



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2017/18

Find out more online: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

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Foreword by Independent Chair

The Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's (WSCB) Annual Report for 2017/18 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 last year's report I stated that pending changes to legislation meant that effective local partnership working had never been more important as the removal of the statutory footing for safeguarding of children in each locality would require the partners to reaffirm their commitment to collaborative working arrangements. The publication of Working Together 2018 and its associated guidance places a significant responsibility on the local authority, the police and health partners to deliver new safeguarding arrangements from 2019.

I am assured that those three key safeguarding partners, along with other important sectors and agencies, are committed to delivering effective and inclusive safeguarding arrangements for the children and young people of Worcestershire.

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.

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. It will be presented 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 have access to the Report.

As was the case last year there has rightly been a focus on Children's Social Care with particular emphasis on developments around early help and the continuing delivery of wider service improvement. The exploitation of children and young people, be that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or in other forms such as trafficking, will remain a priority across the partnership.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, its members and their colleagues, will continue its work to safeguard the children and young people of the county, and I would wish to express my appreciation to all of them for their efforts.



Derek Benson

Independent Chair: August 2018

Assurance Statement

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board assurance statement for 2017/18:

Assurance provided	1. Robust monitoring arrangements are in place through Ofsted, the Children's Commissioner and Essex County Council (Improvement Partner) and progress is being made by Children's Social Care through delivery of its Service Improvement Plan
	2. There is increased engagement with schools at both strategic and operational levels in terms of welfare and safeguarding issues generally, and with decision making in respect of individual children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation
	3. There is good engagement across the partnership with the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) agenda and Designated Safeguarding Leads in virtually all schools have received the Board's CSE training
	4. The Section 11 Audit demonstrates that there is good compliance reported by partner agencies with plans in place to address any required improvements in the delivery of safeguarding duties
	5. There is a robust approach to the co-ordination of services for children and families affected by domestic abuse by the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and there is good linkage with WSCB
Assurance not yet provided	1. No up to date CSE problem profile for Worcestershire
	2. Low levels of awareness across the partnership of private fostering and the duty to notify the local authority
	3. Difficulties with accessing data from West Mercia Police to support trend analysis
	4. Children with disabilities receive a good service from specialist social workers, but assurance is not available about the larger cohort of other disabled children who do not meet the eligibility criteria for this service
	5. Need to consider the safeguarding needs of some groups of 'hidden children' identified by Ofsted in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection
	6. Need to understand better why Worcestershire's data suggests a higher rate of Child Protection Plans due to Neglect than the England average or statistical neighbours
	7. Concern about the capacity of support services to meet the needs of children who are at risk of or have experienced sexual exploitation
	8. Awaiting evidence from the annual schools safeguarding audit (S175/157 Audit) of the extent to which schools have embedded the Whole School Approach to Healthy Relationships in support of the CSE prevention agenda
	9. We remain unsure about the effectiveness of early help delivered by the wider partnership

1. Introduction to the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)

1.1 What is the Safeguarding Children Board?

WSCB is the key statutory body which oversees multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements across Worcestershire. Our work is governed by the statutory guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'.

Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the statutory objectives of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, which are:

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

1.2 Purpose of the Annual Report

It is a statutory requirement for the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding arrangements in Worcestershire. This report relates to the preceding financial year. The report will be submitted to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the chair of the Health and Well-Being Board.

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 & Structure

Membership of the Local Safeguarding Children Board is statutory for a number of partners as outlined in [Working Together \(2015\)](#). A full list of member partner agencies can be found on the WSCB website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

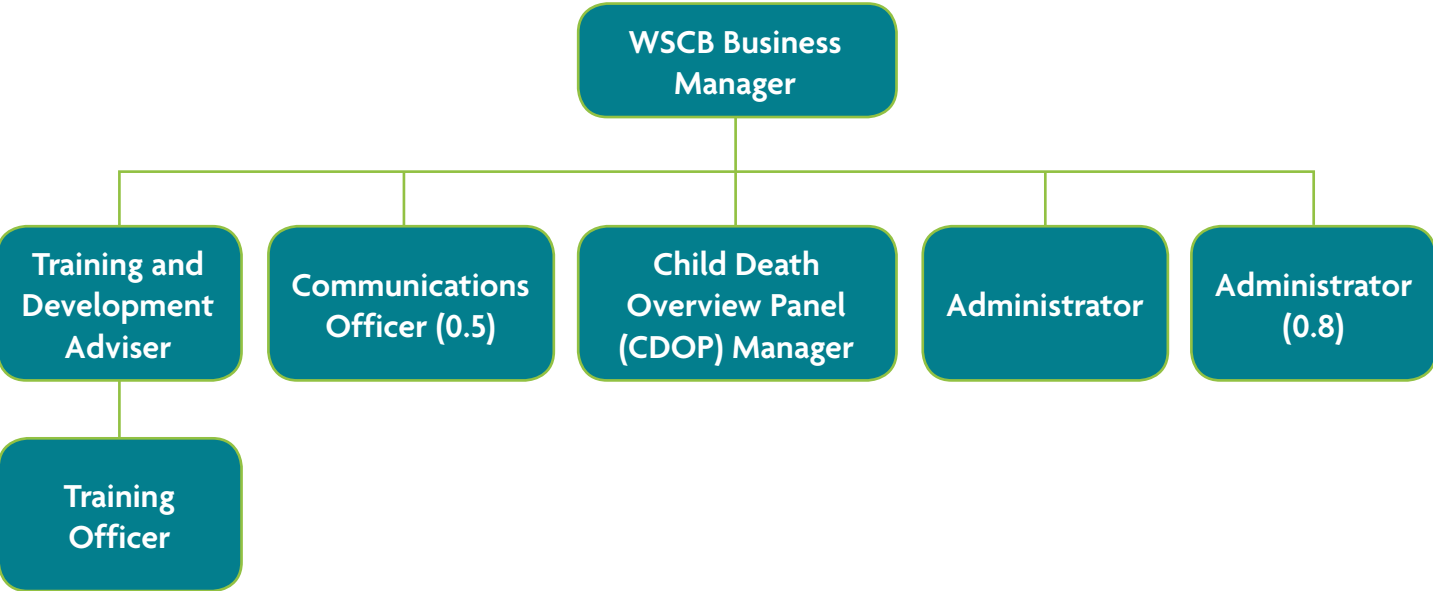
WSCB has a number of sub groups which co-ordinate the activity required for the Board to fulfil its statutory functions. The Board's structure chart is located at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1998/structure_for_worcestershire_safeguarding_children_board_september_2013

1.7 Business Plan

The WSCB Business Plan for 2017/18 is located on the Board's website at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4732/wscb_business_plan_2016_to_2017

