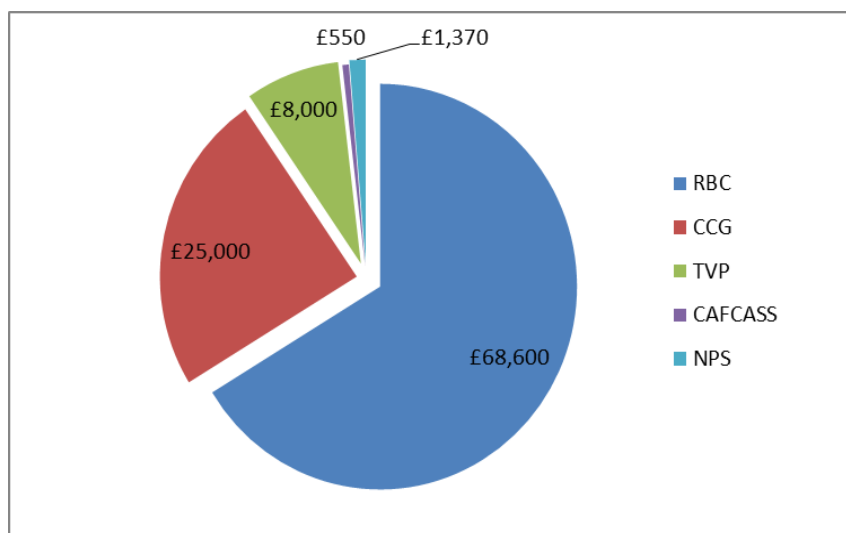
To ensure the best use of resources there are shared sub-groups operating either across the whole of the county or the west of Berkshire. Sub groups for quality assurance and performance, child sexual exploitation and neglect are Reading specific to maintain a local focus on current issues.

LSCB Business Managers and Chairs from across Berkshire meet regularly to share and discuss specific issues, protocols and developments, along with examples of good practice. Reading LSCB also works closely with a number of partnership boards in the area including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Reading Children’s Trust and the Berkshire West Adult Safeguarding Board.

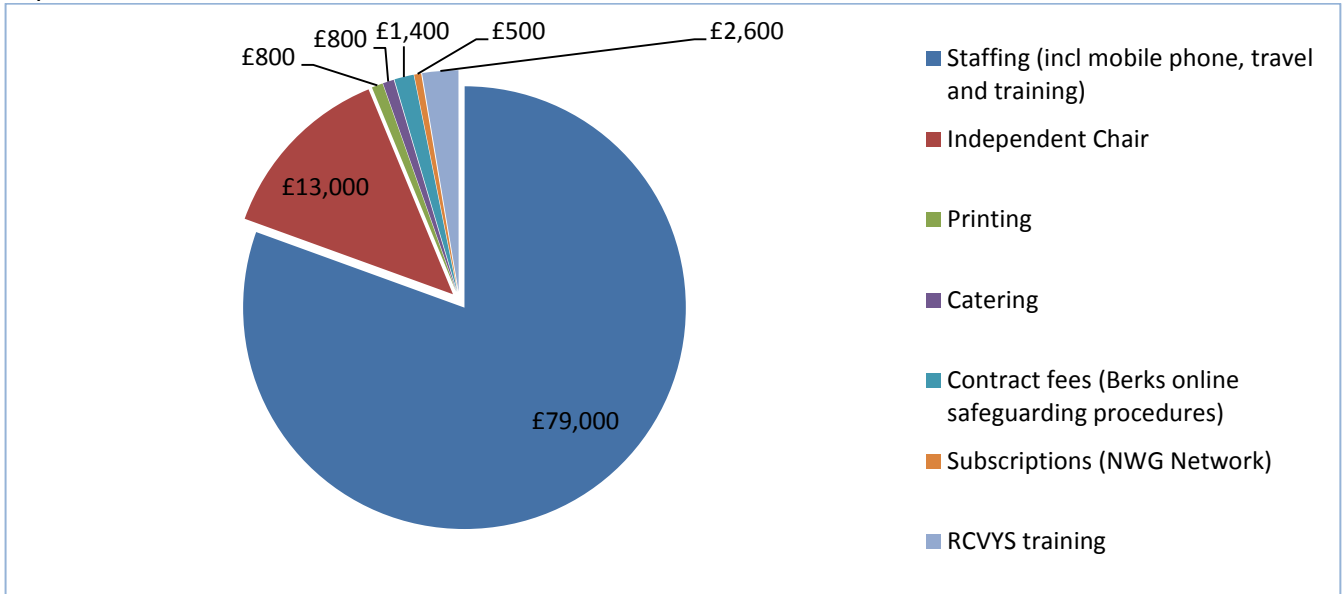
### Finance:

Partners in the Board financially contribute specifically to the LSCB to enable it to operate and undertake work against the priorities. The budget for Reading LSCB in 2017/18 was £103,520.

Contribution:



Expenditure:



There was one serious case review in progress in 2017/18. The costs for this SCR within 2017/18 amount to £7,871.50 and has been funded from an accrued carry forward from previous years, held separately as a contingency fund allocated for potential serious case reviews or partnership reviews. Two further SCRs and a partnership review were identified towards the end of 2017/18, and no costs have yet been allocated to these.

The provisional budget for 2018/19 has been reduced to £97,400 which potentially puts the costs for Reading LSCB in a deficit position. Mitigating actions have been put into place with the reduction of catering and printing, cancelling subscriptions and removal of some training provision, however partners are requested to note that the reducing position will impact on the ability of the LSCB to fulfil its statutory functions to previous levels.

**Ongoing Challenge/Actions:**

- The agreed budget for 2018/19 is significantly lower than previous years and has been highlighted as a risk.

### **Children's Services Improvement Board**

In May 2016 an Ofsted inspection found that RBC Children's Services were inadequate and the recommendations were developed into the Children's Services Improvement Plan. An independently Chaired Children's Services Improvement Board, which includes senior members of partner agencies alongside Children's Services, was created and continues to meet monthly to review and challenge progress against the Improvement Plan. The LSCB Chair has routinely reported to and attended this Board and the LSCB are involved in key actions and priorities within the Improvement Plan, specifically focussing on thresholds, child sexual exploitation and auditing activity.

Ofsted carried out three monitoring visits in 2017/18, each one focussing on a different area of the child's journey through services. The outcomes of these visits have varied and the letters/reports from Ofsted can be seen here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/reading>. . Notably, there were some positive messages regarding the new Children's Single Point of Access and Early Help Services from the visit in October 2017. However, the visit in February 2018, which focussed on children in need of help and protection was particularly challenging and reiterated that much work was still required to improve services for children in Reading. The report included some partnership difficulties (understanding of thresholds, involvement in partnership meetings such as core groups and conferences) and in response the LSCB Chair initiated a project by an independent author to look at these issues, identify the barriers and suggest some workable solutions led by the partners. This work is underway and will report in the autumn 2018.

### **Children's Single Point of Access**

Throughout 2016/2017, evidence through audits and inspections found that the existing referral pathways hindered appropriate referrals into Children's Services. As a result, in June 2017 the new Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) was launched, with the full support and input of LSCB partners. It is a single point of contact for all RBC early help and children's social care services, including disabled children and acts as a front door to manage all safeguarding referrals and determines the level of response that is offered. It includes representation from Children's Social Care, Police, Health, Early Help, Education, Youth Offending Service, Housing, Berkshire Women's Aid, Adult Services, Drug and Alcohol Team and Probation. Monitoring of this service, appropriateness of referrals and application of thresholds has been scrutinised by the LSCB through data reporting and audits (see page 10)

### **Sub Group Process Improvements**

Two LSCB sub groups have significantly improved their review processes during the year. The revised cases for consideration process for the West of Berkshire Case Review Group has ensured clear and timely documentation has been presented to the group for review. The group has undertaken regular reviews of national SCRs to identify themes, extract learning and action points to incorporate into local training (see page 29 for more information). The Pan Berkshire Policy and Procedures Sub Group have taken a pro-active role in identifying chapters that require review and ensuing updates are agreed and key local issues addressed. See page 22 for more information.

### **Move towards a shared Berkshire West Board.**

Over 2017/18 discussion progressed positively with regards to sharing a strategic LSCB between Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. This has been alongside closer working with our neighbouring Berkshire West LSCBs leading to shared auditing activity, a combined Business Plan for 2018/19 and improved communication via a shared newsletter. Further details regarding the merger and the implications of the new statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) can be found on page 34.



**One of our Lay Members, Anderson Connell, writes:**

We have come through another challenging year for Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board in meeting its statutory obligations and delivering on its key priorities in safeguarding the children of Reading. Despite the challenges, as Lay Members, we continued to uphold our remit of representing the public and in particular, our local Reading community. We have continued to challenge, question and offer alternative input to the work undertaken by the Board and its various sub groups in respect of safeguarding and listening to the voices of our local children.

Our interaction with the community over the past year may not have been as high profiled as we would've wished, but it has continued to steadily improve year on year. There is certainly a need for a higher level of engagement with the community and voluntary groups covering all aspects of the Board's activities and particularly on its key deliverable priorities.

