

## **Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**4 June 2020**

### **Practice Improvement - Neglect**

#### **Report by Executive Director for Children, Young People and Learning**

### **Summary**

Significant work has taken place in Children's Services to improve our response to children experiencing neglect. In line with the Practice Improvement Plan, the Neglect Strategy has been refreshed and relaunched, supported by the development of a Neglect Toolkit, Impact Framework and dataset. These developments were informed by consultation with children and young people and the views of multi-agency practitioners. A clear governance framework is in place, both at a partnership and individual agency level to oversee this work and drive the necessary improvements in practice.

The focus is now on embedding these changes in practice across the partnership. Children's social care, along with all partners has a dedicated neglect action plan which specifies the mandatory tools to be used by practitioners. The impact of this will be tested in a multi-agency audit scheduled for July and scrutiny event planned for September 2020.

#### **The focus for scrutiny**

The Committee is invited to scrutinise the work undertaken, and to assure itself that the measures outlined will result in satisfactory outcomes in relation to the key improvement issues and performance indicators set out in Section 5 of the report.

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

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Background and Context**

- 1.1 The impact of neglect on children and young people is significant and is a key priority for the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP). Nationally and locally neglected children represent the largest proportion of children on child protection plans. (West Sussex: April 2020: 62.5%). Neglect is also a significant factor in children supported under early help and child in need plans.
- 1.2 The Ofsted inspection of children's services (February 2019) identified serious weaknesses in the provision of services to support, protect and care

for children, particularly those living in neglectful circumstances. Whilst the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) had developed a Neglect Strategy (2016) and identified neglect as a priority in its business plan (2016 -19), a review by the new Chair highlighted that there was limited evidence that key elements were embedded in practice and improving outcomes for children. Furthermore, there was no detailed assessment of the impact of the work undertaken by the Board. The Board review and Ofsted findings in February 2019 led to a shared agreement that there was an urgent need to drive multi-agency improvement using the Partnership as the vehicle to achieve this. A multi-agency Neglect Working Group was established, chaired by the Independent Chair, to oversee this work.

- 1.3 The quality of social work practice and the local authority response to children experiencing neglect has been a key component of the Practice Improvement Plan; this has been the driver to inform work completed within children’s social care (CSC), including collaboration with the WSSCP in the launch of the Neglect Strategy and the development of a neglect action plan specific to improving practice in children’s social care.
- 1.4 The updated Practice Improvement Plan outlines 3 key improvement areas in relation to neglect:

1.3	With the Safeguarding Children Partnership (formally Children Safeguarding Board) update and launch of Neglect strategy, including a focus on prevention and Early Help.	April 2020	<b>Deputy Director of Children’s Services</b>
1.4	Social Care to have a dedicated neglect action plan to address key areas including implementation of mandatory tools for neglect.	March 2020	<b>Deputy Director of Children’s Services</b>
1.5	Undertake a multi-agency audit of neglect cases to result in an agreed range of actions across the partnership. Audit to address: the promptness of identification, the use made of historical information, the extent to which there is an analysis of the impact of neglect on the child and the robustness of actions to improve outcomes.	July 2020	<b>Assistant Director Safeguarding, Quality and Practice</b>

1.5

## **Narrative of Work undertaken on Neglect to date**

### **2. Project Workplan**

- 2.1 Given the importance of this work, a Neglect Working Group was established in June 2019, chaired by the Independent Chair. The project workplan includes five key strands:
- *Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People*
  - *Hearing from Practitioners*
  - *Refreshing the Neglect Strategy and Developing Agency Action Plans*
  - *Developing a range of Agreed Practice Tools*
  - *Developing a Dataset and Impact Framework to Measure the Impact of the Work*
- 2.2 Single agency action plans were signed-off by each agency's director or equivalent and all agencies have established their own internal governance mechanisms to drive forward and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. Formal reporting on a quarterly basis to the Neglect Working Group ensures ownership and accountability, with additional peer on peer scrutiny and challenge provided by the group and independent Chair. There has been an excellent demonstration of commitment and a real energy to achieve change and improve the response and practice for children and their families.