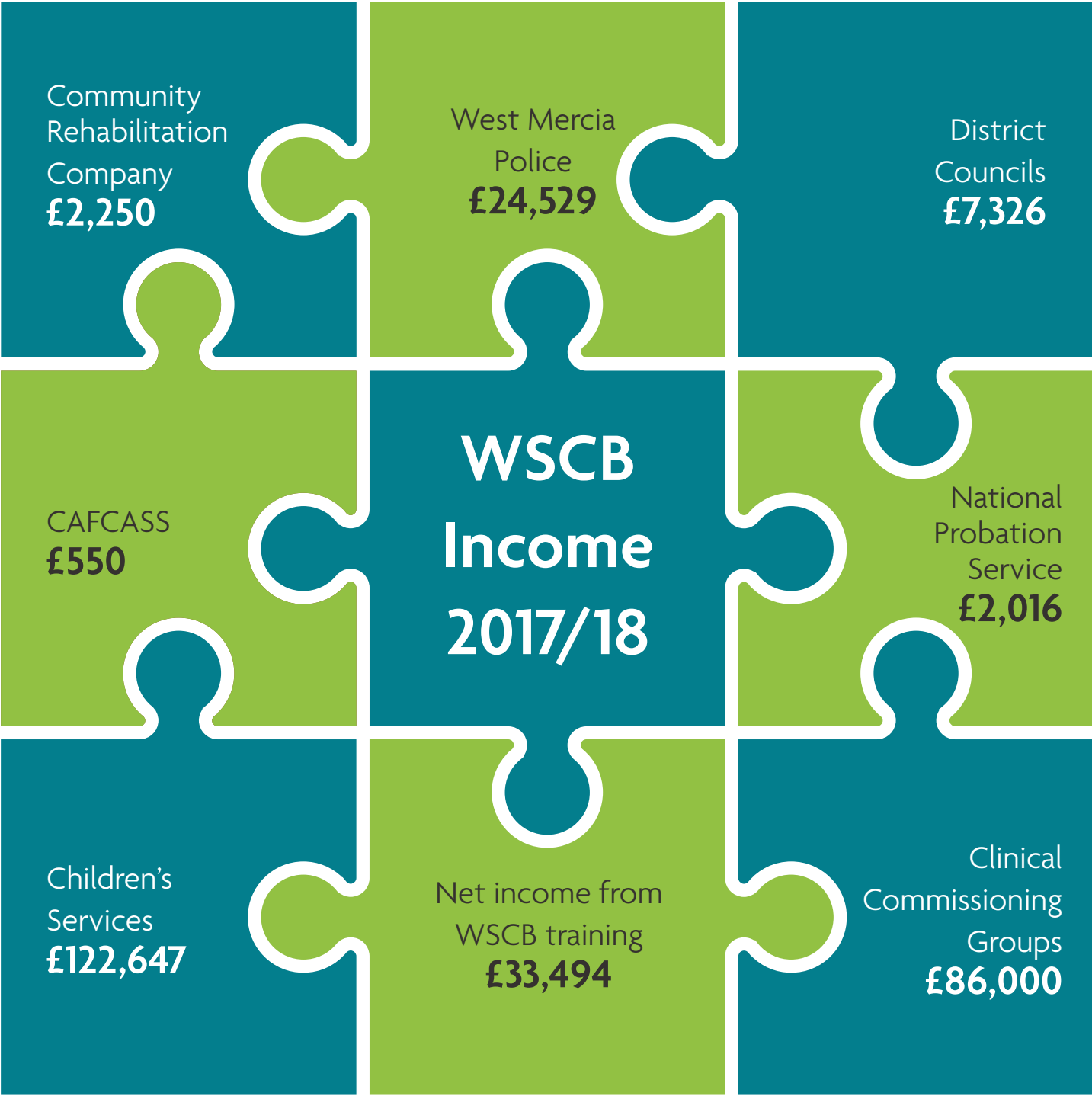
1.8 Administration

The Board's Business Unit supports the Board's functions and is comprised of the following posts:



1.9 Funding

The WSCB is funded through a combination of annual contributions made by partner agencies and income generated through the training charging policy.



1.10 New Local Safeguarding Children Arrangements

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaces Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Chief Officer of Police and the Clinical Commissioning Groups). LSCBs must continue to carry out all of their statutory functions, until the point at which safeguarding partnership arrangements begin to operate in a local area from 2019. Arrangements must be in place by September 2019.



2. Context

2.1 Context & Local Demographics

The largely rural county of Worcestershire is situated in the West Midlands. It has a population of 583,500 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 3,400 people per annum.

2.1.1 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 trend-based projections suggest that the population of 0 to 17 year olds will 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%.

2.1.2 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 6,400 school pupils (8.2%). Polish, Urdu and Punjabi are the most commonly recorded spoken community languages in the area.

2.1.3 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 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).

2.1.4 Local Authority Provision

At the end of March 2017 there were a total of 695 children in need (CIN), 798 looked after children (LAC) and 415 children with Child Protection Plans. (2017 comparison figures in table below.)

Local Authority Provision	March 2017	March 2018
Children in Need Plans (A Child in Need is one that has been assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as being unlikely to maintain a reasonable level of health or development or whose health or development is likely to be impaired without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled).	795	695
Looked after Children (A child who is being looked after by the Local Authority is known as a child in care)	764	798
Child Protection Plans (Children require a Child Protection Plan if they are judged to be suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm).	526	415

2.2 Partnership Working

2.2.1 Linkages with other Strategic Boards

The Board is independent and not subordinate to, nor subsumed within, other local structures in order that it can properly provide effective scrutiny. The work of the WSCB fits within the wider context of the Worcestershire Health and Well-Being Board (HWB), the Safer Communities Board (SCB) and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB).

During 2017/18 the following partnership activities and work streams were advanced:

- High level protocol between WSCB and Family Justice Board (as recommended by Ofsted) has been signed off
- Work has been undertaken to develop a protocol between WSCB, Corporate Parenting Board and the WCC Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Panel
- Twice yearly meetings of the Chairs of HWB, SCB, Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), WSAB & WSCB to consider cross-cutting issues and agree which partnership Board will lead on specific work streams
- In October 2017 Derek Benson became the Chair of the WSAB in addition to chairing the WSCB

The WSCB Independent Chair is directly accountable to the Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Council and works closely with the Director of Children's Families and Communities, attending the Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel when available.

The Board also works closely with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, particularly on key issues such as substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental health.





Links to other strategies

- Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND) Strategy which sets out partnership duties and will be delivered through an action plan to be overseen by the local authority's Children with SEND Improvement Board. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20541/we_are_listening/1616/our_send_strategy
- Children and Young People's Plan 2017-21 which provides a framework for all agencies and organisations working with children, young people and families to make the necessary impact to improve lives. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8306/worcestershire_children_and_young_peoples_plan_booklet.pdf
- Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy 2016 – 21 which is a statement of the Health and Well-Being Board's vision and priorities based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the views of key stakeholders. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7051/joint_health_and_well-being_strategy_2016_to_2021.pdf
- Early Help Strategy 2017 – 2020 which sets out how agencies should work together to provide additional support to children and families. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8802/worcestershire_early_help_strategy_2017_to_2020

3. Key Priorities in 2017/18

3.1 Children subject to Neglect

A Task and Finish Group was established in October 2017 to look at neglect in Worcestershire.

Initial analysis of the data indicates that Worcestershire has a significantly higher rate of Child Protection Plans due to neglect (34.0 per 10,000 in 2017) than the rate for both statistical neighbours (21.6 per 10,000) and England (26.3 per 10,000). 63% of all current Child Protection Plans are for neglect which is significantly higher than the national average of 48%. Nearly three quarters of new Contacts or Referrals to Children's Social Care where neglect is a factor relate to children under 10 years and the other quarter to 11-15 year olds.

Two multi-agency case file audits (MACFAs) were undertaken in 2014 and 2017 on cases where children were experiencing neglect. The findings from these audits have been revisited and compared and, together with questions raised by the data, have guided the development of a Neglect Strategy.

The draft strategy will be presented to the Board in 2018 and will include a clear definition of neglect, a pathway and a toolkit to support the development of shared understanding and language. The WSCB Neglect Strategy will be implemented during 2018/19 with mechanisms in place for monitoring its impact on children and young people.

Impact: It is anticipated that as a result of the strategy thresholds will be applied consistently and risk assessments will be undertaken in a consistent way, with interventions informed by a good understanding of the lived experience of children and young people.



3.2 Children affected by Domestic Abuse

The Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy was launched towards the end of 2017 by the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. In order to support this work a new multi-agency sub group was established during the year chaired by the Assistant Director (Safeguarding).

During the year WSCB undertook a MACFA on 12 children who had been exposed to domestic abuse five or more times. It found that in the main professionals were not aware when a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) had been put in place by the courts (5 out of 12 cases), providing a window of opportunity for work to be undertaken with victims and their children. Assurance has been provided by West Mercia Police that relevant partners will now be notified of the period of time available in which to offer support to victims and safeguard children. In support of this a series of leaflets have been produced for partners around the process and requirements for action. Worcestershire took out more DVPOs between September – December 2017 than other West Mercia force areas with 24 granted by the courts.