As our LSCB moves to firm up its operations in a merged Berkshire West LSCB over the coming year, our role as Lay Members as well as that of other local Lay Members within this merged Board will need to be reviewed in terms of our public representation, and the commitment to our respective local communities. This will be essential to ensure our continuing effectiveness to challenge, question and offer alternative input to the work undertaken by Pan-Berkshire LSCB and its respective sub groups.

**Anderson Connell**  
**Lay Member**

Reading is a vibrant multi-cultural town: the second most ethnically diverse in the South East outside London. Reading is home to approximately 35,850 children and young people under the age of 18 years. This is 22% of the total population in the area. (ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2014).

### What are the needs? (Figures as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018)

Approx. 18% of children in Reading lived in low income families

61 children and young people were living with their families in B&B accommodation (Q4 17/18)

298 children and young people subject to Child Protection Plan (March 2018)

274 Looked After Children (March 2018)

611 children and young people identified as 'Children in Need' by Children's Services (March 2018)

32% of Care Leavers were NEET (March 18)

4 Cases of Female Genital Mutilation were identified in the Reading locality (Q3 17/18)

124 Victims were referred to Berkshire Women's Aid (Q4 17/18)

30 families were accepted as homeless (Q4 17/18)

14 Domestic Abuse perpetrators were referred to Berkshire Women's Aid (Q4 17/18)

54 Looked After Children have a Statement of Education, Health and Care Plan (March 2018)

38% of Looked after Children were placed 20 miles + from home

In March 2018, 7 children were assessed to be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation at levels - 1, 2 and 3

Between April 2017 and March 2018, 292 children were in the households discussed at MARAC

In Q4 17/18 there were 55 reported sexual offences against children aged between 0-17 years

140 CIN, 18 Looked After Children and 2 Children subject to CP Plans are open to the SEND Team (March 2018)

In Q4 17/18 there were 127 violent offences against children aged between 0-17 years

60% of Looked after Children were in stable placements (March 18)

There were 5 Child on Adult Domestic Abuse Incidents in Q2 17/18

Referrals to Tier 3 CAMHS Services: A&D – 5, ADHD – 28, ASD – 23 and 25 – Community Specialist Services (Q3 17/18)

94 referrals to Children's Social Care from the Royal Berkshire Hospital Emergency Department, 53 of them being CAMHS related (Q4 17/18)

2 known Privately Fostered Children

53 of cases referred to the MARAC were repeat cases

143 unique children were reported missing in Q4 17/18, of these 62 received a return home interview within 72 hours of returning home

118 Early Help Assessments were completed in Q4 17/18

5% of Children are subject to a Repeat CP Plan within 2 years

Of the 298 children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan 169 are under the category of Neglect

### Children's Single Point of Access:

In July 2017 Reading developed a 'one front door' which receives Child Protection referrals, safeguarding enquiries and requests for support for RBC Early Help services. This 'front door' is called the Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) and incorporates the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 (including the period prior to CSPoA) there were 10588 contacts into Children's Services. This included 2167 Early Help enquires, 2328 that progressed to a referral into Children's Social Care, 1416 were recorded as 'No Further Action', 2261 were given information and advice before closure and 826 were referred to other agencies.

### Auditing Activity:

In September 2017 a multi-agency audit was designed to look at contacts into CSPoA and in particular those contacts which result in 'No Further Action' (NFA). Between September 2017 and November 2017 there were 3037 contacts into the CSPoA. The highest referral reasons were Domestic Abuse (640), Behavioural Issues (410) and Family in Acute Stress (265).

Of the 3037 contacts 819 (27%) were repeat contacts into CSPoA within 3 months. 662 of those re-referrals had been NFA in the previous contact.

Specific recommendations arising from the learning in this audit are as follows:

- Purpose of CSPoA/Clarity of thresholds - Review the Universal Safeguarding training programme/s to ascertain information and messages about contacting CSPoA/front door.
- Undertake events with partner organisations to ensure clarity of understanding re thresholds and purpose of CSPoA and promote awareness of Service Guide and non RBC support organisations within the local community who undertake support for children, young people and families.
- Training, development and reflective supervision of CSPoA staff to include ensuring understanding of: Application of threshold for statutory assessment, appropriate referrals to Early Help, Advice and support to partners to provide feedback that supports systems learning.
- Review and relaunch of the LSCB Escalation process.

An action plan has been created and will be reviewed by the Quality and Performance sub group in September 2018, and monitored for progress.

### Early Help:

There are well-established Early Help Services across Reading which includes 4 children's centre hubs and 3 satellites delivering services to families across the area. These children's centres have good attendance rates across the clusters, particularly from targeted groups. 5460 children under 3 years old have used the Children's Centres from April 2017- March 2018.

A revised Early Help pathway was implemented in July 2017 which saw children's services providing the community and partners with a single point of access (CSPOA) for Early Help support and safeguarding concerns.

Since July 17 – March 2018, when the new CSPoA was 'live', 715 referrals have been made to RBC Early Help services from CSPoA. Whilst they would all be accepted Early Help assessments were completed on 409 of these cases. The remaining referrals would be for inclusion on the evidence based parenting

groups which Early Help deliver or where the family have declined our support following Early Help contact.

Early Help services also provide support for children, young people and families after a statutory intervention ie single assessment or following a CP or CiN plan – these are step down cases. Cases are also ‘stepped up’ to RBC Children Social Care (CSC) where required, with all step up referrals submitted through the CSPoA to ensure a consistency of thresholds and decision making. Early Help also joint work cases with CSC either when the case has stepped up to ensure consistency of worker or when the case is almost ready to step down to ensure a smooth handover.

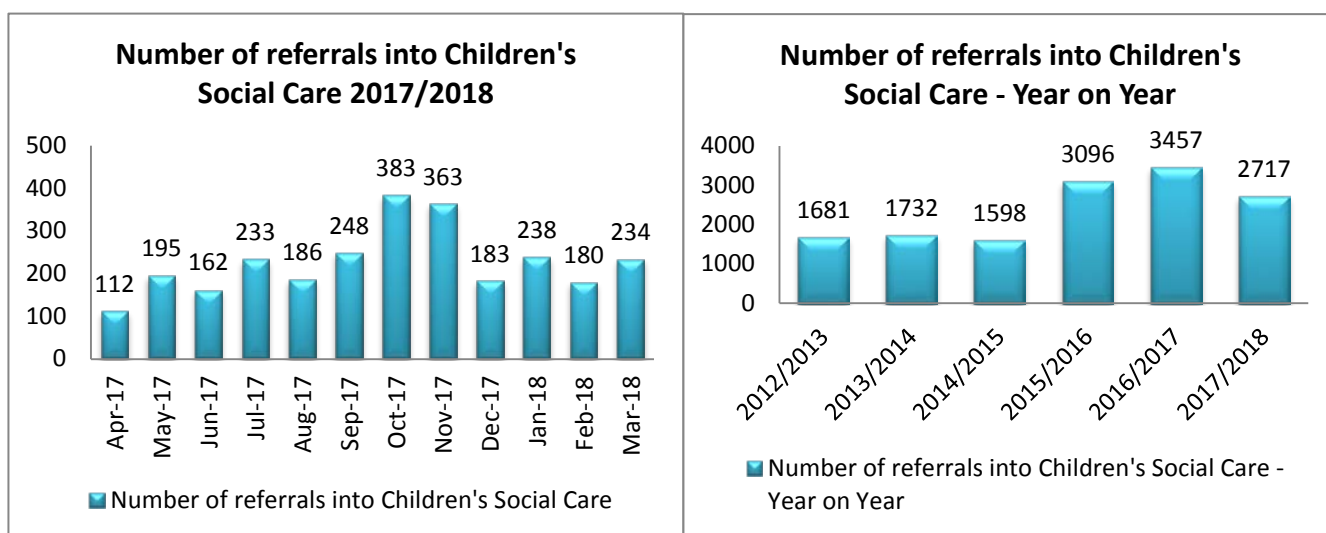
At the end of Q1 18/19 only 9% of cases closed to Early Help had been re-referred into social care within either a 3, 6 or 9 month period, which demonstrates that, for the vast majority of cases supported by Early help services, positive change is sustained.

The Children’s Action Team (CATs) are multi-professional teams that link into existing local resources to provide holistic family support, early intervention and prevention services for children 0 – 19 years old and their families. Specialist Youth Services also provide targeted support to the most vulnerable young people, such as those at risk of teenage pregnancy or sexual exploitation, young people with drug and alcohol misuse issues, young parents, young carers and LGBT young people.

For more vulnerable families where children have social care involvement, the Families for Change team support and work with these families and provide more intensive, high-level support alongside other agencies.

### Children’s Social Care:

There were a total of 2717 referrals to Children’s Social Care between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 this is an average of 226 referrals a month, with 2663 progressed to single assessment. The volume of referrals resulted in a rate per 10,000 of 890.8 for Reading with our Statistical Neighbours figure being 554.1 and National figure being 548.2 for 2016/17.