### **Workstream Updates**

#### **2.3 Hearing the Voice of Children and Young People**

- i) This element of the project involved speaking directly to children, young people and their families who had been the subject of a child protection plan for neglect, about their experiences of services and how these can be improved.
- ii) The key findings highlighted young people's views about the importance of the role of social workers in protecting them. Also, the importance of schools, particularly as a safe place for them to share their worries and feelings. However, it also highlighted the disruption caused by multiple changes of social worker, with some young people not knowing the name of their social worker and describing how they felt "left" when a social worker left their role with the child. Most significantly, the project uncovered that many of the young people did not know they had been the subject of a child protection plan and they had not been involved in or aware of planning to keep them safe.
- iii) The summary report was presented to the Neglect Working Group and agreed by the Steering Group in March 2020. The findings from this report will be published by the WSSCP and are being shared at the Neglect Strategy launch events. Two flyers have also been designed to highlight key messages, one for social workers and one for multi-agency professionals.
- iv) Each agency has been asked to update their action plans where required, to evidence how they are addressing the findings. In short, all agencies must evidence how they are communicating with children and young people and when they are subject of a child protection plan, where age appropriate, ensure they are empowered to take part in safety planning.

## **2.4 Hearing from Practitioners**

- i) Consultation with practitioners involved hearing from a range of professionals to capture their views on barriers to effective interventions and ideas about how to improve responses to neglect.
- ii) Their views about the failure to embed the previous strategy, Howe model and the Neglect Identification Measurement Tool (NIMT) were invaluable and helped to inform the development of the new strategy, tools and agency action plans. Additionally, it informed the rollout of the strategy and toolkits and led to agencies appointing “Neglect Champions” to assist in promoting the expectations and improvements required, embedding good practice and providing practice leadership. Most importantly, it directly led the Partnership to stop the use of the NIMT and develop a new toolkit focused on capturing, understanding and assessing the lived experience of the child.

## **2.5 Refreshing the Neglect Strategy and Developing Agency Action Plans**

- i) This element focused on developing the Partnership Neglect Strategy, with the aim of setting out clear expectations of how social workers and other professionals should work with children to understand the child’s lived experience. It required each agency to develop an individual action plan to improve their response to neglect using 4 strategic objectives:
  - Recognise
  - Respond
  - Quantify
  - Evaluate
- ii) Each agency is required to “RAG rate” progress against their action plan. All agencies provided their first action plan summary report and RAG rated action plan to the February 2020 meeting of the Neglect Working Group.
- iii) The Strategy, Neglect Matrix and Practice tools were signed off at the January 2020 Partnership Steering Group and published on the WSSCP webpage to ensure their accessibility to all staff. The partnership commenced the rollout of the strategy and tools in February 2020, with the aim of reaching over 800 multi-agency practitioners. Each agency also committed to additional rollout events within their own agencies to ensure workforce wide awareness of expectations.

## **2.6 Developing a Range of Practice Tools**

- i) A review was completed of the NIMT and other tools used by both CSC and wider professionals.
- ii) Practitioner and agency feedback led to a decision to stop the use of NIMT and replace it with more suitable child-focused tools, that provide detailed information about the child’s lived experience. It was agreed that all professionals would adopt the “day in my life” tools to elicit what day to day life is like for children. A needs analysis tool entitled, “so what do we know, next steps”, has been specifically developed to assist professionals to analyse the information gathered using the tools.
- iii) The importance of the chronology has been reinforced as a critical tool to gain an understanding of the family’s history. It is expected that all

professionals working with children, where they have an ongoing involvement with the family, will complete a chronology and use the information analytically to inform assessments, plans and reviews.