Approximately one third of all social work assessments have domestic abuse as a factor, and one third of all current Child in Need Plans, 45% of Child Protection Plans and 31% of Looked After Children have domestic abuse identified as a factor.

Audits were undertaken by Children's Social Care in July and December 2017 on the quality, timeliness and management of domestic abuse notifications received at the Family Front Door* and on children who were already subject of a social work plan. This was subject to further scrutiny during the Ofsted monitoring visit in January 2018. Multi-agency audit activity is being agreed as part of the Family Front Door Protocol looking at the quality of decision making and outcomes for the child, specifically identifying any repeat contacts/referrals or repeat assessments for particular scrutiny.

WSCB has been sighted on developments led by the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence during the year.

Impact: All relevant partners are now being routinely notified of the window of opportunity to support victims and safeguard children when Domestic Violence Protection Orders are made by the court following incidents.

3.3 Children vulnerable to or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Board's CSE Strategic Group, led by West Mercia Police, is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the CSE Strategy Action Plan 2017-19, and for providing assurance to the Board about the multi-agency response to children and young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation.

An Ofsted recommendation made in 2016 was for there to be a review of the CSE Operational Group to ensure there was the right representation of partner agencies. Membership now includes representation from schools, a gap identified by Ofsted. Weekly Multi Agency Risk Reduction Strategy (MARRS) meetings have been established and replace the daily triage meetings at the Family Front Door. Schools are invited to contribute in person or via live link to these discussions.

During the year the following assurances/concerns have been noted by the Board:

- A multi-agency CSE dashboard is being developed
- An updated CSE Problem Profile is not yet available to replace the one produced by West Mercia Police in 2015 due to insufficient analytical capacity
- Feedback on their experiences of services has been provided by young people aged 16 years or older who were identified as having experienced or been at risk of to CSE in the last 12 months. This feedback will be particularly important to consider as the CSE Strategy Action Plan is refreshed to ensure that the views of young people are informing service developments going forward.
- Partners are signed-up and engaging with the CSE agenda.
- The West Mercia and Warwickshire Police 'Tell Someone' CSE communications campaign materials were widely circulated by the Board to partner agencies for them to utilise to promote CSE Awareness Day on 18 March 2018.
- The WSCB developed the Whole Schools Approach to Healthy Relationships toolkit for use in schools and set this as the standard for CSE prevention in education settings. The annual safeguarding audit to be completed by schools and colleges in 2018 will seek assurance about the extent to which the toolkit has been implemented in each school.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in all secondary and middle schools have now received face to face training on CSE. Primary schools are currently being targeted where there are gaps. This training is delivered by the WSCB Business Unit with support from colleagues in the Police and Children's Social Care. Attendees are all required to complete a CSE e-learning module prior to attending face to face training.
- A CSE conference was held at Police headquarters in July 2017 which was attended by 68 practitioners from a range of agencies and was well-received.
- There is work in progress to review the CSE Pathway to ensure it reflects current processes and a new CSE Risk Assessment Tool is to be agreed.
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is now a standing member of the strategic group where concerns about the capacity of commissioned support services for victims of CSE to meet local need in Worcestershire has been raised, with assurance provided that this will be considered within the review of the Contract.

*The Family Front Door act as a point of referral and advice.

- The current CSE Action Plan requires us to consider the use of civil orders in the management of young people who are both facilitators of CSE (by introducing other young people to offenders) and also victims in their own right. Recent and current CSE investigations in Worcestershire will provide further insight and learning in respect of this particular challenge.

The WSCB has agreed that CSE will remain a strategic priority in 2018/19 and has agreed to extend the remit of its CSE sub group to include other forms of exploitation.

Referrals about CSE are being made by partner agencies and a number of investigations have been undertaken during the year involving multiple perpetrators who are known to each other.

Partner agencies are aware of the expectations on them in respect of sexual exploitation and there has been a high level of engagement with audits providing assurance that partner agencies are engaged with the CSE agenda.

It is hoped that by October 2018 Designated Safeguarding Leads in all primary and first schools will have completed the online and face to face training. WSCB holds a number of CSE training courses throughout the year to ensure those new in post can also access the training. The schools safeguarding audit (SI75/157 Audit) will provide further assurance in 2018.

Impact: Decisions about risks to individual children and young people are now being made with the benefit of information from schools, awareness has increased across the partnership and CSE is being identified in Worcestershire.

3.4 Early Help

A Task and Finish Group was established in October 2017 to develop the action plan required to support implementation of the WSCB Early Help Strategy approved in September 2017.

Work completed or in progress:

- Seminar held on 9 November 2017 to consider the future model with Partners
- Development of short Early Help Assessment and Plan with associated guidance notes for practitioners
- Drafting of practice guidance on Consent
- Development of a Communications Strategy and website
- A Workforce Development Strategy is being produced
- Development of a WSCB framework for monitoring effectiveness of early help
- Partnership events – Designated Safeguarding Leads network and locality events
- Connecting Families Strategic Group agreed use of funds to support roll out of Signs of Safety to partner agencies

There are clear linkages between early help and the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and in March 2018 it was agreed that responsibility for delivery of the Early Help Action Plan would transfer to the relevant sub-group of the Health and Well-Being Board.

Impact: Further Action 2018/19

- Clarify the future governance arrangements for the delivery of the Early Help Strategy action plan
- Work with partner agencies to raise awareness of their role in delivering early intervention and prevention
- Assurance to be provided to WSCB through its early help effectiveness framework to be overseen by the Monitoring Effectiveness Group (MEG) sub-group of the WSCB

3.5 Voice of the Child, Professional Curiosity and Escalation Policy: Resolution of Professional Differences

MACFA and case review findings in previous years had indicated that practitioners did not always have an understanding of the lived experience of children and young people, or use this to inform decisions about them. Professional curiosity was often absent and indicators of risk not being identified, or explanations from parents and carers taken at face value sometimes leading to disguised compliance.

Learning and Improvement Briefings were developed on the Voice of the Child and Professional Curiosity. Drama students at a local high school produced a DVD which was used to support the Voice of the Child message from a young people's perspective. The DVD was played at Information and Guidance events held to promote the Learning and Improvement Briefings and disseminate the key messages.

The Briefings have also been promoted via the WSCB's newsletter and strategic leads across the partnership have been asked to ensure that links to Learning and Improvement Briefings have been disseminated to all relevant staff. A survey was circulated in May 2018 requesting feedback on action taken to provide assurance to the Board that its key messages have been widely communicated.

Policies and procedures are being reviewed to ensure that they provide appropriate guidance in respect of the Voice of the Child and this work will continue into 2018/19.

Key messages are included in the multi-agency training delivered by the WSCB.

Impact: All statutory partner agencies completed the survey in addition to a number of early years settings and schools. The WSCB can provide assurance that all partner agencies have actively disseminated to practitioners and relevant commissioned services the links to the two Learning and Improvement Briefings and to the Escalation Policy: Resolution of Professional Disagreements. Dissemination has been achieved using a variety of methods. The percentage of early years settings and schools to complete the survey is relatively small (26% and 18% respectively) but still valid. Further assurance will be obtained from the schools safeguarding audit (S175/157 Audit).

The total number of practitioners across the partnership who have received the links to the Learning and Improvement Briefings and the Escalation Policy is approximately 13,000. The impact on practice will continue to be evaluated through the WSCB's MACFA programme during 2018/19.

3.6 Critical Friends (Service Improvement Plan)

In March 2017 eight Board members were nominated to act as 'Critical Friends' to provide support and challenge to Children's Social Care as part of its improvement journey. The role of the Critical Friend was defined as:

A Critical Friend can be defined as a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. A Critical Friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work.

The nominated Critical Friend met with the relevant work stream lead and, where appropriate, the Assistant Director (Safeguarding), on a regular basis to review progress against the Service Improvement Plan, identify blockages and agree the actions to be completed to provide a solution.



