

**Brighton & Hove Safeguarding
Children Partnership
Annual Report
April 2020 - March 2021**



Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

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Foreword: Lead Safeguarding Partners

This annual report charts the work of our safeguarding children partnership during a year of both challenges and achievements in the face of adversity.

As the three safeguarding lead partner representatives we have led the partnership through its first complete reporting year, whilst living through an unprecedented period in our recent safeguarding history. Our partners across the city have navigated supporting and protecting children, young people and their families through a year of uncharted and at times cataclysmic changes. The far reaching restrictions imposed and in some instances the loss of loved ones as a direct result of the pandemic demonstrate will inevitably have longer term repercussions for our children, young people and their families. We are beginning to understand the implications of a global pandemic on our communities. Mental health and wellbeing, disrupted education and restricted mobility as well as the impact of hidden harms such as domestic abuse and criminal exploitation evince emerging pictures of acute need and concern.

In Brighton & Hove we rapidly adapted our practice methods to provide targeted support for families and children most in need of help and protection. Brighton & Hove City Council co-ordinated multi-agency and organisational networks to focus on meeting immediate and intermediate needs. Our 'new normal' involved strengthening existing links and sharing real time operational updates to make sure that we focussed on our most vulnerable families, particularly during initial Covid-19 'lockdown' measures.

Our front line staff worked with tremendous resilience and selflessness as did our remarkable community and voluntary sector organisations. We are very grateful and proud for all they achieved when working in the most challenging and at times frightening circumstances. Whilst we have seen benefits of on line engagement impact, overall it is a mixed picture in terms of social isolation and understanding of the families we want to engage with, set against travel efficiencies and greener ways of working. Moving our core business delivery work to virtual platforms has afforded us an opportunity to look at future ways of working together efficiently and effectively. However, in terms of front line practice this should not be a substitute for face to face work with families who need our help.

Looking to the future, we are developing a new early help strategy which will tackle disadvantage, opening up opportunities and improving life chances for all of our children and young people.

We are cognisant of the challenges ahead as we deal with increased demands on service provision at a time of budget pressures. We must focus our resources accordingly. We look forward to implementing Sir Alan Wood's recommendations arising from his review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes demonstrating the impact of our partnership's work and providing assurance to residents that we will continue to develop our safeguarding services to fulfil our vision to improve the lives of our city's children and young people.



Naomi Ellis

Naomi Ellis,
Head of Safeguarding and
Looked After Children,
Sussex Clinical
Commissioning Groups



Deborah Austin

Deb Austin
Executive Director,
Families, Children and Learning,
Brighton & Hove City Council



Jonathan Hull

Jonathan Hull
Detective Superintendent,
Public Protection
Sussex Police

Introduction

About this report

This is the first whole year report published by the Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership, covering April 2020 - March 2021. The report describes partnership achievements and challenges, and inevitably the focus of this report looks at the impact of Covid-19 measures on keeping children safe and promoting their health and wellbeing. Whilst services were disrupted, many providers were able to swiftly adapt to a 'new normal' to maintain the best possible help and support in extraordinary circumstances.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 reformed the framework supporting the delivery of multi-agency services to protect and safeguard children. Regulations for implementing these changes required all local authority areas in England to have adopted new arrangements by no later than September 2019. The legislation abolished local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) and introduced the concept of three statutory safeguarding partners - local government, the police and health services. As part of the new arrangements there is a statutory requirement for the BHSCP to publish an annual report.

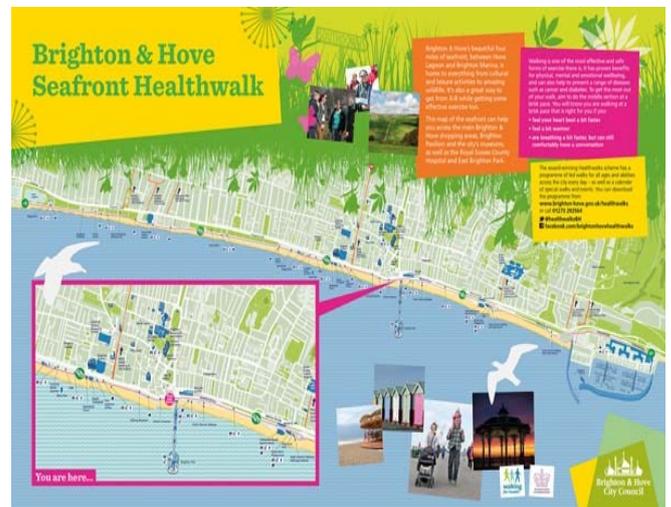
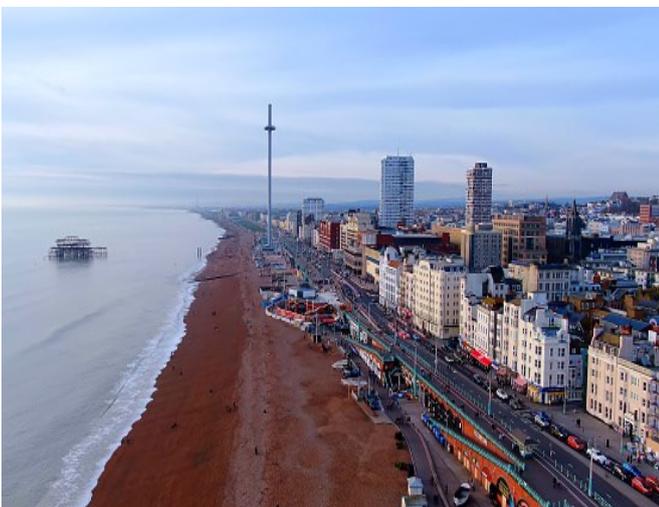
The reporting period predates the final publication of Sir Alan Wood's review of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnerships¹. Our scrutiny work during this period was informed by his initial findings (October 2020) and we will progress our partnership in line with the review's findings during 2021-22.

About Brighton & Hove

The city of Brighton & Hove population is estimated² to be 295,300 in 2020. Between 2017 and 2030 the population is expected to rise by 8.1%. This projected growth is higher than projected population increases in the South East of 7.3% and England: 6.6%). The latest data estimates indicated that 16% of the population are aged 0-15 years. Ethnicity estimates indicate that 21% of children and young people aged 0-15 years are from BME groups. 16% of the city's residents were born outside of the UK, of which 40% were born in the EU. Between 11% and 15% of the population aged over 16 is estimated to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The most recent Indices of Deprivation data published by the in 2019 (by The Department for levelling up, Housing & Communities) show that the city is mid ranking (160 out of 317 local authority districts) and ranked 211 for Education, but less favourable rankings overall in living environment (87/317) and crime (150/317). It is ranked 100 overall in terms of the proportion of the 10% of neighbourhoods with the highest levels of deprivation.

Due to Covid-19 the government decided not to publish its annual school or college level data. According to the latest Department for Education 2019 data, 67% of primary school pupils reached the expected standard of attainment, above the 65% average for England. 47% of secondary students achieved Grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs, compared to a 40% average for England.



Independent Scrutiny of the BHSCP

Foreword by BHSCP Independent Scrutineer and Chair

Welcome to my section of this Annual Report. As the Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the Safeguarding Partnership I have the responsibility for scrutinising this document and making sure it is accurate and provides the information you, the reader, requires. I hope that it meets your expectations, provides you with the information you need and above all gives you complete confidence in the way the Partnership strives to safeguard children in Brighton & Hove.



As you read this section and other parts of this annual report, I would ask you to consider that the BHSCP is emerging from the terrible pandemic that has had such a massive impact on all of us. It is at times like these that our focus is drawn to the true value of those that safeguard our children on a daily basis. This is especially true when we lose their input, when children are not in school, pre-school and after school activities. I want to reassure you that the BHSCP were quick to recognise this and worked tirelessly to make sure other measures were put in place to fill this gap. It is important that we acknowledge the response of our communities to our communication campaigns. Often, we can be overwhelmed by the negatives of a situation but the response of professionals, volunteers and the community to safeguarding during the pandemic has been a real positive for us. I hope that as we return to a semblance of normality, we can continue to rely on each other to take responsibility for safeguarding our children.

Sir Alan Wood has reviewed the progress of safeguarding partnerships and reported back to central government. His report makes for interesting reading and highlights a number of areas where improvements can still be made. Wood highlights the need for strategic leaders to be fully committed to the safeguarding partnership.

BHSCP have responded to this, developing a briefing paper for the three executive leads for the statutory



agencies. This half yearly document is written in conjunction with East and West Sussex SCP's and provides detail of issues that impact on children's safeguarding across the county and nationally.

Brighton & Hove is fortunate to have leaders from all agencies that are committed, professional and understand the value of collaborative working. Please be assured that, whilst they do not always agree, they are resolute in their joint objective of improving outcomes for the city's children. As scrutineer I am confident that I have appropriate access to senior leaders in each of the three statutory agencies.

