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| MEETING: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Full Committee |
| DATE: | Tuesday, 7 September 2021 |
| TIME: | 2.00 pm |
| VENUE: | The Assembly Room - The Civic |

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, Bowser, Cain, Clarke, K. Dyson, Frost, Gollick, Hayward, Kitching, Lodge, Lowe-Fleello, Newing, Noble, Osborne, Pickering, Smith, Stowe, Sumner, Tattersall, Wraith MBE and Wray.

16 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

17 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Tattersall declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos. 10 and 12 due to her membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel. She also declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Berneslai Homes in view of her being a Berneslai Homes Board Member.

Councillor Newing declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 12 as she works for the NHS.

Councillor Lodge declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 12 as he is employed by an organisation which supports vulnerable adults and children.

18 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes of the following meetings were received and approved by Members as a true and accurate record:

Full Committee held on 27 April 2021 (Item 3a)
Sustainable Barnsley Workstream held on 1 June 2021 (Item 3b)
Growing Barnsley Workstream held on 29 June 2021 (Item 3c)
Healthy Barnsley Workstream held on 20 July 2021 (Item 3d)

19 Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020-21

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, BSAB
Wendy Lowder, Executive Director – Adults & Communities, BMBC
Julie Chapman, Service Director – Adult Social Care & Health, BMBC
Cath Erine, Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager, BMBC
Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson – Adults & Communities, BMBC

Susan Brook, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults, Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Chief Superintendent James Abdy, Barnsley District Commander, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
Becky Hoskins, Deputy Director of Nursing & Quality, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)
Emma Cox, Assistant Director of Nursing, Quality & Professions, South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT)

Members were shown a presentation about the work of the BSAB and were invited to consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services (Item 4a) and the Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020-21 (Item 4b). Bob Dyson introduced the BSAB Annual Report, highlighting that everything had changed during the pandemic and creative ways of working had to be developed.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

A huge amount of awareness raising and training has been done around self-neglect and hoarding. Through the Safer Neighbourhood Service, a hoarding support group has been developed. The issues and triggers to this behaviour are now better understood, and early help can stop the situation spiralling out of control. It is estimated that nationally between 3% - 7% of people have problematic issues with hoarding and this has increased during the pandemic through proactive targeted work, which should be seen as a positive. It was felt that there is a need to mobilise strategic resources and connect the 'front line', engaging others in the community such as the local hairdressers, the Post Office etc. Elected Members also have a role to play in reporting concerns.

Residents of care homes are subject to a full needs assessment with twice yearly reviews. A contract monitoring system is in place for the care homes and social care work closely with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure care homes reach the required standards of care. There is an established care home network which brings together SWYFT, Public Health and managers of care homes and other health professionals such as the diabetes nurse, podiatrist etc. to ensure needs are met and information received is shared and acted upon. If a care home has to stop taking residents due to negative inspection findings, social care and the CQC work with managers and staff, residents and their families to understand what has happened and to recommend and monitor improvements to raise standards of care. However, this will take time as sustained improvement will take time to embed. In such instances, it is not advisable to move residents out of care homes unless absolutely necessary, as this causes major disruption and can have negative impacts on the lives of residents.

The BSAB Audit process is a mechanism for learning from both good and poor practice, with findings from reviews disseminated amongst all partners, actions and recommendations followed through and embedded into practice. The process also ensures the Board is abiding by its own policies, and provides feedback to staff. A Peer Review is due to take place in around 6 months' time and the findings will be shared with the Scrutiny Committee.

It can be difficult to engage individuals and obtain consent from them. Often, individuals view the way they live their lives as the norm, and do not want any help. It is essential that staff take the time to develop a good relationship to help and support individuals, and they will try different methods to achieve this. Financial abuse can be difficult to deal with, particularly if family members are involved and workers have to initiate an often delicate and difficult conversation to encourage individuals to open up to them.

Communication is one of the biggest challenges facing the BSAB. The new Communication Plan will help the wider population to understand what safeguarding is about, and what responsibilities they have. A considerable amount of work has been done, with easy to understand information provided in many formats. Elected Members have a role to play in sharing the message amongst their networks and in the community. There is a regional Safeguarding Awareness week in November to get the messages across. Local partners such as Barnsley FC and the local market are involved and leaflets etc will be distributed at the transport interchange. There is a reluctance within communities to report safeguarding concerns, awareness raising is being tackled by public facing events with faith groups and others. Elected Members are in a good position to help with this as they have local knowledge.

