

Worcestershire County Council

**item 5 – Worcestershire Safeguarding
Children Board Annual Report 2016-17
(marked to follow)**

Agenda

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Wednesday, 13 September 2017, 10.00 am
County Hall, Worcester**

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Democratic Services on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing democraticservices@worcestershire.gov.uk

DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
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You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 13 September 2017, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Mrs F M Oborski (Chairman), Mrs J A Potter (Vice Chairman), Ms P Agar, Mr R W Banks, Ms R L Dent, Ms P A Hill, Mr S M Mackay, Ms T L Onslow and Ms S A Webb

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Bryan Allbut (Church of England)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Ms C Richardson (Parent Governor) and Vacancy

Agenda

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [here](#)

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

WORCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

Summary

1. Derek Benson, Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), has been invited to present the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17 (attached as Appendix 1).

Background

2. The Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for publishing an annual report that provides a public assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Worcestershire. The report also recognises achievements and is realistic about the challenges that remain.

3. The report is made publicly available through publication on the Board's website. In addition, it is formally presented to the Chief Executive and Leader of the County Council, to the Health and Well-Being Board and to Cabinet. It is sent to West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner, to the respective Chairmen of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Communities Board, and it is circulated to lead officers in key partner agencies.

4. In August 2016 Derek Benson, Independent Chair, informed the Panel that WSCB could not be assured of the effectiveness of local arrangements in respect of children in the child protection system. The quality and consistency of frontline basic practice needed improvement and more work was required in particular areas to ensure children are safe in Worcestershire.

Key points from the WSCB Annual Report 2016/17

5. During 2016/17 Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board had a particular focus on a number of priorities including:

- Healthy relationships and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Early Help
- Integrated Family Front Door and Thresholds
- Young people at the point of transition (with a specific focus on sexual exploitation)
- Children with disabilities
- Strengthening of the Board's Learning and Improvement Framework

6. By the end of March 2017, the Board had fully implemented its two year Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-17 now replaced by a refreshed Strategy for 2017-19. In the main partner agencies have continued to demonstrate a high level of engagement in development of the strategies and in implementation of the action plans, however in its review of the Local Safeguarding Board in October 2016 Ofsted noted that the number of changes in strategic leads, namely Children's Social Care and West Mercia Police, had impacted on pace in the area of CSE. Assurance has now been provided to the Board that there will be greater consistency of personnel going forward. A specific piece of work undertaken by the Board during the year was the implementation of the 'Whole School Approach to Healthy Relationships' framework and the Board will continue to seek assurance from schools regarding embedding of the framework and its impact. A self-assessment audit undertaken during the year indicated that the majority of agencies were meeting the CSE standards referenced, but where this was not the case action plans were in place to address any deficits. Whilst CSE remains a priority it is not yet possible for the Board to be fully assured about the ability of the system to respond robustly and consistently to CSE concerns in Worcestershire.

7. Throughout the year the Board monitored the early help offer in Worcestershire, paying particular attention to feedback from practitioners who have continued to express confusion about the early help offer and the pathway for accessing early support for children and families. Targeted interventions by commissioned early help providers continue to receive positive evaluations with low levels of re-referrals, albeit this relates to the much smaller cohort of children and families than those who need to access early help support from universal services. The number of recorded Early Help Assessments significantly dropped throughout 2016/17 whilst the number of referrals to the Family Front Door continued to rise. There remain questions about: the capacity of commissioned services to meet demand, the role of universal services in delivery of early help across the wider partnership and the inability of the system to effectively measure early help activity. The Board therefore concluded that there remain serious questions about the effectiveness of the local early help arrangements.

8. This year has continued to see further pressure on the Children's Social Care system with increases in referrals, numbers of looked after children and numbers of children with child protection plans. Throughout the year the Board received updates on the move to create a single 'front door' to manage all contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care. Following their inspection in October 2016 Ofsted inspectors expressed concern about decision making and management oversight in the Family Front Door. Inspectors also expressed concern that referring agencies were not routinely using the Levels of Need (Thresholds) Guidance leading to a high volume of inappropriate referrals and thresholds were not always being applied consistently during the daily triage process. The Board was already aware that the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance did not adequately address the early help pathway and that this was a gap. The Levels of Need (Thresholds) Guidance has since been significantly redrafted and will be reviewed again during 2017/18 to reflect the early help pathway when approved by the Board.

9. The Single Inspection of the Local Authority Children's Services undertaken in October 2016 by Ofsted gave services for children and young people in Worcestershire an overall grading of inadequate. The Board has been sighted on the Local Authority Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan (SIP) which sets out how the required improvements will be achieved. The Board will continue to receive updates from the Director of Children's Services and the WSCB Independent Chair who sits on the Service Improvement Board.

10. In last year's annual report the Board identified specific risks in relation to:

- a) Completion within time scale of return interviews when children go missing (this has improved in that 48% of return interviews are now completed within time scale, however this still needs to improve and the Board's own audit of return interviews suggested that the quality of interviews is variable)
- b) Waiting times for treatment from CAMHS (this has improved with wait times and numbers of children on waiting lists both having reduced in 2016/17)
- c) Completion rates for Looked After Children (LAC) health reviews (the percentage of looked after children with an up to date health assessment has decreased this year from 72% to 62%)

Whilst some improvements have been noted during the year, performance in other areas of practice has declined. The Board is sighted on the Local Authority Children's Services Service Improvement Plan dashboard and will continue to monitor performance against targets over the coming year as part of its scrutiny role.

11. Six cases were presented during the year for consideration of a Serious Case Review but none met the threshold, decisions all subsequently endorsed by Ofsted. One reflective case review was commissioned and presented to the Board in March 2017. Key messages from learning will be communicated to the workforce during 2017/18.

12. During the year the Child Death Overview Panel in Worcestershire reviewed 36 deaths and noted that modifiable factors were present in 15 of them. Cumulative data in respect of babies whose deaths have been classified as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) suggests that parental smoking and co-sleeping are often significant factors. An audit undertaken in February 2017 of babies born between November and December 2016 found that in all cases a safer sleeping risk assessment form had been completed with parents, and where risks had been identified risk management plans were evident in 80% of cases which provides some assurance. In the deaths of unborn or extremely young babies factors such as maternal obesity, smoking, alcohol and other environmental factors are often present in some combination.

13. The Board is pleased to note some evidence of practice improvements from its repeat Multi Agency Case File Audits (MACFAs), however multi-agency practice was not yet found to be consistently good and young people are not yet routinely being screened for risk of sexual exploitation.

14. Last year's annual report noted that the Board's bi-annual Section 11 Audit indicated good compliance by partner agencies with their safeguarding duties and a strong commitment across the partnership to safeguarding children. In September 2016 a dip sample was undertaken of agencies' ability to provide evidence to support their reported position in respect of using service user feedback to develop services. It was found that some original self-assessments had been over-optimistic and so in future Section 11 Audits the Board will request supportive evidence as part of the original audit process.

Conclusion

15. The Board has concluded that at a strategic level there is a strong commitment to safeguarding children in Worcestershire. It has also received assurances that safeguarding arrangements are in place in most key agencies, however systemic failings in Children's Social Care leave children and young people vulnerable to harm.

16. Whilst demand for services continues to grow further assurance is required as to the effectiveness of the wider early help offer and of practitioners' understanding of their own agency's role in providing early help to the families with whom they work. The Board also needs to be assured that practitioners understand the thresholds for accessing statutory services from Children's Social Care. The Board has a key role to play in supporting practitioners to develop their understanding of early help and thresholds and both will be priorities in the coming year.

17. As of the end of March 2017 the Board had received assurance that strategies were in place to improve frontline practice, however it cannot yet be assured about the impact of these and therefore the child protection system remains a risk. The Board recognises the scale and challenge facing the Local Authority and remains committed to working with all partners to bring about the necessary change required to improve outcomes for children in Worcestershire.

18. Assurance will continue to be sought from partner agencies during the coming year as outlined in the body of this report.

Purpose of the Meeting

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report
- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2016/17



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Foreword by Independent Chair

The Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's (WSCB) Annual Report for 2016/17 provides a summary and assessment of the effectiveness of child safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of children in Worcestershire.

The purpose of a Local Safeguarding Children Board is to co-ordinate safeguarding arrangements across agencies and to ensure these are effective. In my view, this has never been more important as changes in legislation and associated guidance will require an increased commitment to partnership working based on mutual trust, respect and inter-dependencies. The Annual Report covers the local and national context, governance and accountability arrangements, priorities, achievements and learning, and concludes with a formal summary statement about the sufficiency of arrangements to ensure children are safe in Worcestershire.

The continued financial pressure experienced by partner agencies has again reaffirmed the importance of working together effectively. But whilst the WSCB is sighted on the impact of such constraints, it remains vitally important that the Board holds those partners to account in terms of their commitment to collaboration and cooperation.

As in previous years the Report will be made publicly available on the Board's website, and will be formally submitted to the Chief Executive and Leader of the County Council. I will present it to the County Council's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel, to the Health and Well-Being Board and to the Council's Cabinet. It will also be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner and to key partnerships. Board members will ensure that their own agencies and relevant Boards have access to the Report. The Report is therefore an important mechanism for providing commentary and assessment to key governance bodies about the importance and effectiveness of safeguarding children in Worcestershire.

Whilst it is the responsibility of the WSCB to maintain a monitoring and scrutiny role across the partnership, in 2016/17 there has been a particular focus on Children's Social Care. Concerns of Board members and practitioners regarding the Family Front Door, the application of Thresholds and standards of practice were confirmed in the findings of the Ofsted inspection conducted in late 2016. These issues remain of concern going into 2017/18.

As well as working with Children's Social Care, other areas will also continue to receive significant attention; Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the 'lived experience' of the child will be priorities for the Board in 2017/18.

This report provides an account of the work done by the WSCB, which when reviewed by Ofsted alongside their inspection of Children's Social Care, was assessed as 'Requiring improvement to be classified as good'. An Action Plan was developed and work immediately commenced to deliver improvements that will provide better outcomes for the children of Worcestershire

The Board, its members and the people they represent remain fully committed to safeguarding children and young people in Worcestershire. I would wish to thank each and every one for their efforts.