Since the Service Improvement Plan was put in place there have been three monitoring Visits from Ofsted and Essex County Council has been engaged by the Council to act as its 'Improvement Partner'. As a result of the progress identified by Ofsted, Essex CC and the Critical Friends, the Service Improvement Plan is currently being refreshed.

The WSCB is to receive a presentation on the revised plan in June 2018 after which a decision will be made about the process for engaging with the Critical Friends going forward.

Impact: The Board has received assurance that these arrangements have proved beneficial to Children's Social Care and have contributed to the development of effective partnership working, as well as service improvement.

3.7 Thresholds

The final version of the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance was approved by the Board in September 2017. The guidance was referenced at the Board's Information and Guidance events held during Autumn 2017.

Letters were sent to strategic leads in April 2018 to formally request that the link to the Levels of Need guidance be disseminated again to all relevant staff and a survey was subsequently circulated to seek assurance that this had been achieved. All statutory partners completed the survey in addition to a number of early years settings and schools. Further assurance will be obtained from schools via the annual schools safeguarding audit (S175/157 Audit).

A decision was taken during the year that awareness of the thresholds guidance would be raised using a communications strategy rather than through face to face training. The appropriateness of referrals being made to Children's Social Care by partner agencies will be assessed by an audit taking place in July 2018.

Impact: The WSCB can provide assurance that all partner agencies have actively disseminated to practitioners and relevant commissioned services the link to the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance. In addition, all agencies confirmed that their staff know the name and contact details of the safeguarding lead to whom they should go to for advice about the action to be taken in respect of a specific child.

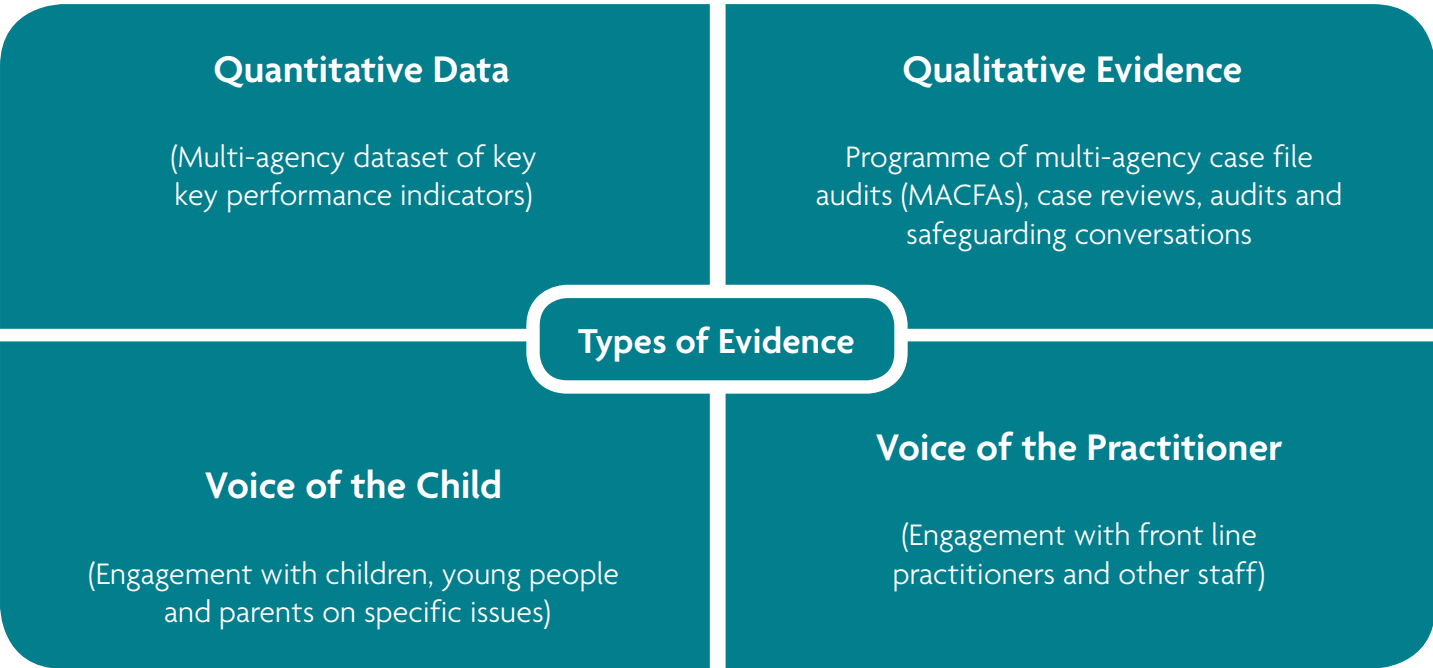
The total number of practitioners across the partnership who have received the link to the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance is approximately 13,000. The WSCB will continue to evaluate whether practitioners appropriately apply the thresholds for accessing services from Children's Social Care during 2018/19.



4. Effectiveness, Learning and Improvement

4.1 Monitoring Effectiveness

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:



4.2 Quantitative Data

The Board maintains a multi-agency dataset of high level key performance indicators which it scrutinises to identify areas of performance which require further interrogation.

The Family Front Door receives all initial Contacts in order to evaluate whether a Referral should be made to Children’s Social Care. A particular focus has been on the demand for Children’s Social Care services and the need for targeting services at the right children and families. As partner agencies develop their understanding of the threshold for making a Referral it is anticipated that the number of Contacts which result in no further action should reduce.

Key headlines¹ from the 2017/18 data:

- ↑ 10,000 Contacts to the Family Front Door, an increase of 10% compared to last year
- ↑ Number of looked after children has increased from 764 last year to 798
- ↓ Number of open Section 17 assessments has reduced from 1035 to 386
- ↓ Number of Section 17 assessments completed has reduced from 5188 last year to 4953
- ↓ Number of open Section 47 (child protection) assessments has reduced from 195 last year to 90
- ↓ Number of open Child in Need Plans has reduced from 795 last year to 695
- ↓ Number of open Child Protection Plans has reduced from 526 last year to 415
- ↓ Percentage of Contacts that became Referrals has remained steady at 36% (37% last year)

Further detail and analysis is available in Appendix 2.

¹ Following acceptance of a referral by the local authority children’s social care, a social worker should lead a multi-agency assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Local authorities have a duty to ascertain the child’s wishes and feelings and take account of them when planning the provision of services.

4.3 Qualitative Data

In 2017/18 the following quality assurance audits were completed:



4.3.1 Section 11 Audit (statutory partners)

The Section 11 Audit is a self-assessment by partner agencies of the extent to which they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities as defined in the Children Act 2004. The S11 Audit provides assurance that safeguarding arrangements are in place across the WSCB partnership or, where improvements are required, plans are in place to address them. WSCB conducts a full S11 audit on a bi-annual basis. This year the Board utilised a new audit template devised by a working party from across the West Midlands.

The audit found that good compliance was reported by agencies, and that clear plans are in place to address any areas that require improvement. A challenge event is planned for the Autumn 2018, to be facilitated by the Independent Chair of the Board, where further assurance will be sought from partner agencies about the evidence provided to support their self-assessments.

4.3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation Audit

The CSE self-assessment tool and guidance was published on the WSCB website to enable all agencies to assess themselves against the standards established by the Board. Partner agencies have been asked to update the self-assessment submitted in 2016 to enable the WSCB to evaluate what progress has been made across the partnership in responding to children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. A small number of schools and GP practices who determined that they required improvement in 2016 were asked to repeat the audit by outlining progress made against their action plan.

4.3.3 Section 175/157 Audit (safeguarding audit for schools and colleges)

Under the Education Act 2002 (Section 175/157) schools must “make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children”. This audit evidenced a high level of safeguarding activity across the education settings in Worcestershire. The return rate was 73% and from those schools who returned the audit:

96% report that staff are familiar with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ and have been issued with the school’s safeguarding policy

94% confirmed that they are aware of and utilise the WSCB inter-agency guidance

This is a high level of compliance achieved across the settings, however the Board requires the return rate to be 100% and action will be put in place over the next year to support schools to achieve this.

