

Health and Wellbeing Board
24 January 2019
West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017-18
Report by Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board

Summary

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) Annual Report is presented as a means of highlighting the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to consider the Report, and to comment on whether any further scrutiny is required. It is recommended:

- (1) That the Board considers the successes and areas for improvement for the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) in 2017-18.
- (2) That the Board consider the WSSCB's Key Messages for partner agencies and West Sussex County Council.
- (3) Endorse this report and:
- (4) As partner agencies consider the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board's key messages in line with the new Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy (currently in consultation) the Health and Wellbeing Board is requested to support the development of a protocol between the Safeguarding Children's Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Safer Sussex Partnership to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration.

1. Background and Context

1.1. The WSSCB Annual Report 2017-18 was prepared by an Independent Chair and Board Manager covering a period in which neither post holder was in situ. The report 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 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 Board.

2. Proposal

2.1 During 2017-18 key multi-agency safeguarding initiatives and achievements included:

- A positive focussed visit by Ofsted to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) noted that significant progress had been made by "a good range of partners, including early help, housing, domestic abuse services, police, health and the designated officer".
- The Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service went live in 2017. The vision of this whole system partnership is to create a safe, connected and affordable system of prevention and Early Help.
- Publication of a Harvard University report, based on a fact-finding visit, recognised West Sussex as a leading provider nationally of early help interventions to vulnerable families and children. The Government subsequently confirmed West Sussex as a leading county in delivering services to vulnerable families under the national intervention programme: 1,939 families have now achieved sustainability since the programme began in 2012.
- Pause is a national programme which works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. Pause West Sussex went live in September 2017. 22 women successfully engaged with the programme. West Sussex believes that as result, 20 babies who would otherwise have been predicted to have entered the care system remained with their families.
- The ground-breaking Young People at Risk pilot was developed to support the most complex and vulnerable adolescents in West Sussex. Whilst the number of children involved in the pilot was small at 15, it achieved successful outcomes for a third of the group in reducing missing episodes and for two thirds there was improved placement stability.
- Operation Encompass was successfully piloted in the Crawley area by Sussex Police, assisted by the Safeguarding in Education Team. 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. It is now being rolled out across Sussex.
- The Safeguarding team for the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) became operational providing 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.
- An ambitious training and awareness raising programme delivered by the partnership included a Pan Sussex safeguarding week (November 2017) and Conferences featuring national experts in their field (e.g. the Neglect and Fabricated and Induced Illness Conferences). During 2017-18 Districts and Boroughs and West Sussex Community Safety led on training provision to the night-time economy around Child Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation, radicalisation and serious

organised crime. Around 1000 taxi drivers and operators have received training to date (March 2018) to help them to identify and report signs of exploitation to Sussex police.

2.2. The WSSCB annual report acknowledged key challenges in 2017-18:

- Ensuring effective multi-agency collaboration requires consistent commitment and engagement in WSSCB related activities across the partnership, with a shared sense of vision and purpose.
- Our partners voiced the need to recognise resource limitations and focus our new Child Safeguarding Partnership arrangements accordingly and to demonstrate impact and positive outcomes for our Children and Young People and their families.
- Building relationships to enable alignment of work across our wider partnerships, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Adults Board to optimise our collective resource deployment. This would ensure that partners connect with the Child Safeguarding Partnership to respond to challenges including the current funding landscape, coupled with population growth and increased pressure on services in West Sussex.
- The need to demonstrate that Board activity was effective and able to use information, intelligence and data to inform its priorities and monitor performance and the impact of its work.
- Ensuring that the WSSCB understood and responded dynamically to harmful practices, which include female genital mutilation, honour based violence and forced marriage. During 2018-19 the Board will work with partners to develop a robust multi-agency Exploitation Strategy which articulates our response to harmful practices as well as all forms of Criminal Exploitation including County lines and Child Sexual Abuse.

3. Our priority areas for multi-agency action 2018-19

3.1 The WSSCB Business Plan will continue to focus on three priority areas:

- Prevention and protection of children at risk of or experiencing neglect
- Prevention and protection of children from exploitation and abuse
- Children's emotional well-being and mental health

Provision of early help to Children, Young People and their families is an additional WSSCB priority as a thread which runs through the 3 headline priorities.

3.2 The WSSCB's work will cease in mid-2019: plans during 2018-19 will commence to drive forward a new local multi-agency model to safeguard children. The purpose of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) arrangement is to oversee multi-agency plans and strategies to protect children and safeguard their welfare. The LSCP will be led by three named safeguarding partners: Sussex Police, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Local Authority – as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and new statutory guidance requirements set out under Working Together to Safeguard Children, published in July 2018.

The LSCP will review progress and assess strengths and areas for development in the local child safeguarding system. This analysis will inform the priorities and will contribute to an annual report on progress made delivering the LSCP's business plan.

4. Key messages for partner agencies

4.1 The WSSCB annual report includes our messages for partner agencies to take forward in their work in 2018-19:

- We recognise and value the strength of partner engagement with the WSSCB. The delivery of services in partnership is a challenge, and a priority for the coming year has to be improving our ability to work together, particularly in relation to our key priorities: the neglect, exploitation and mental health of the children we serve, as well as embedding learning from our Child Death and Serious Case reviews.
- We must ensure we are clear about our individual responsibility and accountability for improving services in order to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people in West Sussex.
- To improve our services we must ensure we embed a culture of listening to children, young people and their families about their experiences of support and how we can best support them in the future.

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Appendix: WSSCB annual report 2017-18.

Background Papers: None