Derek Benson

Independent Chair: August 2017

Executive Summary

1. Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board continues to meet its statutory responsibilities and governance arrangements are clear (Ofsted, 2017). Changes during the year to its structure have ensured that Serious Case Reviews and Child Sexual Exploitation are appropriately positioned to provide Board members with direct line of sight.
2. The Board's activities during the year focussed on its priorities:
 - Young people at the point of transition
 - Children with disabilities
 - Healthy relationships and Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Integrated Family Front Door and Thresholds
 - Early Help
 - Strengthening of the Learning and Improvement Framework
3. The Single Inspection of the Local Authority Children's Services undertaken by Ofsted in October 2016 gave services for children and young people in Worcestershire an overall grade of 'Inadequate'. The Local Authority Children's Services Service Improvement Plan (SIP) sets out how the required improvements are to be achieved. The Board will continue to receive updates from the Director of Children's Services and the WSCB Independent Chair who sits on the Service Improvement Board.
4. Multi-Agency Case File Audits (MACFAs) undertaken by the Board during the year noted improvements in some areas of practice (where the audit had been repeated) and identified examples of very good practice. The main conclusion, however, was the lack of consistently good practice and the response from partner agencies in a significant number of the cases audited either required improvement or had been inadequate.
5. Six cases were presented for consideration of a serious case review but none met the threshold, decisions all subsequently endorsed by Ofsted. One reflective case review was commissioned and the report was presented to the Board in March 2017. Learning and Improvement Briefings form part of the Board's Communications Strategy and are highly regarded by practitioners, as is multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the Board. Key messages from learning were communicated to the workforce using a range of media, however senior managers are now also now being asked to apply learning to their own setting and to put in place agency-specific action plans where appropriate to ensure that practice improves.
6. Whilst at a strategic level the Board can demonstrate that there is a strong commitment to safeguarding children in Worcestershire, and assurances have been provided that safeguarding arrangements are in place in all key agencies, systemic failings across Children's Social Care leave children and young people vulnerable to harm. In addition, further assurance is required as to the effectiveness of the wider early help offer, and partners' understanding of the early help pathway and the threshold for statutory intervention by Children's Social Care. The Board has a key role to play in supporting practitioners to develop their understanding of early help and thresholds and both will be priorities in the coming year. The Board recognises the scale and challenge facing the local authority and remains committed to working with all partners to bring about the necessary change required to improve outcomes for children in Worcestershire.

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Annual Report

Statutory legislation requires the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Worcestershire. This report relates to the preceding financial year. The report will be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the chair of the Health and Well-Being Board.

The report aims to provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action.

1.2 Role of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how partner organisations in the local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board by 1 April 2006.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board has been in existence for a number of years now and is continually developing in order to fulfil its role within the context of a constantly changing and challenging safeguarding landscape. WSCB complies with the requirements for Local Safeguarding Children Boards set out in the LSCB Regulations and in [Working Together \(2015\)](#)

1.3 Vision Statement

All children and young people in Worcestershire are safe and thriving

1.4 Mission Statement

Working in partnership to keep all children and young people safe and thriving within an environment where safeguarding is everybody's business and intervention and support is timely and right for individuals and families.

1.5 WSCB Values

- Respect for children, young people and their families
- Making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people
- Working together in partnership
- Collective and mutual challenge between partners to keep children safe
- Involving communities at a local level
- Valuing and responding to diversity

1.6 WSCB Membership

Membership of LSCB is statutory for a number of partners as outlined in [Working Together \(2015\)](#). A full list of member partner agencies can be found in Appendix 3. Points to note include vacancies for two Lay members and an Early Years representative (as of March 2017).

The Board's end of year financial statement for 2016/17 is located in Appendix 4.

The Board's structure is located in Appendix 5.

1.7 Ofsted Review of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

As part of the Ofsted single inspection of the local authority undertaken in October 2016 there was a review of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

The executive summary of the report published in January 2017 was:

'The Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) requires improvement to be good. The board is meeting its statutory responsibilities, and governance arrangements are clear. The independent chair brings appropriate and persistent challenge across the partnership. The WSCB annual report provides an honest appraisal of the quality of services available to children. The LSCB cannot be assured that children in Worcestershire are effectively safeguarded.

The restructure of the WSCB and the appointment of the new chair in 2016 have begun to strengthen engagement, following a period of inconsistent attendance by some partners and gaps in sub-group chairs during 2015–16. The board's interface with the family justice board and the local authority corporate parenting board still needs to be formalised.

The board has detailed multi-agency performance information, supported by a coherent structure, to monitor the effectiveness of frontline practice. Audit activity provides rich information, but needs strengthening to reach clearer findings to enhance the board's ability to evaluate practice, progress and impact. Further work is required to ensure that the board has access to all information that it needs about children at risk of sexual exploitation, to enable a coherent and informed approach.

The board has reviewed and reissued the levels of need guidance, circulating it widely and providing training to over 400 partners. Early help pathways are not yet clear enough, and there is anxiety across the partnership regarding the local authority's plan to reduce commissioned early help support.

The board takes a rigorous approach to monitoring the effectiveness of multi-agency training, which is informed by needs analyses. There is a structured learning and improvement framework, including learning from reviews, child deaths and serious case reviews (SCRs). Findings are disseminated and inform the development of multi-agency training. Case review action plans require more rigorous monitoring to ensure full partnership compliance.

The board has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of multi-agency training and has assurance that programmes effectively target training needs. Staff value the training provided. However, the board is less able to demonstrate that the work that it does to disseminate learning or the training that it coordinates are yet resulting in changes to practice or improved service delivery for children.'

The recommendations were:

- The board should ensure that there is an agreed governance structure in place for an effective interface with the family justice and the corporate parenting boards.
- The board should strengthen its oversight of the response to child sexual exploitation practice, by ensuring that the operational sub-group is represented by all agencies that are able to offer a sufficient level of oversight and analysis.
- The board should strengthen its case file audit programme so that findings provide a clear baseline from which to evaluate practice and measure impact.
- The board should ensure rigorous monitoring of action plans, including single- agency action plans that arise from critical incident reviews.

At the Board meeting in March 2017 the WSCB Ofsted Action Plan was approved and this is being monitored by the quarterly meeting of sub group chairs.

1.8 Wood Review and Children and Social Work Act 2017

In December 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) announced it had commissioned a review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards to be led by Alan Wood. The Government response to the Wood Review indicated a change in thinking regarding the future of LSCBs and proposed the following new arrangements:

- A new statutory framework, which will set out clear requirements, but give local partners the freedom to decide how they operate to improve outcomes for children
- The 3 key partners (local authorities, the police and the health) will be required to make and publish plans showing how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area
- All local organisations involved in the protection of children will be expected to cooperate with the new multi-agency arrangements
- LSCBs will lose their statutory status and local areas will be able to choose whether they retain their LSCB, or a version of it, to deliver the requirements of the statutory framework
- Legislation and statutory guidance will be published to underpin the new framework

Publication of the revised version of the statutory guidance 'Working Together' is awaited. It is anticipated that it will be available for consultation during the Autumn of 2017 with a view to publication early in 2018. It will then be possible for discussions to take place about the requirements of the statutory framework and the most appropriate way for these requirements to be delivered locally, to include a debate about whether Worcestershire retains its safeguarding children board or moves towards an alternative model.

Summary

This report aims to provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them, as well as other proposals for action.

The Board has taken full account of the key relevant partners' strategies in its own planning processes. The protocol with the Health and Well Being Board and Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board has been reviewed and now incorporates the Safer Communities Board.

Partners continue to fund the Board in order that it can fulfil its statutory responsibilities and it should be noted that core funding has been maintained at the current level for a number of years in spite of competing financial pressures for the partner agencies. This year contributory partners have also supported a separate fund to pay for Serious Case Reviews.

Further revisions to the Board Structure were made in 2016/17 which included changing the status of the CSE Strategic Group from a time limited group to a formal sub group and making the Serious Case Review Group a formal sub group, both now reporting directly to the Board. Board members continue to chair the four sub groups, providing clearer and improved oversight from the Board to the wide range of activity being undertaken on its behalf.

Ofsted has concluded that the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board is meeting its statutory responsibilities and governance arrangements are clear. In order to be graded as 'good' recommendations for improvements have been made and these are currently being implemented.

Section 2. Priority Work Streams

2.1 Board Priorities and activities

In 2016/17 WSCB worked to a three year rolling Strategic Plan that identified three strategic priorities:



2.2 Specific work streams to support robust safeguarding practice

2.2.1 Better provision for vulnerable children

- Young people at the point of transition

The focus has been on the pathway for provision of support for young people over 18 years old identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation. It is of significant concern that the current legislative framework, available support services and safeguarding options do not provide the required infrastructure to adequately address the needs of young people once they turn 18. Whilst some support will be available under the auspices of the Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Care Act 2014, these provisions are not comprehensive nor easily applicable to many young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

Discussions have taken place between the independent chairs of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board. Business Managers have also met with Adult Social Care managers, and agreement has been secured to develop a pathway for this group of vulnerable young adults. It will set out how those at risk of sexual exploitation will be identified and the process for accessing support services post 18.

- **Children with disabilities**

Children with disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group at risk of abuse and neglect. Recommendations were made to local safeguarding children boards in the Ofsted thematic report (2012) and by the National Working Group (2016). In order to seek assurance about the response in Worcestershire a specific piece of work was undertaken which asked key questions about safeguarding arrangements locally for this group of children.

A report will be made to WSCB in 2017/18 on the detailed findings, to include recommendations about further audits to consider the application of thresholds in respect of vulnerable children with disabilities.

- **Healthy relationships and risk of Child Sexual Exploitation**

WSCB continues to be committed to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and recognises that CSE is a community safety issue and as such everyone must work together to keep children safe.

The Board's CSE Strategy (2015 – 2017) and supporting CSE Action Plan was fully implemented and signed off in April 2017 overseen by the CSE Strategic Group consisting of Board members and other strategic leads. CSE was addressed at every Board meeting during 2016/17.

During its review Ofsted highlighted that the CSE Action Plan was ambitious and implementation lengthy. Pace had been impacted upon by changes in strategic leadership. Following a number of changes a new lead for CSE was appointed from West Mercia Police, with assurance provided to the Board in March 2017 about continuity going forward.

A specific piece of work undertaken by the Board during the year was the implementation of its 'Whole School Approach to Healthy Relationships' framework which supports proactive awareness raising across the whole school community; governors, staff, parents and pupils. Tools which have been endorsed by the Board are available for schools to utilise.

Early feedback indicates that schools who have started to use the resource, or are planning to use it, consider the content helpful. The Board will continue to seek assurance from schools regarding embedding of the the framework and its impact.

The framework can be located at:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7222/wscbhealthyrelationshipsawholeschoolapproach>

A self-assessment audit was undertaken during this period where partner agencies, including a sample of schools and General Practitioners, were asked to grade themselves against a set of practice standards developed by the Board. Findings from the self-assessment indicated that the majority of agencies were meeting the standards albeit with some areas of practice requiring improvement. Children's Social Care assessed themselves as inadequate against each of the four practice standards and has an action plan in place to address this. WSCB will continue to seek assurance on actions taken and the impact of the changes made.

Issues which have been addressed as part of the WSCB CSE Strategy include:

- Formal request to partner agencies to ensure that commissioning arrangements include CSE training requirement and use of CSE identification tool and Pathway by staff
- Youth Offending Service has developed a screening tool to identify potential offenders
- Development of the www.tell-someone.org communications strategy by West Mercia Police which directly links in the four West Mercia local safeguarding children boards
- Awareness raising initiatives with licenced premises, taxi drivers, hotels and bed and breakfast establishments
- Development of West Mercia Police technical capabilities in line with emerging patterns of offending
- Feedback from a sample of parents of children who had been identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation illustrated that approximately one third of parents are not sufficiently IT aware to pick up on or address risks related to the use of technologies in sexual exploitation. It also highlighted the changing face of sexual development in respect of sexting and access to pornography by young people
- Development of the daily triage process at the Family Front Door which screens children who go missing for CSE

Ofsted made a specific recommendation about the need for the Board to ensure that all relevant partner agencies are involved in the CSE and Missing Operational Group to ensure effective information sharing about young people known to them. A review of the role and purpose of the operational group is a key component of the refreshed CSE Action Plan going forward.