4.3.4 Multi-Agency Case File Audits

Multi-Agency Case File Audits (MACFAs) are in-depth audits of a small sample of cases facilitated by an independent Auditor commissioned by the Board. This year MACFA themes have reflected the Board's strategic priority groups of children and all have been undertaken previously to provide opportunity to assess improvements in practice. This year the audits have reviewed a larger number of children than in previous years: 24 cases (12 boys, 12 girls). A Learning and Improvement Briefing has been published which summarises the key aspects of learning from the MACFAs. The Briefing can be found here: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/landiresources

Any child protection issues identified by the review process are immediately picked up by the relevant agency and actioned. Learning is taken back to individual agencies to inform practice and is also included in multi-agency core training delivered by the Board.

The MACFA panel has invited individual schools to participate in the process and this has enabled better understanding of the child's lived experience for all partner agencies.

This year four audits were undertaken on: Children with Disabilities, Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation.

4.3.5 Safeguarding Conversations

Safeguarding Conversations are a process developed by WSCB where Board members meet with frontline practitioners to discuss how performance and practice issues impact upon the delivery of a multi-agency plan and subsequent outcomes for a child or young person. Two Safeguarding Conversations were held during the year and four Board members, including the Director of Children, Families and Communities, were involved in the discussions.

The Safeguarding Conversations were based on Neglect and Domestic Abuse in line with WSCB priorities. Whilst this is a reflective learning process, action will be taken immediately if safeguarding issues are identified to ensure children are safeguarded and receive appropriate services.

4.3.6 Single Agency Inspections

Children's Social Care

Since the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection of Children's Social Care by Ofsted in October 2016 the Board has received regular updates from the Director of Children, Families and Communities regarding progress against the Service Improvement Plan (SIP).

The Children's Commissioner, Trevor Doughty, has provided support and the local authority has appointed Essex County Council as its Improvement Partner. In addition, Ofsted have continued to monitor progress through quarterly monitoring visits. As a result of feedback received from Ofsted monitoring visits, Essex Diagnostics and the local authority's own Quality Assurance and Performance Information, the Service Improvement Plan has been updated to focus on a refreshed set of priorities.

At the same time, having been judged inadequate by Ofsted and placed under direction by the Department for Education, the business case for an Alternative Delivery Model has been developed. This was presented to Cabinet on 29 March 2018 and there was a unanimous decision to develop a wholly-owned Council company to deliver Children's Social Care services. The new Company will be implemented from October 2019.

The revised Service Improvement work streams are:

- Support and develop the workforce;
- Promote social care best practice;
- Build quality assurance processes;
- Listen to the Voice of the Child;
- Enhance multi-agency partnerships;
- Deliver effective Through Care.

A key part of the Service Improvement Plan has been the creation of a new Children’s Social Care Operating Model and the implementation of the Signs of Safety approach to practice. The new structure was created in order to ensure that resources are being used most effectively, that there is sufficient management capacity to provide good oversight and supervision, and to ensure that caseloads for social workers are manageable. This enables them to build good relationships with children and young people and the journey for the child through services to be as coordinated and as seamless as possible.

The Children’s Commissioner visited on 8-9 May 2017 and published his findings at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645624/Worcestershire-Report_of_the_Commissioner_for_Childrens_Services.pdf

Ofsted monitoring visits were undertaken on 22-24 May 2017, 12-13 September 2017 and 30-31 January 2018. Letters confirming their findings are published on the Ofsted website and can be found at: <https://reports.beta.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80584>

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission undertook a Joint Local Area SEND inspection in Worcestershire between 5-9 March 2018 to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The findings of the inspection are summarised in the published letter located at: https://files.api.beta.ofsted.gov.uk/80584__1.PDF

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

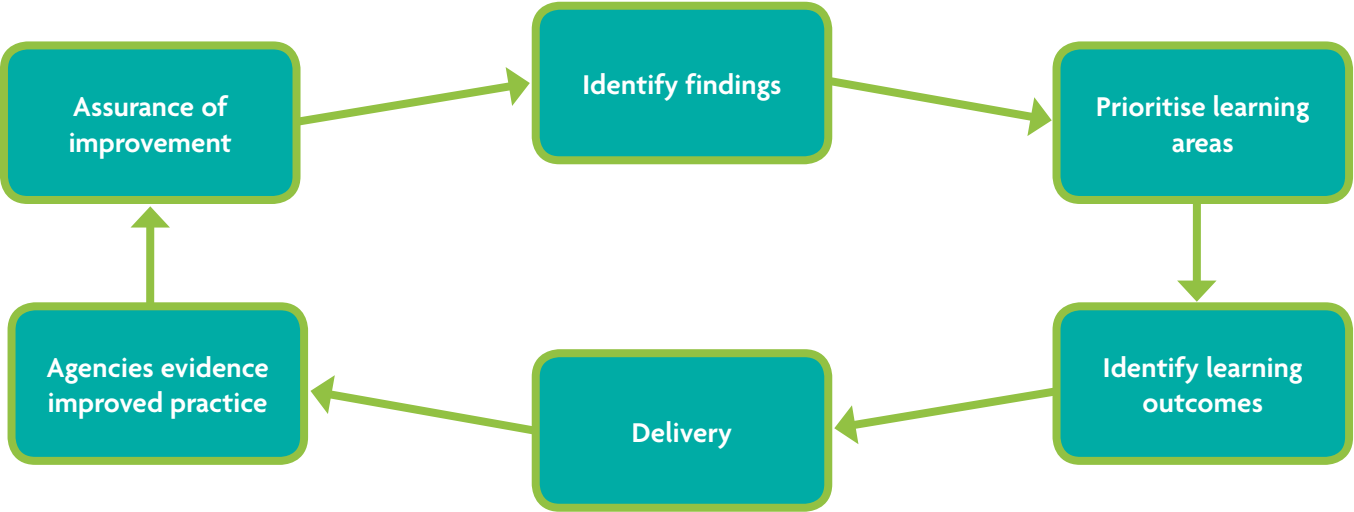
On 17 January 2018 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published its report on the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust following their inspection in November 2017. The inspection assessed the core services of urgent and emergency care and medical care at the Alexandra and Worcestershire Royal Hospitals. The Trust has been in special measures since December 2015.

www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RWP

4.4 Learning and Improvement Framework

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

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





4.5 Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

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 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 may reveal trends and common factors

During 2017/18 Worcestershire CDOP received Notification of 25 Child Deaths; the lowest since CDOP processes began in 2008. Although this is very encouraging, we should not attach too much significance to a single year's figures.

CDOP and its sub-groups met on 9 occasions and undertook 25 Child Death Reviews. Modifiable Factors were present in 11 of the deaths and included lack of parental supervision, inaction following expression of suicidal ideation, maternal obesity, smoking and also possible incomplete evaluation of previous miscarriages.

Other issues coming to Panel included several incidents relating to hospital care, questions relating to teenage suicide along with the review and implementation of the West Mercia SUDIC (Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infants and Children) Policy.

A thorough analysis of Child Death Reviews categorised as 'Suicide or Deliberate Self-Harm' was carried out by the Clinical Commissioning Group and it was reassuring to learn that Worcestershire data was not out of step with other parts of the country. It was also very helpful to receive and then to disseminate details of care support that one particular school had developed for pupils.

The Panel Chairman and Manager also participated extensively in consideration of plans for the implementation of the new child death arrangements (as detailed in Working Together 2018) and presented suggested modifications (particularly relevant to Worcestershire) to the December meetings of CDOP and then to WSCB.

Attention has been given to managing the backlog of Child Death Notifications received, especially those managed through the Rapid Response process, to ensure that Child Death Reviews are completed as promptly as post-death processes permit.

4.6 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Case Reviews

The Serious Case Review Group considers cases which have been identified by partner agencies to decide whether the criteria for a SCR are met. During the year 3 cases were considered and all were found to meet the criteria, resulting in SCRs being formally commissioned by the Board. At the time of writing one Serious Case Review had been completed but not yet published awaiting the outcome of parallel processes (such as inquests, criminal proceedings or other formal review processes). As part of the SCR process learning events were held with practitioners to inform the process and the findings. Learning from all three SCRs will inform the Board's Learning and Improvement communications during 2017/18.