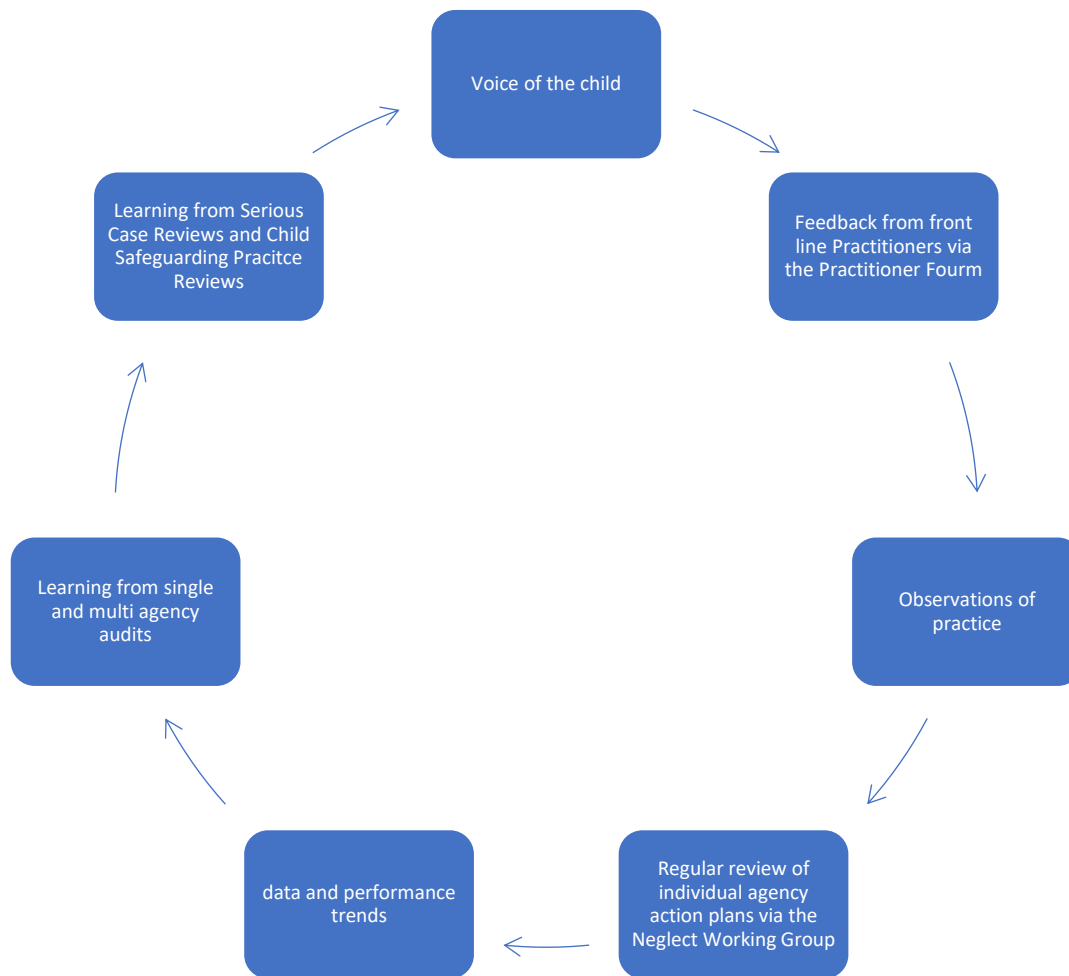
iv) It is mandatory for social workers to use a chronology, the appropriate day in my life tool, an assessment checklist and a parent child observation tool (which helps form a view about children's relationships), when assessing and reviewing children's circumstances. Additionally, where the need is identified, a strengths and difficulties questionnaire must be completed to assess mental health.

## **2.7 Developing a Dataset and Impact Framework to Measure the Impact of the Work**

i) A specific dataset and Impact Framework have been designed to track and measure improvements in practice, (Appendices 1 and 2). The Impact Framework includes the formal updates on progress of individual agency action plans, including the RAG rating.

ii) The dataset was informed by a review of the work undertaken by other Safeguarding Children Partnerships, in particular the work of Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Partnership. In 2017, Cheshire West and Chester's neglect practice was inspected under the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) framework and their neglect dataset was acknowledged as good practice by Ofsted. In addition, other indicators have been added by partner agencies that were highlighted as priorities for practice improvement. Efforts have been made to ensure the dataset was collaboratively designed and that it aligned to the measures in the Improvement Plan.