2.2.2 Integrated Family Front Door

Throughout the year the Board has received updates in respect of the move to create a single 'front door' to manage all contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care. This has involved the co-location of staff from Police and Health to join Children's Services, and the development of 'virtual' members who are contacted if necessary to share information to support the new daily triage process.

The Board raised concerns regarding the absence of a representative for schools in the triage process. The Board monitored developments and in March 2017 assurance was provided that the Safeguarding Lead in Education post would be reconfigured to enable there to be education input into the Family Front Door. This will be implemented in 2017/18.

Ofsted inspectors expressed concern about decision making and management oversight in the Family Front Door and these are both areas being addressed by the Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan. Referring agencies were not routinely using the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance leading to a high volume of inappropriate referrals and thresholds were not always applied consistently during the daily triage process. The Board's own audit of the Family Front Door in January 2017 found that in the main referrals were appropriate, although a proportion of those referrals were for targeted family support which is accessed through the same referral route. The Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance has been revised in consultation with partners and work continues to improve its application in practice. Workshops to support this process will be held in 2017/18.

2.2.3 Early Help

Throughout the year the Board monitored the early help offer in Worcestershire, paying particular attention to feedback from practitioners. Practitioners have continued to express confusion about the early help offer in Worcestershire and the pathway for accessing early interventions and support for children and families.

The offer was revised this year so that early help resources are better targeted at those families most in need of them. This is in part due to a reduction in the early help budget. The lack of clarity about the early help services available, and understanding the part practitioners and their agency play in delivering it, leaves questions about the effectiveness of the local early help arrangements. This assessment was supported by Ofsted's findings.

Targeted interventions by commissioned early help providers receive positive evaluations with low levels of re-referrals, albeit this relates to the much smaller cohort of children and families than those accessing early help support from universal services.

During the year the Board has worked with colleagues from Children's Social Care to review the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance ensuring that it links with the recently published Worcestershire County Council document outlining the early help offer in Worcestershire. The early help document can be found at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8060/early_help_in_worcestershire

The revised Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance will be published in 2017/18.

2.2.4 Learning leading to practice changes

The Board's Learning and Improvement Framework has been strengthened and a more robust approach is being taken to the dissemination of learning and improvement briefings. Strategic leads in partner agencies are now asked to consider the implications of the learning for their own organisation, develop an action plan for improving practice and to evaluate impact. The Board will continue to seek assurance about the action taken and the impact on practice.

2.3 Activities undertaken by the Board to support its priorities in 2016/17

- Delivery of six multi-agency events to 320 practitioners between June – November 2016 to launch the recently refreshed 'Levels of Need' (Thresholds) guidance and the new Integrated Family Front Door
- Implementation of the CSE Strategy and supporting action plan
- Implementation of the framework for a 'whole school' approach to healthy relationships and CSE prevention
- Completion of CSE self-assessment audit across the Partnership
- Strengthening of the Learning and Improvement Framework
- Development of an assurance position statement in respect of the safeguarding response to children with disabilities

2.4 Single agency activities to support Board priorities

The WSCB Annual Report 2015/16 identified specific challenges for each partner agency during the coming year. The full response from partner agencies on how these were addressed during 2016/17 can be found in Appendix 7.

Summary

During the year significant resource has gone into the implementation of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Action Plan and assurance has been provided by the majority of partner agencies that arrangements are in place to respond to concerns about CSE as they arise. There is still a need to ensure that all relevant partner agencies are involved in information sharing about vulnerable children and young people, including individual schools, and that we know which young people in Worcestershire are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The Board will focus in the coming year on developing practitioners' understanding of thresholds for statutory intervention with a view to reducing the numbers of inappropriate referrals to Children's Social care. A revised version of the Levels of Need (Thresholds) Guidance will be published in 2017 which will clarify the early help offer and pathway, with multi-agency learning events being set up in the Autumn to support learning.

Section 3. Performance, Effectiveness and Improvement

3.1 Inspections

3.1.1 Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care

Worcestershire Children's Social Care was inspected by Ofsted between 24th October 2016 and 17th November 2016. The overall grade of 'Inadequate' was awarded for the response to children in need of help and protection and children looked after.

The full report published on 24th January 2017 can be accessed here:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/worcestershire>

Ofsted reported that:

'There are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children in Worcestershire who need help and protection and children looked after. Services for care leavers are inadequate, because young people leaving care do not consistently receive the necessary support to make a successful transition to adulthood. Services for children in need of adoption require improvement. Elected members and senior leaders have not taken sufficient action to ensure the protection of vulnerable children. This corporate failure leaves children in Worcestershire at continued risk of significant harm.'

Following publication of the Ofsted report, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Children and Families, the Director of Children, Families and Communities (DCFC) and the Assistant Director (Safeguarding) informed various stakeholders, including the local media, scrutiny panels, partner agencies and their own workforce that plans had already been in place to deliver service improvements prior to the inspection and that this work would continue and be further strengthened to develop an improvement plan which addressed all fourteen Ofsted recommendations.

The Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan (SIP) brings together all of the activity which is underway and/or planned by Worcestershire County Council with the support of partners to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across Worcestershire. For further details please access:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20396/ofsted_improvement_plan

The Board's Independent Chair sits on the Children's Services Safeguarding Improvement Board enabling a direct line of contact between the two Boards. In addition, from May 2017 Partners were also invited to be members of the Safeguarding Improvement Board (SIB) to provide additional oversight, scrutiny and transparency.

Worcestershire County Council reports that, working closely together with its partners, it is determined to drive long-term and sustainable improvement to ensure that Worcestershire is a place where all children, including the most vulnerable, can thrive, achieve and live good quality lives in supportive and resilient communities.

Summary

The Ofsted report, published in January 2017, confirmed the Board's view that safeguarding arrangements in Worcestershire were not robust enough. It also demonstrated that insufficient improvement had been made under the previous Improvement Plan to provide the necessary assurance that the critical issues were being addressed. The Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan (SIP) now sets out how improvements will be achieved. The SIP will be monitored by the Department for Education (DFE) and the Board will receive regular updates from the Director of Children, Families and Communities and the WSCB Independent Chair who sits on the Improvement Board. The Board has provided a named member for each of the eight outcomes in the SIP to act as a 'critical friend' by providing support and challenge.

3.1.2 HMIC PEEL Effectiveness Inspection: West Mercia Police (December 2016)

The first HMIC PEEL inspection carried out in 2015 focussed on vulnerability, in particular domestic violence, missing people and Child Sexual Exploitation, and regional working to address serious and organised crime.

The 2016 PEEL inspection focussed on activity to address the findings of the previous inspection and also other national drivers such as the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

West Mercia Police were awarded a judgement of 'Good' at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The full report can be accessed at:

<https://www.justiceininspectores.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-effectiveness-2016-west-mercia.pdf>

3.1.3 Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust CQC Inspection (November 2016)

The Trust was inspected by the Care Quality Commission in November 2016 and unannounced inspections took place at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, the Alexandra Hospital and the Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre on 7, 8 and 15 December 2016. The Trust was awarded an overall judgement of 'Inadequate'. The report highlighted examples of good practice, but there were other areas which required significant improvement. The full report can be located at:

http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/AAAG5821.pdf

A section 29A warning notice was issued to the Trust which set out specific improvements to be made. The Board received assurance in March 2017 that an electronic alert system had replaced the previous paper system for flagging children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan when they presented at hospital. Decisions are still to be made about whether the electronic alert system can extend to children on a Child in Need Plan, children who are looked after, children at risk of sexual exploitation and children at risk of domestic abuse.

3.1.4 CQC inspection of Swanswell Charitable Trust (September 2016)

Swanswell Charitable Trust has been commissioned since 2015 to provide substance misuse services in Worcestershire. It is a specialist treatment service for adults, young people and

families experiencing substance misuse dependence, including GP shared care in the community. The service also incorporates some prevention services working closely with schools and other providers of services for young people.

The CQC inspected the three bases – Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster – separately in September 2016. This was one of the first inspections the service had undergone and was also a pilot for CQC's new approach to inspecting substance misuse treatment services and no gradings were awarded.

CQC are monitoring implementation of action plans and have indicated that they are pleased with the action taken to date.

Full reports can be located at:

Worcester http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/AAAG0187.pdf

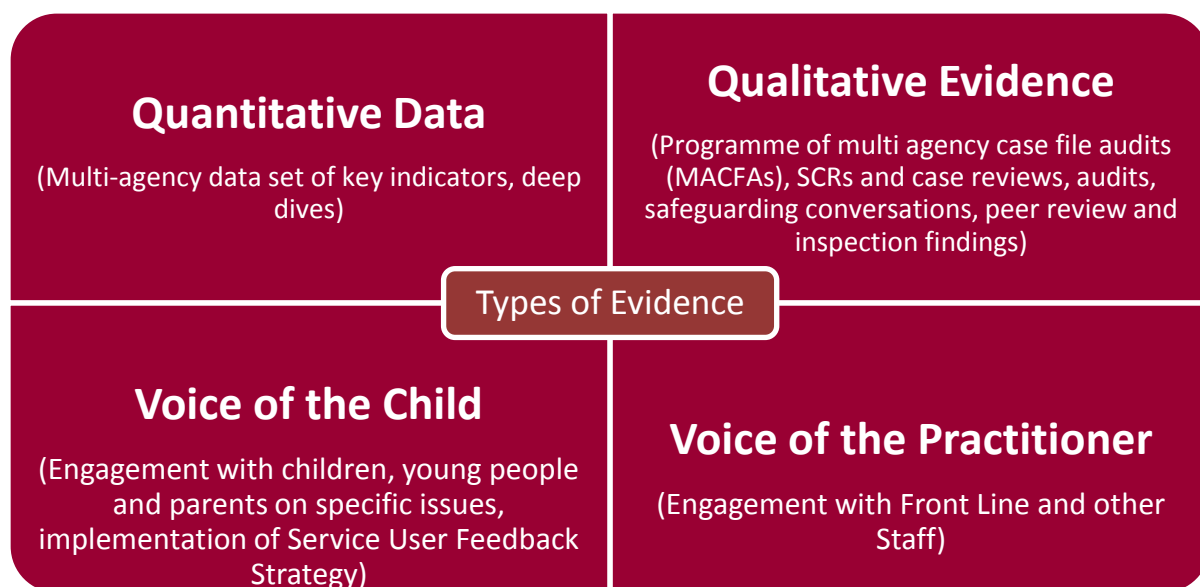
Kidderminster <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-2012231211>

Redditch <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-2012231230>

3.2 Monitoring Effectiveness

Regulation 5 of the LSCB Regulations sets out that Safeguarding Boards should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A specific sub group (Monitoring Effectiveness Group) has met regularly to monitor effectiveness based on evidence provided in the framework below. This group is chaired by a Board member enabling efficient handling of any issues that arise and direct communication with the Board.