BHSCP recognises the impact and importance of independent scrutiny. Scrutiny is a persistent theme and can be seen to be occurring in all partnership meetings. As Independent Scrutineer I have been commissioned to complete bespoke pieces of work. In addition, we continue to scrutinise strategies, practice and outcomes across the Partnership in a number of ways, providing statutory leaders with evidence of good practice and areas for improvement. This document provides detail of independent scrutiny that takes place. The success of scrutiny relies on a culture that welcomes challenge and values its impact.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this report and created a document that is fair, informative and balanced. I also want to thank everyone involved in the BHSCP for their tireless work over the last twelve months. Brighton & Hove is blessed with some exceptional safeguarding professionals, our communities have supported us through this pandemic and I sincerely hope we can build on this.

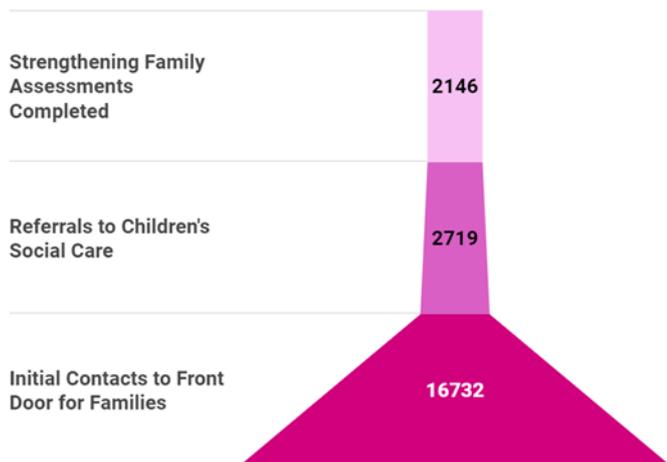
Thank you for your continued support.



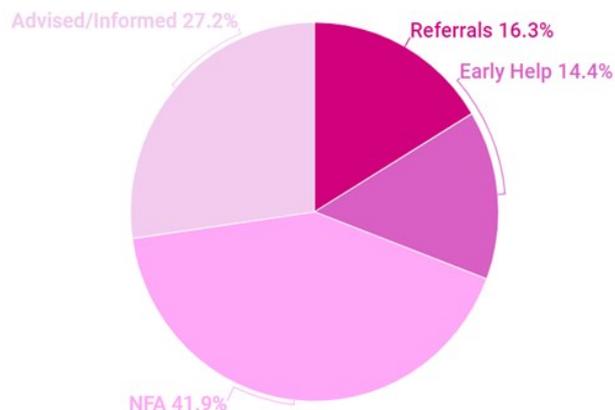
Chris Robson, BHSCP Independent Scrutineer and Chair

About Brighton & Hove children and families

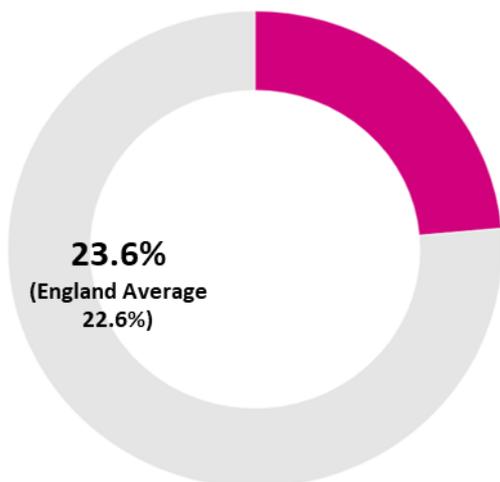
Initial Contacts, Referrals and Assessments



Initial Contacts by Outcome



Re-Referrals to Children's Social Care



Early Help and child protection



799

Early Help Assessments completed year ending 31st March 2021



1,626

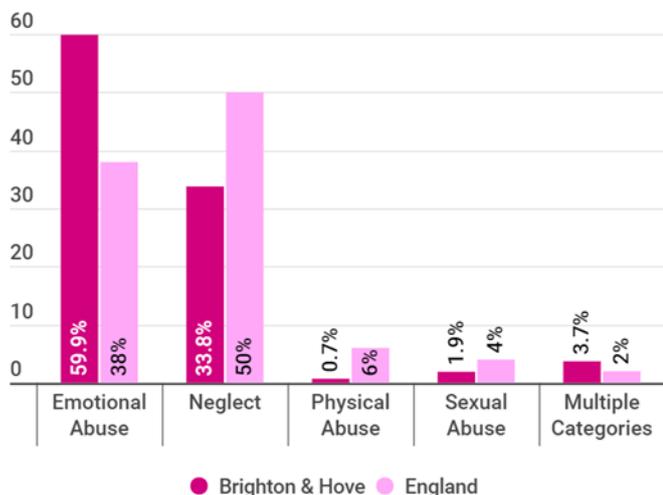
Children and young people who were receiving support from any Early Help Service at 31st March 2021



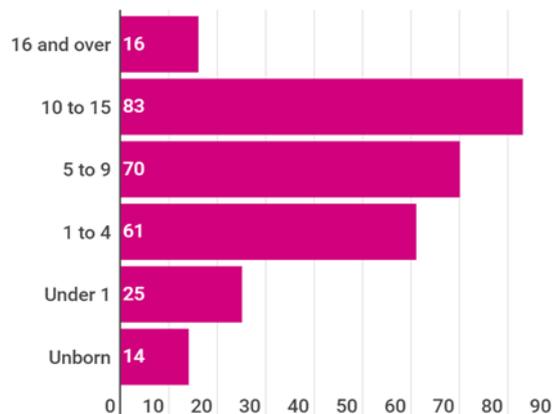
269

Children subject of a child protection plan at 31st March 2021, down from 335 at 31st March 2020

Children Subject of a CP Plan by Category of Abuse



Children Subject of a CP Plan by Age



About Brighton & Hove children and families

Children Missing from Education



40

30 Children Missing from Education under Criteria 1 and 2

Criteria 1: 17 pupils known to be not on roll and missing For the period January to March 2021

Criteria 2: 23 children who were reported to have come off roll from a school with an unconfirmed destination in another authority.

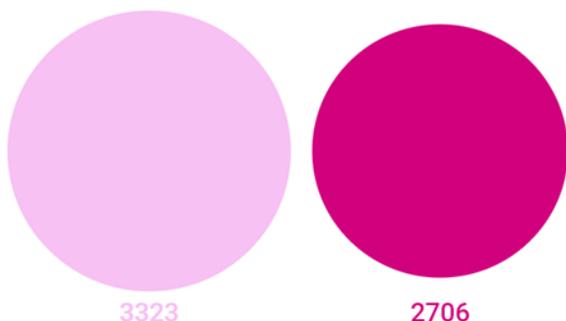
Pupils Educated at Home



437

Children educated at home at 31st March 2020, up from 294 at 31st March 2019

Sessions (half days) missed through fixed term exclusion



CAMHS Caseload



1,490

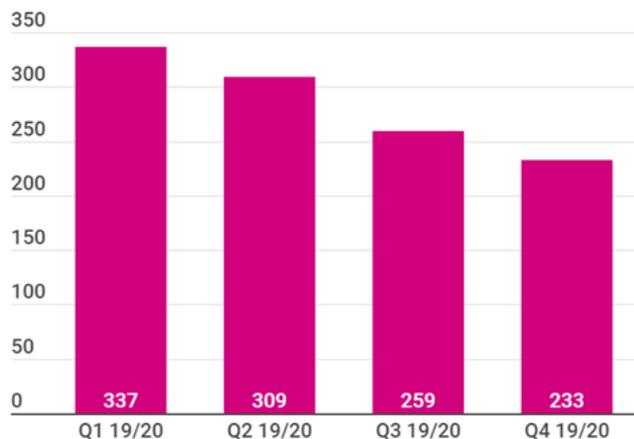
Cases open to CAMHS at 31st March 2021, up from 1,340 at 31st March 2020

MACSE / MACE / AVRMS nominals Q4 2020-21*

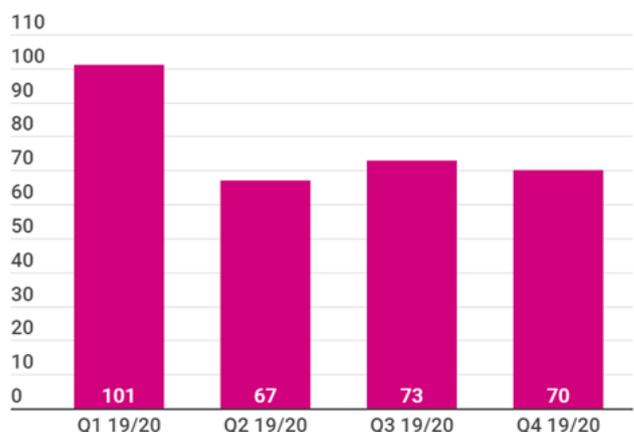


● High ● Red ● Amber ● Green

Under 18 Missing Reports 2019-20



Single Combined Assessment of Risk Forms (SCARFs)



Referrals to CSARC



69

Children Referred to CSARC during year ending 31st March 2020



30

Children Seen

Business plan delivery progress

The Safeguarding Children Partnership operations were initially disrupted by Covid –19 measures, impacting on the delivery of our business plan priorities. With this in mind we took the decision to extend the plan by a year to run until March 2023.