iii) The purpose of the dataset is to provide a quarterly view of the impact of the strategic work on front-line practice and the experiences of children and their families. It is the intention that regular review of the dataset by the Neglect Working Group, will be complemented by the scrutiny events outlined in the Impact Framework. The Framework will form the basis for the pilot of the Partnership's first detailed scrutiny event and will focus on evidencing whether the desired impact has been achieved by gathering information and evidence from the following sources:



iv) This scrutiny process will commence in July 2020 with a multi-agency audit and will culminate in a multi-agency scrutiny event in September 2020, led by the independent Chair and Scrutineer. The plan is to embed this scrutiny approach into the Council’s Partnership Quality Assurance Framework, which is currently being updated. It will also form the model for ongoing scrutiny of our key business priorities as set out in the 2020-2022 business plan.

### **3. Children’s Social Care Update**

The CSC action plan has ensured a renewed focus and drive, with achievements including the following:

#### **3.1 Neglect Champions**

i) A group of 24 neglect champions has been established across the whole service to support and embed the implementation of the strategy and use of the four mandatory tools. The champions were included in the testing process for the toolkit and have led the development of neglect workshops, team briefings as well as providing tailored support to individual teams and practitioners.

### **3.2 Development of Toolkit and Practice Standards**

i) With the recent introduction and implementation of CSC Practice Standards and a revised Quality Assurance Framework in April 2020, the service now has a clear benchmark which will inform and steer good practice. This is integral to supporting improvements in practice and achieving better outcomes for children and young people.

iii) The development of the CSC neglect toolkit has been modelled on good practice in other local authorities, ensuring it is fit for purpose and will support practitioners in improving the quality of assessments. A mandatory toolkit consisting of an assessment checklist, chronology, a day in the life of the child and parent / child observation has been introduced.

iv) The toolkit has recently been added to the Mosaic case recording system enabling a reporting mechanism on its use. As at 22/05/2020, the toolkit had been used in 191 cases. Feedback from staff in respect of the toolkit has been positive, with good examples shared of how it has helped practitioners to identify and understand areas of concern:

“With the younger children I encouraged them to draw pictures, for example, we spoke about who wakes them up in the morning and where their uniform is ....”

“With the older children the tool was used to understand their roles and responsibilities in the family. It became evident that they were young carers ....”

v) In the December 2019 Monitoring Visit, Ofsted commented that this tool is well embedded. However, as with all the neglect tools further work is required to ensure practitioners understand how their use should inform planning in respect of children.

vi) In March 2020, the impact chronology was revised and re-launched within the service. Performance data shows increasing use of the impact chronology with 1,256 being completed the week ending 18 May 2020, compared to 150 the week ending 24 April 2020.

vii) Celebrating good practice is also being recognised and a link has been developed on the CSC 'Point' where good practice examples can be shared.

### **3.3 Training and Implementation**

i) The planned WSSCP neglect conferences were the intended launch of the Neglect Strategy, with follow-up workshops planned specifically for CSC staff, led by the neglect champions.

ii) The WSSCP neglect events undertaken so far have predominantly been attended by the neglect champions who also attended an event in February 2020, facilitated by Research in Practice on adolescent neglect. The latter was also attended by residential staff.

iii) Prior to the WSSCP briefings being cancelled children's services accounted for 42% of the attendees. Virtual training events are now planned from 1 June and managers from across CSC have been identified to attend to support them in embedding the Neglect Strategy and toolkit within their teams.

iv) Feedback gathered from the service in April 2020 identified a lack of confidence in using the neglect toolkit. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has impacted on the numbers of staff being trained. However, the roll-out of a mandatory e-learning course commenced on 1 May 2020 to replace the face to face workshops that had been planned. A training event is also being delivered on

the effective use of chronologies. There will be a focus on how to bring learning back into reflective discussions within supervision to ensure learning is embedded in practice.

v) To ensure a continued focus on workforce development a Children First rolling programme of training was launched on 1 April 2020, with an emphasis on 'what good looks like'. This will be included in the Children's Services Learning Pathway for all new staff and links will feature in the induction handbook. The aim being to strengthen practice for all children, including those experiencing neglect.