The WSCB evidence base for monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Worcestershire for children and young people during this period has included a combination of:



3.2.1 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data continues to be scrutinised through the Board's Performance Analysis Activity Group. This group has responsibility for collecting and analysing data on behalf of the Board in respect of strategic priorities and is mandated by the board to:

- Produce a performance dashboard.
- Identify key lines of enquiry or questions from the data.
- Identify trends from data and provide commentary for the Monitoring Effectiveness Group to consider.
- Identify and make recommendations for addressing gaps in information.

Ofsted noted that:

"The PAAG rigorously scrutinises multi-agency performance information and reports quarterly to the monitoring effectiveness sub-group. A comprehensive multi-agency performance dashboard supports the board to scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding services. This includes oversight of children held in police custody overnight, performance information on CAMHS assessment and treatment timescales, as well as a wide range of other performance information. The dashboard would be strengthened by the inclusion of designated officer investigation outcomes and investigation timescales. Information about children missing education and those electively home educated would provide further important data to strengthen the dashboard further. The board has taken robust action to obtain this data, escalating its concerns when the data was not initially forthcoming, and has very recently received the required data and analysis."

The dashboard was strengthened in line with Ofsted's comments in February 2017. The Board will continue to work in close partnership with partner agencies to ensure that relevant data is available for scrutiny and, where necessary, will apply the Board's escalation matrix to ensure a purposeful response is received.

A summary of key performance indicators collected and scrutinised by the Board is contained in Appendix 6.

3.2.2 Qualitative Data

Ofsted (2016) reported that the Board's assurance and audit are appropriately driven by evaluation and intelligence gathered from a range of activities. In 2016/17 the following audits were completed:

- Section 11 Audit

The S11 Audit is a self-assessment by partner agencies of the extent to which they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. The S11 Audit provides assurance that safeguarding arrangements are in place across the WSCB partnership with partner agencies reporting that they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities or, where improvements are required, plans are in place to address them. WSCB conducts a full S11 audit on a bi-annual basis.

The Board's annual report 2015/16 noted that there was good compliance reported by agencies, and that clear plans were in place to address any areas that required improvement. A particular

focus last year was on agencies' compliance with safeguarding expectations in respect of commissioning arrangements and use of feedback from service users to develop services. Agencies were also asked to report on any changes to the previous year's position.

In September 2016 the Board undertook a dip sample to confirm the stated position in respect of service user feedback. It was found that not all agencies could provide sufficient evidence to support their original self-assessment. This has led to a recommendation that future S11 audits be followed by challenge events. S11 audits will now ask for supportive evidence as part of the original audit process to ensure that self-assessment can be evidenced and to mitigate against over-optimism.

The Board is currently engaged with a regional project looking at the viability of a common standardised S11 Audit template and grading system for use across the West Midlands.

- CSE Self-assessment Audit

This self-assessment enabled partner agencies to evaluate the extent to which they are meeting expected standards and to identify those areas where they need to improve. 39 partner agencies were asked to complete the self-assessment, including a sample of schools and General Practitioners (GPs). The majority of partner agencies identified that they fully or partially met the required standards, with a number identifying specific actions to improve their response to child sexual exploitation. The audit is to be repeated in 2018 to ensure that agencies have undertaken actions identified this year and to identify any barriers to doing so. Additionally, the CSE self-assessment template will be made available on the WSCB website for self-assessment purposes.

- Section 175/157 Audit

Section 175/157 of the Education Act places a statutory duty on schools to make arrangements to ensure that their safeguarding functions are carried out. This year 219 audits were received. 290 templates were circulated to schools so this represents a return rate of 76%. Highlights from this audit include:

- 91% of schools (who responded) indicated that they were aware of and used the WSCB inter-agency procedures
- 95% of schools (who responded) stated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training was up to date

A recommendation from this audit is for the Board to receive notification of those schools which fail Ofsted inspections due to safeguarding inadequacies in order for themes to be identified.

- Referral and Thresholds Audit

The role of the Board is to ensure that the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance document is available and understood by practitioners. The Board undertook an audit of the Family Front Door in February 2017 which included the following actions:

- Phoning all referrers who had completed a Cause for Concern Notification during one specified week
- Assessing the quality of Cause for Concern Notifications
- Undertaking a survey of practitioners' views

- Analysing calls received by staff in the Family Front Door

The main conclusions from this audit were:

- Of the sample graded (n=53) the quality of 70% of the Cause for Concern Notifications were good, although some professionals need to be clearer about the nature of their concerns and what they expect to happen.
- The overall finding from the audit was that the majority of professionals completing the Cause for Concern Notifications appear to understand the thresholds and most contacts were considered to be appropriate. However, as the Family Front Door receives both requests for a referral for a statutory response by Children's Social Care and referrals for a targeted family support service (early help) it is difficult to evaluate with confidence practitioners' understanding of thresholds. Ofsted concluded that practitioners in Worcestershire do not understand thresholds for intervention by Children's Social Care and that thresholds are not applied consistently.
- 71% of respondents were happy with the response received from the FFD, 29% were not and this was in part due to a disagreement about the decision about what type of service is required.
- Not all of those completing a Cause for Concern Notification referred to the Levels of Need guidance at the time of making the referral, although most stated that this was because they knew the document well and did not need to refer to it on a case by case basis. Most practitioners were aware of the guidance.
- The availability of Community Social Workers for advice and support was appreciated by referrers.
- There remains a lack of clarity regarding access to early help, which concurs with Ofsted's findings.

WSCB will continue over the coming year to provide support and challenge in respect of the early help pathway in Worcestershire and practitioners' understanding of thresholds.

- Training and Workforce Audit

The training and workforce audit provided assurance to the Board that partner agencies have staff in sufficient numbers with sufficient skills and experience to ensure that they can effectively safeguard children, however threats to this included:

- Continuous changes to structure and service re-design
- Reducing budgets and the impact on training budgets

The audit enabled agencies to highlight any gaps in training and make reference to specific actions plans to address these. Following the audit a learning and challenge event was held with training leads from a variety of agencies. The outcome of this event was to acknowledge that, in addition to agencies ensuring training is effective, practitioners have an individual responsibility to ensure that the training they receive impacts on their practice. The WSCB Training Strategy is to be reviewed to include this.

- Return Interview Audit

A random sample of 30 return interviews with children who had gone missing in the previous six months was audited. The decision making, timeliness and quality of the interviews was considered. Findings concluded that there were some excellent examples of recording, a number of which could be used for training purposes. Others contained limited detail and little

or no analysis. The majority were of an acceptable standard but lack of consistency was a concern.

- Escalation Guidance Survey

192 managers and practitioners responded to this survey in respect of the WSCB guidance for resolving professional disagreements about safeguarding children responses. The overall findings were that 83% were aware of the guidance, 19% had used the escalation process and, of these, 53% of concerns had been resolved as a result of the escalation.

Following the audit it was agreed that the Escalation Guidance should be re-launched to raise awareness of it amongst practitioners. During 2017/18 it will be included as part of the Board's wider communications initiatives.

Summary

WSCB auditing activity has included the monitoring of all partner agencies, including samples of schools and General Practitioners (GPs) when this has been appropriate. Partner engagement with audit activity has been good despite the high number of audits conducted during the year.

Actions for the Board from the Ofsted Review are in the process of being implemented and will be monitored to ensure the Board's performance continues to improve.

Monitoring of understanding of thresholds, early help, responses to Child Sexual Exploitation and the Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan (SIP) will be key areas of focus for the Board in 2017/18.

3.3 Learning & Improvement

The Board continues to produce its highly regarded Learning and Improvement briefings and Ofsted reported that: *'The learning from safeguarding conversations, MACFAs, SCRs and child deaths is summarised into concise, informative, annual overview reports and learning and improvement briefings. Although the board has appropriately sought assurance from partners that learning briefings are disseminated across the children's workforce, it is not yet able to evidence that the learning leads to changes in practice or improved services to children and families. This is an area under review.'*

The Learning and Improvement Framework consolidates learning from a range of activities including:

- Child Death Reviews
- Multi-Agency Case File Audits (MACFAs)
- Safeguarding Conversations
- Serious Case Reviews and case reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews (where appropriate)

3.3.1 Child Death Overview Panel

Ofsted noted that the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is effective. Learning is cascaded through learning and improvement briefings, through the CDOP annual report and through presentations to the Board and to the Health and Well-Being Board.

The Child Death Overview Panel has a statutory responsibility to collect and analyse information about the deaths of all children who live in Worcestershire to identify any safety and welfare matters along with wider public health or safety concerns. The Panel analyses the collated information to classify each death, identify any 'modifiable factors' that may have contributed to the death of the child and make recommendations regarding interventions to reduce the risk of similar deaths. Although there may only be a small number of deaths from a particular cause in a given year, cumulative data and liaison with other CDOPs in the West Midlands can reveal trends and common factors

During the year the CDOP reviewed 36 deaths and noted that modifiable factors were present in 15 of the deaths. The Perinatal Sub-Group discussed 22 deaths before bringing them to full Panel. Modifiable factors were identified in 40% of these deaths; management of the pregnancy and delivery being the most frequently occurring modifiable factors, along with parental smoking and obesity.

Data collected over the last nine years indicates that parental cigarette smoking and bed sharing are factors present in the majority of cases classified as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. The CDOP has been instrumental in the implementation of a West Mercia-wide 'Safer Sleeping' programme. An audit was undertaken in February 2017 of Worcestershire babies (n=120) born between September and November 2016. In all cases a safer sleeping risk assessment form had been completed, parents had been asked about sleeping arrangements, about smoking, alcohol consumption and the taking of drugs/medication, and about safer sleeping considerations when away from home. Where risks were identified risk management plans were evident in 80% of cases. An action plan has been implemented to address this and a repeat audit will be undertaken in January 2018 to monitor progress.

3.3.2 Multi-Agency Case File Audits (MACFAs)

Ofsted reported that the MACFAs provide rich information about a small cohort of children's experiences and have effectively highlighted critical issues. The process for MACFAs and other audit activity has been revised following Ofsted feedback. The audit template has been reviewed to ensure that each individual audit produces comparative data so that the Board has an effective baseline from which to evaluate practice improvements or measure impact over time.

Four Multi-Agency Case File Audits were undertaken in 2016/17:

- Parental Mental Health

This was a repeat MACFA which evidenced that some improvements in practice were evident since the previous MACFA, however practice was still not consistently good across the four

cases audited. Issues identified were the need to balance self-reporting by parents with the exercising of professional curiosity, the need for agencies to be clear about which other professionals are involved with the family, and the differences there can be in response to child in need cases as opposed to child protection cases.

