

Tuesday 18th April 2023

7.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Childrens Services and Education

Report:

1. The Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) annual report provides an overview of multiagency safeguarding activity during the year 2021-2022 and reflects the efforts of partner agencies who have worked in collaboration to promote the welfare and safeguarding of the children and young people of Walsall.
2. The WSP has demonstrated its ability to provide effective leadership through a time of significant challenge following the impact of the pandemic. Some of the new ways of working required in the previous year have been retained by the partnership to better support our children, young people, and their families/carers.
3. In December 2020 Penny Thompson was commissioned by WSP to review the effectiveness of the partnership. The partnership maintained its focus during 2021-2022 on strengthening its multiagency arrangements by ensuring the system had:
 - a. Robust and streamlined governance structure to ensure effective focus for the respective children and adults safeguarding arrangements and where there were joint interests.
 - b. clearer line sight to frontline practice
 - c. increased connectivity to practice through practice reviews, audit and workforce development.
4. The WSP identified three priorities for progression, Neglect, Self-Neglect and All-Age Exploitation.
5. The children's safeguarding agenda nationally became subject to much criticism and scrutiny because of the events relating to the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. The WSP responded at pace to ensure the children's workforce were briefed of early findings.
6. Opportunity was taken to further look at the effectiveness of the WSP arrangements following the publication of the Wood Review of Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements published in May 2021. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was

completed with the development of a supporting action plan on areas of the partnership which required additional development.

7. WSP are required to assess the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements. This assurance was elicited through a range of activities undertaken across the year. This includes OFSTED Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services (ILACS) outcome, section 11 audit, feedback from service user experience and views of practitioners and measuring the impact from Walsall's child safeguarding practice reviews.
8. The WSP also considers the outcome of partner agency inspection and the implication on the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding system.
9. In May 2021 the CQC published its findings on key areas of practice inspected within the Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. The three domains assessed in the unannounced March 2021 inspection – safe, responsive and well-led – were rated as “Inadequate”; downgraded from “Requires Improvement.” The WSP will continue to seek assurance from health colleagues on its improvement plans.
10. The **WSP Performance data** has told us the following:
 - a. Early Help demand has increased in 2021 compared to 2019 and there remains a positive impact of Early Help services for children and families.
 - b. There has been a slight increase in referrals to MASH for period 1st April 21- 31st March 2022 compared to the same period in 2020/21 and remains appropriately lower than the previous year.
 - c. There remains a positive reduction in children subject to child protection plans 2021/222 when compared to 2019.
 - d. There remains a positive increase of the number of families supported through the Family Safeguarding Model.
 - e. The pre-birth assessment guidance is being used effectively and is monitored through regular audit activity (impact of SCR 7 recommendation).
 - f. Staff who responded to the satisfaction survey felt their organisation ensured they were competent and supported to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
11. In terms of the **WSP Priorities**
 - a. Neglect
 - There has been a revision to the revised strategy and action plan and development of an outcome's framework.
 - More children are being supported through Early Help and less children (11% compared to 16% last year) are having a social care Child and Family Assessment due to Neglect.
 - b. Exploitation
 - We have identified, screened and worked with more young people at risk of Exploitation.

- Development of an all-aged Exploitation Strategy and related training to 190 delegates
- Progress continues to be made with the All-Age Exploitation pathway and included the development of an Exploitation Hub.
- Impending development of a performance framework
- We continue to work with partners to develop the multiagency dataset and score card to assess identification and response to exploitation.

12. **Multiagency audits (MAA)** - Four themed audits were undertaken in the period - Neglect, Review of Line sight of frontline practice, Child Sexual Abuse and Injuries in non-mobile babies.

13. MAA have further provided assurance around improving safeguarding performance with no cases graded inadequate in this period. There was an increase from 30% in the previous year to 40% of cases being graded as requiring improvement and 60% of audits undertaken were graded as good, a slight decline of 1% on the previous year. No case was considered as outstanding which is also decline on the previous year's performance of 4%.

14. The WSP continues to work robustly to ensure that learning arising from audits is cascaded widely and in a timely manner to ensure real time focus on areas of practice requiring improvement. To complement practitioner briefings, learning from the cases is also shared within a Practice Reflection Workshop. Practice Reflection Workshops provide some vital time out for any practitioner working with children or adults to embed good practice through reflecting on a case study from the audit.

15. During 2021 a new process for measuring the impact from case reviews was developed, agreed and implemented. This was something which the partners had identified as an important focus in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

16. In December 2021 a learning event from child reviews was held which covered learning on a range of themes including:

Child Sexual Abuse	Under 2's	Bruising in non-mobile babies	Connected Carers
Information sharing	Multi-agency working and case coordination	Think Family	Professional Curiosity
Professional Challenge	Mental Health	Pathways and referrals	

17. The Partnership and children and adult workforce continue to receive learning from audits and case reviews by way of 'Key Messages' in newsletters, website updates, 7-minute briefings, webinars and input to existing and new training courses being developed.

18. **Ofsted In Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACs)** took place in October 2021 of which the overall effectiveness was graded as Good'.
19. The report recorded 'An ambitious and stable senior leadership team is dedicated to the delivery of the Walsall Right 4 Children Transformation Programme, launched in September 2018. Since the previous inspection in 2017, outcomes for children and their families have been improving and children's services are now good.'
20. Positive multiagency work has been observed across the WSP children's safeguarding arrangements through 2021-2022. There is always more to be done and the partnership adopts a positive approach to continually learning.
21. **Areas for focus in 2022-2023**
 - a. Review of the Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose across the children's and adult's strategic agenda.
 - b. Full Section 11 Audit to be completed during the next year, utilising the West Midlands Audit Tool.
 - c. To deliver the proposed forward plan for practice development activity, informed by the learning gained from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and National Reviews, the outcomes of audits and aligned to the Partnerships Key Priorities, alongside the regular training schedule for the year.
 - d. Continue to progress the All-Age Exploitation Strategy and Child Neglect Strategy as key priorities under the children's agenda and measure their impact through the outcome framework.
 - e. Strengthen the Think Family approach, in particular children's staff knowledge around the Self-Neglect Pathway and Mental Capacity Act.
 - f. Additional scrutiny work to be commissioned in 2022-23 to explore if it is possible to identify any changes or improvement in practice as a result of a previous SCR recommendations and actions.
 - g. Additional scrutiny work to be undertaken in relation to robustness of the functioning of the MASH, application of Right Help Right Time Guidance and use of single agency Early Help to meet need at the earliest opportunity.
 - h. Re-establish capacity within the Business Unit and further the children and young people's engagement agenda.

Recommendations:

That:


1. The Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the content of the WSP Childrens Annual Report 2021-2022 attached.



103066 Safeguarding
Children's Annual Rep

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