### **3.4 Quality Assurance Audit**

i) An audit focused on neglect was completed in August 2019. Analysis from the 49 children's case files audited identified a few areas requiring improvement, including drift and delay influenced by a lack of robust management oversight.

ii) A more recent audit has been undertaken (December 2019) focusing on children subject to child protection plans for 15+ months. Whilst not specific to neglect, it is pertinent that 18 of the 27 children audited were in this cohort.

iii) A difference in the auditing tool used creates some challenge in clear comparison. However, analysis in the December audit demonstrated that key areas of improvement were comparable to the August audits. Whilst drift remained prevalent in some cases, (particularly historically), there was a marked improvement (across all 27 of the audits) in the progression of more recent plans.

iv) The Council's quality assurance scrutiny continues to demonstrate that neglect must remain a priority, with the continued focus of all managers in driving practice improvement.

### **3.5 Legal Process**

i) The response to neglected children subject to pre-proceedings and care proceedings will be tracked by a newly appointed Court Progression Officer, to ensure that they don't experience drift. The approach to pre-proceedings has been revised and is scheduled for implementation in May 2020.

### **3.6 Pre-birth Guidance**

i) Pre-birth guidance specific to CSC has been updated and was agreed in April 2020. A West Sussex multi-agency Pre-Birth Protocol has also been developed and each partner agency is currently taking it through their governance structures for sign-off.

### **3.7 Voice of the Child**

i) Voice of the child workshops are being delivered across the service as part of the wider workforce development programme and the application of 'what good looks like'. The auditing process will help measure this through the audit itself and, where appropriate, direct feedback from the child. The key messages from the Voice of the Child work will be reinforced with staff and a flyer has been developed to support this. The importance of continuity of



social worker is recognised and the recruitment and retention of social workers remains a priority.

ii) Improved case transfer processes between teams within children's social care is a current priority. A Step Across Panel with Early Help is minimising the risk of families experiencing a 'start again approach'. The shared use of the 'day of the life' tool across the partnership will also offer a consistent approach when working directly with children, enabling exploration of their lived experience and the impact of this.

#### **4. Resources**

4.1 The work described has been undertaken within the existing resources of the Practice Improvement team in Children's Services, in collaboration with a range of stakeholders of the service.

#### **5. Issues for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee**

##### **Key Improvement Issues (including actions being addressed)**

5.1 Agencies have stepped up to demonstrate their commitment to improving multi-agency practice in relation to neglect. To summarise, the Partnership has:

- Worked with multi-agency frontline practitioners to hear their feedback and used this to inform all aspects of the strategy, toolkits and rollout of training.
- Revised and relaunched the Neglect Strategy in January 2020.
- Devised and launched a mandatory toolkit for social workers and other professionals to improve the recognition, response and assessment of neglect.
- Ensured individual agency action plans exist to drive forward the work.
- Ensured progress against action plans is reported quarterly using an impact-based reporting template and RAG rating.
- Undertaken the voice of the child project, published the findings and developed flyers to spread the key messages.
- Developed a multi-agency roll out of the strategy, toolkits, voice of child findings and learning from a neglect focused Serious Case Review, supported by multi-agency training and mandatory e-learning for all staff in CSC.
- Developed a dataset to measure progress and highlight emerging themes.
- Developed an Impact Framework to measure the impact of this work.
- Scoped a neglect audit in July 2020 and a scrutiny event in September 2020, to be led by the Independent Scrutineer involving multi-agency audit, data analysis, observation of practice and the voice of children and young people and practitioners.

5.2 It is equally important to reflect on the work being undertaken by individual agencies as reported in their RAG rated Action Plan Summary Reports:

- Most of the lead agencies are using their neglect champions to develop training, awareness and practice improvement.