- Children known to CAMHS

This was a repeat MACFA which evidenced some improvement since the last audit in the quality of information being sought about parental difficulties. There was a lack of routine screening for risk of sexual exploitation in the cases audited, and the quality, co-ordination and circulation of plans could be improved.

- Children Missing Education (CME)

There was evidence that the focus of professional attention was on the education issue specifically, with wider or safeguarding issues being missed or left to drift. Again, there was a lack of routine screening for sexual exploitation in the cases audited.

- Missing Children

This was a repeat MACFA which evidenced that procedures for missing children were being followed in the main and that return interviews were being completed more consistently than when the previous audit had been undertaken. As a result of the MACFA a dip sample of early help cases was undertaken to clarify whether delay in response was typical in missing children cases. This was not found to be the case.

3.3.3 Safeguarding Conversations

Ofsted reported that: 'The board runs four safeguarding conversations per year, each of which involves an in-depth review of a child's situation with the allocated practitioners and provides the board with first-hand evidence of the quality of practice across the partnership'

In 2016/17 three Safeguarding Conversations took place which enabled Board members to discuss a specific case with the practitioners involved. In total six Board members participated in Safeguarding Conversations during the year. They met with a range of practitioners from agencies including:

- Early Help Managers and practitioners
- Social Worker
- Designated Safeguarding Lead, School
- Children Missing Education and Hard to Place officer
- Sexual Health Outreach practitioner and manager
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (schools)

Whilst this is a learning process, action will be taken if practice issues are identified to ensure children are safeguarded and are receiving appropriate services. Practitioners and Board members state that the conversations are an extremely useful way to reflect on current practice. The conversations also enable positive feedback. In one difficult case the Board members

acknowledged the good work of the social worker and provided written feedback to the relevant line manager.

3.3.4 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)

No SCRs were initiated during the year, although one was published in April 2016 from the previous year. Six cases were brought to the SCR Group for consideration by partner agencies but these cases did not meet the criteria for undertaking an SCR. Ofsted found that the SCR Group has an effective process for reviewing cases of concern and agreed with the decisions taken in respect of these six cases. One case was identified as presenting opportunities for multi-agency learning and a reflective case review was commissioned by the Board. The formal report was presented to Board members in March 2017 and wider communications on the key messages will be rolled out across the WSCB partnership during 2017/18.

3.4 Policies and Procedures

It is a statutory function of the Local Safeguarding Children Board to publish multi-agency policies and procedures which set out the action to be taken by practitioners when there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, and the policies in relation to a number of practice areas, such as training and safe recruitment.

This year the Board took the decision to join a consortium of nine LSCBs across the West Midlands to commission a shared set of inter-agency procedures to be hosted and maintained by an independent provider. In January 2017 Phew Design Ltd was formally commissioned by Sandwell Council on behalf of the consortium following a robust procurement process and the new procedures went live on 31 March 2017.

The Regional Safeguarding Procedures Group (RSPG) has been formally established to oversee further development work and to monitor the contract with the provider.

3.5 Effectiveness of training

WSCB delivered 70 multi-agency training events in 2016/17 to 1983 people. There is strong engagement with multi-agency training by schools, Children's Social Care and the Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust in particular.

WSCB multi-agency training is evaluated extremely highly in terms of the content and style of delivery by those attending. Content is regularly reviewed to ensure that up to date research and learning, both local and national, is reflected to support the delivery of contemporary practice across the Partnership. Learning events delivered in 2016/17 included Family Front Door events and Child Sexual Exploitation headline news events reaching 727 practitioners and managers. These large scale events were well attended, particularly by schools, and they also attract representatives from agencies which tend to deliver their training on a single agency basis, for example the Police, which encourages multi-agency interaction.

Learners report that their level of knowledge and confidence improves after attending the training events. Demonstrating that this knowledge and confidence impacts on frontline practice

remains a challenge, however the Board approaches this by conducting impact evaluations and audits which include nationally recognised processes, such as the PIAT (Promoting Inter-Agency Training) evaluation framework. Partner agencies are also asked to implement the Board's Framework for Evaluation within their own organisations.

The Board received an award this year from Virtual Academy (e-learning provider) for its 'outstanding contribution to sharing safeguarding knowledge'.

Ofsted commented positively on the Board's robust approach to evaluating training, citing the Training Strategy 2014-17 and the Learning and Improvement Framework as key mechanisms which support its monitoring and evaluation role. It also noted that the Board utilises an up to date training needs analysis to inform training provision and monitors training take up. The Board's Training Evaluation Report (May 2016) identified that attendees' knowledge and confidence improve as a result of the multi-agency training, although the Board is less able to evidence how training impacts on practice or outcomes for children and this requires further attention.

3.6 Communications

During the past year the Board has undertaken a wide range of communication activities to raise the profile of the Board, promote engagement and strengthen existing means of communication with members of the public, parents and carers, children and young people and practitioners from all agencies. The Board uses a range of methods including the WSCB website, newsletters, the Board's Annual Report and the Practitioner Network meetings. The Board's Learning and Improvement briefings continue to receive positive feedback from practitioners, with one neighbouring LSCB seeking permission to reproduce the briefing on the Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2011 – 2014. This and other examples of Learning and Improvement briefings are located at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20380/safeguarding_children_information_for_professionals/482/learning_and_improvement/3).

The Board seeks to raise awareness of specific safeguarding issues through community partnerships and directly with the public through local campaigns on national awareness days. During the year press releases, media coverage and digital technology have been employed to deliver communication strategies on issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Internet Safety and the DfE child protection campaign, *Together We Can Tackle Child Abuse*. The Board has also promoted the NSPCC's Underwear Rule campaign, known as *PANTS*, aimed at supporting younger children to discern inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Further information and examples of WSCB communications can be located on the WSCB website at <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren>.

It was noted by Ofsted that the Board's website needs to be more distinguishable from that of the County Council. This will be a particular focus in 2017/18.

3.7 Engagement with front line practitioners

The WSCB Practitioner Network, with representation from a wide range of agencies, continues to provide an effective linkage between staff operating on the frontline and the Board. This forum is used to disseminate learning and to take feedback from practitioners on a range of specific issues.

Ofsted reported that: *'the practitioner network and use of multi-agency safeguarding conversations enhance the board's line of sight of frontline practice'*.

3.8 Engagement with children, families and parents

During the year the Board again commissioned a group of young people known as the Youth Advisory Board for Safeguarding (YABS) to act as a focus group for consultation on safeguarding issues. During the year these young people provided feedback on a number of issues, such as the importance of service user feedback and listening to the views of young people, including the production of a DVD, and advising on how to make documents such as the WSCB Annual Report accessible for young people.

The Board collaborated with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and consulted with a group of former NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) students at a Worcester College to ascertain their views on issues affecting them. This group of young adults reported their main concerns to be their ability to find work, fear of assault and domestic abuse, and access to housing.

During the year the Board engaged directly with parents of children with disabilities as part of a Multi-Agency Case File Audit (MACFA) process. Board officers attended an event hosted by Children's Social Care which engaged parents and professionals directly.

Summary

The Board has a range of processes in place for consolidating learning which include Child Death Reviews, Serious Case Reviews, MACFAs, Safeguarding Conversations and other case reviews. Positive feedback continues to be received about the Board's Learning and Improvement briefings. This year the Board has provided more direction to partner agencies about the action to be taken to implement learning in their organisations and the need to monitor improvements in practice to support the Board's evaluation of impact.

Ofsted has endorsed the robustness of the work undertaken by the Serious Case Review Group, agreeing with its decision making in respect of those cases brought for consideration, and of the Child Death Overview Panel.

Multi-agency training delivered by the Board has continued to be evaluated highly by partner agencies and the Board's contribution to the development of safeguarding knowledge has been formally acknowledged by a national e-learning provider.

Ofsted acknowledged the quality and range of the Board's communications. The issue of the Board's branding and the accessibility of its website will be addressed during 2017/18.

Section 4. Formal Summary Statement of the arrangements to ensure that children are safe in Worcestershire

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board has a responsibility to form an annual overall judgment on safeguarding arrangements and their effectiveness. Based on the Board's quality assurance activity and the learning to come from it, and giving consideration to inspection findings during the year, it can make the following formal summary statement in respect of 2016/17:

Engagement with the work of WSCB has remained strong, evidenced by Board members chairing sub-groups and ensuring actions are completed to implement the Business Plan. Attendance at Board meetings is good and response to audits is generally positive. As reported in last year's annual report, however, changes to membership have continued to challenge continuity and pace in some key aspects of the Board's work, most notably in respect of the development work around child sexual exploitation. This is something the Board will need to remain cognisant of, and be sufficiently flexible to minimise the impact. Contributory partners have, despite competing financial demands, provided additional funding this year for Serious Case Reviews, and the majority of funding partners have also made a commitment to provide more funding in 2017/18 to support partnership initiatives following the Ofsted inspection. This provides evidence of the strength of multi-agency commitment to learning and improvement across the WSCB partnership.

Ofsted has evaluated the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board to be 'Requiring Improvement to be Good'.

In 2014/15 and 2015/16 the Board formed the view that it could not be assured about the robustness of the child protection system. The LGA peer review undertaken in April 2015 had raised serious questions about the quality of frontline social work practice and since then the Board has been monitoring the local authority's improvement journey, primarily through the Independent Chair's participation in the Children's Social Care Safeguarding Improvement Board chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. It had been noted by the Board in last year's annual report that the pace of improvement was slower than had been anticipated. This year Ofsted inspectors have concluded that there are '*... widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children in Worcestershire who need help and protection and children looked after*'. The formal report stated that the Safeguarding Improvement Board '*has not provided sufficient focus to tackle poor practice, and there has continued to be a lack of management oversight of children's services*'. It noted that '*senior leaders were unaware of critical issues identified by inspectors during the inspection, and that inconsistent leadership and insufficient numbers of staff at all levels had contributed to a fundamental weakness in practice*'. It was acknowledged by inspectors, and is recognised by the WSCB, that the new Children's Services senior leadership team was starting to provide the 'focus and drive' required and that partner agencies and staff were expressing confidence in the new leadership team's ability to drive through the necessary improvements.

Since the inspection the WSCB Independent Chair has continued to participate in the refreshed Safeguarding Improvement Board (SIB). Senior executive leads from statutory partners have also been invited to participate in the SIB. The WSCB Independent Chair has also been invited to participate in workshops held with the local authority and Ofsted inspectors. He and the Board will play a key role in offering support and challenge to Children's Services. The Board has also nominated specific Board members to act as 'critical friends' in respect of the eight

improvement areas in the Safeguarding Improvement Plan. The Board will receive updates from the Director of Children, Families and Communities and reports from the critical friends as to the issues addressed and the local authority's response to them. This will form the basis of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's scrutiny of the implementation of the Safeguarding Improvement Plan going forward.