Thames Valley Police, Education and Health Services were the highest referrers in 2017/2018 with 1041, 493 and 408 referrals respectively.

The number of strategy discussions held within the period April 2017 to March 2018 was 1075 and during this period 667 section 47 enquiries (undertaken where there is reasonable cause to suspect that

a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) were initiated. In the same period in 2016/2017 1066 Section 47 enquiries were initiated.

The number of Initial Child Protection Case Conferences decreased in 2017-2018 with 418 children and young people considered. This is a reduction of 54 children and young people compared to the 2016/2017 figure. The total number of child protection plans and breakdown of category as of 31st March 2017 are:

CP Plan Category	Total Q4 17/18
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	106
<b>Neglect</b>	169
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	9
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	14
<b>Total</b>	298

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, there were 611 children categorised as In Need (rate per 10,000 child population is 436.6; Statistical Neighbours is 367.4 for 2016/2017). At the end of March 2017 92% of Reading children had CIN plans and 82% received CIN visits on time.

At 31st March 2018, there were 274 children and young people Looked After, an increase of 9 compared to the same point in 2017. This number represents 74.9 children per 10,000 population which is higher than both the National Average of 62 and our Statistical Neighbour average rate of 65.3 per 10,000.

The shortage of local placements in the Reading Borough Council area means that 38% of our Looked After Children are placed more than 20 miles away from their home address. While this may be for a positive reason such as children in adoptive placements or in specialist residential settings, we are working to reduce this figure to retain further stability in education provision, receive local health services and remain in contact with their family and community when safe to do so. It should be noted that placement stability for these young people remains high.

At the end of March 2018 there were 101 young people eligible for Leaving Care Services. 72% had a Pathway Plan which sees a decrease of 14% in from March 2017; however 93% were in suitable accommodation which is higher than the National Average of 81%.

As of March 2018, 32% of Care Leavers were not in suitable employment, education or training which is lower than the National Average of 40%.

**Priority 1: Neglect**

The number of children with a child protection plan for neglect out of the four categories (neglect; physical; sexual and emotional abuse) has been routinely above 50% for the last four years, which is above the national average. Research has shown the negative impact of living with neglect can have on children and young people's emotional and physical development and has lifelong consequences in terms of poor outcomes in educational achievement; mental health; employment etc.

It was recognised by the Board that there had been a lack of progress and pace in relation to neglect so to ensure ongoing progress in 2017/2018 the task and finish group set up in 2016/2017 continued to meet regularly.

The Neglect Task and Finish Group was tasked with identifying and developing ways to enhance agency response and professional knowledge and skills in identifying, responding to, and addressing neglect; from universal and early help services, to Child in Need and working with children subject to child protection plans.

**What has been delivered:**

The group initially focused on awareness raising documentation and the production of the Neglect strategy.

Initial work included:

- Focused review of the Thresholds document to ensure neglect signs and symptoms are clear. These updates were part of the revised documentation for 2016/17 and in line with the recommendation made by Ofsted as part of their inspection.
- Neglect leaflet produced, available on the LSCB website and disseminated out to LSCB organisations.
- A specific Neglect webpage for professionals was developed on the LSCB website.
- A Neglect briefing session was delivered to designated safeguarding leads in Schools, which highlighted the resources on the LSCB website.
- Confirmation received that neglect is included in all universal safeguarding training.

**Key areas that have been completed over the past year include:**

- Graded Care Profile 2 training – this key tool for use in neglect cases is being rolled out to all appropriate front line staff within Reading Children Services and key partner agencies. This training enables practitioners to identify the presence and nature of neglect within a family. This implementation will be supported by familiarisation sessions for staff that may not need to use the tool but should understand what the tool looks like and what the results mean. There will be a need to monitor and understand its impact over time.
- Revision of the Neglect Strategy to reflect the learning from the audit and JTAI, clearly identify key indicators and symptoms of neglect in line with our levels of need, plus a list of services available who offer support in relation to the impact of neglect, at the different levels of need. This strategy has been circulated to the LSCB, is available on the LSCB website and on the local Reading Borough Council Tri.x procedures.
- Chronology guidance has been written and reviewed by members of the task and finish group. The document is available on the LSCB website but further work is required to ensure this is widely disseminated.

## Audit Activity:

The 3 West of Berkshire LSCBs undertook joint multi-professional auditing, providing inter-agency review and analysis of records. Auditors considered agencies existing chronologies and answered open questions to identify learning points. The audit leads from each area then met to discuss findings and agree recommendations.

The key learning points that correlated across the 3 LSCBs were that:

- Reflective supervision can be a key contribution to identifying level of need and risk to the family. There is inconsistent access to reflective supervision across the partnership.
- The Children in Need cohort are the least likely to demonstrate improved outcomes, with evidence of drift and delay in cases.
- Short term thinking and planning is leading to professionals and families being unprepared to manage manifestations of trauma at different developmental stages of the child/young person.
- Combined chronologies are an effective tool in reviewing cases of chronic or long-term neglect.

The audit recommended:

- Chronologies are an effective tool in reviewing cases of chronic or long-term neglect.
- Assessment and planning of neglect cases needs to ensure multi-agency input and recognise long term impact of neglect.
- The LSCB need to raise awareness and promote importance of early identification and swift response to key risk factors.
- Reflective supervision can be a key contribution to identifying level of need and risk to the family. There is inconsistent access to reflective supervision across the partnership.

These recommendations were included in the Neglect Task and Finish Group work plan and the Reading LSCB Business Plan, with the completed actions reflected above.

In March 2018 the LSCB identified some key areas of work that still required progress which related to the GCP tool being implemented. It was proposed that the issues relating to neglect be held within the Strategic Learning & Development Group for Reading Children's Services. This is not an LSCB group but a Reading focussed group which will oversee practice development work including GCP2 and Signs of Safety. This group will provide information on progress into the LSCB Quality and Performance Sub Group, which will report into the main LSCB Board. These issues will be incorporated within the new LSCB Business Plan for 2018/2019. It was therefore proposed and agreed that the LSCB task and finish sub-group for Neglect was disbanded.

### Ongoing Challenge:

There are other areas of outstanding work which are wider than neglect and these are included in the Berkshire West LSCB Business Plan for 2018/19:

- Using multi-agency reflective supervision session to progress cases where there is a long-standing issue
- Continued dissemination of chronology guidance
- Understanding of thresholds via ongoing partnership audit and training

### Actions:

The group agreed that there are key ongoing actions that specifically focus on neglect:

- Continued implementation of the Graded Care Profile 2
- Monitoring and auditing of the GCP2 to evidence impact

## Priority 2: Domestic Abuse from a Child's Perspective

### **Purpose:**

In order to deliver high quality, effective and joined up services it is important for organisations to understand the experience of the child and their 'journey' through the system.

The focus for the Board in 2017/2018 was to:

- Raise awareness in local communities to include domestic abuse, Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse.
- Ensure a consistent and coordinated response by partners, particularly with medium risk cases.
- Provide consistent information for children and young people around healthy relationships.

### **What has been delivered:**

- The Domestic Abuse (DA) action plan has been refreshed and agreed at the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group.
- A standardised wording was agreed to enable web page production and dissemination of information.
- Thames Valley Police launched Operation Encompass which allows DA notifications to be shared directly with schools, once the school has signed up to an information sharing agreement. The majority of Reading Schools have signed the agreement enabling them to receive notifications when the Police attend the home of a child or young person following a domestic abuse incident. This provides more information and greater awareness of what is happening to that child in their home to monitor welfare and make safeguarding referrals if required. Schools have reported that they are happy the scheme exists. The scheme supports a more holistic view of the child's home life.
- The Domestic Abuse Training sub-group formed and revised the training programme to ensure effective and consistent training across the workforce –there has been 6 x level 1 DA courses and 2 x level 2 DA Courses (with around 20 delegates attending each session). There have also been a number of specific MARAC sessions.
- Domestic Abuse forums were successfully relaunched with 4 forums delivered each year. Forums are deliberately focused on operational issues impacting on front line staff, with a focused presentation on a specific topic followed by a wider discussion.

The work of the Board compliments that of the Community Safety Partnership's Domestic Abuse Strategy that was launched in 2015 which outlined the partnership intentions for a 3 year period. The strategy has now moved into its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and the key work identified for the final year is as follows:

- Encouraging people to seek support earlier - Improving information, education and prevention
- Providing the right response first time - Improving identification, encouraging disclosures and ensuring an appropriate immediate response.
- Having the right services available - Improving support to move from victim to survivor or to change offending behaviour
- Understanding of the challenges in our town - improving data analysis and community engagement.

What has been delivered via the strategy action plan:

- Introduced the DARIM (Domestic Abuse Repeat Incident Meeting). This meeting occurs just before the MARAC meetings every month and discusses medium risk, high volume cases. Cases are predominately referred by the police and the group takes a holistic problems solving approach intended to reduce the level of Domestic Abuse within the household.