Introduction: About our Business Plan

The current Business Plan runs from April 2020 - March 2023 and is the first plan under the new safeguarding children partnership arrangements. The priorities were determined via consultation and based on identified local and national areas of safeguarding concern. They are delivered by the BHSCP's subgroups. This section provides an overview of the business plan. Key achievements and challenges are described later in this report under individual sub-group activity updates.

Priority 1 - Partnership Engagement and Accountability

Aims: Embed the principles of safeguarding children citywide.

Progress made: A communications strategy was developed for wider communications with partners. This has seen improved communication both internally and externally:

- ◆ Redesign of the BHSCP's internal newsletter moving to a weekly format, sharing partner updates as well as national guidance and information in a succinct and reader friendly format. The letter recognised the significant increase in written communications and briefings disseminated both locally and nationally under Covid-19 measures. Feedback from partner agencies indicates that the format works well; however it is unclear as to the extent of its reach; this needs to be tested.
- ◆ Updating the partnership's website to reflect the new arrangements and including a professionals portal to access e.g. professional briefings and internal resources and assessment templates.
- ◆ Use of social media to promote BHSCP activity and develop connections and links to the city's community and voluntary sector.
- ◆ Regular briefings to ensure that front line and managers are connected to the BHSCP's work and areas identified by sub-group activity for improvement.

Challenges: a strategy to support meaningful direct engagement with children and young people was put on hold as was direct engagement with education safeguarding leads.



Business plan delivery progress

Priority 1 - Partnership Engagement and Accountability (continued)

Voice of children and young people: Agencies and organisations told us about how they worked with the voice of children and young people via their section 11³ audit returns, below are a sample of representative examples :

- ◆ **BHCC Public Health:** “There are initiatives in place under the Public Health Schools Programme to ensure participation of young people e.g. the Right Here project working with pupil Mental Health Champions in schools. For the Healthy Lifestyles Team services children and young people feedback is an essential part of evaluation.”
- ◆ **Safety Net:** “Recently our young volunteers have been contributing to our e-zine, this is a new piece of work that has been produced as a result of Covid and sharing their experiences. Feedback is gathered in creative ways within our children’s activities project to ensure that all ‘voices’ are heard, using stickers, physical movement, as well as e-surveys.”
- ◆ **BHCC Family Children and Learning:** “Children in Care Council representatives meet regularly with the Council’s Lead Member, Director of Children’s Service and Assistant Director. Young Ambassadors are routinely involved in recruitment of social work staff. Children’s voices are expected to be represented in all assessment and Social Worker interventions”.
- ◆ **RISE** “We have been implementing the ‘just right’ approach with children who use our service; a system which aims to support children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by utilising effective communication methods.
- ◆ **Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital:** “Parents and young people have participated in staff selection on CNS and psychologist interview panels eg diabetes/epilepsy; Every ward has a ‘We said you did notice board’; the play team even evaluate the children’s Christmas party to make improvements year on year.
- ◆ **YMCA Downlink** “The ‘Right Here’ service is a youth led Health & Well Being Project for 11-25 year olds in Brighton, whereby they deliver workshops, run campaigns, deliver training etc. in schools and elsewhere.”

Challenges: Several areas of work were postponed during Covid-19 to recognise the pressures on partner agencies’ and organisations’ capacity to support business plan delivery and also environmental factors. Recruitment of lay members commenced at the end of this reporting period and this will see a further strengthening of scrutiny arrangements via newly recruited lay persons who will work with our sub-groups to support our drive to improve practice.

The BHSCP website requires significant time/resources to maintain and update and yet its reach continues to be limited. For example, ICON data was isolated to assess the impact of the promotional work undertaken across the partnership around ICON. It became evident that it was not leading to direct website ‘hits’ to access resources.

Closer working with the community and voluntary sector continues to develop and build upon the productive engagement via co-ordinated work during the pandemic.



Business plan delivery progress (continued)

Priority 2 - Safeguarding children from violence and exploitation:

Aims: Ensure there is a clear understanding of the scale of complex and contextual safeguarding within Brighton & Hove and that the needs of children and young people affected by any form of violence, from any source, are identified and assessed effectively resulting in timely and appropriate intervention.

Progress made: Key achievements include the adoption of Pan Sussex Contextual safeguarding principles, for delivery to front line practitioners during 2021-22 (delivery delayed by Covid-19). The Exploitation Group agreed to:

(i) Incorporate the BHSCP's Exploitation audit action plan into the wider Exploitation group action plan to avoid duplication of effort.

(ii) Deliver the BHSCP's business plan priority 2 via the Exploitation Group.

Challenges: Impact of Covid-19 resulted in pressure on resources in Sussex Police. This delayed a mapping exercise to inform a comprehensive understanding of the local criminal exploitation (CE) landscape.

Priority 3 - Neglect:

Aims: The needs of children and young people affected by neglect are identified and assessed effectively resulting in timely and appropriate intervention.

Progress made: Neglect has been a key or significant area of learning identified in 4 recent learning reviews; further learning was identified via a delayed (due to Covid-19) audit - this will be recorded in the 2021-22 report.

In order to tackle neglect the partnership offers multi agency training and is rolling out an assessment tool (see Early Help section). This aims to encourage consistency of language and early recording and tracking of neglect concerns. This, in conjunction with a refresh to the multiagency strategy, should ensure that partner agencies and organisations are able to make consistent and evidenced referrals to the Front Door For Families for support and intervention.

Challenges: Covid-19 impacted on agency and organisations ability to see children face to face. Many potentially vulnerable children and young people who were absent from school became invisible during the early 'lockdown' stages of the pandemic. Strenuous efforts were made to ameliorate this by identifying and working with vulnerable children. The BHSCP ran communications campaigns during the spring and autumn of 2020 to raise community awareness about child neglect and abuse.



Priority 4 - Mental Health and Emotional Health and Wellbeing:

Aims: Consistently good service provision for children who need support for emotional and mental health issues.

Progress made: Foundations for our Future is the product of a jointly commissioned (by Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, Clinical Commissioning Groups and 3 Sussex local authorities) review of children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing across Sussex. 20 overarching recommendations are being implemented via a Programme Board, supported by a locally led operational delivery group.

Challenges: The need to ensure that the work is aligned to Covid-19 recovery work in this arena and suicide prevention strategies to avoid duplication (or omission) of effort.

Strategic Leadership

Steering Group

In accordance with statutory guidance ⁵, The Steering Group is led by three partners, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), Clinical Commissioning Groups and Sussex Police. It meets every quarter to set and oversee the strategic direction of the BHSCP's priority work. During this reporting period it focussed primarily on ensuring an effective multi-agency response to Covid-19 as well as further development and strengthening of the partnership's strategic and delivery arrangements ⁴.

In the early stages of the pandemic the lead partners sought to understand the impact of a lockdown on safeguarding children, being cognisant of the adverse effects on the emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people. The diversion of health visiting staff to support Acute Trusts (hospitals) adversely impacted on their ability as a service to maintain pre-Covid 19 levels of support to families with babies and young children; (this did not occur in the second phase of the pandemic). This was at a time when schools were closed to all but the most vulnerable and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to enable professionals to conduct face to face visits was in short supply. Future learning e.g. via practice reviews and audit will assess how and why Covid-19 measures were responded to locally. This will help to inform recovery measures needed to adapt services to optimise the benefits, both for users and to support professionals who are providing them.

Strategies to mitigate emerging issues were considered, including both child and parental mental ill health and social isolation, domestic abuse and increasing demand on substance misuse services.

Looking to the future

The impact of living through a global pandemic on children's education and emotional health and wellbeing is already known. Emerging issues around harmful sexual behaviours and on line abuse will be addressed as a part of a move to ensure that services recognise that appropriate response and support is delivered to children.



Independent Scrutiny:

Partnership's arrangements

In September 2020 lead safeguarding partners commissioned the BHSCP's Independent Scrutineer to undertake a review of the current Partnership arrangements, which came into effect in September 2019. The timing of the review was put back to spring 2021 in order to utilise the findings of Sir Alan Wood's report regarding the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. However, due to further publication delays (of the Wood report) an initial scrutiny stage was completed and shared. BHSCP used these key areas of focus:

- ◆ Strategic leadership and governance arrangements
- ◆ BHSCP vision and values
- ◆ Review the extent and impact of partner engagement in BHSCP activities
- ◆ Assurance via robust and independent scrutiny

The Independent Scrutineer utilised:

- Interviews with each of the Strategic leads for the statutory agencies
- Focus Groups and/or interviews with key partners including Chairs of sub-groups
- Questionnaires to practitioners
- Review of scrutiny and Section 11
- Review of the new multi-agency arrangements for Brighton & Hove.

