

Health and Wellbeing Board

25 January 2022

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (Children and Adult's) Annual Reports 2020-21

For Assurance

1. Purpose

It is important that the Health and Wellbeing Board is sighted on the work, priorities, assurances or developments being progressed by the Safeguarding Partnership. Shared areas of interest and the opportunity for shared understanding have led to the Annual Report being presented as part of the routine interconnectivity and governance between the two boards.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board note the content of the Annual Reports.
- 2.2. That the Board consider, as part of future business, any opportunities for collaboration on joint issues.

3. Report detail

Children

- 3.1 Although this year has been challenging due to a pandemic, there continues to be evidence that children are safe in Walsall (data on page 8 of full report):
 - I. An appropriate reduction in referrals to MASH
 - II. Positive impact of Early Help services
 - III. Positive reductions seen in the number of children subject to child protection plans
 - IV. Positive increase of the number of families supported through the Family Safeguarding Model
- 3.2 Partnership focus on safeguarding has continued through regular meetings between statutory partners despite the challenges brought by the pandemic.
- 3.3 Attendance at multi-agency meetings has improved, particularly since they moved online. This virtual or blended approach allows for greater flexibility moving forward.
- 3.4 A successful bid to the TCE (Tackling Child Exploitation) Programme saw work with local colleagues begin to develop work in relation to community resilience and engagement and consider the role which the wider community can take in developing an effective, strategic all-age response to exploitation.
- 3.5 The CSA Strategy was updated and re-agreed by partners and an action plan developed.

- 3.6 The Neglect Strategy was revisited to bring a renewed focus.
- 3.7 Progress was made with the All-Age Exploitation pathway and included the development of an Exploitation Hub.
- 3.8 The multi-agency audit programme continued to obtain learning in order to improve practice and saw improvements in the case ratings.
- 3.9 During the year there were 5 multi-agency audits carried out, 4 were linked to the safeguarding partnership priorities and one (during quarter three) was in response to the 3.10 Parliamentary Under- Secretary of State for Children and Families request for assurance in respect of services to new-borns and infants during lockdown . In respect of the latter, all the children had been seen by the relevant multi-agency professionals with good recording regarding whether this was face to face or virtually. All case files audited had relevant risk assessments in place and PPE was utilised appropriately as required for in person contact. There was consistent evidence of good information sharing across agencies. Needs identified during assessment were being met and children and their families were being supported. Where risks had escalated, there was clear evidence that the appropriate actions had been taken to respond and consider these in a multi-agency forum, leading to an initial child protection plan for one infant.
- 3.11 Work has taken place to embed the SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) pathway, supported by SARC Lunch and Learn training sessions.
- 3.12 An independent review (by Penny Thompson, CBE) commissioned by the 3 statutory partners in Autumn 2020 to consider the first year of the new arrangements was a proactive and positive undertaking. The report commented on the committed and effective Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit and the openness, candour and self-reflection demonstrated by the partnerships leaders.
- 3.13 Approaching the end of the contract held by the previous Independent Chair (Liz Murphy) the statutory partners reflected on the independent scrutiny of the Safeguarding Arrangements and opted to re-appoint an Independent Chair. Recruitment took place in the early part of 2021 with the new post holder (Sally Hodges) commenced in April 2021.
- 3.14 **Areas for improvement or focus in 2021-22**
- I. To implement recommendations made by Penny Thompson in her independent review of the Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements, including creating an Executive Group and reducing the number of partnership priorities to provide more focus and impact.
 - II. To consider and implement recommendations from the Wood Review.
 - III. Progression and sign off the All-Age Exploitation Strategy.
 - IV. Revision and continued delivery of the Neglect Strategy.
 - V. To review the participation strategy to ensure we effectively engage with young people and practitioners and improve our communication with partners
 - VI. Implementation of the ICON Programme across Walsall
 - VII. Strengthen the links between the Family Safeguarding model and Walsall Safeguarding Partnership

- VIII. Develop a positive and productive relationship between Safeguarding Partnership and the Safer Walsall Partnership
- IX. Due to Covid-19 there was limited inspection activity of the statutory partners during this year. Once this re-commences the Partnership will be sighted on and respond to the respective findings.
- X. Track the impact that learning from our reviews and audits have had by carrying out a range of assurance activities and engaging with practitioners.
- XI. To embed Impact Evaluations across the Partnership as part of management oversight and supervisions.