WSCB will continue to seek assurance about practice and service improvements within Children's Social Care, actively participating in the Service Improvement Board and through the 'critical friend' role.

Whilst much of the Board's focus has inevitably been on Children's Social Care this year, the Board has also asked for assurance about the impact of the new Pathfinder model implemented by West Mercia Police for conducting investigations into abuse and neglect, and on the response to the findings of the Care Quality Commission's monitoring visit to the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

WSCB will continue to seek assurance about the impact of service changes within partner agencies on safeguarding arrangements for children, and about the implementation of recommendations from inspections, monitoring of progress and evidence of impact on services provided for children and young people.

Health, Police and other practitioners have continued to be co-located at the Family Front Door in the Worcestershire Safeguarding Hub alongside their partners from Children's and Adult Social Care. Work within the hub has continued to improve communication and dissemination of information. Daily triage now takes place regarding domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation. This has improved the timeliness of information sharing across the partnership, however Ofsted raised some concerns about decision making and recording in the triage process. Development of this function will continue and the Board will continue to monitor progress and seek assurance during 2017/18. During the last year the Board has continued to raise concerns about the lack of education representation at the hub and in triage. By the end of the year assurance had been provided by the local authority that the Safeguarding in Education Lead would be present in the daily triage acting as a conduit for information sharing with schools.

The Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance was revised last year and approved by the Board in March 2016, however the Board identified in October 2016 that there was a gap regarding the early help pathway in Worcestershire, and this gap was also highlighted by Ofsted. An understanding of the local early help offer and the early help pathway is critical to ensuring that practitioners are able to make appropriate decisions about how families access timely support and when to make a referral to Children's Social Care. Feedback received by the Board during 2016/17 is that practitioners have remained unclear about the early help offer and their part in delivering it, and about the process for accessing services for families. This has continued to contribute to a high volume of inappropriate referrals to the Family Front Door. In addition, some early help services are accessed using the same Cause for Concern Notification as social care referrals leading to further confusion.

The Board remains assured that there are robust mechanisms in place to quality assure the services provided by commissioned early help providers and that effective work is being undertaken with families by these providers. This was also recognised by Ofsted who commented on the robust quality assurance framework in place for commissioned services and the positive feedback from families.

The Board continues to be concerned about the effectiveness of the wider early help offer in Worcestershire. Whilst good work is being undertaken with families by universal services, as a single agency or with partner agencies, the absence of data in respect of assessments, plans and outcomes makes it impossible to evaluate the impact of this work. The absence of data combined with the fact that practitioners continue to report confusion about the early help pathway, and the fact that the number of Early Help Assessments has reduced significantly during the year, means that the Board is unable to provide assurance about its effectiveness.

WSCB continues to acknowledge the ongoing work being undertaken to refine and improve systems and processes at the Family Front Door. Concern remains about the application of thresholds by partner agencies and Children's Social Care staff and an urgent review of the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance was identified as being essential to support better understanding. The Board has a part to play in publishing helpful and clear guidance, and in clarifying across the Partnership the threshold for statutory intervention by Children's Social Care. This will be a priority during 2017/18.

WSCB will have a key role to play in 2017/18 to develop understanding of the early help pathway in Worcestershire across the Partnership.

Ofsted noted the fact that children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation are not routinely being discussed in multi-agency meetings where all the relevant partner agencies are represented and this was seen as a particular concern. The Board is more assured than it has been previously that children who go missing will receive a Return Interview after a missing episode, although half of the interviews being undertaken remain outside of the statutory time scale of 72 hours and the quality is variable. The Board cannot yet be assured about the multi-agency response to children at risk of sexual exploitation and this will remain a priority in 2017/18.

CSE and Missing Children will continue to be subject to rigorous oversight and scrutiny by the CSE Strategic Group (now a formal sub group of the Board). The Board will repeat the CSE self-assessment audit on an annual basis, seeking assurance from individual partner agencies about implementation of their action plans. The refreshed CSE Action Plan 2017-19 will focus on a smaller number of critical issues, to include the completion of the review of the CSE and Missing Operational Group and implementation of a new multi-agency operating model which ensures that all relevant partner agencies input to discussions about vulnerable children.

In last year's annual report the Board noted some evidence from case file audits of improved practice in recording the Voice of the Child, albeit there were questions as to extent to which children's views were sufficiently influencing assessments and decision making. This year Ofsted made a very clear statement that it considered social work practice to be parent-centered and made a specific recommendation to the local authority in respect of promotion of the Voice of the Child. Ofsted also highlighted the lack of multi-agency input into the development of Child Protection Plans by core group members. The inspectors identified lack of challenge, chronic drift and delay; which could be indicative of practitioners failing to consider the child's lived experience and promoting the voice of the child.

WSCB will continue to seek assurance through MACFAs, Safeguarding Conversations and case reviews that the Voice of the Child is used to inform assessments and decision making in a meaningful way. The lived experience of the child will be a strategic priority for the Board during 2017/18.

Summary statement of overall evaluation

The Board concluded that the body of evidence from data, audits, its own learning and inspection findings demonstrates a clear picture that children and young people are not being adequately safeguarded by the system in Worcestershire. Whilst at a strategic level there is clearly a strong commitment to safeguarding children across the Worcestershire Partnership, and safeguarding arrangements are in place in most key agencies, systemic failings across Children's Social Care are leaving children vulnerable to harm.

Further assurance is required as to the effectiveness of the wider early help offer, albeit it is recognised that the quality of provision by local authority commissioned providers is good. In order for children and families to receive the right services at the right time there needs to be a good understanding of the early help pathway and the threshold for statutory intervention by Children's Social Care. The Board cannot be assured that understanding of thresholds is sufficiently well developed across the Partnership, or that the early help offer in Worcestershire is effective, further confirmed by observations made by Ofsted. The Board has a clear role to play in supporting practitioners to develop their understanding of early help and thresholds and both will be priorities in the coming year.

The Board recognises the scale and challenge facing the local authority and remains committed to working with the senior leadership team and other partner agencies to bring about the necessary change required to improve outcomes for its most vulnerable children and young people in Worcestershire.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Statutory Objectives & Functions of LSCBs

Statutory Objectives of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

The objectives of LSCBs, as set out in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 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 the area, and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes

Statutory Functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

The functions of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, set out in primary legislation and regulations, are:

- (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
 - The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
 - training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
 - investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
 - safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
 - cooperation with neighbouring Children's Services authorities and their Board partners;
- (b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- (c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- (d) participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and
- (e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

LSCBs do not commission or deliver direct frontline services though they may provide training. While LSCBs do not have the power to direct other organisations they do have a role in making clear where improvement is needed. Each Board partner retains its own existing line of accountability for safeguarding.

Appendix 2 Local Background & Context

Local Demographics

The largely rural county of Worcestershire is situated in the West Midlands. It has a population of 583,000 and 75% of residents live within the main towns and urban areas. According to figures released by Worcestershire County Council the county population is increasing by approximately 3,300 persons per annum.

Age

Worcestershire has a resident population of approximately 116,100 children and young people aged 0 to 17, making up 20% of the total population. Over the next ten years the population of 0 to 17 year olds is projected to increase by 5,100 (4.5%) with variations between age groups. The population of 10 to 15 year olds is projected to increase by 4.3% while the population of 16 to 17 year olds is projected to increase by 5.6%.

Ethnicity

10% of the population aged 0 to 17 is classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British. The largest group is Asian or Asian British and the next largest is children from a mixed heritage background. English is spoken as an additional language by over 6000 school pupils (7.7%). Polish, Urdu and Punjabi are the most commonly recorded spoken community languages in the area.

Areas of Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation use several measures including income, employment, education, health, barriers to housing and services, crime, and living environment. These are weighted and combined to create an overall Index of Multiple Deprivation. In Worcestershire deprivation scores vary with the highest score at 75.6 in one area of Worcester City and 2.4 in another. Most of the high deprivation areas are in the urban areas of Worcester, Wyre Forest and Redditch, with some areas of deprivation also present in the other towns of Evesham, Malvern, Droitwich and Stourport. The average for the county is 17.7, ranked as 111 out of 152 Local Authority areas (1 being the most deprived).

Local Authority Provision

At the end of March 2017 there were a total of 4067 children in need (CIN), 764 looked after children (LAC) and 498 children with child protection plans. (2016 comparison figures in table below.)

Local Authority Provision	March 2016	March 2017
Children in Need	3767	4067
Looked after Children	707	764
Child Protection Plans	472	498

Appendix 3 Attendance at Board Meetings

Agency or sector	Name	Meetings attended	Deputy	Board member	Agency
Independent Chair	Derek Benson	4/4	N/A	100%	100%
Vice Chair	Michael Hunter	4/4		100%	100%
Community Voluntary Sector					
Children's Services:					
Learning and Achievement	John Edwards	3/4		75%	75%
Director of Children's Services	Catherine Driscoll	4/4		100%	100%
Assistant Director (Safeguarding)	Di Partridge	2/2		100%	100%
	Tina Russell	2/2		100%	
Early Help and Partnerships	Hannah Needham	3/4		75%	75%
Adult Services:					
Directorate of Adult Services	Sarah Cox	4/4		100%	100%
Directorate of Public Health	Frances Howie	2/4		50%	100%
	Elizabeth Altay	2/4	50%		
Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)					
NHS Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG	Jo Galloway	2/4		50%	100%
Wyre Forest CCG and South Worcestershire CCG					
	Ellen Footman	3/4		75%	
	Lisa Levy	1/4		25%	
Designated Doctor/ Designated Nurse (deputise for each other)	Andy Mills	4/4		100%	100%
	Ellen Footman	3/4		75%	
NHS England (In attendance when appropriate in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding – represented by CCGs)	Helen English (deputising for Alison Tennant and Vicki Twedde)	1/4	25%	0	N/A
Worcester Health and Care NHS Trust					
	Michelle Clarke	1/4		25%	75%
	Suzanne Hardy	2/4	50%		
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust					
	Lisa Miruszenko	1/4		25%	100%

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Agency or sector	Name	Meetings attended	Deputy	Board member	Agency
	Christina Rogers	3/4	75%		
WM Ambulance Service	Robert Cole	0		0	0%
West Mercia Police	DS Mark Loader (Chair of CSE Strategic Group)	4/4		100%	100%
	DS Jason Wells	1/4		25%	
	DS Mark Walters	1/4		25%	
District Councils	Kevin Dicks	3/4		75%	100%
	Judith Willis (deputising)	1/4	25%		
Fortis Living (representing Housing Providers)	Clare Jackson (Chair of Improving Front Line Practice)	3/4		75%	75%
Youth Offending Service	Keith Barham	3/4		75%	75%
CAFCASS	Steve White	1/4		25%	25%
National Probation Service	David Cookson	3/4		75%	75%
Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)	Susannah Stennett (Chair of Monitoring Effectiveness Group)	4/4		100%	100%
Education					
Further Education Colleges	Anna Place	2/4		50%	50%
First Schools	Tracey O'Keefe Pullen	3/4		75%	75%
Middle Schools	Lynne Evans	4/4		100%	100%
High Schools	Alan Roll	3/4		75%	75%
Special Schools	Paul Yeomans	2/2			50%
Independent Schools	Matthew Armstrong	1/4		25%	25%
Early Years *	Nicola Turrell	1/4		25%	25%
Lay members*	Sylvia Dyke	1/4			25%
	Margaret Tovey	3/4			75%
Health Watch – Participant Observers	Morag Edmondson	2/4		50%	N/A
	Jane Stanley	1/4		25%	N/A
WSCB Board Manager	Sue Haddon	4/4		100%	N/A
WSCB Training and Development Adviser	Angela Eason	4/4		100%	N/A