Key recommendations included strengthening governance arrangements by providing regular update reports to Lead Partner representatives (Chief Executives and Chief Constable). The report also recommended that lead partners ensure that they increase their visibility and are accessible to partner agencies and organisations. The BHSCP's annual report format will be revised and implemented in 2021-2022, covering key achievements, risks and issues. The Independent Scrutineer will analyse the report and lead partner's assurances and comment on the impact of the BHSCP's work on outcomes for children and families. The Lead partners and Steering Group accepted the recommendations.

Partnership Board

Partnership Board

The Partnership Board supports delivery of the Steering Group's strategic objectives. It has a wide membership including statutory agencies and representatives from the community and voluntary sector.

Under the new arrangements the Partnership Board's function has changed in that its core purpose is to support delivery of the partnership's key work, including business plan priorities. It achieves this by:

Operationalising the strategic aims of the Steering Group

Raising issues put forward by Steering Group

Engaging the wider safeguarding community

Normally meeting quarterly, due to Covid-19 measures the first quarter's meeting was cancelled. Thereafter the Partnership Board met as scheduled via a virtual platform. Whilst this presented challenges in terms of a large meeting membership this was managed via effective chairing and rapid adjustments to virtual meetings by all.

Progress made:

The autumn meeting focussed on updates and discussing Pebble House's (the Sussex Child Sexual Assault Referral Centre) annual report as well as sharing key messages around ensuring that agencies followed the updated Child Sexual Abuse pathway, informed by learning review and audit activity.

During the winter meeting partners discussed safeguarding under 5s and in spring 2021 focused on early help provision.

For 2021-22 themed Partnership Board meetings will centre on our business plan priorities' progress and look at collectively resolving and mitigating barriers and challenges around delivery.

Challenges:

Feedback from some members of the community and voluntary sector indicates that there is more work to be done around developing the Partnership Board to ensure that is an effective forum for wider engagement and ensuring that there is a thread from front line practice up to the Steering Group.

Independent Scrutiny of the Partnership Board

In September 2020 the BHSCP's lead partners commissioned the Independent Scrutineer to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the Partnership Board. The review followed a significant change in local safeguarding arrangements that have been put in place as a result of new legislation which saw responsibility for key decisions transfer to the Steering Group.

The scrutineer concluded that attendance was good and that attendees were engaged and committed to making a difference for children, young people across the city.

Areas for further development included;

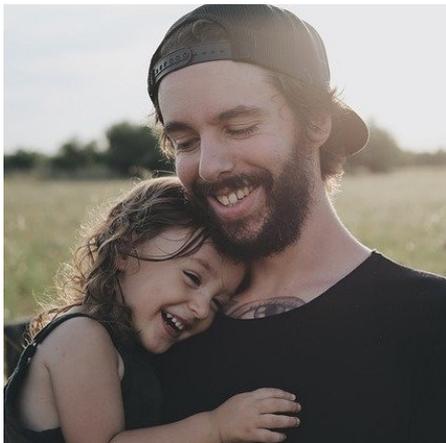
- ◆ Feedback from front line practitioners via a survey; it was clear that whilst over 75% of the 40 respondents were aware of the changes, a small number of professionals were unable to describe the differences the changes had made.
- ◆ It is difficult to measure the difference that the Partnership Board has made in terms of impact on outcomes for children.

The Independent Scrutineer recommended that the Partnership Board continued in its current format, with improved connections to lead partners and closer interaction between the Steering Group via a standing agenda item.



Early Help Review

Brighton & Hove County Council's (BHCC) Families, Children and Learning (FCL) directorate is undertaking a review of Early Help across the city, with a view to developing a citywide model that focuses systems and resources on tackling local disadvantage. It seeks to align with the Government's good practice model for Early Help.



Work with a cohort of families, will explore at first hand the experiences of those families who have accessed support and services.

Some preliminary work has already been undertaken, including a peer review by the Local Government Association (March 2020) and a self-assessment of the Early Help system (Dec 2020).

An outline business case was presented to the BHCC's Corporate Modernisation Board, and through this, FCL is being supported to undertake the review and development work by external consultants, 'Peopletoo'.

Peopletoo are helping define the scope, develop a full business case and 'invest to save' options. This includes exploring Family Hubs, digital and data transformation, and reviewing existing Early Help pathways and processes.

Work is in train to develop a visual map of the Early Help system in the city. Online workshops are taking place currently for FCL staff, school leaders and community and voluntary sector (CVS) partners, with the aim of gathering views on developing a model for Early Help that improves coordination and integration of services for families across the city.

Exploratory work is underway to define the digital and data transformation needed to better join up information and to ensure resources are targeted effectively.

It is anticipated that draft proposals will be shared with FCL leadership in the autumn of 2021, followed by readiness for change assessments and designing of the formal consultation process. A project manager has been recruited to support the consultation and implementation phases. A cross-party working group has also been set up, to input into the Early Help review and to ensure the work fits with the wider development of the disadvantage strategy.

Alongside alignment with the Local Authority's work on tackling disadvantage, there is a need also to align this work to the changing requirements of the Supporting Families (previously known as 'Troubled Families') grant funded programme, which brings in nearly £1m per annum to Early Help in the city. The new programme places much greater emphasis on:

- ◆ Data transformation - integration of data systems and improved data sharing between partners
- ◆ Embedding a whole-family approach across all Early Help and Social Care services
- ◆ A broader set of family outcomes, with a new Outcomes Framework to be used from April 2022.



Early Help (Continued)

Operation Encompass

Aim: to ensure that schools have timely information about all police-attended incidents of domestic abuse to enable school staff school to understand how to support children who are experiencing domestic abuse.



91 schools across the city have been identified as applicable (these includes Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form) of which 89 Schools have attended an Operation Encompass Training Session and Signed an Information Sharing Agreement. They are receiving notifications and actively participating in Operation Encompass.

Each school has a nominated Key Adult who is informed at the beginning of a school day when a child or young person has been involved in or exposed to a domestic incident. This allows the school to act immediately to provide tailored support to the affected child.

There were 660 notifications in Brighton & Hove between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. This is down from 716 (8% reduction in referrals) in the previous year. This is concerning given the perceived rise in instances of domestic abuse during Covid-19 measures.

Looking to the future: Operation Encompass is national scheme and as such it is hoped that Sussex Police will be able to share information where children may not currently fall within the reporting criteria. This includes exploring:

Information sharing - with Brighton & Hove City Council in relation to elective home education and where details of the schools and colleges are missing, so that all children and young people are reached.

Early Years – the founders of Operation Encompass are working with the Home Office, Department of Education and Public Health England in relation to children from pre-birth to 5 years old. Sussex may be one of the pilot forces.

Language Schools - This has not been developed anywhere in the country yet. Working with language schools will be explored after scoping of rollout of Operation Encompass to Early Years settings.

Graded Care Profile - Neglect Assessment Tool

Graded Care Profile 2

MEASURING CARE, HELPING FAMILIES

Aims: GCP2 is an assessment tool which evaluates how parents and/or carers look after a child's physical and emotional needs. The tool enables practitioners to understand what life is like for a child and identifies both strengths and areas for care givers to improve. The tool also provides an evidence base which can be used to inform care and interventions plans.

Covid-19 impacted roll out of GCP2 across early help providers during this reporting period. The NSPCC developed a training package for virtual delivery; because the previous training relied upon face to face training it took some time to put together a package that provided a high quality training experience for staff. Due to staffing pressures roll out of the first phase of GCP2 was further delayed, and expected to commence in June 2021. In the interim, the BHSCP's Learning and Development Officer worked with Sussex Police to ensure that key neglect messages are held on front line officer's handheld devices, 'Crewmate'. Pressures on schools has also impacted roll out and this will be monitored during 2021-22.

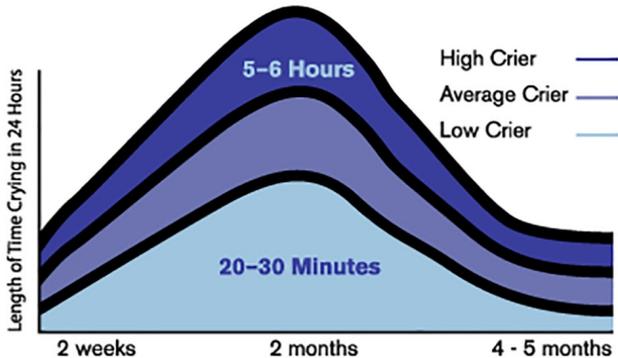
Early Help (continued)

ICON

“Babies cry, you can cope!” is the key ICON message for parents of newborn babies.