Adult's

- 3.15 Despite the pandemic, there continues to be evidence of awareness of the safeguarding adults agenda as the number of safeguarding concerns that are being raised has increased from 2019-2020.
- 3.16 Adults continue to be consulted with and their desired outcome of the safeguarding concern captured, there are only a consistent low number of adults not asked their outcomes alongside a reduced number of outcomes not achieved. This can be due to outcomes not being realistic and unable to be achieved e.g. a police prosecution.
- 3.17 The numbers of individuals where a risk was identified, was reduced or removed was 82% (compared with 89.8% during 2019-2020) of cases showing positive outcomes for adults in Walsall.
- 3.18 The continuation of the Quality in Care Team has proved invaluable during the pandemic, ensuring homes have adequate personal protective equipment and access to regular advice and information from the team. This has ensured that care standards are monitored and improving. This was further evidenced through the Provider Collaboration Review carried out by change to; the Care Quality Commission during July 2020.
- 3.19 The Partnership held weekly Safeguarding Meetings in response to the pandemic to ensure a collective ownership and accountability of safeguarding practice, between Police, Health and Local Authority (adults and children) and regular key messages were developed and distributed to keep the wider workforce informed.
- 3.20 A variety of high quality learning opportunities were offered throughout the pandemic. The rapid lockdown meant that all planned learning had to move from face to face to virtual and this was managed very effectively. Given the additional pressures on partners as a result of the pandemic the engagement has been encouraging and we now have a wealth of recorded webinars on the website. A number of comments in the evaluations highlighted that those who attended would be cascading their learning to others so the learning is reaching further than the Partnership set out to.
- 3.21 Additionally, partners continued to contribute to multi-agency audits over the year which assisted in ensuring greater consistency of practice. Some engagement from partners was impacted by the pandemic including the vaccination roll out but enough multi-agency contributors made the audits worthwhile and provided quality assurance in key areas of the partnership work.

- 3.22 Progress was also made on reviewing forms and guidance, this included:
- I. A Review of the Adult Safeguarding Concern Form
 - II. Development and roll out of the Safeguarding Medication Guidance
 - III. Review of the Decision Making Support Tool
 - IV. Assurance exercises in relation to caused enquires and Position of Trust to begin to quality assure how partners are embedding these processes
- 3.23 Towards the end of the year WSP commissioned an Independent Review of its Arrangements, ensuring there was an equal voice for all partners. The purpose was to review the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Arrangements and the robustness of quality assurance arrangements.
- 3.24 However, there is still some work to do to ensure we are an effective learning system, this includes:
- I. Finalising and implementing an All-Age Exploitation Strategy
 - II. Completion and implementation of the multi-agency revised Self Neglect Pathway, Guidance & Governance structure
 - III. Implementing the findings from the WSP Review of its arrangements
 - IV. Capturing the views adults with care and support needs who have experienced safeguarding to shape strategy, planning and service delivery needs
 - V. Increasing the conversion rate of safeguarding enquiries through raising awareness and understanding of the legal framework within the partnership
 - VI. Contribute to embedding the Domestic Abuse Strategy for the Partnership
 - VII. Measuring the impact of reviews and audits has had on adult safeguarding practice
 - VIII. Embedding the new Learning Disability Partnership Board
 - IX. Embedding Impact Evaluations across the Partnership as part of management oversight and supervisions
 - X. Revisiting the Practice Improvement Strategy and Competency Framework, to explore any gaps in the learning and development offer
 - XI. Continue the quality assurance work on Caused Enquiries and Position of Trust

Looking Forward (2021-22):

- 3.25 We (WSP) have agreed a smaller set of priorities for the forthcoming year, these are focused on Adult Neglect, Child Neglect and All-Age Exploitation.
- 3.26 We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 and the increased service demand this may bring and look to reset the way we conduct our business by learning from good practice from this year and we will also focus on embedding our revised arrangements.

- 3.27 We will be further engaging with the voluntary and community sector to capture the views of adults with care and support needs. We will use this feedback to shape strategy, planning and service delivery.
- 3.28 We will also be closely tracking the impact that learning from our reviews and audits have had by carrying out a range of assurance activities and engaging with practitioners.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

- a. The requirements of the partnership arrangements are set out in the Care Act 2014 and Working Together 2018.
- b. The Business Unit which supports the arrangements is joint funded through the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and West Midlands Police.

5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

- 5.1 This annual report and the priorities and work of the Safeguarding Partnership has associations to all of the HWBB priorities, to a greater or lesser extent. The success or otherwise of safeguarding practice will directly impact on individuals abilities to achieve other positive outcomes sought by the HWBB (and Marmot principles), such as being ready to start school and access education, good mental health, making positive contributions to communities.
- 5.2 Safeguarding: This report is an overview of safeguarding partnership activity, assurance and priorities.

Background papers

The overview detailed above is taken from the full Annual Report for the Children's Safeguarding Partnership, which can be accessed on the WSP website [here](#), are embedded below and attached.



Safeguarding
Children's Annual Rep



Safeguarding Adult's
Annual Report 2020 -

Author

Sarah Barker – Safeguarding Partnership Business Manager
Organisation

☎ 01922 658409

✉ sarah.barker@walsall.gov.uk