If the criteria for a SCR are not met, consideration is given to conducting a case review. No case reviews were initiated during the year. The learning from one completed case review initiated during 2016/17, 'Annabel', was presented at six Information and Guidance sessions for practitioners and included in a [Learning and Improvement Briefing](#).

4.7 Communications

During the year WSCB 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.

Website

The WSCB website contains a broad spectrum of information and guidance on safeguarding subjects and links directly to the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures. It also contains policies, links to statutory guidance, legislation and helpful websites. Data shows that there were 48,000 unique page views on the website during the year which demonstrates a high level of usage. During the year plans have been developed to commission a joint website with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board to provide a joint safeguarding resource, particularly important in respect of cross cutting issues such as Transition, Domestic Abuse, Mental Capacity Act and Exploitation, as well as supporting the 'Think Family' approach.

WSCB Newsletter

The newsletter, Safeguarding Matters, continues to be circulated quarterly. It contains news and information from WSCB as well as relevant updates from our partners. It provides a range of articles about local and national issues relevant to safeguarding children, as well as links to websites and documents. The newsletter is well received by practitioners.

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20377/safeguarding_children/208/about_the_safeguarding_children_board/6

Events & Awareness Days

WSCB has issued communications for E-Safety Week and CSE Awareness Day. This has included a comprehensive communications plan, materials and ideas for how partners can contribute to publicity for the events. Collaboration between WSCB and West Mercia Police (WMP) took place for the CSE Awareness Day. WSCB promoted the 'Tell Someone' website and developed a PowerPoint presentation for partners use from the campaign materials by kind permission of WMP.

Learning and Improvement Briefings (LIBs)

The Board's Learning and Improvement briefings have been added to with briefings on: Voice of the Child; Professional Curiosity; and Learning from a Case Review. As well as being available on the WSCB website and cascaded via safeguarding leads the briefings were disseminated at information and guidance briefings involving over 300 local practitioners. The Learning and Improvement Briefings have been particularly well received as indicated by the following feedback from a Manager of an Integrated Safeguarding Team:

"Please keep producing these really useful mechanisms for feedback and learning to staff"

Further information and examples of WSCB communications can be located on the WSCB website at:

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

4.8 Engagement with Front Line Practitioners

Practitioner Network

Now in its thirteenth year the WSCB Practitioner Network is the interface between safeguarding practice and safeguarding strategy. The network provides the Board with a practitioner's view of the reality of safeguarding children and young people in Worcestershire. Practitioners meet quarterly and represent a wide variety of organisations involved with safeguarding. The network is a dynamic process, not only serving to promote best practice, but also operating as a conduit to convey views and concerns back to the Board.

This forum is used to disseminate learning and to take feedback from practitioners on a range of specific issues. In 2017/18 the Practitioner Network was consulted on relevant policies and Learning and Improvement Briefings, including Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance, Voice of the Child, Professional Curiosity and the Domestic Abuse Training Pathway.

Specific presentations were made to the Practitioner Network on:

- SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
- Royal Mail Blues Programme¹
- Domestic Abuse
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Signs of Safety
- Step Up/Step Down procedures

4.9 Engagement with Children, Young people and Families

WSCB has worked alongside other agencies this year and obtained feedback from domestic abuse victims, early help service users, and families as part of the case review and Serious Case Review processes.

The Board's Business Unit has recruited a social work student from the University of Worcester to support its work around engagement with young people and to bring a young person's perspective and challenge to discussions.

This year the Board commissioned a local school to produce a DVD about how young people perceive professionals. The DVD was shown to over 300 people at WSCB Information and Guidance Briefings and published on the WSCB [website](#).

4.10 Policies & Procedures

On 1 April 2017 the [West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) went live. These are online inter-agency procedures shared across nine of the fourteen Local Safeguarding Children Boards in the West Midlands. They were developed by an independent Provider, Phew Design Limited, who have been commissioned to host and maintain the procedures up to March 2020.



¹ The Blues programme, funded by Royal Mail, is a preventative course aimed for people aged 15-18 years-old who are suffering from, or who are at risk of developing a mental health disorder



4.11 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Training

WSCB delivered 58 multi-agency training events in 2017/18 to 1308 people. There is good attendance at multi-agency training by schools, Children's Services and the Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust. Some agencies use single agency training which research suggests is less effective at promoting multi-agency working. The WSCB Training Pathway can be found at:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4352/worcestershire_safeguarding_children_board_training_pathway_2014_to_2017

WSCB multi-agency training is rated extremely highly in terms of the content and style of delivery. The training content is regularly reviewed to ensure that current knowledge from MACFAs, case reviews and Serious Case Reviews is reflected. Learners report that their knowledge and confidence have improved after attending the training events. The Board seeks to demonstrate that this knowledge and confidence has impacted on practice by conducting post-training impact evaluations and audits, and partner agencies are asked to ensure that they follow the WSCB Framework for Evaluation (www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4354/framework_for_evaluation)

During the year impact evaluations were conducted three months after the training on a range of courses including CSE and core safeguarding training. The results highlight the increase in skills and knowledge from attending training and provide assurance that those who responded were able to demonstrate how learning had been transferred into the workplace and had impacted on children and their families.

1389 practitioners completed an e-learning course and 97% of these were satisfied or very satisfied that the course gave them all the information they needed. This represents a significant reduction in the number of licences used compared to previous years and in March 2018 the Board agreed that it will no longer broker e-learning after 2018/19. It will therefore be important to signpost partner agencies to alternative e-learning providers going forward..

Ofsted (2017) reported that: 'The board takes a robust approach to evaluating training. A comprehensive training evaluation... identifies that attendees rate WSCB multi-agency training highly, and that their knowledge and confidence improve as a result'.

The annual report prepared by the Board's Workforce Development Group is available at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20380/safeguarding_children_information_for_professionals/897/safeguarding_children_training

5. Formal Summary Statement

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board has a responsibility to form an annual overall judgment on safeguarding arrangements and their effectiveness. Based on the learning from the Board's quality assurance activity and giving consideration to inspection findings during the year, it can make the following formal summary statement in respect of 2017/18:

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 remains good and response to audits is generally positive, although this year it has been necessary to escalate a number of slow responses to audits to ensure compliance. There have been changes to Board membership which 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 early help. Contributory partners have, despite competing financial demands, provided additional funding this year to support partnership initiatives following the Ofsted inspection. There remains evidence of a strong multi-agency commitment to learning and improvement across the WSCB partnership.

From September 2019 Local Safeguarding Children Boards will no longer exist in their current form and during the coming year the key safeguarding partners will be developing an alternative framework and governance for fulfilling the statutory functions set out in Working Together 2018 which is due to be published in June 2018.

A strategic objective for 2018/19 is to develop and publish details of the new safeguarding partnership arrangements to replace WSCB



Last year's annual report cited Ofsted's conclusions. From their 2016 inspection it was acknowledged by inspectors, and recognised by the WSCB, that the new Children's Social Care senior leadership team was starting to provide the 'focus and drive' required to drive through the necessary improvements.

As would be expected, much of the Board's attention has this year focused on Children's Social Care. The Service Improvement Board has been replaced by the Quarterly Performance Review Meetings which are chaired by Essex County Council. The Board's direct support and challenge role has come from the nominated Board members who have acted as Critical Friends in respect of the eight improvement areas in the Safeguarding Improvement Plan. This has worked better in some areas than others, but it has been particularly constructive in relation to the developments around early help. The Critical Friend role will continue into 2018/19 following a review. The Board has received regular updates from the Director of Children, Families and Communities and the Assistant Director (Safeguarding) has provided commentary and analysis regarding performance information at Board meetings. This, along with sight of the Ofsted findings summarised in their published letters, has formed the basis of the Board's scrutiny of developments in Children's Social Care during the year.