Curves of Early Infant Crying 2 Weeks to 4 - 5 Months



Research suggests that some parents and care givers can lose control when a baby’s crying becomes too much. Some go on to shake a baby with devastating consequences. Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) causes catastrophic brain injuries, which can lead to death, or significant long-term health and learning disabilities.

ICON is a programme adopted by health and social care organisations in Brighton & Hove, across Sussex and nationally to provide information about infant crying, including how to cope, support parents and carers, reduce stress and prevent abusive head trauma in babies. The ICON journey started in Brighton and Hove in 2019 following a local learning review where a young baby had suffered significant non-accidental injuries. Partner agencies and organisations led by the Clinical Commissioning Group looked at opportunities to talk to parents and care givers about prevention of AHT.



A working group mapped opportunities for discussions, which highlighted the need to look for space for both fathers and care givers to receive key ICON messages.

Key achievements:

- ◆ Mult-agency working group met regularly to develop messaging and support via early help, Sussex Police and via community and voluntary organisations.
- ◆ A virtual practitioner launch event across Sussex in November 2020 was supported by Brighton & Hove and attended by 146 staff. The event described indicators of AHT and signposted practitioners to the resources available to help them in their conversations with care givers e.g. coping with crying plans.

I Infant crying is normal and it will stop

C Comforting can sometimes soothe the baby – is the baby hungry, tired, or in need of a nappy change?

O It's Okay to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you. After a few minutes, when you're feeling calm, go back and check on the baby;

N Never shake or harm a baby; it can cause lasting damage or death

If you need support, speak to someone such as: your family, friends, Midwife, Health Visitor or GP

Key Challenge: Measuring the impact of a preventative programme is difficult - whilst quantitative measures (e.g. the number of GPs who talked to parents at the 6 week baby check) can be captured, understanding the impact of this work on preventing AHT incidents is not straightforward. This was compounded by Covid-19 measures; as reported by National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reported an increase in non-accidental injury related rapid reviews in the first half of 2020. ⁶ A national NHS funded evaluation of the ICON programme, to test its impact, is due to commence in 2021. It is hoped that the Sussex Partnerships will be able to contribute to this research.

Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Case Review Group

A key partnership function is to reflect on systems and practice following a serious child safeguarding incident. A Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is undertaken when a child dies or the child has been seriously harmed. The purpose of a LCSPR is for agencies and individuals to learn lessons that improve the way in which they work, both individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and ultimately to deliver improved outcomes for them.

The Case Review Group (CRG) undertakes work which identifies areas for consideration which will drive improvement to services delivered to children, young people and their families. During this reporting period the partnership:

- ◆ Undertook 1 rapid review of a serious safeguarding incident.
- ◆ Commissioned two child safeguarding practice reviews. It is hoped that the reviews will be completed and published in spring 2022.
- ◆ Completed a 'legacy' Serious Case Review. Due to the exceptional nature of the case it was published anonymously on the NSPCC's ⁸ case review repository. Learning has been disseminated to practitioners.
- ◆ Delivered a 'legacy' local learning review via a virtual meeting platform. Early Learning was disseminated to practitioners who had worked with the family and subsequently to wider multi-agency and organisation staff via an on line learning event as well as producing a practitioners and managers briefing. The final report will be completed once parallel processes have concluded.

Dissemination of learning event (January 2021)

The partnership hosted a virtual learning event, attended by over 100 professionals which focussed sharing on key learning from our reviews:

- ◆ The impact of neglect on children and their brain development
- ◆ How to optimise outcomes for a child when planning and undertaking a face to face meeting to 'achieve best evidence' to support criminal proceedings
- ◆ Considering Black, Asian and diverse cultures within assessments and across systems
- ◆ Safeguarding children affected by family drug and alcohol use.

The event was interactive with practitioners using live chat to help inform a wide ranging panel discussion which considered how to improve front line professionals' confidence when working with children and families around how to hold difficult conversations.



Two virtual briefings provided staff with opportunities to receive an overview of child safeguarding practice reviews, and national learning from the triennial analysis report (covering three years: 2014-17, published in 2020) as well as recent local learning.

The sessions focussed on recognition and response to neglect, utilising a case study taken from the triennial analysis overview report.

Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (continued)

Briefings: The BHSCP introduced a new format for written briefings, based on a template used across health partnership networks: a short “9 minute” learning note for practitioners, in conjunction with a longer more detailed managers’ briefing to use at staff meetings. The team received very positive feedback from agencies who had found the presentation and content of these briefings helpful.

In addition a working group was set up to review and update the BHSCP’s training offer for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) to incorporate key learning from this review. This included learning regarding female perpetrators and non verbal disclosures of CSA.

Taking forward learning: Turning findings into learning and recommendations to be delivered via multi agency action plans remains an area for further development.

Delivery of actions from learning was variable: ‘quick wins’ were realised around dissemination of learning via briefings and learning events for front line staff as well as bite size ‘professional curiosity’ training.



Less straightforward is developing a culture which drives deeper reforms to systems and practice issues across the partnership - this is reflected in work such as roll out of GCP2 described in the early help section of this report. The reasons for this are complex, factors include available resources and capacity within the partnership to effect change - from operational and strategic leadership through to front line staff. This was exacerbated by the increase in work to embed learning from a rise in local learning reviews as well as national findings. ‘Lighter touch’ reviews may be helpful in addressing lower level practice concerns but whether they are able to deliver lasting change and impact on practice is yet to be tested. Wider discussions with partners across the country suggest that this is a shared concern and needs to be fully understood to ensure that the value of review work is fully attaining its intended objectives and reach in a timely way.

Key Challenges: Operating under Covid-19 measures brought significant challenges in terms of resources and the impact of virtual meetings. Being unable to hold supportive face to face meetings with practitioners was of particular concern when holding events with front line professionals who were involved in reviews and worked with families.

Delays to reviews due to parallel processes continue and whilst we acknowledge the National Panel’s prompts to conclude reviews we have taken an approach which yields early learning and recognises that other investigations and processes may bring to light new information which could impact on our key learning. This approach also affects the timing of interacting with families. The CRG remains conscious of the need to speed up the implementation of learning from reviews.

Looking forward: Information sharing, ‘think family’ and professional escalation of concerns were recurring themes raised as additional learning and for the partnership. These are some of the ‘stubborn’ issues for the partnership to address.

Measuring the impact of learning identified by the CRG is currently under consideration - including how to be assured that it is making a difference to children and families.

The CRG are looking to:

- (i) meet with agencies involved in a review undertaken 2 years ago to assess how the learning has changed practice in their area.
- (ii) trial different review methodologies.



Regular joint SCP communications with the National Panel via briefings, and webinars has resulted in improved clarity and is helping us to refocus our work.

Practice Improvement

Child Safeguarding Liaison Group

The Child Safeguarding Liaison Group (CSLG) is an interagency forum that also meets monthly to review and improve joint working practice in respect of interagency Child Protection processes. The forum provides an opportunity for practitioners and managers to raise specific concerns and also share good practice. The group looks at the practical implications of local and national learning and contributes to policy and process development. CSLG activity encourages closer co-operation, networking and respectful challenge between agencies to support positive improvements to joint working and practice. The CSLG also links front line work directly to the Steering Group, notifying senior leaders of significant emerging issues and potential risks to front line practice delivery.

The CSLG continued to meet regularly whilst under Covid-19 measures, discussing multi-agency issues arising from the initial 'lockdown', including e.g. concerns about the reduced reporting of child sexual abuse (CSA).

Examples of areas discussed and the impact on learning and practice:

- ◆ A case which exemplified a practitioner's tenacity and resilience when navigating a complex legal framework relating to medical identification of CSA resulted in a discussion which captured key learning points, resulting in:
 - an update to the Pan Sussex CSA pathway process.
 - a learning note for practitioners.These identified improvements benefited practice both locally and across Sussex.
- ◆ A further discussion centred on how best to address acute mental health episodes and led to a Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust lead explaining their approach to this. The group also used the discussion to jointly revisit and consider local threshold for mental health support.
- ◆ Looking at how best agencies can work together to ensure cultural competence and clarity when communicating with families from Black, Asian and diverse cultures. Learning briefings were developed and disseminated to staff.

The CSLG also held discussions about national learning and how this might apply locally. For example non-accidental injuries to babies and young children and the 'National Panel's' report on sudden unexplained deaths in infants (SUDIs) ⁹. Dialogue around the bruising protocol and paediatrician's responses took place - an example of how broader discussion promotes, enhances and embeds multi-agency understanding of a partner agency's operating parameters and/or best practice and the rationale that sits behind it.

Looking forward: It is understood that this group has had a positive impact on interagency co-operation and challenge resulting in a reduction in formal inter-agency escalations. This should be tested via discussions at the CSLG and also by promoting and monitoring the BHSCP's escalation process.