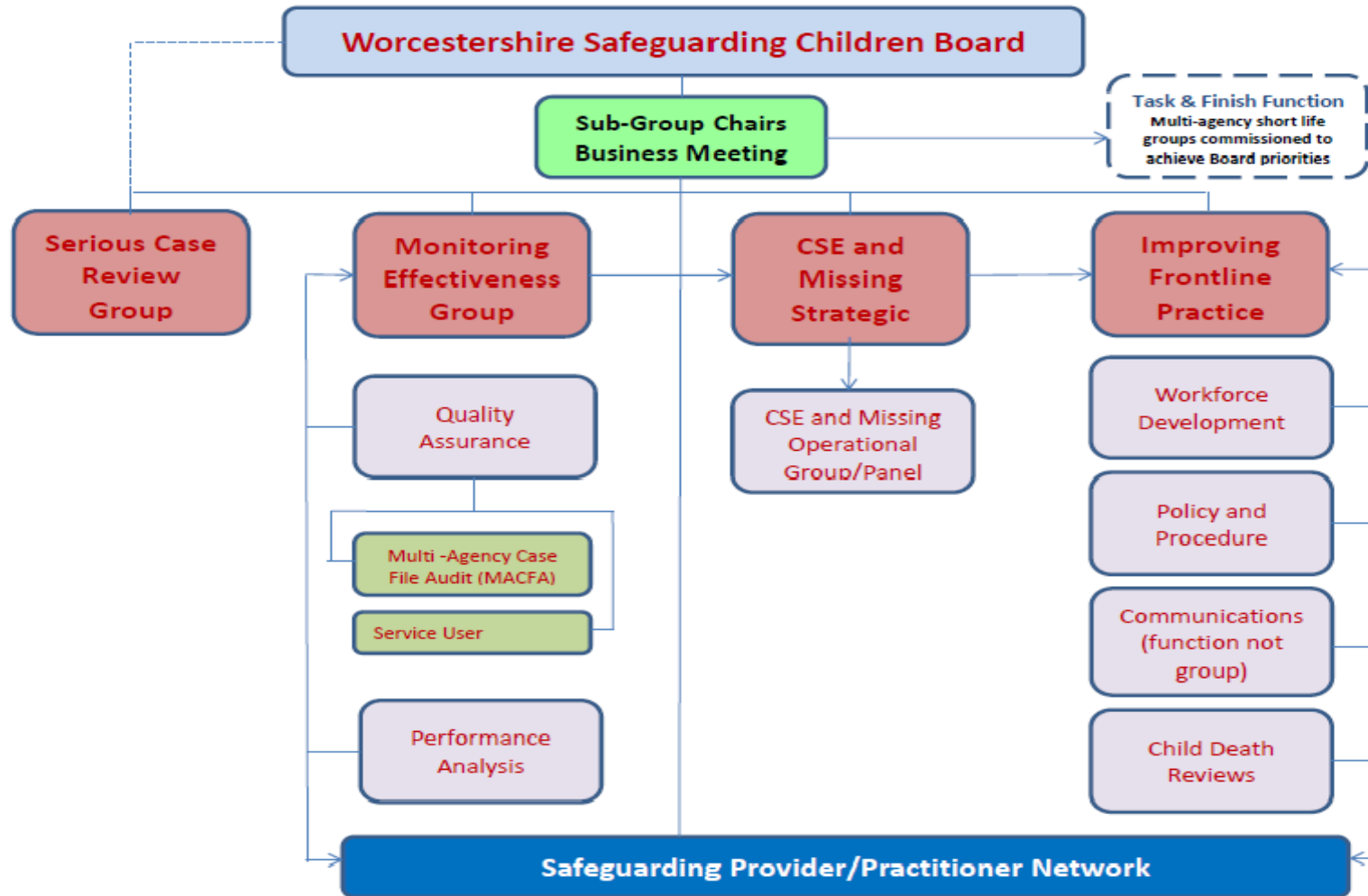
Clare Marchant, CEO of Worcestershire County Council attended two meetings during the year

*At March, 2017 vacancies existed for two lay members and an Early Years representative

Appendix 4 Financial Statement 2016/17

	Board Budget	Training Delivery	SCR	Total
	Expenditure £			
Salaries	207,934			207,934
Independent Chair	19,178			19,178
Serious Case Reviews and Case Reviews			2,335	2,335
Performance resources	26,860			26,860
Administration and business costs	15,427			15,427
Training Expenditure (excluding salaries)		22,756		22,756
E-Academy (E-learning)		18,989		18,989
Total Expenditure	269,398	41,745	2,335	313,478
	Income £			
Agency Contributions				
WCC - 50%	(122,647)			(122,647)
Health - 35%	(86,000)			(86,000)
Police - 10%	(24,529)			(24,529)
National Probation Service - 0.9%	(2,016)			(2,016)
Community Rehabilitation Company - 0.9%	(2,250)			(2,250)
CAFCASS - 0.4%	(550)			(550)
District councils - 2.5%	(5,984)			(5,984)
Core training, Early Years and GP		(60,650)		(60,650)
Income from E-Learning		(18,875)		(18,875)
Serious Case Review Income			(39,920)	(39,920)
Total income	(243,976)	(79,525)	(39,920)	(363,421)
Net Expenditure	25,422	(37,780)	(37,585)	(49,943)
Holding account b/f as at 01.04.16	(37,932)			(37,932)
Holding account as 31 st March 2017	(12,510)	(37,780)	(37,585)	(87,875)

Appendix 5 Board Structure



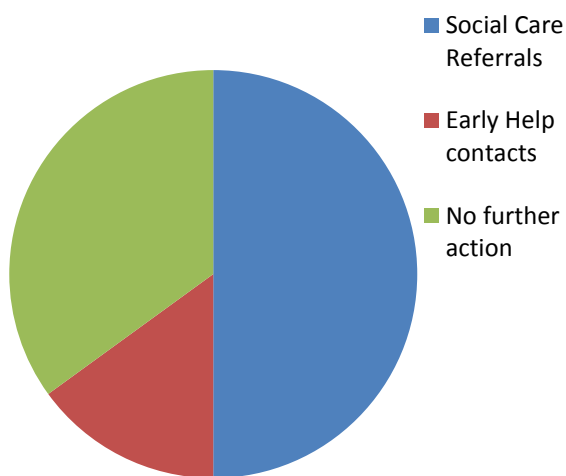
Updated March 2017

Appendix 6 Performance Data (March 2017)

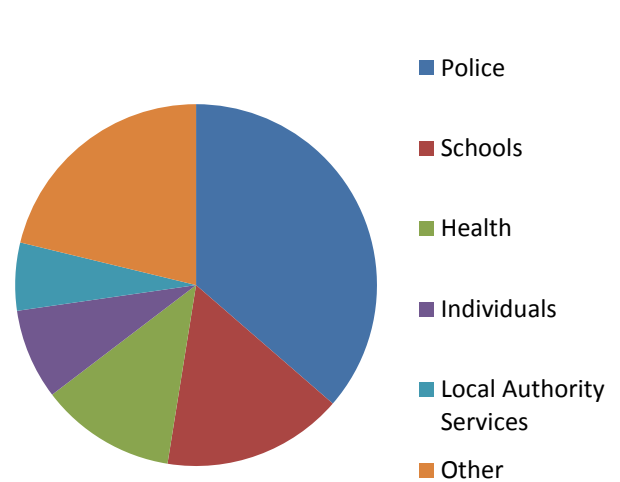
The following performance data refers to the year ending 31 March 2017. It is a quantitative summary with analysis undertaken by the Performance Analysis Group (PAG) and the Monitoring Effectiveness Group (MEG). Issues which require further investigation are referred to partner agencies following application of the Board's Escalation Matrix to identify the level of escalation required.

The number of Family Front Door (FFD) contacts and referrals continues to rise. In an average month 800 contacts are received at the Family Front Door.

Referrals to the Family Front Door

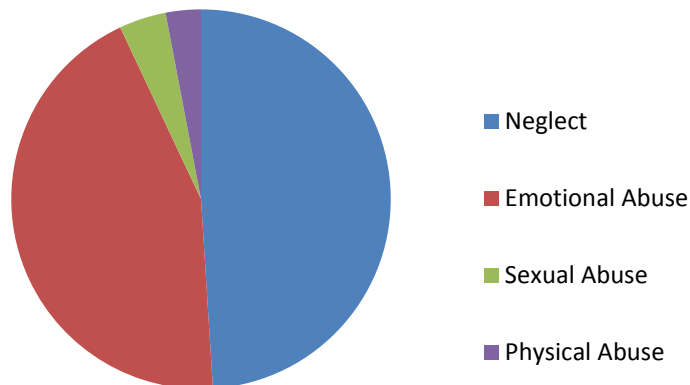


Source of contact



- The number of Child Protection plans in place has increased to 516 (up by 150 in the last six months)
- The rate of Section 17 assessments completed in 45 days is 68% year to date compared to 80% in the previous year and to the national benchmark of 83.5% in 2015/16
- The percentage of children subject to a CP plan for a second time is 20% above the national benchmark of 18%.
- The number of children subject to a Child in Need Plan was 734.
- 49% of Initial Child Protection Conferences are held in 15 days from strategy discussion

Children are on Child Protection Plans for the following categories:



- Since the implementation of the Family Front Door (July 2016) there has been a monthly average of 240 requests for commissioned Early Help Services. The number of Early Help Assessments (EHA) has markedly dropped throughout 2016/17 to a recent monthly average of 100. The overall number of EHAs open is currently at 442 compared to June 2016 end at 1232.
- Numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) remained steady to November 2016 but since then has increased by 70. In March 2017 770 were LAC. The percentage of LAC with an up to date health assessment has decreased to 62% from 72%.
- Referrals have remained constant for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in 2016/17 at 200 per month. The numbers on waiting lists for an initial appointment has decreased, as have waiting times.
- The numbers of missing children has increased to an average of 80 per month. 48% of all these incidents requiring 'return interviews' were completed within 72 hours. In 2017 there was a monthly average of 37 referrals in relation to CSE, current overall number of children recorded as suffering from CSE is 24, and the overall number recorded as vulnerable to CSE is 305, reflecting a small increase in both since data collection began in October 2016.
- The number of domestic abuse incidents recorded has decreased by 5% year on year with a monthly average of 580. Domestic abuse was identified as evident in 28% of all social work assessments.
- There have been 21 notifications for private fostering arrangements to March end this year in comparison with 17 in 2016/17. 50% of fostering visits were within timescale.
- All children charged in police custody and under the age of 18 dropped to 500 from 549 and under 17 arrests dropped to 283 from 319 for the year 2016/17. There has been a decrease in both the number of children charged and detained by the police as well as those held in police custody overnight for four hours or more.
- Children missing education and the number of children being electively home educated has increased
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) deals with allegations against adults. There has been an increase in Initial and Follow up strategy meetings, now averaging 27 per month. 90% of cases are closed within 5 days of these meetings and 50% of all closed cases are unsubstantiated.