- Several agencies have already completed practice audits within their own agencies.
- Education has already trained over 200 school designated safeguarding leads specifically in the use of the Howe model and the neglect tools and these leads have been mandated to cascade this training to all staff in their own settings. They have also raised awareness of neglect in drama productions in schools to aid recognition.
- The Police have circulated 60 second briefings to all staff on recognising the signs of neglect and the required response and have undertaken work to ensure neglect is being appropriately addressed as a crime across Sussex. All staff are expected to record the views of children and young people as part of any contact and this is monitored and audited.
- Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust has highlighted to all staff the need to improve the recognition and response to neglect. It is scaling confidence in working with neglect and has a clear package to provide specific neglect ½ day sessions for each locality.
- West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group has developed a new case discussion form for neglect cases.
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has undertaken a baseline initial analysis of practitioner's confidence in working with neglect and amended its Level 3 training (all clinical staff) and Level 3 specialist (ChYPS) has been amended to include more specific work on neglect.
- In Early Help staff training records evidenced that 64% of the Early Help Workforce have attended a 1-day neglect training course, an increase of 22% since the beginning of the year. The service has completed a repeat thematic audit for neglect and is disseminating the findings. There has been positive written feedback from staff about how the tools have assisted their assessments.
- The Community and Voluntary Sector has been engaged in specific interactive sessions on recognising and responding to neglect.

## **Challenges**

The following areas are proving challenging, particularly due to the impact of Covid-19. However, there is a clear plan to address this.

### **5.3 Rollout and Training in Respect of the Strategy and Toolkit**

i) The multi-agency rollout and training was planned to train 800 staff initially, starting in February 2020, with the wider workforce being trained by individual agencies as outlined in their action plans. All multi-agency sessions were fully booked. Unfortunately, at the point Covid-19 hit, only 4 sessions had occurred, so the Partnership had trained only 180 of the planned 800 staff.

ii) It is important to note that, the sessions that have occurred have been rated highly and the feedback has been extremely positive. Mentimeter was used in each of the sessions to provide real time data on reported confidence and knowledge levels at the beginning and end of each session. Additionally, there was a facility for participants to offer any other feedback.

iii) Of the participants that voted all showed:

- An increase in their awareness of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- An increase in confidence in recognising and responding to neglect.
- Awareness of where to find the tools.
- Increased confidence in using the tools.

iv) Staff commented that:

*"Having used the tools elsewhere it is good to see them being integrated into multi agency working and the joint responsibility we have"*

*"Useful to have it outlined how all agencies can work together to build a more thorough assessment"*

*"The tools are going to be really useful to use with families and children"*

v) Plans to continue to deliver the Neglect Strategy launch sessions virtually have taken a little time to organise due to the need for these to be interactive but these are due to commence on 1 June. Neglect champions and frontline managers will be prioritised for the virtual training and supported to deliver to their teams and help frontline practitioners embed the neglect tools into their practice.

#### **5.4 Populating and Using the Dataset to Measure Impact**

i) The dataset recently agreed by the Partnership, (Appendix 1) has proved challenging to populate. The adoption of "the day in my life tools" in January 2020 has required changes to the case recording system to capture data regarding use of the toolkit. This will be available from May 2020. Additionally, some agencies are struggling to provide data for this quarter due to operational demands as a result of Covid-19. Where there are gaps in reporting, assurance has been sought from the relevant agencies, that the key data will be available for the next quarter.

#### **5.5 Key Performance Indicators**

See attached dataset, (Appendix 1). Pressure on some agencies has prevented a full update on a number of the indicators. This is explored in the report. The most recent review of the dataset has highlighted the following emerging themes:

- 35.7% of children on child in need (CIN) plans for neglect have been open for more than 12 months. This could potentially be a sign of drift and delay in the planning and interventions for this cohort of children.
- There has been a slight (4%) rise in the number of children that have been the subject of repeat child protection (CP) plans due to neglect in the past three years. This could be a sign of drift and delay for children on CP plans.
- There has been a decrease in numbers and percentages of children on child protection plans due to neglect and this requires further examination.
- The mean number of referrals between Dec 2019 - Feb 2020 was 3,024. Therefore, the low figure of 350 referrals where neglect is the presenting factor, is not representative. This requires further exploration.

- The increase in the number of CIN plans for more than 12 months requires further scrutiny, as does the rise in the numbers of children that have been the subject of repeat CP plans due to neglect in the past three years.
- These themes will be placed on the agenda for the next Improving Practice and Governance (IPAG) sub-group meeting to consider and agree next steps to explore these themes.
- Focused improvement work has commenced in the Family Support & Protection Teams and will continue until July 2020, which will provide a detailed analysis of practice, alongside coaching and mentoring of managers and social workers, emotionally and practically to improve practice and management. The findings of this work will be reported to the Improvement Board.