The CSLG will continue to develop a strengths based approach to learning, as a catalyst for sharing examples of best practice and thinking about what worked well and why and how this might be shared and applied more widely to drive practice improvement.



Monitoring and Evaluation of our work

Monitoring and Evaluation Group (M&E Group)

The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Group supports partner agencies and organisations to develop and improve by strengthening and supporting a learning culture across partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the city. This group, through its scrutiny and challenge role, is instrumental in assisting the Partnership to create a culture of openness and facilitate effective and regular challenge to all partner agencies and organisations.

In the early stages of the business year the partnership focused on data which would inform them about safeguarding children, during Covid-19 lockdown measures, such as children attending school and the number of face-to-face visits conducted by statutory agencies and organisations. The M&E group sought to develop a robust composite and informative picture across the safeguarding partnership.



The M&E Group developed a Quality Assurance Framework to support the partnership to deliver on its vision and business plan objectives.

The framework maps the main sources of resources, data and information utilised by the partnership to provide assurance about its activities.

Multi-Agency audits

The M&E group normally undertakes two deep dive (detailed case study) audits per year. Previous multi-agency audits have required managers to audit case files and records and to discuss the findings with other agencies at an audit feedback group. In 2020-21, the M&E Group focused on developing the current approach, which is to actively engage front line practitioners and to hold reflective group sessions following an audit to help to encourage multi-agency solution focused approaches to drive improvements to systems and practice.

June 2020: The findings report of a multi-agency audit of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Family Environment (completed in March 2020) was produced. Following the audit, the CSA Pathway was amended to make it clear about how and who to contact at the SARC including scenarios e.g. forensic, non-forensic and out of hours. A dip sample of CSA cases was also undertaken by Children's Social Care to check that strategy discussions involved all of the relevant agencies.

Oct 2020: The multi-agency audit of practice with children and families who identify as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic was completed. The findings report was produced in Jan 2021. A multi-agency action plan was developed to address the audit recommendations and which sought to improve knowledge and confidence. A briefing note highlighting the key learning points was disseminated to managers and front-line practitioners.

Feb 2021: Preparation for a multi-agency audit to evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children who are at risk of neglect with a focus on children under 4 years of age was undertaken by the M&E Group. The completion of the audits by partner agencies was postponed until May 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19 on resources. The audit report was written in June 2021.

Key challenges - Despite the impact of Covid-19 on staffing and resources across the partnership, multi-agency audits were undertaken but with some slight delay. Already described regarding Case Review work, a concern has been timely completion of action plans arising from audit work. In order to fully capitalise on audit work outcomes, action plans need to be realistic in their ambitions with an across-the-board commitment to deliver them and demonstrate impact.



Monitoring and Evaluation of our work

Section 11 audit

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out agencies' and organisations' responsibilities under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004³; namely it places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The three recently formed Safeguarding Children Partnerships (SCP) undertook their first joint Brighton & Hove and Pan Sussex s11 audit as SCPs. This continued a two-year cycle of activity which occurred under the previous Local Safeguarding Children Boards' (LSCBs') audit in year 1 and scrutiny of action plans in year 2 of the cycle. The last audit was carried out in 2018.

Agencies and organisations across the city and Pan Sussex were asked to complete a self-assessment return using a tool which enabled them to assess their level of compliance with statutory guidance and reflect on areas requiring development. S11 activity also provides an opportunity to identify and share good practice.

The self-assessment return was updated this year to include a suite of indicators around children who are looked after (CLA), some were new (7) and some added to existing standards (6). This contributed to an overall 16% increase in the number of standards to be assessed in 2020: from 80 (in 2018) to 93 in 2020.

There was positive engagement across all agencies involved in the audit. A panel that included two young people representing the voice of children and young people, met with 4 selected Pan Sussex agencies. A separate panel for 3 Brighton & Hove agencies represented a shift from the all-day Pan Sussex and local peer challenge days in 2018. Our Lay Member supported the panel as our community voice.

95% of the Pan Sussex standards were rated as green or not applicable, it is questionable, based upon current evidence, that lead partners can be entirely assured that this is realistic and sustainable position, particularly in light of the impact of Covid-19.

Three key recommendations were implemented:

Recommendation 1: Action plan progress is tested via a scrutiny panel in 2021. The panel's objectives will be to look at more detailed standard specific submissions from agencies which demonstrate continued compliance with s11 process and how agencies/organisations are able to evidence this in practice.

Recommendation 2: Pan Sussex Strategic leaders were asked to approve the formation of a Pan Sussex working group whose objectives are to review, refocus and redevelop the s11 self evaluation form (SEF). This should ensure that the audit retains appropriate focus and that the tool is effective and proportionate and can gauge agencies/organisations understanding of their responsibilities under SCP arrangements via their responses.

Recommendation 3: The Sussex partnerships consider further joint and local analysis of subject specific areas, particularly around Standard 9: risk management, using the s11 SEFs to benchmark and triangulate returns information.

The three recommendations are being taken forward during 2021-22; an example is the collation of ICON information provided via the returns to identify gaps in partners' knowledge and provision of ICON messaging.



Protecting Children and Young People from Exploitation

Exploitation Group

Since 2019, Brighton & Hove City Council's Community Safety Partnership (BHCSP) has led on the strategic direction for tackling city wide exploitation, acknowledging that exploitation can impact anyone regardless of age.

The BHCSP's Exploitation Group is co-chaired by Sussex Police and the Community Safety Partnership and it brings together Safeguarding Partners from across Brighton & Hove, including Safeguarding Adults Board representatives, Public Health and a strong representative voice from the Community and Voluntary Sector. By working together across adults' and childrens' safeguarding we are better able to recognise and mitigate a whole picture in terms of how criminal exploitation manifests across the city.

After an initial pause in meetings due to Covid-19 pressures, the group increased its meetings from quarterly to bi-monthly for the rest of the business year. The group were cognisant that after the initial lock down period exploitation re-emerged as a significant and evolving threat to children, young people and their families, with greater risks regarding on line exploitation.

The 'National Panel's report (pre Covid-19) "It was hard to escape"¹⁰ shone a light nationally on extra-familial safeguarding. Issues raised around the quality of data, prevention, disruption and support for victims resonated locally.

Scoping work to bench mark the local picture against the four themed areas (problem identification; supporting staff; service design and practice development) is in train.



Key achievements:

- ◆ Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) provided additional funding to monitor the impact of Brighton Streets detached youth work interventions.
- ◆ Webinars designed to help and support parents and care givers to identify and respond to criminal exploitation "You Are Not Alone" were delivered in November 2020.



- ◆ Development of the "Young People's Plan" for a pilot in 2021-22. The pilot will initially operate with 6 young people aged 15 years of age or above. It recognises that the current child protection plan approach may not be a good fit for some adolescents. The pilot is utilising learning from other SCP areas to inform its approach. It will use (i) location assessments and interventions to reduce high harm 'hot spots' in the city; and (ii) focus on the use of contextual safeguarding 'young people plans' in a way which engages young people.

Key challenges:

- ◆ Understanding the changing picture of exploitation and disrupting perpetrators of exploitation at the earliest opportunity.
- ◆ The group need to utilise available data more effectively to be better able to understand risks to children and young people e.g. school exclusions; exploitation of children who live outside of the city; on line exploitation; and transition to adulthood within a broader and city wide context.

Learning and Development

The year from April 2020 until March 2021 has been one of the most challenging and difficult for training. As we went into the first “lockdown” all face to face training stopped. This led to a swift reappraisal of how we could continue to deliver a multi-agency offer to partners across our locality and Sussex.

As a result, there was a subsequent loss of attendance while we reconfigured training onto virtual platforms as quickly as possible.

In Brighton & Hove, we continue to offer three core training days, and these remain mandatory for all new to role in safeguarding agencies. However, in view of the issues around delivery, these were turned into virtual events and ‘Day One’ has temporarily been replaced by use of an E-Learning Module that was re-written by the Training Manager on behalf of the Partnership and BHCC. As a result of the loss of months we also added extra dates, both to cover the lost sessions and to allow for presenting to a reduced audience via a virtual platform.

The clear benefits of multi-agency training remain evident in the positive feedback received, both for these core days and for the more specific and specialised training offers.

The numbers of staff attending the BHSCP Training has remained at a high level and we have had a total of **534** attendees between April 2020 – March 2021. (training was suspended for some months due to COVID19).

In relation to e-learning courses, it should also be noted that **380** staff have undertaken the “Many Faces of Exploitation” module on the Gateway, this was co-written and built on the Gateway by the Training Manager and a colleague from YMCA Wise, providers of support to children and young people to stay safe in their relationships.

The BHSCP Training Manager has also remained involved heavily in the implementation of the Graded Care Profile (GCP2), a new Neglect assessment tool, which will eventually be used across the city by safeguarding children staff. This process has been actioned by a working group and has now been able to progress to the point where staff training is being rolled out.

