

West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

26th January 2023

West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report October 2020 to March 2022

**Report by, Chris Robson, Independent Chairman, West Sussex
Safeguarding Children's Partnership**

Summary

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSSCP) is required to produce an annual report providing an overview of its key achievements against its business plan priorities.

Nationally Children's Safeguarding Partnerships are expected to submit the report to the Department of Education. Unfortunately, due to capacity issues within the WSSCP business team, we were unable to produce a report to cover the 2020/21 period. Therefore, this report is dated from October 2020 to March 2022 to account for the partnership's activities over this period.

The Health and Wellbeing Board does not have a role in approving or endorsing this annual report as it is a partnership document. It is being presented to the HWB for information as they are a key partner and the WSSCP activities aligns with Health and Wellbeing Strategy outcomes.

Recommendation(s) to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) To note the WSSCP progress in delivering business plan priorities.
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Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) is led by three Strategic Lead Partners: Police, Health and the Local Authority, whose role, functions, and operations are set out in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.
- 1.2 Statutory partnerships are required to work together as joint and equal partners to shape bespoke arrangements which respond to local need. [The Wood Review](#) of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements emphasises the need for strong leadership from partners.

- 1.3 Safeguarding children's partnerships are expected to set out safeguarding priorities based on local needs which are identified based on data and consultation with key priorities. The annual report provides an overview of the partnership's progress in delivering priorities over the previous year as well as identifying any gaps or evidence of emerging need which enables the setting of priorities for the upcoming year.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 In 2019, the WSSCP identified the three following priorities based on data and consultation with partners: neglect, exploitation, and strengthening of multi- agency safeguarding practice. In addition, the partnership also sets out three overarching priorities to improve how it functions. These include: 'Lead and consolidate effective partnership arrangements' and 'Revise and embed a Learning and Improvement Framework'.
- 2.2 The Annual report produced in 2020/21 outlined progress in delivering the priorities and confirmed that the priorities set out in 2021 were still the right one for the partnership, so these were rolled over to 2021/2022.
- 2.3 As outlined in the introduction to this report, there have been some capacity issues with the WSSCP business team which has had an impact on delivery. None the less, there is evidence of key achievements.

In addition to the activities undertaken to address neglect and exploitation, WSSCP identified that mental ill health and wellbeing was an emerging need and during 2020 undertook a number of actions to improve provision in this area.

- 2.4 Some of the key achievements to highlight include:
- **Neglect** - implemented a neglect strategy across all agencies in the partnership to improve practice, undertook a neglect scrutiny process and implemented a multi-agency training programme
 - **Exploitation** – undertook a child exploitation scrutiny process, started two safeguarding practice reviews related to exploitation and improved WSSCP's governance arrangements.
 - **Improving multi agency safeguarding practice** – worked with the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (WSSAB) to develop protocols to improve the movement of young people from children to adult services, supported the development of the Family Safeguarding Model and delivered the ICON project to disseminate safer sleeping messages.
- 2.4 During this time the WSSCP also worked very closely with statutory partners and colleagues in WSCC public health to develop interventions to address mental ill health and emotional wellbeing.

Mental ill health need increased across the country partly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

West Sussex was particularly affected. There was an increase in the number of children completing suicide during the report timeframe. In addition, data provided by the public health team showed that there was a significantly higher level of mental health need in the area compared with other areas in Sussex.

To address this, the partnership supported a number of mental ill health and emotional wellbeing interventions. This included supporting Operation Warren, a multi-agency response that included wrap-around support to at-risk children and undertaking several safeguarding practice reviews which included suicide.

2.5 An area of strength was the multiagency training program which saw 904 people from a range of organisations attending training in key subjects in line with the recommendations of safeguarding practice reviews, audits and scrutinise. Training evaluation found that of those who completed evaluation forms, 91% said that the training increased their confidence.

2.6 The annual report enabled the WSSCP to identify areas for the partnership to build on and a these will be taken forward as part of the Business Plan development process. The partnership plans to:

- Develop a series of impact measures to enable us to evidence the effect of our interventions and policies.
- Increase and improve our communications activities to ensure that a wider range of stakeholders attend and benefit from our extensive training programme.
- Develop and implement a voice and participation strategy to ensure that children and families can directly influence WSSCP work.

A WSSCP business plan is being developed in partnership with stakeholders which will set out clear objectives for 2023/24 and it will address some of the issues outlined above.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

3.1 The Annual report was developed in consultation with key stakeholders. This included the Heads of Safeguarding from across Police, Health and Children's Social Care and the Chairs of all the WSSCP subgroups. The report also went to the District and Boroughs for their input.

3.2 The report was also discussed at key WSSCP subgroups such as the Improvement and Assurance Group, the Learning and Development Group and the Steering Group. Membership of those groups includes

additional partners such as the voluntary sector and probation as well as representation from health, police, CAHMS and a range of WSCC departments

- 3.3 Data included in the report came from Children Social Care, Community Safety, Health and Public Health. Data leads from those organisations provided invaluable advice on how to present and interpret the data.

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Appendix: West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report October 2021 to March 2022.