- Specific complex needs workers funded through the PCC office, based at BWA, has provided additional support to those experiencing abuse that also have mental health and/ or substance misuse issues across the West of Berkshire.
- The holistic Family Choices programme and group work with Children and young people in the school setting. The number of referrals to all services reduced in Q2 of 2017/18 as there was a wind down of previous contracts, however the referrals numbers are expected to increase again now there is the certainty of the new contracts.

The table below shows the number of children and young people referrals received since the start of the strategy:

Year	Number of C&YP referral
14/15	174
15/16	214
16/17	404
17/18 (half year)*	142

Outcomes from the young people service, based on feedback from young people engaging with the service provision in Q2 are as follows:

89% demonstrated an understanding of improving safety	67% demonstrated modified behaviour around personal safety
67% demonstrated a better age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships	89% demonstrated a better age-appropriate understanding of domestic abuse
67% felt more able to resolve issues arising from incidents	78% exhibited increased confidence, empowerment and self-esteem
72% felt safer at home	72% felt there was less conflict at home
69% had more trust in their relationship with the parents	

**Ongoing Challenge:**

- Monitoring that all required staff access Domestic Abuse training
- Consistent and appropriate representation at the DARIM and MARAC meetings from Partner Agencies and clear escalation of cases when needed

**Actions:**

- Targeted Youth Service working with School Nurses, Community Alcohol Partnership and Solutions for Health to produce a PSHE offer for schools that include partners.
- Monitor the effectiveness and impact of Operation Encompass (DA Notifications for Schools).
- Review of local and national Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews to identify learning for partners across Berkshire West.
- Updating and monitoring the LSCB websites to promote consistent and accurate information.

### Priority 3: Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

The profile of needs on children and young people with SEND in Reading has changed over the last few years, along with the national changes which support provision being made to young people with the most complex needs up to the age of 25.

The current pattern of provision and services across Reading does not meet the needs of as many young people as we would like, which has resulted in a significant number of children and young people accessing provision outside of the Reading.

#### **What has been delivered:**

- A SEND Strategy has been developed and from this there is 4 work strands. Each of these strands has a working group, they are: Data/needs analysis, early intervention, utilising specialist resources and transition to adulthood. Progress against all strands has been made with the data strand identifying low numbers of children under 5 years old with Education, health and Care Plans. Through raising this with colleagues and partner agencies there has been over 30 requests for Education, Health and Care assessments.
- The transfer of statements to Education, Health and Care Plans needs was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 which was a significant achievement for the team.
- The timeliness of visits to children open to the team has significantly improved in quarter 4, with visits outside timescale being a rarity and closely monitored by the managers within the service.
- A SEND Strategy Board has been set up with representatives from all key partners, including Reading Families Forum who are monitoring the implementation of the strategy, and its progress.
- The involvement of parents/carers from the start in developing and implementing plans for children and young people with additional needs is essential. Reading Borough Council has been working closely with Reading Families Forum and the impact has been very positive to date.
- The Ofsted monitoring visit in February 2018 raised some concerns regarding the number of children in the young people's disability team were on child protection plans and the number of social workers in the team able to use augmentative communication methods. As a result the regularity of case supervision is now closely monitored ensuring safeguarding concerns are highlighted and managers within the team are now from a safeguarding background giving more robust oversight. There has also been investment in tools and training to improve communication with non-verbal children.
- There are continuing concerns over the number of exclusions of children and young people with special educational needs and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is now being monitored monthly by the Head of Service for Education and raised directly with schools.

#### **Auditing Activity**

An audit of section 47s in CYPDT was undertaken by the manager to investigate the low percentage resulting in child protection plans. This did not highlight any significant concerns.

There were 11 cases managed by CYPDT whereby strategy discussions were held and progressed to a section 47 child protection investigations. Of the 11, 6 cases progressed to ICPC where 2 cases became subject to Child Protection Plan and 4 were deemed that they could be appropriately safeguarded via a Child in Need Plan.

Whilst the level of conversion from strategy meeting or discussion to a child becoming subject a Child Protection Plan is comparatively low there is no evidence to suggest in the respective cases that the appropriate process and thresholds were not implemented correctly. There was evidence on all cases of management oversight and discussion of thresholds to determine the action required.

**Ongoing Challenge:**

- Work needs to be undertaken with the Youth Cabinet to increase representation of young people with SEND.
- The involvement of young people in the development and implementation of the strategy is vital to its success. This engagement is less developed than that with parents/carers, but there is now a Young People's Forum who has named themselves 'Special United'.
- Ryeish Green is a specialist respite provision for children with long term complex health needs and associated profound and multiple learning disabilities. In November 2017 they were at 44% staffing capacity which affected the services they were able to provide. Updates received in March 2018 highlighted that the Ryeish Green facility is closing in April 2018. The CCG are currently reviewing arrangements for children and young people who require this level of care.

**Actions:**

- Ryeish Green - Future arrangements for children needing this level of care are currently being redesigned by the CCG in full consultation with families and providers including schools. Further updates are expected to the Board.

In March 2018, the Board recognised the considerable work undertaken in partnership within this area, and the improvements made. It was therefore agreed that this was no longer a key priority for the Board, but regular updates on the progress of partnership work would be requested. However it was recognised that the Board is not completely assured of the provision of services for disabled children specifically, and further reports and auditing activity is required in this area.

## Priority 4: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing, including Trafficking, Slavery & Online Exploitation

The Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group develops the LSCB strategy and monitors the implementation of the action plan for safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation. The strategy and action plan are in line with statutory regulation and recommendations from the Office of the Children's Commissioner and other emerging best practice.

The group provides strategic co-ordination and oversight of partners' work, and multi-agency activity in this area of practice with the overall aim of reducing the risks to children and young people who persistently go missing and/or may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

From July 2018 the remit of this sub group has broadened to incorporate all forms of exploitation and will be referred to as Child Exploitation & Missing Strategic Sub Group

### Summary of Activity

In September 2017 Reading undertook a review and restructure of its CSE and Missing pathways and processes with a view to ensuring they were most effective.

SEMRAC (Sexual Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference) was becoming unmanageable due to the significant numbers of children who were being discussed each month. The meeting at that time would consider children who might be considered vulnerable to CSE, rather than focusing time and attention on those highest risk children where there was evidence, or strong suggestion, that they were being exploited.

SEMRAC would also discuss all children who had 3 missing episodes in the past 90 days and those who had been missing for over 24 hours. This was regardless of whether there was any exploitation or other significant concerns.

In an attempt to create a more efficient process the following changes were implemented:

- SEMRAC – continues to meet monthly however the SEMRAC triage meeting provides an opportunity for Chairs and Coordinator to review all new screening tools and ensure the right children are added to the agenda.
- MERG (Missing Evaluation & Review Group) established. This group meets weekly to ensure a rapid response to missing children. MERG will discuss all children who were reported missing in the previous week, ensure return interviews have been completed, check if strategy meetings are required or have been held, identify risks and appropriate support and identify any themes or trends.
- Disruption meetings – Thames Valley Police host this fortnightly group where all CSE intelligence submissions are reviewed and disruption activity is planned and monitored.
- CSE Champions continue to meet bi-monthly. The purpose of the meeting is to provide Champions with learning opportunities and meetings include invitations to guest speakers. Most recently a Primary Mental Health Worker attended and discussed Trauma Assessments.
- Training and development has been ongoing and in 2017/18 included Champions supporting the delivery of approximately 25 awareness workshops for over 150 Reading bus drivers. This was initiated from return interview intelligence where young people who had been missing late at night had reported they were 'just riding the buses'.

- Continued delivery of workshops for Reading taxi drivers. This is an ongoing programme that is now embedded in to the new and re-licensing process.
- The sub group will scrutinise data from MERG, missing episodes and return interviews and SEMRAC. Thames Valley Police also developed a local problem profile. Further work to be done on this data analysis.

### **Auditing Activity**

The Quality and Performance Sub Group undertook an audit to measure the effectiveness of wider agencies in identifying and responding to CSE concerns. The focus of the audit was:

- To get a sense of multi-agency awareness of CSE strategy and processes
- To understand agencies involvement following identification of concern
- To identify how agencies support the ongoing work to address CSE risk.

This audit built on previous CSE development and audit work that has been undertaken in Reading over recent years. The audit comprises two areas of activity:

- Approximately 150 surveys were sent to a number of partner agencies. Whilst the majority of those targeted were individual schools, others who were approached se included LSCB representatives, other LA area schools who educate Reading children, and Voluntary organisations.
- Some detailed case audits took place on a sample of recent referrals to SEMRAC. 9 cases were selected and Social Care records were explored, to identify partner agencies that were involved in the referral and risk management. Individuals who were identified and who worked with the young person following the identification of CSE concerns were contacted over the telephone and were asked a series of questions.

Findings included:

- Evidence of the embedding of some of the basic CSE practices
- General awareness of the issue of CSE and the appropriate action to take over cases of concern.
- Not all relevant practitioners have a clear understanding of the specific CSE risks and their role in managing the risk from the planning processes
- The use of the tool has increased over time and by different agencies but does not have sufficient multi-agency input in their completion
- Partner's involvement in targeted intervention work has been patchy.
- Partners have been able to access a variety of training to support their knowledge and practice
- There is a need for ongoing support of those implementing risk management plans and delivering interventions around CSE
- Practitioners are able to access a variety of support mechanisms and contacts in their work

An action plan was developed and incorporated into the work plan for the CSE and Missing Sub Group.