There has also been a piece of work undertaken with Sussex police to add details around neglect onto the handheld tablets used by officers, to allow further details of possible neglect to be added to the police submissions to the Front Door for Families.

It should also be noted that we have added a new cohort of 12 staff to the BHSCP training pool, to enhance numbers. We could not continue without the support of these invaluable members of staff, **“Thank You”**.



Future planning – There are clear plans to look at all training offers and adjust these to include both updated legislation and procedures, while also making sure that county wide initiatives are incorporated. There is also a close collaboration where appropriate between Children’s Safeguarding Partnerships, to make sure that we coordinate Sussex wide training around certain offers, such as MAPPA, Outcomes for Looked After Children and Harmful Practices.

There is also work being undertaken by all three Training Managers to arrange a Pan Sussex (Virtual) Conference which will be held in November 2021.

In conclusion, it has been a strange and difficult year, but we have maintained our training standards and the response from attendees clearly shows that they are impressed by the ongoing training offers and that it is meeting their needs.

Learning and Development

Uptake of BHSCP training 2020-21

I am incredibly grateful for the three days of training, for your informative and clear resources. This training has been brilliant.

Table 1: Training delivered by subject

Core Child Protection Courses	Courses Presented	Attendance
E-learning Module – Day 1	ongoing	646
Assessment, Referral, and Investigation	5	58
Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups	5	51
Total		755
Level 3 - Specialist Child Protection Courses		
Domestic Abuse and Violence	2	39
Exploitation	4	79
Young Woman and Gangs - Contextual Safety Planning	2	44
MAPPAs – Multi Agency Public Protection	1	6
Impact of Parental Substance Misuse	2	34
Sexually Harmful Behaviours	1	19
Engaging Effectively with Families	2	29
Safeguarding in a Digital World	6	50
Staff briefing – learning from case reviews	1	98
Gangs & Youth Violence	2	51
Trauma Informed Practice	2	85
Total		534

The virtual core safeguarding training days had a total of **109** staff attending, (between November 2020 and March 2021) and **646** multi-agency staff undertook the related e-learning module. A total of **755** staff undertook some form of safeguarding children training. It should be noted that there has been a particularly good take up of the e-learning from agencies that do not always come to core training, many of our partners within the community voluntary services have used this method to provide themselves with basic child protection awareness, which is most encouraging.

Thank you for an amazing session, I have really enjoyed it, have learned so much and it will certainly help my practice.

Thank you for an excellent training session! The case conference role play was really useful. Such a good way to experience that in a 'low risk' setting.

Table 2: Core Training uptake by agency

Agency	Developing an Understanding (e-learning)	Referral, Assessment and Investigation	Case Conference and core groups
Police	1	0	0
Education	78	32	34
Health	58	5	5
CVS	181	5	4
Probation	5	0	0
BHCC	134	12	12
Early Years	94	4	3
Housing	34	0	0
Other	61	0	1
Total	646	58	59

Safeguarding Work Across Sussex

Pan Sussex Strategic Leaders

The Pan Sussex Safeguarding lead partners meet twice yearly to focus on setting the 'road map' for future partnership development and identify shared safeguarding priorities across the three areas.

This includes being assured that there is consistent implementation of regional and national guidance, learning and processes such as national and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In addition, the group seeks to identify opportunities for Pan Sussex delivery of initiatives such as commissioning of services, thus ensuring a targeted and resource efficient join-up which reduces the potential for duplication or omission in safeguarding work.

Pan Sussex SCP collaborations include:

- ◆ Pan Sussex scoping exercise and C-19 supported pan Sussex training offer e.g. MAPPA and Harmful practices training.
- ◆ Pan Sussex Contextual Safeguarding Principles agreed.
- ◆ Pan Sussex communication campaigns, including promoting a free NSPCC safeguarding training offer for people who visit homes as part of their work (e.g. gas and telecoms engineers and delivery drivers).
- ◆ Sussex Police received funding from the Home Office's Serious Violence Fund to carry out targeted work to reduce knife related hospital admissions. Partner agencies supported the campaign in September October utilising a range of social media messages.



In addition, Sussex Police run educational programmes with schools and colleges throughout the year to educate on the law of knife crime and also encourage young people not to get caught up by peer pressure.

Safeguarding Under 5s

A Pan Sussex Public health multi-agency working group was set up to look at the 'National Panel's' report "Out of Routine" ⁹. The group set out to develop a consistent approach in several safeguarding areas such as 'safer sleeping' principles, to be shared with and adopted by agencies across Pan Sussex.

The Safeguarding under 5s working group is informing the planning of a thematic Conference scheduled for November 2021, focussing on both local and national learning, and also think about how to effect lasting changes to systems and services, including 'universal' service provision, which can positively impact outcomes for under 5s.

Suicide prevention and promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

This has been an important area where leads have linked up across Sussex to seek to improve outcomes for children and young people and address longer term issues such as waiting times. There has been extensive preventative and responsive work e.g. helping schools to provide informed and current help/resources to children, young people and their families.

Pan Sussex Policies and Procedures Group

The Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures are produced to ensure that staff meet the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. A working group meets quarterly to review existing policies and procedures and to consider whether development of guidance is needed in response to specific issues raised by e.g. learning reviews and audit work. This reporting year saw a significant improvement in the group's outputs with a dedicated resource funded by the three Sussex SCPs providing traction. Timely briefings to staff highlighted key changes to updated policies and procedures and summarised new guidance.

In future, the group need to consider how best to rationalise and consolidate procedures to ensure they can be managed effectively. Planned work includes the alignment of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Procedures across Sussex.

Looking to the Future

Key areas of focus for 2021-22

Life under Covid-19 has irrevocably changed our children's lives. For some this may have meant spending more time at home together as a family and this has been reflected in an increase in the numbers of children who continued to be educated at home as restrictions eased.



For others, bereavement and the impact of social isolation on children's emotional health and wellbeing may have been the unwelcome consequences and experiences due to a global pandemic.

Our child safeguarding practice review work will seek to afford an insight into the impact of virtual relationships with children in need of early help and protection. Audit work will also focus on areas for development and post pandemic recovery. This will explore the impact on children in education and consider how best to support schools as they emerge from hours/days/weeks of 'lost' lessons and its effect on children's attainment both socially and academically.

Sir Alan Wood's review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements ¹ acknowledges that progress will take time. As a partnership we will need to explore how we capture the voice of our children; strengthen links to our 'education' and assurance. Independent scrutiny is developing well under the new arrangements with two independent scrutineers holding clear and distinct functions. Recruiting new lay members will further strengthen and diversify support for our existing lay person in terms of wider ranging scrutiny of sub-group activity.

The wealth of research published and arising actions required during this reporting period has been simultaneously insightful and overwhelming and must be prioritised. The BHSCP is keen to learn from the national evaluation of independent scrutiny models expected in late 2021/early 2022.

Key challenges and opportunities:

- ◆ Supporting children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing in a timely and effective way. This key concern is detailed throughout this report and reflects a wider national picture at a time when resources are under increased pressure.
- ◆ Outcome focused work - how do we know that our work is having a positive impact on keeping children safe and promoting their wellbeing? In areas where this is inconclusive, we must gain an understanding of when continuing is the right thing to do, even where tangible outcome evidence is difficult to demonstrate e.g. preventative ICON work around Abusive Head Trauma.
- ◆ How as a partnership do we best focus increasing limited resources, which will come under further strain as budgets will inevitably be under increasing pressure?
- ◆ Further developing a fair and inclusive working environment, e.g. focussing on anti-racist practice and tackling gender based harmful behaviours and practices.
- ◆ Lead Partner assurance—are they confident that current partnership arrangements are effective, with a supporting culture which actively seeks to improve and develop multi-agency working relationships.
- ◆ Engaging with the National Panel and safeguarding networks will further assist the BHSCP to achieve its objectives in a shifting and largely unknown post pandemic landscape.

- ◆ Working with and supporting Clinical Commissioning Groups as they undergo transformational change to an Integrated Care System operating framework.



Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)

The Community and Voluntary sector plays a very significant and highly valued role in protecting and promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of children young people and families in the city. During the pandemic the community response has remained consistent and responsive to changing needs.

Community Works state:



“Community Works, Safety Net and the BHSCP have been working together to improve engagement with the CVS. A package of training has been maintained even throughout the pandemic including Safeguarding for Trustees, and a Safeguarding Q&A for front line workers. Our aim is to build ever stronger partnership arrangements to assist in safeguarding in the city.

The CVS responded extensively to the Prevention Peer Review, completing surveys, writing case studies and taking part in workshops with the Local Government Association; the CVS look forward to working together on the recommendations.

COVID 19 has created a challenging environment for voluntary and community organisations, there are concerns about funding, opening services back up again after moving them online and supporting service users in an uncertain environment but we know that effective partnership is the best route out together.”