All agencies involved in safeguarding have high selection and recruitment standards to ensure only the very best levels of service. For example, the police selection process consists of a stakeholder group, who submit questions in advance of interviews. Once employed there is ongoing monitoring and development of individuals, with a structured plan to address any development and training issues. Individuals are rigorously vetted through the DBS process. It is not yet clear how the new Adult Social Care Bill will help with the high turnover of care workers, particularly within domiciliary care. Providers hold responsibility for staff training, but multi-agency training through the BSAB is also available to them.

There has been an audit following the sad deaths of four young homeless individuals in Barnsley. It was found that all of them had troubled lives from a very young age. A joined up approach is needed across children's and adults services to ensure people don't fall through the gaps. Work is now being done through the Safer Partnership Board to look at housing and other issues such as transition to address what may have led the individuals to become homeless. The Multi agency Panel looks at people who are struggling but don't qualify for formal safeguarding intervention and is able to offer help through partners. Work with private landlords has not progressed due to the pandemic but will be picked up as those with private landlords don't have the same services as those with a social landlord. A private sector housing plan is to be brought forward shortly. The Police work across all types of tenancy and are ideally placed to refer in to the process.

Members were advised that the most effective way to report a safeguarding concern is through Adult Social Care. There is a robust 'front door', referrals are triaged and the most appropriate response is given. Adult Social Care sits within the Customer Access Team (CAT) and feedback is given to every referral. Interim arrangements fall within the Better Lives Barnsley Programme. Members will be provided with the relevant contact phone number.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution and for the excellent work of the BSAB in safeguarding vulnerable people in Barnsley;
- (ii) Members continue to raise awareness of safeguarding and report concerns in their communities, and
- (iii) Members be provided with the contact number for reporting safeguarding concerns.

20 Draft Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2020-21

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, LSCP

Mel John-Ross, Executive Director, Children's Services, BMBC

Pam Allen, Interim Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, BMBC

Cllr Sarah Tattersall, Cabinet Support Member – Children's Services, BMBC

Chief Superintendent James Abdy, Barnsley District Commander, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)

Nikki Kelly, Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)

Angela Fawcett, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children, Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Emma Cox, Assistant Director of Nursing, Quality & Professions, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT)

Diane Drury, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, Children's Services, BMBC

Members were invited to consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services (Item 5a) and the Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2020-21 (Item 5b).

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Bullying is a constant theme within safeguarding and has far reaching impacts on children. All schools are required to have an Anti-bullying strategy, which forms part of each school's annual self assessment. Tackling bullying relies on initial reporting of concerns and schools need to recognise the impact of bullying on an individual and take action. Schools are visited regularly and OFSTED inspect schools against their bullying procedure. The SEND Youth Forum and the Youth Councils were involved in refreshing the overall Strategy and included some very powerful case studies, with the voice of the child evident throughout. These bodies also helped to develop the Anti-Bullying Commitment which all schools in the Barnsley Alliance have signed up to and is in evidence in all schools. The SEND Youth Forum is being supported to produce a young people's peer challenge where they go in to schools and look for evidence of commitment.

It was highlighted that bullying can lead on to tragedies such as the recent stabbing of a 15 year old boy in Monk Bretton, and needs to be tackled using a multi agency approach. There is a definite crossover between safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnership. Funding has been allocated by the Police to reduce knife crime etc., with a whole host of activities to address this. Bullying and knife crime has to be considered against the backdrop of the online world, where online bullying can spill over into real life. Prevalence of knives and gang activity is relatively low in Barnsley but nevertheless a significant piece of work is being done to address it, with Police Officers going in to schools to work with them and to offer support, as education is key to tackling this growing issue.

A discussion took place around ways to address the criminalisation of young people, particularly males, who engage in 'sexting' and sharing images on social media etc using mobile technology. This type of behaviour can ruin future life chances and many young people aren't aware of the longer term implications. All schools are involved in educating young people about the dangers of this type of behaviour. A recent large scale operation involved the exploitation of children by an offender in Wales, with a cluster of activity in Barnsley connected to Facebook. It was pointed out that 'spent' convictions and cautions of young people will not reappear in later life, based on individual assessment. The Police don't want to criminalise this type of behaviour when the issue is education. Rather, there is a proportionate enquiry aimed at diverting individuals away from that behaviour through education. Prosecution will be pursued only if it is in the public interest. Education and diversion is a better option. Barnsley is in the top quartile nationally for young people entering the youth justice system for the first time. Partnership work is effective, with good outcomes evidenced.

Lots of work is done on child Neglect in Barnsley, which can present as a form of parental bullying and hidden harm. Neglect continues to be most likely reason for a child to be taken into care. A Neglect Strategy and toolkit has been produced alongside the NSPCC. It may be necessary to resurrect the Neglect sub-group, but this will need resourcing as responsibility for Neglect was shared amongst the other sub-groups in the Action Plan. Early Help and Intervention to promote good parenting is important in tackling neglect, but parents have to accept help and parents need to be encouraged to use community support to help them. Staff have to have the time to have difficult conversations and the time and skills to be curious and persistent, which has been difficult to achieve during the pandemic?

The recent audit examined a wide range of issues. Elective Home Education (EHE) is a particular area of concern as there has been a big increase during the pandemic, leading to potential safeguarding concerns as children are not seen in schools and may fall through the gap. Work with the Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Service (BSARCS) has been strengthened, as the audit found that Barnsley wasn't making best use of that organisation to ensure correct support for children needing wraparound care. Our response to this has now been strengthened. During the pandemic, the Board's training offer was increased, with almost twice as many people taking up the 'virtual' training offer. Topics covered include safe sleeping and safety in the first year of life.

Sexual abuse and harassment is a very emotive topic which when identified is taken very seriously. This has evolved in recent times with the use of social media.

Education Improvement Officers ensure findings of the inspection report are cascaded and discussed with both primary and secondary headteachers. There is also an audit tool to support schools to help them to review the robustness of their approach to this issue. When OFSTED inspect schools this is a criteria which has to be evidenced. Twilight training sessions and webinars are provided for head teachers and designated safeguarding leads. An external trainer provides robust training covering policies, procedures and awareness raising.

Availability of CAMHS for young people is a national problem, with long waiting times for treatment. There is significant investment in the service alongside an action plan. Schools can be a pathway into the acute service. The Early Help offer is also in place and can be accessed before CAMHS. CAMHS services worked differently during pandemic, both in terms of group and individual work, but never stopped and provided an emergency service at all times. Where children and families did not have computer access, equipment was provided. Members were urged to feed in any concerns they may have so that they can be addressed. Early Help offer in place before get to CAMHS.

It was reported that sadly 13 babies have died in 5 years in Barnsley, some of which may have been due to modifiable factors such as co-sleeping. Child deaths are always investigated, with the aim of learning lessons and modifying practices. Everyone has a responsibility to report concerns - for example, unsafe sleeping arrangements can be identified by agencies other than health such as a housing officer may see a child sleeping on a sofa, which will need addressing. Training programmes are rolled out to different agencies to spread learning as widely as possible. There are many training programmes, such as Managing Crying, Don't Shake the Baby and the ICON programme which gives parents strategies to deal with behaviours such as crying. GPs, hospitals and community services all have procedures in place to alert when babies and young children are not being brought to appointments - they are not simply marked as 'did not attend' as there may be a safeguarding issue.

Early Help is a strong element of the partnership, with a review of the all age Early Help Strategy due to the pandemic. There has been a lot of disruption and staff changes in some localities but the Early Help service is generally stable, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. If Members are concerned about the Early Help service in their area they should flag concerns up with Children's Services, who are happy to investigate further.

It was reported that court proceedings have been delayed during the pandemic, but the service is slowly getting back to normal. This is a national issue which has had a significant impact on children.

RESOLVED that witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution and the report be noted.

21 Children's Social Care Performance Report

Members were invited to consider a cover report relating to Children's Social Care Performance. The redacted report was provided for information only.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

22 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the items so marked because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the specific paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, subject to the public interest test.

23 Children's Social Care Performance Report

Members were invited to consider a cover report relating to Children's Social Care Performance (Item 8a) in relation to the Data Report (Item 8b) and the Explanatory Document (Item 8c). Mel John-Ross introduced the report. Areas to note include the increase in contacts and assessments; the rise in the number of children in care; the strength of partnership working during the pandemic (particularly with schools) and the flexibility of working offered during the pandemic.

Strong overall performance has been maintained in the majority of areas throughout the report, despite the additional challenges and pressures brought about by the pandemic.

It was reiterated that Barnsley remains committed to maintaining a stable work force and agency staff are not used for front line posts, which has been the case for a number of years. Staff welfare and reduction of caseloads for all social workers remains a priority. Face to face working in localities has continued throughout the pandemic but on a more flexible level and the refurbishment of Westgate will not affect staff adversely.

The service was last subject to a full OFSTED inspection in October 2018 and received a judgement of 'good'. The Annual Engagement is due in October 2021. Additional Social Workers and Family Support Workers (assigned to Social Workers) have been recruited. Barnsley is a nationally recognised 'Employer of Choice' for Social Workers.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the performance report be noted, and
- (ii) the service be congratulated on recruitment of social workers and the excellent service provided to children and their families in Barnsley.

Chair