Key actions identified included:

- 7 point briefings to be disseminated to LSCB Partners – for sharing at team meetings at an operational level
- Amend the CSE training pathway offer to include differentiated levels of training
- LSCB Screening tool to be amended to include prompt for identifying other practitioners who have contributed
- Develop CSE direct work resource that can be accessed by practitioners delivering interventions
- Offer a number of workshops to involved practitioners to support good practice

**Ongoing Challenge:**

- Schools engagement – this is an area that has previously been escalated to the Board. Schools do not engage with CSE training or preventative education opportunities. Therefore they are not making appropriate referrals, not utilising the screening tool and likely to be missing vital early signs of vulnerability or indicators of exploitation. The Exploitation Team Manager will be working more closely with education to address this issue.

**Action:**

- From July 2018 the CSE & Missing Strategic Sub group will become the LSCB Exploitation & Missing Strategic Sub Group, broadening the remit to child criminal exploitation.
- Criminal Exploitation – this is a significant area for development. Work will include workforce development and implementation of robust pathways
- EMRAC (Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference) will be launched in September 2018. The purpose is to broaden the remit in to all forms of child exploitation. It has been agreed that EMRAC will be accountable and report in to the LSCB via the sub group.
- The Pan Berkshire Exploitation Leads are working together on a new Exploitation Screening and Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool.
- Missing prevention plans – further development of our work with the highest risk missing children.
- Prevention and education – significant work to be done in this area to ensure children, parents/carers and communities are educated on exploitation, risks and identification.
- eSafety – the sub group will need to ensure it includes eSafety in its work as this is a significant issue when it comes to risks and exploitation of children and often something that is overlooked.
- Champions – relaunch of the Champions as ‘Exploitation Champions’. Membership has declined and attendance at meetings and training is poor.

### Statutory Legislation

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that should be represented on LSCBs. Our current membership is listed in the appendices.

The core objectives of the LSCB are as set out in section 14(1) of the Children Act 2004 as follows:

- a) To co-ordinate 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,
- b) To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.

The role and function of the LSCB is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and include:

- Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including what to do if concerned about a child, thresholds for intervention, allegations management, safer recruitment and training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
- Communication and raising awareness of children's safeguarding
- Monitoring and evaluation the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners.
- Undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

A revised Working Together was published in July 2018. Further information can be found below.

### Policies and Procedures Sub Group (Pan Berkshire)

The purpose of the Pan-Berkshire Policy and Procedures subgroup is to ensure that:

- The Berkshire LSCBs develop and maintain high quality, up to date, safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures remain in line with key national policy and legislative changes.
- That Policy & procedures are consistently disseminated across the partnership and changes are communicated.

Clear policies and procedures are required across the county to ensure consistent safeguarding practice is maintained for the benefit of the Berkshire's children, young people and families.

#### Issues:

- The forward work programme and expectations on group members were not always clear.
- The relationship with the procedure provider had not been consistent, leading to difficulties in maintaining a cumbersome set of procedures and the sub group feeling disempowered.

### **Summary of activity/achievements:**

At the beginning of 2017 the group agreed to a more proactive approach and since then have worked to a robust programme of reviewing the policies and procedures. Sub group members remain willing to take responsibility for reviewing chapters outside of the schedule provided by Tri.x and in line with our local forward planner.

Of the current 58 policies and procedures listed in our manual, 38 have been reviewed by the group between April 2017 and March 2018, with another 10 reviewed in April 2018. These have been a mixture of small changes, as advised by Tri.x, and thorough reviews by group members which are then ratified at sub group meetings.

### **Outcomes and Impact:**

Positive outcomes from the current process:

- LSCB Boards and Senior Managers are assured that practitioners have access to procedures that are regularly updated with changes to statutory legislation and guidance, as well as regularly reviewed to ensure local accuracy and appropriateness.
- The sub-group feel personal ownership of our shared Berkshire procedures.
- Tri.x has used information gathered through the expertise of our sub-group to inform chapters circulated to other Boards' manuals.
- The LSCB Chairs have recognised a significant improvement in progressing the work of this group.

### **Ongoing Challenge:**

- **Commitment:** Along with the other pan Berkshire sub groups, the Policy and Procedures function requires significant time commitment to Chair and administer, plus the expectation that sub group members are willing not only to attend meetings but complete work outside of meetings.
- **Working Together 2018:** The proposed changes to statutory guidance will inevitably have a destabilising effect on the running of LSCBs over the next year. It is important that the three statutory partners responsible for setting up the future safeguarding arrangements recognise the positive outcomes of continuing to share key functions such as the responsibilities of this subgroup.
- **Contract:** The current 3 year contract with Signis terminates in August 2018. The Berkshire LSCBs have agreed to continue with the contract for the next three years, at the current annual charge (£1,400 per Local Authority area per year). The contract is being reviewed by the Reading Borough Council Legal Services prior to signature by the Chair on behalf of the sub group and all Berkshire LSCBs.

### **Action:**

- **Commitment** - The strategic leads from all partners are asked to be mindful of the additional time pressures this puts on their representatives.
- **Working Together 2018** - LSCBs are asked to recognise the strengths of continuing shared procedures manual, and the positive work of the sub-group, while discussions relating to the future safeguarding arrangements take place.
- **Contract** - Funding partners are asked to ensure that funding to the LSCB (and for future safeguarding arrangements) remain adequate to ensure the contract cost is split equally across the six areas.



Section 11 (s11) of the Children Act 2004 places a duty all organisations that provide services to children, or provide staff or volunteers to work with or care for children to make arrangements to ensure that they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The purpose of the Pan Berkshire s11 Panel subgroup is to:

- Oversee the s11 audit process for the 6 Local Authorities and all Berkshire wide statutory and voluntary organisations, which are of a significant size and scope, and to ensure the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements.
- Set clear expectations with those organisations and the LSCBs about the timeframe and process for submission of their self-assessment section 11 audits, and about their ongoing development towards compliance.
- Read and scrutinise the s11 returns of Pan Berkshire organisations on a three yearly audit cycle, in order to evaluate the agencies' compliance with s11 standards; to provide feedback and identify actions on areas which require more work to be compliant.
- Review the compliance of Pan Berkshire organisations and monitor progress on the actions identified in the s11 audits and provide support and challenge as needed.
- Provide feedback via a 6 monthly update and annual report on the 'effectiveness' of safeguarding arrangements and identify any emerging themes or recommendations to the Local Safeguarding Boards.

### **Summary of activity/achievements:**

- Wokingham LSCB has continued to host and provide administrative support for the panel. Since the last annual report there have been 4 panel meetings.
- The panel has been well supported by a strong and consistent core membership of experienced colleagues who are committed to the process.
- Our aim has been to operate a process which is able to provide a high level of challenge to organisations with a view to promoting good practice in safeguarding and to act as a critical friend. The feedback from presenters from the organisations has been generally positive and the panel members feel that the format and tool is robust.

### **The activity and output of the panel:**

We have updated the communication to organisations for the review process in an attempt to provide more guidance and request more evidence to support their self-assessment. The panel members have identified three cross cutting themes from the full audit process and have asked organisations to comment on them. They are;

- The voice of the child;
- Safeguarding in commissioning arrangements
- How safeguarding is promoted to both volunteers and well as paid staff.

In order to improve the scrutiny of the panel and to be more evidence focussed, the panel has asked for supporting information on whether the organisation has been involved in any Serious Case Reviews or Inspections and also to make a statement of compliance.

### **Themes:**

- The quality of returns for the review cycle has been varied and has worked best when organisations have completed an overview report including any changes to their organisation and have provided a local context to the information being provided.

- Panel members have noted that most organisations have been able to highlight good practice and to identify the areas needing further work. Returns have been enhanced by the inclusion of evidence such as data or findings from inspections.
- In all LA submissions, safer recruitment seems to be well embedded with paid employees but the knowledge about the safer recruitment and training of volunteers within larger organisations and LAs seems to be less evident.
- Asking organisations to comment on the child's voice/service user involvement has helped to keep this theme central to the audit process.
- The changing landscape of organisations, Local Authorities and Trust arrangements and commissioned services provides a new challenge when sending requests to organisations.

#### **Ongoing Challenge/Actions:**

- The panel has continued to grapple with the issue of the level of detail needed by the panel to be able to scrutinise and hold organisations to account.
- We have taken steps in the review process to request additional supporting information which was helpful when provided and we will review the need to continue to do this as we approach the next full cycle of reviews.
- Although there were some administrative challenges for Wokingham as host and administrator due to staff illness the administrator and chair worked together and all the panel meetings went ahead as planned.
- The lack of Children's Social Care representation on the panels over the last year; this has been escalated again and although we have had one manager join this year from Slough Children Trust, she is from the quality assurance service and not social care so the gap remains.
- Maintaining robust challenge. In order to strengthen the scrutiny of the s11 process, the panel will continue to scrutinise the evidence of compliance in each area of safeguarding and provide a challenge to organisations if the supporting evidence is not sufficient.