Appendix 7 Single Agency Safeguarding Priorities

Agencies were asked to identify for themselves development areas to support the work of the Board. Feedback on actions is summarised below:

Development area as outlined in 2015/16 Annual Report	Responses and Achievements
WCC Children's Social Care	
<p>Full implementation of 'Integrated Family Front Door' operating under a MASH ethos i.e. timely and proportionate sharing of information with key partners leading to effective help and support to address need at the earliest opportunity. To be delivered through a variety of means to include universal and/or Third Sector support services, targeted family support services or Children's Social Care services dependent on levels of need/risk</p>	<p>The Family Front Door has an information sharing agreement and co-location with Children's Services Initial Screening and Contact, Initial Safeguarding, Community Social Work and Emergency Duty Teams, with Police Harm Assessment and Child Sexual Exploitation Teams, Adult Safeguarding, CAMHS, Probation, Women's Aid, and Safeguarding Nurses. There are daily multi-agency Triage meetings for Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, and Missing.</p>
<p>Continued improvement in the quality and consistency of frontline practice and management oversight</p>	<p>An extensive Service Improvement Plan is in place, developing a range of new policies, practices and training. Back To Basics Practice Standards intranet site is accessed by all Children's Social Care staff, as is a comprehensive Performance Data Dashboard updated every 24 hours. Audit programmes assess the quality of practice and management oversight, and are collated into a larger data set to inform and track improvement.</p>
<p>Continuing to improve the response to children missing from home, care and education</p>	<p>Performance on Return Interviews for children missing from home and care has improved with 96.8% completion in 2016-17, 45.7% being completed within 72 hours.</p> <p>The Safeguarding in Education post has been recruited to, and will provide a link to the Family Front Door and CSE/Missing Triage for children missing Education.</p>

<p>Continue to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced social workers and managers</p>	<p>August 2016 permanent staffing for Social Work positions was 68%, capacity provided by Temporary Agency workers but with impacts on stability in the workforce and with children and families. A centralised Social Work Recruitment Team has led to improvements to 75% (March 2017) with the aim being a minimum of 85%.</p> <p>Revised pay arrangements implemented (April 2017) to ensure that we are more competitive with other regional Las, with further improvements to pay and terms and conditions identified for the year ahead.</p> <p>Worcestershire's Social Work Academy will be formally launched by September 2017.</p>
<p>District Councils</p>	
<p>Development of the District Council role in supporting initiatives around CSE locations of concern.</p> <p>Consistency in safeguarding responsibilities to contracted service providers</p> <p>Improved understanding of Thresholds by District Council staff teams.</p>	<p>This has been achieved through the representation on the CSE & Missing Group. In addition from May 2017 data sharing of the CSE most vulnerable list has been put in place. An example of impact has been District Council Officer support to improve safety following concerns around the inappropriate use of a derelict building.</p> <p>District Council's have a process in place to include safeguarding responsibilities within appropriate contracts. An example of impact is in contracted staff disclosing and sharing concerns that led to action by the District Community Social Worker.</p> <p>Information has been shared with District Council officers on the Thresholds Guidance to bring about improved quality/expectations of referrals to Social Care</p>
<p>Police</p>	
<p>Structural changes to be better connected</p> <p>Improve holistic approach and developing professional curiosity</p>	<p>Achieved; Management structures introduced in April 2017 in Worcestershire include senior management aligned at community safety partnership and board levels, with dedicated resources for representation at board subgroups. This is following an internal review.</p> <p>In Progress; West Mercia wide roll out of Vulnerability and Professional Curiosity training planned for Sept – Dec 2017 following Warwickshire pilot evaluated by Worcester University. 'See Past the Obvious' change campaign launched Vulnerability Strategy in January 2017, with DVD shown</p>

<p>Improve response to missing/absent children and potential link with CSE</p>	<p>to all frontline teams in Worcestershire. Learning nudges created to support under #Alwayslearning. DCI Vulnerability lead appointed in Worcestershire in April 2017 to drive holistic approach; 2 dedicated DIs within local command structure for tactical delivery.</p> <p>Partially achieved; HMIC Vulnerability PEEL Inspection 2016 highlighted improvements to police response to Missing. Police continue to provision Missing & CSE triage in Worcestershire with committed resources. CSE remains an alliance strategic policing requirement for 2016/17. Challenge remains to hone the multi-agency pathway as the complexity of CSE means it cannot be addressed by police in isolation. Police senior management lead already chairs WSCB CSE Strategic group, and local dedicated DI resource to Chair Operational group from April 2017.</p>
<p>National Probation Service (NPS)</p>	
<p>Though fully engaged in the Family Front Door / MASH arrangements, technology interface continues to prove challenging as NPS systems are not compatible with Framework-i. A significant technology update is due for NPS in late 2016 that will hopefully resolve this issue and enable increased efficiency</p>	<p>No response provided</p>
<p>Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)</p>	
<p>Ensure access to Framework i</p> <p>Embed use of home visits risk assessment procedure and increase level of home visiting to monitor children's wellbeing</p> <p>Assure that all frontline staff have received in-house training to support roll-out of new safeguarding procedures, including input on making referrals to Children's Social Care</p> <p>Assure training effectiveness</p>	<p>Framework-i access has not been possible due to IT security levels on our system which are a contractual obligation and cannot be changed; no way forward has been found so existing methods of information sharing continue with Children's Social Care as previously.</p> <p>Procedure is in use and home visiting levels are monitored monthly in order to drive increase. In-house training has been delivered to all staff.</p> <p>Assurance of training effectiveness is ongoing with peer audit processes for sentence planning which check whether safeguarding concerns are correctly actioned.</p>
<p>Health Providers</p>	

<p><u>Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Health and Care Trust</u> To review all Mandatory Safeguarding Children Training packages to ensure alignment with RCPCH (2014) Intercollegiate Guidelines</p> <p>Development of Trust policy 'Managing Allegation's Against People in a Position of Trust'</p> <p>Amalgamation of an integrated Trust Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Committee</p> <p>To ensure all appropriate trust staff receive Mandatory Safeguarding Supervision in line with RCPCH (2014)</p>	<p>Safeguarding Training compliance remains high priority with all members of The Safeguarding Team delivering training across three hospital sites in addition to facilitating bespoke training sessions to priority areas. Plan for external training to be commissioned. Target trust compliance required of 90%</p> <p>Trust policy 'Managing Allegation's Against People in a Position of Trust' now in place. Plan for further training to support and embed process.</p> <p>Implementation of the adult and children committee. This is now an integrated Safeguarding Committee with a safeguarding delivery work plan which aligns with the WSCB priorities</p> <p>Trust has increased the amount of trained Safeguarding Supervisors and provides 1:1 Safeguarding Supervision to all Community Midwives and Specialist Midwives. Further developments will focus on audit of effectiveness of supervision and opportunities for group supervision for key staff groups through Safeguarding Links/Champions.</p>
<p><u>Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust</u> Supporting the development of 'Family Front Door'</p> <p>Public Health Commissioners published a Starting Well tender for Universal Prevention 0 – 19 services including Public Health Nursing and Early Help. The tender had a focus on targeting services to children and families dependent on need and living in areas of highest deprivation. This has subsequently not been awarded and existing</p>	<p>Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Integrated Safeguarding Team (IST) are based at Wildwood sitting alongside the 'Family Front Door' (FFD) staff. Named nurses participate in the daily triage for domestic abuse and missing. The IST also support the exchange of information between clinical staff and the FFD.</p> <p>Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust has worked with Public Health Commissioners to redesign the Public Health Nursing service to target children living in areas of highest deprivation. The health visiting and school health nurses have been brought together into area based integrated teams. An impact analysis was presented to WSCB as the redesigned service was</p>

<p>contracts are being extended with a view to a new service being in place by March 2019.</p>	<p>implemented and a follow up paper will be submitted in 2017/18.</p>
<p>Health Commissioners</p>	
<p>Continue to improve GP engagement in safeguarding Processes -The Named Professionals for Primary Care support GP Practices in improving safeguarding systems and processes.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with WCC to improve GP involvement in safeguarding processes through the further use of Technology</p> <p>The CAMHS Transformation Plan will continue to be implemented throughout 2016-17, with the intention of the Starting Well service commencing from October 2016, and a new CAMHS service specification agreed by October 2016.</p>	<p>The CCG Safeguarding Team-Designated Nurse, Adult Safeguarding Lead and Named Professional, provided advice and support to GP Practices in Worcestershire. A rolling programme of learning and development sessions have been commissioned to improve safeguarding knowledge across GP Practice. The sessions are held throughout Worcestershire. In addition engagement of GPs in MACFA, Case Reviews and other reflective, post review and practice learning processes has been improved. Safeguarding information updates are disseminated weekly to all practices via the CCGs communication updates. A Safeguarding audit cycle continues of all GP practices. This provides a baseline regarding the safeguarding systems and processes in place within each GP Practice. The Named Professional worked with the practices to address any identified gaps or areas for development, enabling resources to be targeted where needed. Audits and assurance processes will continue to monitor learning, and embedding of recommendation outcomes made by WSCB.</p> <p>WCC now contact GP Practices using information Technology to share and request information. This includes providing information following Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation Triage meetings. This has improved the timeliness of information sharing to a key partner. The Named Professional is integrated into the Safeguarding Hub with Children's safeguarding services and other agencies which provides a conduit back into the CCGs and the GP partners.</p>

Appendix 8 Glossary

CAFCASS	Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Groups
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CiN	Child in Need
CME	Children Missing Education
CPC	Child Protection Conference
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
EH	Early Help
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHE	Elective Home Education
EHN	Early Help Notification
EYSI	Early Years Strategic Inquiry
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HACT	Health and Care NHS Trust
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HWB	Health and Well Being Board
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conferences
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LAC	Looked after Children
LGA	Local Government Association
LSOAs	Lower Layer Super Output Area
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

MEG	Monitoring Effectiveness Group
NPS	National Probation Service
QAG	Quality Assurance Group
SCR	Serious Case Review
SUDIC	Sudden, Unexpected Deaths in Infants and Children
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
WFADA & SV	Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
WMP	West Midlands Police
WMQRS	West Midlands Quality Review Service CAMHS
WSAB	Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board
WSCB	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board
YABS	Youth Advisory Board (Safeguarding)
YOS	Youth Offending Service



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren