

Item 5a

Report of the Executive Director Core Services to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 7 September 2021

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

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) is the organisation responsible for agreeing how services and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the borough and ensuring that they do so effectively. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 places the responsibility on the three 'Safeguarding Partners', the police; the local authority; and health, to formulate the local arrangements for partnership working to safeguard children in their own geographical area.
- 1.2 The Partnership, which replaced the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board from the beginning of April 2019, has an Independent Chair and brings together senior representatives from the key statutory, voluntary, and community sectors with a responsibility for delivering services to children and young people.
- 1.3 The Chair of the partnership is accountable to the three Safeguarding Partners, the Police, Health and the Local Authority (through the Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services). Each agency representative involved in the work of the Partnership is accountable to the governing body of their own agency, ensuring that safeguarding children remains high on the agenda across the area.
- 1.4 In the past, children's social care services in Barnsley were judged as requiring improvement by Ofsted and the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board had a significant governance role in ensuring that improvements continued to be implemented and embedded within the service. Ofsted re-inspected children's social care services in October 2018 resulting in a judgement of 'good'.
- 1.5 The role of the Partnership is to:-
 - Ensure that safeguarding children and young people is at the centre of everything they do
 - Hold Partnership members to account, making sure they are doing enough to keep children and young people safe
 - Collect and share information about how well they are keeping children and young people safe and identify what more can be done

2.0 Current Position

- 2.1 The Draft Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report 2020-21 (Item 5b - attached) outlines the work of the Partnership and its sub-groups over the last year and indicates its priorities and plans for continued improvement. It also shows how they try to include the voice of children, young people and families at every opportunity.

2.2 The governance structure of the Partnership is outlined within the report, showing the six sub-groups who ensure the work of the Partnership is carried forward. These groups are:-

- Performance Audit and Quality Assurance Sub-Group
- Child Exploitation Strategy Group
- Policy, Procedures and Workforce Practice & Development Sub-Group
- Child Death Overview Panel
- Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) Sub-Group
- Disability Sub-Group

2.3 It should be noted that Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) replaced Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and this sub-committee was known as the SCR sub-committee under the previous arrangements for partnership working to safeguard children.

3.0 Covid-19

3.1 This year was marked by unprecedented challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the series of national lockdowns impacted upon all agencies and staff working with children and families, service delivery, and on the wellbeing and safety of many children and families.

3.2 There were increased concerns about 'Hidden Harm' for vulnerable children and young people with reduced schools' attendance and contact with professionals, as well as frequent disruption to children's education.

3.3 To tackle the challenges presented by Covid-19 the Partnership are pleased to report that:-

- Throughout the pandemic the partnership, and its subgroups, has continued to meet albeit by video conferencing
- Agencies came together to develop a tracker system to identify and support vulnerable children and families, working with schools and across health and children's social care and Early Help to ensure that children in need were seen and had regular contact with professionals
- The Partnership continued to work closely with Barnsley schools to offer support and advice during the pandemic and has continued termly forums with all Designated Safeguarding Leads to promote safeguarding training, information sharing and the exchange of best practice
- The Partnership continued with its regular activity, with staff working from home and adapting to virtual Partnership and subgroup meetings
- Quality assurance activity continued, with all subgroups completing quarterly audits and the multi-agency training programme has also continued, with an expanded virtual offer which has seen higher take up rates
- Links were maintained with safeguarding colleagues both locally, sub-regionally and regionally
- The Partnership received updates from all partners about how they were continuing to keep children safe and respond to allegations of abuse and neglect
- Communication with partner agencies was improved by introducing a quarterly Safeguarding Newsletter, which provides information on latest safeguarding practice developments, new legislation, research findings, safeguarding training opportunities and reaffirms key messages

4.0 Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Consultation with Local Young People

4.1 On 26 July 2021, OSC Members met virtually with representatives from Barnsley Youth Council, Care4Us Council and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Forum. This was to find out how young people in Barnsley have found lockdown and the impact of Covid-19, as well as gather their thoughts on relevant services on the OSC work programme during 2021-22.

4.2 As with last year's consultation exercise, the main safeguarding issue raised by local young people was bullying. This was mentioned by a number of young people both from personal experience as well as on behalf of a number of their peers. Young people explained that it is difficult to speak up about bullying for fear of repercussions. They also felt that if concerns were raised, they were not necessarily taken seriously.

5.0 Invited Witnesses

5.1 A number of Partnership representatives have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding their work over the last annual reporting year (April 2020-March 2021), as well as work being undertaken currently and future plans:-

- Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, LSCP
- Mel John-Ross, Executive Director, Children's Services, BMBC
- Pam Allen, Interim Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, Children's Services, BMBC
- Diane Drury, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, Children's Services, BMBC
- Cllr Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson –Children's Services
- 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)

6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

6.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What are the good news stories for 2020-21 and how do they improve outcomes for children in the borough?
- How effective are the current partnership working arrangements? Do you have the right skills around the table? If not, where are the gaps?
- When will the new Anti-Bullying Strategy be embedded into practice, how will you know that schools are complying and what is being done to educate children and young people to prevent bullying in the first place?

- How do you ensure that ‘the voice of the child’ influences the work of the partnership and what evidence is there of this?
- What approach do partners take to understand and respond to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families, such as their peers, neighbourhoods, schools and online?
- What investigations have been made into the findings of the recent Ofsted report into sexual harassment and sexual abuse in schools, what were the findings and what is being done to tackle the issues?
- How do you ensure that children develop the right tools, such as confidence and resilience, to reduce their chances of being exploited or becoming vulnerable?
- How confident are you that staff have the time and skills to be curious and persistent with those children who are hard to reach?
- Can you give us an example of any issues that were highlighted as a result of the audits conducted this year and how you intend to remedy them?
- What actions could be taken by Members to assist in the work of Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership?

7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Barnsley LSCP Annual Report 2019-20 (Item 5b - attached)
- Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership New Arrangements and Implementing the Requirements of Working Together 2018:-
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/10311/barnsley-safeguarding-children-partnership-implementation-document.pdf>
- Barnsley Safeguarding Children Website:-
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/>

8.0 Glossary

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| BHNFT | Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust |
| CCG | Clinical Commissioning Group |
| CE | Child Exploitation |
| CSE | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| DSL | Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| LCSP | Local Children’s Safeguarding Partnership |
| LCSPR | Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews |
| OSC | Overview & Scrutiny Committee |
| SCRs | Serious Case Reviews |
| SWYPFT | South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust |
| SYP | South Yorkshire Police |

9.0 Officer Contact

Jane Murphy, Scrutiny Officer, 27 August 2021