#### **Priorities:**

- To continue with the work plan and remain with four meetings per year.
- To fill gaps in membership to ensure a strong multi-agency representation.
- To start the new full 3 year review cycle in September 2018
- To seek and collate more detailed feedback from agencies on their experience when they submit s11 audits to the panel.
- To provide a 6-monthly update to the independent LSCB Chairs - Next report due October 2018.

### **Local Approach**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires all schools to fulfil their duties in safeguarding children. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015 and its subsequent updates provide schools with clear guidance on what these duties include. The local authority has the duty to ensure that schools and all other services work together and share information to establish safeguarding procedures that are clear and effective, and that all children are safe.

The LSCB undertake an annual audit of safeguarding procedures in schools through a self-evaluation toolkit being provided for schools to complete and to return. For 2017/18, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Audit was sent to 67 schools and 1 Alternative Provider in Reading. The returns have been analysed to identify issues to inform guidance and training for schools. The analysis has also been used to recommend changes in both the audit and arrangements for undertake the audit in future.

To improve the quality and accuracy of the audit the toolkit will be refined with statements being narrowed and focused on the key imperatives that ensure children are safe and that safeguarding is effective. This includes greater link to premises risk assessments, national priorities around County Lines and CSE.

Moving forward in 18/19 it is intended that the S.175 processes undertaken by the three LA areas will become aligned to enable a more consistent process and greater shared learning.

### Child Death Overview Panel (Pan Berkshire)

In 2008, Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs) were statutorily established in England under the aegis of LSCBs with the responsibility of reviewing the deaths of all children (0 to <18 years).

Within Berkshire there is a shared child death overview panel that works jointly for the 6 Unitary Authority Local Safeguarding Boards and is made up of a range of representatives from a range of organisations and professional areas of expertise. This process is undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident in Berkshire.

The purpose of the CDOP, (as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006) is to collect and analyse information about each child death with a view to:

- Identifying any changes that we can make or actions we can take that might help to prevent similar deaths in the future.
- Sharing this learning with colleagues regionally and nationally so that the findings will have a wider impact.

#### **Summary:**

The group has met regularly throughout the year with good partnership representation. There were 57 deaths within 2017/18 and as expected because of the low numbers involved, the year on year numbers fluctuate somewhat, with no clear trend observed over recent years. In 2017/18 CDOP has reviewed 52 cases, including some deaths notified in the previous year but not reviewed until this year. England & Wales data from 2016/2017 reported 76% of cases were reviewed within 12 months (currently we do not have the data from the Department of Health for 2017/2018): locally this year we achieved closure on 87% of cases within 12 months

In 2017-18 57% of actual deaths in year were in children under 1 year (and of reviewed deaths 60% were under 1 year). This is broadly consistent with the national figure (66%).

In the past year, 15 cases where there were unexpected deaths were reviewed. All have documented rapid response reviews. During the last seven years the proportion of unexpected deaths continues to fall although this year there was a small increase. Over 82% of all deaths occur within the hospital setting

Modifiable factors are defined as 'those, where, if actions could be taken through national or local interventions, the risk of future child deaths could be reduced'. Nationally the proportion of deaths which were assessed as having modifiable factors has remained unchanged at 27 per cent in 2016/2017. Locally in 2017/2018 of the cases reviewed 18% were considered to have modifiable factors including:

- Consanguinity
- Not following safe sleeping advice

- Management of health conditions
- Prop feeding
- Vaccination
- Parenting issues

#### **Achievements:**

- Discussions are thorough and considered of high quality.
- Improvements have been made to documentation to facilitate categorisation of deaths, identification of modifiable factors and recording of recommendations, which are circulated via a regular CDOP Newsletter and to LSCBs for their attention and action.
- The second multi-agency training day entitled “Saving Children’s Lives” was held on 7 March 2018 in Reading with 90+ people attending.
- The panel approved the purchase of eCDOP: an online recording, casework and reporting system for child deaths. eCDOP has already been adopted by more than 55 CDOPs nationally including our closest neighbours Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The full annual report will be published on the CDOP website:

<http://www.westberkslscb.org.uk/professionals-volunteers/cdop/>

#### **Priorities for 2017/18**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance was published this year (June 2018). Significant changes have been made to arrangements for Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Overview Panels. These require the Boards to amend their processes to reflect these changes and will include the transfer of responsibility for CDOP from the Department of Education to the Department of Health.
- The CDOP will continue to build on our successful work to date in supporting a reduction in mortality from SUDI and accidents.
- The panel is taking part in the LeDeR (Learning Disability Mortality Review) based at the University of Bristol. Deaths of children from 1st September 2017 (4 years and over) with learning disabilities will be notified to LeDeR and learning shared.

For 2018/2019 we will be carrying out thematic reviews on the following:

- Children with life limiting conditions and deteriorating neurological conditions
- Cases where safe sleep recommendations have not been followed.

#### **Learning and Development Sub Group (West of Berkshire)**

In order to fulfil its statutory functions under Regulation 5 an LSCB should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire LSCBs share a Learning and Development sub group whose purpose is to lead the strategic planning and oversee the operational delivery of Learning and Development (L&D). The aim of the group is to coordinate the provision of sufficient high-quality learning and development opportunities that are appropriate to local needs and have a positive impact on safeguarding outcomes; holding partner organisations to account for operational delivery and uptake.

### Summary of activity/achievements:

- **Work plan** - the L&D sub group produced a comprehensive work plan for 2017/18, which enabled progress of work and actions to be tracked.
- **Training Needs** - the annual West of Berkshire LSCB training programme has not always been needs led, often has not reflected Board priorities and whilst there have been some new subjects introduced, on the main the courses on offer has been the same for many years. It was felt that this has contributed to low attendance on some courses. In November 2017 the Chair sent out a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) form to all partners. Response was positive and included returns from Local Authorities, Health, Probation, Education and Voluntary sector. The TNA form also asked questions relating to preferred learning methods. The results were used to inform the commissioning of the new 2017/18 LSCB multi agency training programme. In addition to some new topics the new programme included more short courses and workshops, making it more accessible to members of the workforce that may previous not have utilised the programme on offer.
- **Training Audit** - In November 2018, alongside the TNA the Chair sent out a Training Audit form to all partners. Again response was positive. The audit provided assurance that adequate and appropriate safeguarding training is provided to staff and volunteers across the partnership.
- **LSCB Forum** - These 2 hour events take place quarterly and are hosted by each LA and Royal Berkshire Hospital in turn. Themes covered this year were Child Exploitation, Neglect, Fabricated and Induced Illness and Learning from Serious Case Reviews. Forums are well attended with an average of 54 delegates at each session.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - FGM training was identified as a gap. Therefore Reading Borough Council developed an online FGM course which was reviewed and signed off by members of the L&D group, and then shared across the area for the entire children's workforce to access.

### Impact Evaluation

The L&D group have agreed a standard Impact Evaluation template. This is emailed out to all delegates 3 months after attending an LSCB course. Questions on the evaluation form aim to identify the difference that attending the course has made to professional practice, whilst also identifying any organisational barriers to implementing learning. From July 2017 (3 months after the launch of the 2017/2018 programme) these impact evaluations were imbedded in to the L&D process for all LSCB courses in Reading and West Berkshire. Due to personnel changes and capacity in Wokingham impact evaluations are not sent out as standard.

Return rates are still poor and more work is to be done throughout 2018/19 to ensure that the impact of attendance of training, in particular the difference that this makes to children and families, is further developed. This requires management sign up and could include discussion about training attendance in supervision and appraisals.

The Chair has identified 2 Local Authorities where Ofsted commended their impact evaluation process so these LA's will be contacted and any good practice shared with the L&D group.

### Online Safeguarding Training

Our current provider has hosted our online Universal Safeguarding Children and Introduction to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) courses for a number of years. Unfortunately they announced that they were closing down in July 2018, meaning significant work was undertaken to identify an alternative .

The L&D Sub Group Chair, with colleagues from Reading Workforce Development Team, have written a new Universal Safeguarding level 1 course, which will be available through the Local Authority e-learning system. A generic open access login will be made available to allow the entire children's workforce to access the course for free. There is a number of good quality online CSE courses available free of charge which we will signpost people to.

**Ongoing Challenge:**

- Being unfunded and with limited resource for support, the sub-group relies on good will across partners and this can limit the ability to respond quickly to emerging needs or to adequately resource new ideas or work.

**Actions:**

- Membership of the sub-group needs to be strengthened with the TOR fully reflecting the requirement of members.
- Impact evaluation – this process needs to be strengthened and regular reports provided to the sub-group and Board to ensure courses are appropriate for Reading.
- Ensure that there is an accessible online training provision in place.