In October 2017 Ofsted acknowledged that the local authority had taken steps to tackle its 'serious weaknesses' and was beginning to make progress to improve services for children and young people. By February 2018 Ofsted were acknowledging that 'whilst services for children in Worcestershire continue to require much work to be of a good standard, progress has been made since the last monitoring visit'.

WSCB will continue to seek assurance about practice and service improvements within Children's Social Care through the Critical Friend role and through receipt of updates from senior managers over the coming year.

A key part of the Service Improvement Plan has been the creation of a new operating model for Children's Social Care and the implementation of the Signs of Safety approach to practice. In addition, this year saw the development of a **business case** for an Alternative Delivery Model for Children's Social Care and a decision made by Cabinet on 29 March 2018 to develop a wholly-owned Council company for future delivery of Children's Social Care services to be implemented in October 2019. The Board will consider the implications of the new delivery model for children, young people and their families and any identified risks to safeguarding as the detail unfolds.

In other areas, the Board is assured that partner agencies are engaged with the CSE agenda and that virtually all schools have received CSE training delivered by the Board. It is encouraging that young people at risk of sexual exploitation are now being identified and during the year two significant CSE investigations have been initiated involving large numbers of potential child victims or witnesses. Whilst our understanding of CSE is developing, of concern is the lack of an updated CSE Problem Profile which reflects the emerging patterns of offending in Worcestershire. Work has been undertaken to ensure that support services for young people at risk of CSE are sufficiently flexible and resilient to meet need. Assurance will not be available about the embedding of the Whole School Approach to Healthy Relationships framework until next year's Section 175 audit is completed.

Work has been undertaken over the last few months to foster relationships with schools where there has been a gap previously. Schools are now more actively engaged in decision making about children at the Family Front Door which, in turn, leads to improved communication between partner agencies. Since the recruitment by the local authority of a new Education Safeguarding Adviser there is also much improved representation from education on the Board's sub groups and improved communication with schools about safeguarding issues.

The Board is particularly encouraged by the positive contribution made by partner agencies to multi-agency working, in particular the role of Police and Health in supporting the developing processes for early screening and decision making within the Family Front Door.

As of March 2018 WSCB concludes that progress has undoubtedly been made, however there is still some way to go to reach the necessary level of assurance that all children are receiving the right services at the right time.



Appendix 1 - End of Year Financial Statement

	WSCB Core Budget	Training Delivery	SCR (ringfenced)	Partnership Fund (ringfenced)	Total
Expenditure					
Salaries*	164,474				164,474
Independent Chair	16,503				16,503
Serious Case Reviews and Case Reviews			10,225		10,225
Performance Resources	21,933				21,933
Administration and business costs	21,131				21,131
Training Expenditure (excluding salaries)		23,195			23,195
E-Academy (E-learning)		17,086			17,086
Partnership Fund Expenditure				0	
Total Expenditure	224,041	40,281	10,225	0	274,547

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%	-7,326				-7,326
Core training, Early Years and GP		-56,275			-56,275
Income from E-Learning		-17,500			-17,500
Serious Case Review Income					
Partnership Fund Income				-39,200	-39,200
Total income	-245,318	-73,775		-39,200	-358,293
Net Expenditure	-21,277	-33,494	10,225	-39,200	-83,746
Holding account b/f as at 1st April 2017	-12,510	-37,780	-37,585		-87,875
Holding account as 31st March 2018	-33,787	-71,274	-27,360	-39,200	

* Savings of £40,000 have been made against long-term sickness absence by the WSCB Training Officer

Appendix 2 - Headlines from the Data¹

1. Contacts, Referrals & Assessments

The Family Front Door receives all initial Contacts to answer questions about children or to receive reports or child protection concerns. Management decisions on Contacts are consistent with 98% now dealt with within 72 hours.

- There were just over 10,000 Contacts to the Family Front Door in the full year, an increase of 10% on last year². Percentages of Contacts by source are: Police 51%, Schools 14%, Health 12%, Individual 6%, Local Authority Services 5%, Others 12%.
- Percentages of Contacts by outcome are: Children's Social Care Referral 36%, Early Help 8%, No further action to Children's Social Care 55%.
- Repeat referrals within 12 months have increased slightly to 22% (last year was 20%).
- There were approximately 5,000 Social Work Assessments (including repeat assessments) completed with the following outcomes: 73% case closed to Children's Social Care (these include those that have stepped down to Early Help and Targeted Family Support), 14% went on to Child in Need Plans, 12% forwarded to a Section 47 Assessment, and 1% became a Looked After Child.
- Percentage of Social Work Assessments completed within time scale increased to 73% (last year was 68%), with February and March at 85% indicating an improving trend.

2. Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can be provided to a child and family by a single agency or a group of agencies working together, particularly when a child or family has multiple and complex needs. All families can access universal services, whatever their level of need.

- Within the 2018 Service Improvement Plan is the need for an improved robust dataset that will provide consistent and accurate early help information. This is currently work in progress.

3. Children with a Child In Need Plan

A Child in Need (CIN) is one that has been assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as being unlikely to maintain a reasonable level of health or development or whose health or development is likely to be impaired without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

- The number of children with open CIN Plans has reduced to 695 (last year was 795) which reflects focused work undertaken to review cases that had been drifting without intervention. However in year 2018/19 the number of CIN Plans is increasing in line with the service approach to support families using non-oppressive practice where possible and to ensure that there is a consistent application of the Child Protection threshold for intervention

4. Children with a Child Protection Plan

Children require a Child Protection Plan if they are judged to be suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. An Initial Child Protection Conference will be convened within 15 days of a Strategy Meeting³ to plan how to safeguard the child. If the Child Protection Conference considers that the child is at continuing risk of significant harm they will be made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

¹ There were a number of changes made to the data collection methods in 2017/18 to ensure better monitoring of performance. This will have impacted on the data provided.

² This includes a number of Domestic Abuse incidents which were included in the data set for a short period of time in 2017/18

³ A strategy meeting is held to share information and agree the conduct and timing of any investigation.

Children with a Child Protection Plan are considered to be in need of protection from either neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse, or a combination of these. The Plan details the main concerns for the child, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns and by whom, and how professionals and the family and child will know when progress is being made.