## **5.6 Evidence of Impact**

i) There is evidence of significant structured work occurring within agencies under the key strategic objectives, particularly "Recognise" and "Respond". There has also been extremely positive feedback from agencies and their staff about the tools and quantifiable evidence of improved awareness and confidence of staff in responding to neglect.

ii) However, having scrutinised the first quarter agency Neglect Action Plan summary reports and RAG rating at the end of February, it is also evident that many agencies were still establishing and finalising baselines to allow them to effectively measure the distance travelled and the impact of intervention for children. Equally, others were still collating and measuring the early impact of their work. For example, Community Health was collating the responses to its staff scaling questionnaire that it will use to test the levels of staff confidence in dealing with neglect and to chart progress over time. Moreover, Early Help has submitted a proposal to add 'neglect' as a category on Holistix to allow it to explicitly measure the distance travelled for children experiencing neglect.

iii) Additionally, the Neglect Working Group recognises the need to further develop messaging around this work across communities and a wider range of bodies in West Sussex to ensure appropriate identification and reporting of neglect. Sessions have been undertaken with the community and voluntary sector, with district and borough representatives and plans developed to engage community dentists, but the group is planning to communicate the strategy and key messages to an even wider audience

iv) In summary, while there is emerging evidence of the impact of the Partnership improvement work on the awareness and confidence of staff across the partner agencies, the impact on practice is still to be tested and the real difference for children and young people will need to be fully evidenced by audit, robust data and the scrutiny event outlined in the attached Impact Framework.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 Consultation is as set out in the Narrative section of this report (Section 2).

## **7. Risk Implications and Mitigations**

7.1 As set out in the Introduction to this report (Section 1), significant risk arises from the failure to identify and respond appropriately to children

experiencing neglect. This report outlines a comprehensive set of actions to mitigate this risk and improve the quality of practice.

## **8. Other Options Considered**

- 8.1 The imperative to respond to criticisms contained in the Ofsted report is explained in the Introduction. The approach set out in this report has benefited from substantial consultation and analysis as set out in Section 2.

## **9. Equality Duty**

- 9.1 The service recognises the primary importance of child safeguarding, sound family relationships, good parenting and the nurture of children to fulfil their potential. The provision of the service is based on need, as determined through formal assessment protocols. This need is not explicitly related to formally protected characteristics, but any such characteristic is and will continue, (as now) to be respected in compliance with equality principles, and taken into account in the way in which the service is delivered.
- 9.2 In terms of those with a protected characteristic, the service will ensure enablement and support across all relevant categories, and this will both continue and be enhanced through the Children First agenda.

## **10. Social Value**

10.1 The Children First agenda and measures for service recovery discussed in this report will directly support improved delivery of the West Sussex Plan priority to give every child the Best Start in Life. Enhancing the protection of young lives and support for family life will continue to build resilience and social capital and contribute towards stronger and more effective communities. The implementation of the service improvements will also respect sustainability principles in accordance with the County Council's strategic policies.

## **11. Crime and Disorder Implications**

11.1 There are positive implications for Sections 17, 37 and 39 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in the prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and in reducing offending and re-offending by young people, all of which are affected by the progress activity discussed in this report.

## **12. Human Rights Implications**

12.1 The County Council has an overriding duty to safeguard the Human Rights of children in need, and this has been recognised in the Children First agenda. The Council is mindful of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – The Right to Respect for Family and Private Life - and has taken relevant factors into consideration in preparing this report. The processing of personal and special category data is subject to the Council's Data Protection Act policies and procedures in relation to discharging the Council's and its partners' legal responsibilities.

12.2 The County Council is also mindful of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - which states that all children have the right to be consulted and to have their opinions heard on any decision that affects them.

Hearing, understanding and acting upon the voice and experiences of the child is a key design principle of the Children First service improvements.

**Lucy Butler,**

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1. Partnership Neglect Dataset

Appendix 2. Neglect Impact Framework

**Background Papers** None