**Training for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS):**

The RCVYS (Reading Children Voluntary Youth Services) Safeguarding Training Programme 2017 continued the success of the programme from 2015 and 2016, and incorporated learning points and developments from the previous years. The 2017 programme aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Keep children safe by training front line workers in safeguarding awareness. Ensure that more Voluntary Sector organisations can refer appropriately into MASH or the Early Help Hub, and to the LADO.
- Increase Voluntary Sector organisations' ability to manage safeguarding in their organisation.
- Increase Voluntary Sector organisations' ability to recruit their staff and volunteers more safely.
- Increase trustees' awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities.

In total, 268 different people from 102 different Voluntary Sector organisations received safeguarding training to help them improve the way they keep children safe in Reading.

258 different people from 93 different organisations attended a training course which provided them with the tools and information to refer appropriately.

Unfortunately, funding cuts have meant that RCVYS had to close in March 2018. The training for 2018 onwards has passed to Reading Voluntary Action to deliver, however VCFS colleagues can continue to access all courses on the LSCB training programme.

**Case Review Group (West of Berkshire)**

The Case Review Group (CRG) receives and reviews all cases referred to the group where staff from any partner agency of the Safeguarding Children Boards in the West of Berkshire have identified potential learning. Recommendations are made to the LSCB Chair when the group agrees that the criteria has been met to undertake a serious case review (SCR) as defined in Working Together (2015).

**Summary of activity/achievements:**

The group has met regularly, with generally good representation. Membership has been regularly reviewed to try to ensure appropriate representation and commitment from all agencies.

The group has continued to review those cases referred in as potentially requiring either formal serious case review or other form of multi-agency consideration. In 2017/2018 seven cases were submitted, three from Reading, three from West Berkshire and one from Wokingham. Four cases were deemed to meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review. Reading has three ongoing SCRs and a partnership review, none of which concluded in 2017/18.

- Serious Case Review E16: A case of multi-generational inter-familial sexual abuse of children. Due to the scale of the case, this review has been ongoing since 2016, but is expected to publish within 2018/19.
- Serious Case Review G17: A case of non-accidental injury of a two week old baby, leading to life changing conditions, plus a subsequent injury when still less than a year old after originally being returned to the care of his mother after a court ruling. The review is currently on hold pending the conclusions of court processes but is expected to publish in 2018/19.
- Serious Case Review I17: A case of a 4 year old child who was admitted into hospital having ingested a potentially lethal dose of his sister's epilepsy medication. Using the SILP review methodology the review should publish early 2019.
- Partnership Review H17: A case of a family with five children where a large number of agencies had been involved since 2008 due to ongoing concerns around neglect. A locally agreed partnership review model will be used on this case and a learning report published early 2019.

The process for referring cases in for group discussion has been strengthened to ensure that any case causing concern regarding multi-agency working to a partner agency is able to be discussed by the group.

The group has undertaken regular review of national SCRs to identify themes, extract learning and action points to incorporate into local training. Opportunities to link work plans with other subgroups should continue to be developed, for example an LSCB Forum focussed exclusively on the learning from national SCRs.

The review of national SCRs has also lead to the sharing of notable cases with wider partnership groups, such as the Corporate Parenting Panel, for them to reflect on local learning.

#### **Ongoing Challenge:**

- SCRs and partnership reviews require significant time and people resource. There are an unprecedented number of reviews being undertaken in Berkshire West currently and partners are asked to be mindful of the additional pressure this puts on those involved in the review.
- Many of the themes in national SCRs, such as the vulnerability of infants, poor mental health in teenagers, impact of neglect and drift in multiagency management of child protection cases continue to be unchanged, and it is a challenge to all case review groups to try to extract relevant learning points, and disseminate them to the children's workforce in a way which supports professionals to protect and make effective change for children at risk of harm.
- Any cases to be reviewed by independent authors require significant funding and partners should be aware that this request could be made retrospectively and all partners must be aware of the cost implications.

#### **Actions:**

- The group will focus on identifying themes and concerns in national SCRs that resonate with local issues and challenge partners to provide assurances, or actions to improve local practice

The role of the Reading LSCB Quality Assurance and Performance Subgroup is to ensure there are sound mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and auditing safeguarding activity in place, particularly in relation to front line services, and ensuring that improvements are made to deliver better outcomes for children. Also, its role is to demonstrate that the LSCB is a 'learning partnership' that has a strong focus on impact and effectiveness, and when necessary, escalate any identified risk in order to provide assurance to the Board to enable them to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

This requires LSCB partners to challenge and scrutinise their peers and where assurances are not robust, to hold those partners to account. This is achieved through a supportive environment and a committed core group of QA partners.

### Auditing Activity

The key audits undertaken and reviewed by the group have been informed by the LSCB Business Plan priorities and incorporated throughout this report. The learning has been shared with Board members. These audits include:

- Neglect Audit (p 14)
- Section 47s in the children and Young People's Disability Team (p 17)
- CSE Audit (p 20)
- Multi-agency audit around effectiveness of application of thresholds/Single Point of Access (p 10)

In summary, general learning from these audits include:

- Lack of consistent use of assessment tools
- Inconsistent access to reflective supervision across the partnership
- Evidence of short term thinking and planning
- Inconsistent use of chronologies and the need for more multi-agency chronologies.
- Improved understanding of thresholds are required within Children's Services and the wider partnership

### LSCB Dataset

The group recognised that further work was required on the dataset to ensure it is more focused, information is clear and relevant, and that the narrative provides the background and meaning to the data. The group assigned a data owner to each of the priorities to provide an overarching view which improved the information received.

Moving forward the dashboard will be reviewed and updated to reflect the Journey of the Child through Children's Services. This will align with the datasets of West Berkshire and Wokingham, as part of our move to a merged Berkshire West LSCB.

### Ongoing Challenge:

- Completion of the audit programme for the year within agreed timescales is a challenge for all members of the sub group due to competing demands. Moving forward, it is essential that multi-agency auditing continues, but with a focus on quality and depth of audit work, as opposed to quantity and must be aligned with single agency auditing activity.
- Learning from audits must be more effectively disseminated and embedded into practice, however this must be completed at no cost and LSCB partners must take joint responsibility for this work. The action plans must be monitored through to completion.
- The data set continues to be improved in its design and presentation to enable it to assist the sub group in its scrutiny of the data and subsequent presentation to the Board, to achieve a document which has ease of use, which demonstrates trends and encourages partners to scrutinise and challenge the data where necessary.



### Berkshire West LSCB

The three LSCBs of West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham were created in 2006 and although they have shared the same Independent LSCB Chair for at least the last 8 years they have continued as distinct entities. Berkshire has 6 LSCBs and in the interest of efficiencies, size and the fact that there are a number of pan Berkshire agencies, have had shared sub groups (CDOP, Policies and Procedures and Section 11 and CSE) for a number of years. Additionally the Berkshire West LSCBs have shared their Learning and Development sub group and more recently a Case Review sub group.

With the support of partners, in September 2017 the three Local Authorities recruited an Independent LSCB Chair (Alex Walters) with the specific intention of merging the 3 West of Berkshire LSCBs.

In January 2018 the LSCB Independent Chair presented a proposal report at all three local LSCBs in January 2018. The Boards agreed that:

- The merger provides the opportunity to strengthen and co-design partnership safeguarding arrangements to further improve outcomes for children in the west of Berkshire.
- The merger provides the opportunity to create workable strategic arrangements that fit form to function and are proportionate, efficient, effective and adequately resourced.
- The merger provides the opportunity to reduce the current duplication and maximize efficiencies for a number of statutory partners.
- The merger provides the opportunity to share learning and enhanced reach across a wider geographical footprint.

The Boards also agreed that the merger will be led via a task and finish group comprised of representatives from the three main safeguarding partners and will provide a mechanism to take the work forward. It provides a forum for open discussion to ensure all areas/partners have their voices heard in achieving the merger of the 3 LSCBs. The Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to Chair and hosts the group, and it first met on 11th April. The group agreed that:

- Its purpose is to plan and oversee the merger of the 3 LSCBs over a 'transition' year (2018/19) so that by June 2019, we are in an informed position to publish our intentions to fulfil our safeguarding governance, oversight and assurance in line with new guidance (see below).
- The 3 LSCBs West of Berkshire will merge to one LSCB covering Berkshire West – to be known as Berkshire West LSCB. This will be a high level strategic partnership at the most senior level but will need to continue to reflect the current statutory requirements for membership.
- The first meeting of the newly merged board was scheduled for 12th July 2018, following final individual Board meetings in May 2018.
- The three separate LSCB budgets remain as they are for 2018/19. The three LSCBs have similar small budgets which primarily fund the LSCB staff, Independent Chair, Policies and Procedures.
- A number of workstreams have been identified including the effective continued involvement of the education and VCFS sectors, membership, governance and accountability, quality assurance and independent scrutiny.
- The Local sub groups- Quality and Performance and CSE - to continue in 18/19 to retain the key local focus but will look at ways to undertake some shared activity i.e. multi-agency auditing etc. In order to deliver this model, the role/oversight of the 3 local Quality Assurance and Performance sub groups would need to be widened to include receipt of reports of local arrangements.

