

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

4 March 2020

**West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual/Closure Report:
April 2018 to June 2019**

**Report by Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding
Children Board (WSSCB)**

Summary

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) Annual Report intentionally coincides with the cessation of the WSSCB as a statutory body and exceptionally spans a 15-month period from 1st April 2018 - 30th June 2019.

The Annual Report describes the WSSCB's work to deliver against its priority business areas, improvement plans and examines how the partnership is safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in West Sussex.

The focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to consider the report, and to comment on whether any further scrutiny is required. This includes the successes and areas for improvement for the newly formed West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) which replaced the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) in June 2019. The Committee could also consider the key messages for partner agencies and West Sussex County Council.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The WSSCB Annual and Closure Report (April 2018 to June 2019) describes the WSSCB's work to deliver three priority business areas and also examines multi-agency service provision to children from early help services through to child safeguarding and protection, including children who are looked after in West Sussex. It references key achievements and also highlights future challenges faced by the newly formed West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 During 2018-19 key multi-agency safeguarding initiatives and achievements included:

- Development of new statutory local safeguarding children partnership arrangements; these arrangements were presented to the Select Committee in June 2019. Three lead partners: Sussex Police, Health (CCGs) and the Local Authority are responsible for ensuring that arrangements meet local needs.
- The ground-breaking Young People at Risk pilot was further developed to support the most complex and vulnerable adolescents in West Sussex. Particular focus was placed on the reduction of children going missing, recognising that this heightens their vulnerability to criminal and sexual exploitation. A 25% reduction in missing episodes for this cohort was realised between August 2018 and June 2019.
- Operation Encompass was successfully rolled out across West Sussex following a pilot in the Crawley area by Sussex Police, assisted by the Safeguarding in Education Team. Sussex Police reported that Operation Encompass was rolled out to 338 schools across West Sussex (which represents 97% of applicable schools). The pilot delivered timely sharing of information between police and schools about children who were present when the police attended a domestic abuse incident; enabling schools to provide appropriate early support to children. Sussex Police's evaluation of its impact is awaited.
- The Safeguarding Team for the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) provided a positive annual report to the WSSCB about the impact on practice following the first year's provision of a full-time Named Nurse for the West Sussex Locality and an Associate Director of Safeguarding to represent the SPFT at a strategic level to drive support for the child and their family's mental health and wellbeing.
- The launch of the Collaborative Working Agreement (CWA) in June 2019 between West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board, West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, and Safer West Sussex Partnership. The CWA aims to work coherently to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of all residents of West Sussex and safeguard children, young people and adults, particularly those who are most vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
- The formation of the Neglect Work Group in Spring 2019, to address concerns raised by the partnership and Ofsted's report of February 2019¹, to ensure that front-line practice improved.
- An improvement plan to address areas for Board development saw the development of a strategy for engaging with children, which was co-produced with children and young people and the production of a Board performance data set.

2.2. The WSSCB annual/closure report acknowledged unprecedented challenges in 2018-19:

¹ Ofsted Inspection of WSCC's Children's Services on 25th February 2019, published 8th May 2019

- The impact of the Ofsted report and its immediate and future implications for the partnership, including consideration of how best to work collaboratively to support the Local Authority's Children First Practice Improvement Plan.
- The need to deliver a consistently committed and engaged partnership with a shared sense of vision and purpose.
- For the WSSCP to demonstrate impact of its multi-agency safeguarding work to deliver improved outcomes for our children, young people and their families and that the new partnership is able to show how it has been effective. Critical to achieving this will be hearing the voice of children and young people to inform all of the WSSCP's work - from strategic planning through to front-line practice improvement.

3. Resources

3.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

4. Issues for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the Annual Report; there is a statutory requirement to produce a report describing the WSSCP's activity. The Committee is asked to consider this report, and whether there are any areas for further scrutiny.
- 4.2 To support the three lead partners to move the new partnership forward and deploying the new WSSCP arrangements to address deficits and build on successful multi-agency work.
- 4.3 There has been a focus by the partnership on tackling neglect and this has intensified since the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services. Partners have demonstrated a strong commitment to progressing this work and have robust action plans in place to drive improvement. The voice of children, young people and practitioners have informed the launch of a new Neglect Strategy and toolkits to improve practice. These are being rolled out on a multi-agency basis and a Neglect Impact Framework has been drawn up to allow the Partnership to measure the impact of the changes.
- 4.4 The WSSCP ask the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee to consider the following key messages:
- The importance of promoting the work of the new Child Safeguarding Partnership arrangements and ensuring it delivers fully on its commitment to listen to the voice of children, young people and their families to improve outcomes and service provision across West Sussex.
 - The need to support and promote the Collaborative Working Agreement to further strengthen and develop a joined-up approach to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Adults Safeguarding Board, Districts and Boroughs and our Community Safety Partnerships.

- The ongoing need to improve our links with the community in relation to safeguarding children locally.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This retrospective report was co-written by and in consultation with partner agencies. There is no further requirement for consultation as part of this retrospective scrutiny exercise.
- 5.2 The report has been reviewed by the Children Service's Senior Leadership Team who acknowledged the content of the report but felt that there is a need for a stronger emphasis on the impact and improvement that services provide for children. This will be addressed in forthcoming reports.

6. Risk Management Implications and Mitigations

- 6.1 The original report was fully risk-assessed, and no further consideration is necessary as part of this retrospective scrutiny exercise.

7. Other Options Considered

- 7.1 Not applicable. The WSSCP has a statutory requirement to produce an annual report.

8. Equality Duty

- 8.1 The WSSCP annual/closure report content is compliant with partner agencies' responsibilities under the Equality Duty; no further consideration is necessary as part of this retrospective scrutiny.

9. Social Value

- 9.1 The report describes and evidences the social value of partner's activity throughout the county.

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 10.1 None.

11. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 None.

Lesley Walker

Independent Chair, West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Contact: Jon Brydon WSCC Head of Safeguarding, Family Operations
Mob: 07715 603737

Appendix A: WSSCB annual/closure report 2018-19.

Background Papers: None.