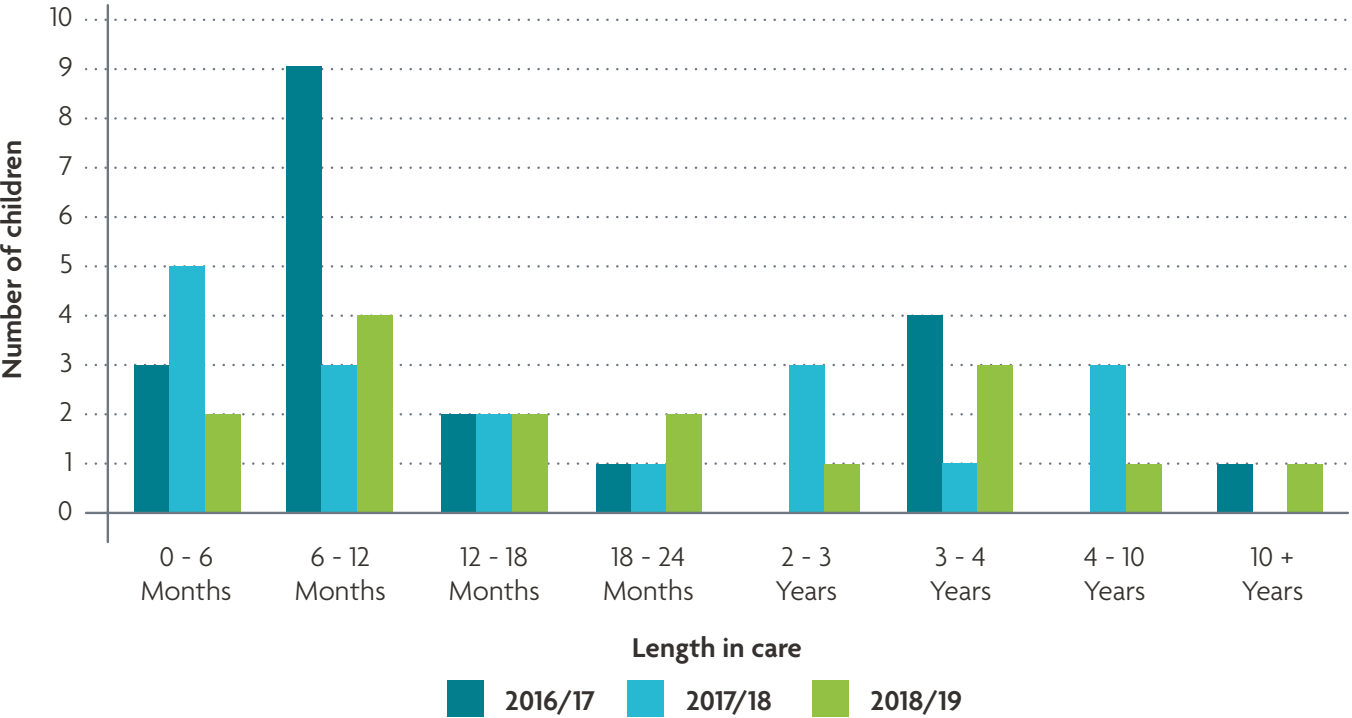
- Number of children with a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 415 (last year was 526). This reduction reflects the post Ofsted safeguarding work undertaken to improve assessments of risk and minimise drift and delay in case work.
- Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for longer than 18 months has reduced to 7 (last year was 19)
- The rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 has reduced to 36 (last year was 45, national rate was 43)
- Initial Child Protection Conference timeliness improved significantly to 75% (last year was 49%).
- Review Child Protection Conference timeliness improved to 95% (last year was 92%)

5. Looked After Children

A child who is being looked after by the Local Authority is known as a child in care.

- The number of looked after children has increased to 798 (last year was 764). This increase is linked to the fact that for 23% of children whose Child Protection Plan ended it had been necessary to place them in local authority Care due to outcomes not being achieved on the Plan. On average 23% of children ceasing to be on a Child Protection Plan have become Looked After and 70% because the threshold for significant harm is no longer met.
- A new Edge of Care panel process and offer was introduced in May 2017 and at the end of the year this offer has supported 76 children to stay out of care. Edge of Care development is in the Service Improvement Plan.
- The number of new entrants to the care system in 2017/18 is lower than 2016/17 although the overall entry rate is higher than statistical neighbours and the national average
- There have been significant numbers of children and young people who have been in care for many years without a Permanency Plan which would remove their status as a looked after child, e.g. adoption. Practice has improved in this area by the addressing of drift and delay in permanency planning. The data shows increasing numbers of children now achieving permanency within 12 months of being received into care and a rise in those moving out after 18 months - 3 years.

Time children had been in care when they left care system



- The rate of looked after children per 10,000 has increased to 69 (last year was 66, national average was 62).

6. Children who are Care Leavers

As a care leaver, you can get Care Leaver Team service support from the age of 16 until 25 years

- There are currently 382 care leavers, of whom 88% are classed as 'in touch' with the service, 89% are known to be in suitable accommodation, for the majority of the others accommodation arrangements are not known.

7. Children in Private Fostering

A privately fostered child is defined as a child under the age of 16 (18 if disabled) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than the parent, a parent who is not the biological parent but has parental responsibility, a close relative such as a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent or step parent. A child who is looked after in their own home by an adult is not considered to be privately fostered.

- There were 15 private fostering arrangements in place in 2017/18 (last year was 9). 66% of fostering visits were within timescale.

The Board has been informed that the number of privately fostered children is lower than expected, in line with the national picture, suggesting that there is a lack of awareness of private fostering situations or of the need to notify them to the local authority. Since the report was drafted lead practitioners with responsibility for privately fostered children have been identified within Children's Social Care and there are developments in place to continue to raise awareness of what constitutes private fostering and the duty on professionals to notify the local authority of these children.

8. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are children who have travelled to the UK alone, or become separated from anyone with parental and/or care responsibilities for them. Children seek asylum because they have a genuine need for protection and are in search of safety. Under sections 17 and 20 of the Children Act 1989 local authorities have a duty to provide support to these children.

- 13 children were accepted as UASC during the year, all aged from 14-17 years. The total now placed in Worcestershire is 24, 17 of which are in foster care and 7 in semi-independent accommodation.

9. Children with a Disability

The Children with Disabilities Team offers services to those children and young people requiring additional resources in respect of their disability, where the disability has a profound impact on the child or young person's life. Other services available are those provided by health, education, play and youth services, as well as community resources provided by voluntary agencies.

- The number of children allocated to the Children with Disabilities Team remained steady at 413, with 298 being subject to a Short Breaks Plan, 67 on a Child in Need Plan, 30 being looked after and 5 on a Child Protection Plan.

10. Children Missing Education & Electively Home Educated

A child missing education is a school-age child who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by the local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home. Parents have the right to educate their children at home as long as they provide an education that is suitable for their child's needs and aptitudes. There is a requirement on local authorities to annually monitor the suitability of education provided to children educated at home. Schools have to inform their local authority if a child is removed from roll to be electively home educated (EHE) and the guidance has extended this requirement to academies and independent schools.

- The number of children registered as missing education has remained steady at approximately 130, with 90 of these still under current enquiry
- The number of children being electively home educated has increased to 694 (last year was 507). Both of these are a key focus for the County Council and a CME & EHE strategy is under development

11. Children at Risk of Offending

The Youth Justice Service aims to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people under the age of 18 by providing a variety of interventions and support. These can include preventative provisions and diversionary activities, so that young people can have more fulfilling lives, families are strengthened, and communities feel safer and more harmonious.

- 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.

12. Children and Mental Health

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides support to children and families where the young person is experiencing significant mental health difficulties. The team includes psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, mental health nurses, family therapists and therapeutic social workers.

- Referrals have remained constant for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in 2017/18 at 200 per month. The numbers on waiting lists for an initial appointment has remained steady at 293, whilst waiting times have increased slightly from 5.1 weeks in 2016/17 to 5.7 weeks this year.

13. Missing Children

The aim is to reduce the incidence of all children and young people going missing and if they do, to reduce the risk of them suffering harm and recover them to safety as soon as possible. We do this through partnership working, information sharing, problem solving and performance management. A child or young person will be categorised as 'Missing' when their whereabouts cannot be established and/or the circumstances are out of character and the context suggests the person is subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

- Fewer children are going missing compared to last year. However, there has been an increase in missing children incidents, now averaging 100 per month (last year was 80). 36% of these were children missing from local authority Care, compared to 64% missing from home.
- Percentage of return interviews held within 72 hours of the child being located decreased to 34% from 49% last year, however since the recruitment in February 2018 of three missing children officers performance has started to improve and this trend is expected to continue into next year.

14. Concerns about Adults who are in Positions of Trust

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) provides advice and manages the process for responding to concerns about adults who are in positions of trust because they work with children or young people. There is now a referral form in place which enables more transparency, accountability and ability to track cases. There is a need to implement a system which captures 'low level advice' via telephone calls so that patterns and trends can be identified.

The Board has received assurance during the year about the effectiveness of the LADO arrangements and supported the initiative to improve the quality of intelligence to strengthen the service provided going forward.

- Number of meetings held was 177 (last year 247)
- There have been 43 cases where the outcome was substantiated (data not held last year)
- Percentage of cases closed within 3 months was 60%

Appendix 3 - Glossary

CAFCASS	Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
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
EHE	Elective Home Education
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HWB	Health and Well-Being Board
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LAC	Looked After Child
LGA	Local Government Association
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
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
SUDIC	Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infants and Children
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
WFADA & SV	Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
WMP	West Mercia Police
WSAB	Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board
WSCB	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board
YJS	Youth Justice Service