In line with move to a shared Board, and the noted similarity in priority areas across the three LSCBs, the 2018/19 Business Plan has been written as a Berkshire West document, but with important local priorities listed separately. Berkshire West LSCB will focus on the areas below in its work in the coming year and take a leadership role in delivery and quality assurance of partnership work in these areas. The actions for each priority area are set out in the full Business Plan.

### Joint Berkshire West LSCB Priorities

#### Domestic Abuse

In order to deliver high quality, effective and joined up services it is important for organisations to understand the experience of the child and their 'journey' through the system

#### Exploitation

Seeking to ensure that all children and young people who are vulnerable to exploitation are identified and protected through the co-ordination and provision of effective multi-agency service provision

#### Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

There is a need to support the LSCBs throughout the planning and transition of the implementation of the new Working Together guidance and merge of the Berkshire West LSCB's

#### The Effectiveness of the LSCB

There are a number of issues that either cut across all priorities or form a key part of the work of the LSCB and the development of good practice within its partner agencies

### Berkshire West LSCB Locality Focused Priorities

#### WEST BERKSHIRE AND WOKINGHAM Early Help and Targeted Prevention

Seeking to support and understand the Early Help provisions, thresholds inclusive of step up and step down and the effectiveness of Early Help assessment, planning and intervention

#### READING

#### Supporting the Reading Children's Services Improvement Journey

There is a need for multi-agency support to Reading Children's Services to ensure that the improvements required can be achieved and sustained. Key elements of the Learning and Improvement Plan rely on partnership support for success.

In November 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a review of LSCBs and SCR and Child Death functions undertaken by Alan Wood from December to March 16. The subsequent legislation in response to the review is contained in the Children and Social Work Act, which received Royal Assent in May 2017. The DfE issued a consultation in October 2017 on the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, which is the statutory guidance supporting the legislation.

The primary aim is to create flexible new local safeguarding arrangements led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). It places a duty on those three partners to make arrangements to work together, and with any relevant agencies, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area. All three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements, including their funding. There will no longer be a statutory requirement to have an LSCB or an Independent LSCB Chair although the local safeguarding partners must ensure there is independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the local arrangements. There are a number of other proposals relating to SCRs and Child Death review arrangements.

To be effective, these local arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and wellbeing boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and MAPPAs.

Working Together 2018 was published in June 2018 and a timeline established for the safeguarding partners to agree their future arrangements. From 29th June 2018, local authority areas must begin their transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partner and child death review partner arrangements and the arrangements must be published by 29th June 2019, or at any time before the end of that period. Following publication of the arrangements, safeguarding partners have up to 3 months from the date of publication to implement the arrangements. The task and finish group originally set up to oversee the merger of the three LSCBs will now become the vehicle for these discussions locally.

To support the work of the task and finish group and the merged Berkshire West LSCB over the transition year, the LSCB Chair submitted a bid for DfE funding for the Early Adopter programme of new safeguarding arrangements and was one of 17 sites agreed nationally. This additional funding will provide capacity for a programme manager to lead and ensure all the work streams identified to support the merged Board can be accommodated. This includes work on Governance and accountability, independent scrutiny and quality assurance, work with the Education Sector and the VCFS to enable appropriate engagement with clear dissemination pathways, clarity on the functions and resources required of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Regular reporting to the DfE will be required and shared with Berkshire West LSCB. This information and progress will be fully captured in the LSCB annual report for 2018/19, which will be the final report under the current arrangements.

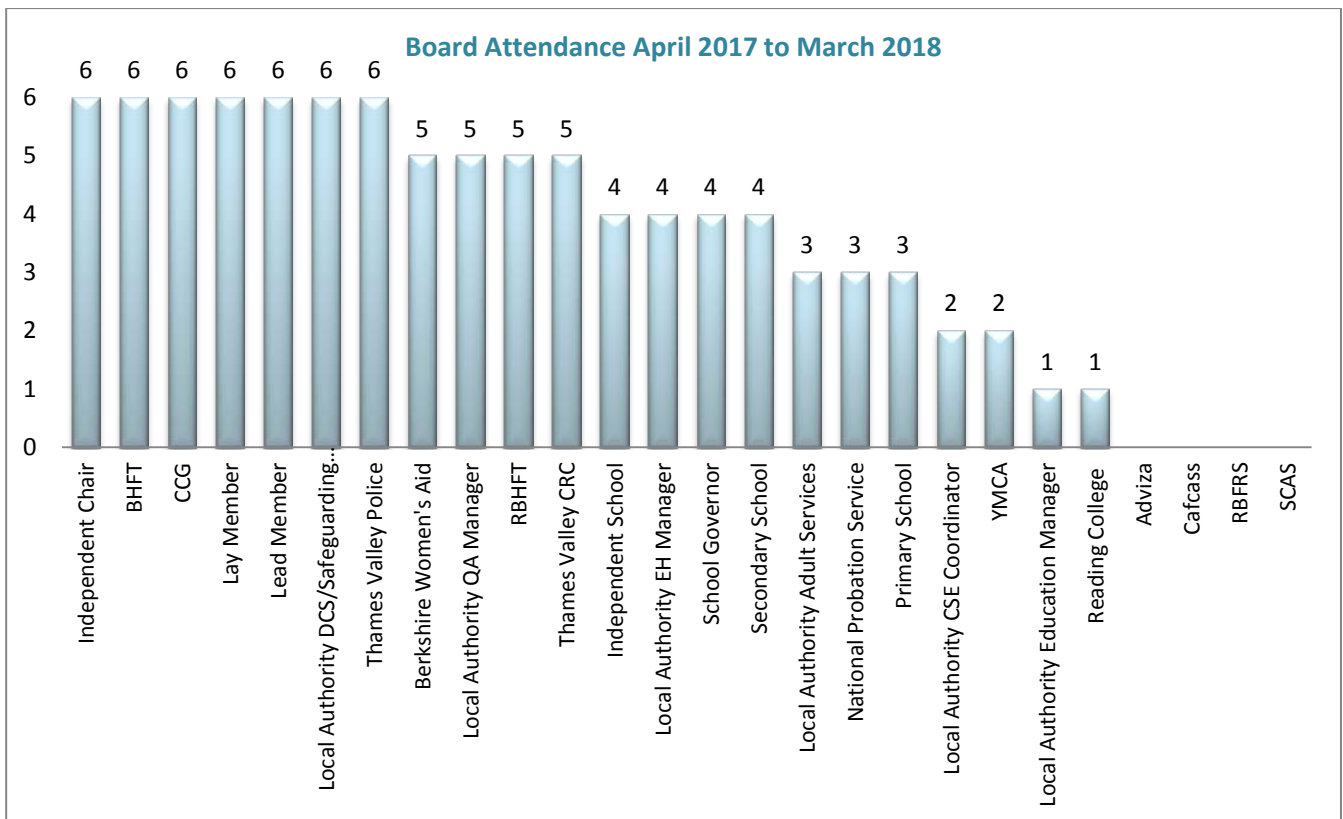
Name	Agency
Alex Walters	Independent LSCB Chair
Anderson Connell	Lay Member
Andrea Clare	Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Reviewing, RBC
Ann Marie Dodds/Kim Drake	Interim Director of Education, Adult and Children's Services, RBC
Anne Farley	Lay Member
Anthony Heselton	South Central Ambulance Service
Arlene Kersley	YMCA
Ashley Robson	Reading School
Becky Herron	LSCB Learning and Development Sub Group Chair
Bob Kenwick	School Governor
Christine Kattirzki	Kendrick School
Cllr Jan Gavin	Lead Member, Participant Observer
Debbie Simmons	Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Emma Robinson/Liz Terry	Berkshire Women's Aid
Hannah Powell/Geoff Davies	Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company
Jayne Reynolds/Jane Fowler	Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
John Ennis	National Probation Service
Katy Nesbitt/Shawn Fox	Activate Learning, Reading College
Kevin Gibbs	Cafcass
Kim Drake	Consultant for Safeguarding and Improvement, RBC
Kim Wilkins	Public Health, RBC
Liz Stead	Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Liz Warren	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services
Patricia Pease	Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust
Rachel Dent	Head Teacher, Abbey School (Independent School Rep)
Ruth Perry	Caversham Primary School
Sarah Hughes	Paediatric Consultant in Neurodisability, RBHFT
Sarah Tapliss	Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities, RBC
Stan Gilmour/Penny Jones	Thames Valley Police
Vicky Rhodes	Strategic Lead for Early Help, RBC

## Board Meeting Attendance

Reading LSCB members have a responsibility to attend all meetings and disseminate relevant information within their agency. Attendance at meetings is monitored to ensure attendance is regular and at an appropriate level.

Attendance in Reading is generally good and, if a member is unable to attend, they are asked to send a deputy to ensure all messages are disseminated to each agency. Any lack of agency attendance is addressed directly by the Business Manager or escalated to the Chair.

Attendance figures by agency, based on six meetings held from April 2017 to March 2018, are shown below.



## Reading LSCB Board Information

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Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards Child  
Protection Procedures available on  
line: <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

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If you have any queries about the report please contact Esther Blake at the contact details above. If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please contact Esther Blake.