Lay members

Lay members play an important role in providing an independent voice to help inform BHSCP’s decision making and provide a perspective based on their experience of living in Brighton & Hove.

During 2020-21 we said a fond goodbye to a long standing lay member who had ably supported our practice review work. We remained grateful to our remaining lay person for her ongoing work to support improvement to systems and practice. This was despite personal pressures brought by the Pandemic. Our lay member brought her critical thinking knowledge from her own experience of industry in conjunction with child centred thinking, to challenge constructively and effectively for example when signing off a practice review. Her input into the s11 audit as a community voice also proved invaluable; partners are immensely grateful for her ongoing commitment, adding much valued scrutiny via respectful and informed challenge.



Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Brighton & Hove Private Fostering 2020-21: Raising awareness about Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 if disabled), by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Given concerns about the level of 'hidden' private fostering, local authorities are required to raise public awareness of the requirement to notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements and therefore to reduce the number of 'unknown' private fostering arrangements.



In 2020-21 a number of initiatives were undertaken to highlight the notification arrangements to existing and potential private foster carers, voluntary and statutory agencies, and members of the public:

- ◆ In March 2020 the Private Fostering Monitor delivered training to professionals from services working with children and families in Brighton & Hove. The training is part of a Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP) one day training event called *Hidden Children and Young People: Working with Invisible Families*. Training in March 2021 was postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- ◆ Information about private fostering has been included in the primary and secondary school application guides 2020-21.
- ◆ The chapter relating to Private Fostering in the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures was refreshed in May 2020.
- ◆ The Private Fostering Monitor has worked with the Project Manager (Carefirst to Eclipse Migration) to ensure that private fostering is accurately mapped in readiness for Go-Live (postponed to August 2021).
- ◆ The Private Fostering Monitor has provided a Private Fostering briefing to the social workers and managers at the Front Door for Families in February 2021.
- ◆ Information about private fostering is regularly shared by the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP) with professionals and members of the public via the BHSCP website and social media.
- ◆ We continue to raise awareness about private fostering with Language Schools; Guardianship Agencies and other Homestay Providers.
- ◆ The BHCC Education Safeguarding Officer has provided information and guidance to local independent schools during this period to ensure that the front door is notified of private fostering arrangements arising from covid-19 restrictions. For example, at the start of the third lockdown, a small number of children (boarders at the schools) could not return home during the third lockdown and had to live with host families which constitutes a private fostering arrangement.

Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust (BSUH)

Safeguarding children and young people remains a priority within Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust (BSUH) which is the main acute hospital in the area, through a continued commitment to promoting safeguarding as an integral component of practice and keeping the child or young person at the centre of safeguarding decision making.

Partnership Working continues to be strong as BSUH is represented by the Named Nurse & Doctor at key strategic groups both internally and externally. This includes participation in the audit programmes and dissemination of the learning.

Covid-19 has had an impact on the way children and young people access care and how professionals interact with families. Face to face A&E services continued throughout the lock down, but some clinic appointments were not possible, so the use of online or telephone contact was instigated. Staff were mindful of the challenges, trying to ensure every contact was meaningful because other support services from the partnership were restricted. Child protection medicals continued throughout.



It was noted that the numbers of young people presenting to A&E with issues relating to mental health has dramatically increased and this has been escalated within the CCG and partnership.

Flexibility about training opportunities was needed, so newsletters and information sheets were used as well as online quiz and e-learning, however it is recognised that this is not as effective as face to face discussions.

In April 2021 Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust (BSUH) amalgamated with Western Sussex Hospitals Foundation Trust (WSHT) to become University Hospitals Sussex Foundation Trust. The commitment to safeguarding children and young people will continue to be a high priority within the new Trust.

The LionCare Group



The LionCare Group provides independent therapeutic residential children's homes and independent therapeutic Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support (SEMH) School. The Lioncare Group was proud of its ability to have a positive impact on children's lives in the city during Covid-19: "Our Children's Homes and School remained open... and operational throughout the Covid pandemic." The Lioncare Group also challenged the partnership to think about how to develop and improve collaborative working with them as a specialist provider, to keep children safe.

Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Key achievements:

- ◆ CCG looked after children team developed bespoke training on the healthcare needs of children in care available to all agency staff and delivered as an offer via LSCP.



- ◆ Community of Practice for working with Fathers and non- Birthing Parents developed and working across the partnership with health membership.
- ◆ Pan Sussex Non Accidental Injury (NAI) practice guidance developed for injuries to non-mobile infants, including eye haemorrhages, standardised by the Pan Sussex Policies and Procedures.

Impact of CCG Training:

- ◆ Raising professional awareness of Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) and the importance of ICON messaging.
- ◆ Importance of the role of fathers and male carers emphasised in training and communications as research indicates that 70% of AHT is caused by males.
- ◆ Multi agency staff equipped with the knowledge to support parents understand normal child development stages including babies crying, in order to support families develop a strategy to manage this through the sharing of the ICON messaging including the 'crying plan'.

Key challenges:

Covid-19 pandemic required all NHS organisations to consider how we best support acute services:

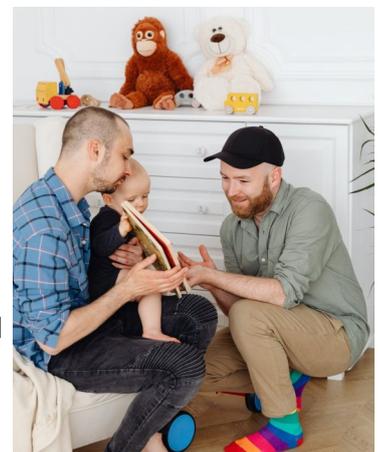
- ◆ Business as usual was paused, or altered. Business continuity plans were implemented within the CCGs and across our health partners. New ways of working and communicating using new technology and video calls, rather than face to face meetings were established with our safeguarding children partners.
- ◆ CCGs were required to plan for nursing and other staff redeployment; this included the safeguarding **and** children looked after teams.
- ◆ The safeguarding children partnership was flexible and able to understand and recognise the challenges the NHS and CCG has faced. Effective working together has continued.
- ◆ Child Exploitation Conferences at the Brighton Amex Stadium were postponed to 2021-22 financial year due to Covid government restrictions.

Impact on new parenthood:

Health visitors were redeployed into acute services at the beginning of the pandemic which impacted on the service new parents received.

The CCG worked with providers and the partnership to share these concerns regionally and nationally, along with other CCG's.

Health visitor's and Healthy Child Programme practitioners (school nurses) were recognised as offering an essential service to children and families and were not redeployed further, allowing services to support new parents to resume.



Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC): Safer Communities

Safer Communities is responsible for the provision of regulatory services and community safety including exploitation; violence reduction; domestic and sexual violence and abuse; and leading 'Prevent' (safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation).

Key Achievement: The Community Safety Team worked in partnership with the BHCC's Adolescent Service to develop a clear plan to embed a contextual safeguarding approach in cases involving exploitation and extra-familial harm. In addition to this the Community Safety Team facilitated neighbourhood-based contextual safeguarding meetings involving a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies which has led to far richer discussions and safety planning e.g. Preston Park and Brighton Seafront.



Key challenge: was to ensure that agencies involved in child safeguarding were able to identify that if a child or young person has become involved in exploitative activity such as drug dealing the complexity of their situation should be explored before considering how best to support them out of this situation, recognising that prosecution may not be appropriate. Professionals are developing a greater understanding of the impact of trauma on a child or young person's behaviour including fear of reprisals and debt entrapment.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS)



ESFRS are committed to improving the safety of the most vulnerable people in our communities, which includes working with partners to safeguard children and young people.

Key achievement: Working with partner agencies to deliver Virtual Safety in Action to primary schools and home educated children in Brighton & Hove. This included mental health, wellbeing and internet safety resources/information, that were pertinent to lockdown challenges. Up to March 2021 there were a total of 4,403 page views for the resources.

Key Challenge: The challenge was delivering key safety messages without face to face contact, which normally results from educational events, school visits and home safety visits (home safety visits were restricted to homes with no working smoke alarm or other issues) and fire station open days.

Our response to Covid-19 measures:

- ◆ Continued home safety visits to reduce fire and accident risk within homes.
- ◆ **FireWise**, our fire setting intervention programme to children and young people with a fascination for fire was adapted utilising a mixture of face to face and online sessions.
- ◆ Developing and delivering our **Safe Drive, Stay Alive** road safety programme through a specially developed online session to reach and influence 16-17 year olds, including home educated young people.
- ◆ Through developing our **Water Savvy, Water Safe WS²** water safety programme to reduce the risk of drowning for children of all ages.



Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Sussex Police

“Covid-19 has had a profound impact on all services and we have had to quickly innovate and adapt to new ways of working. Where visiting of children was required as part of joint agency working or a police investigation, visits took place despite concerns around Covid-19.”

Key achievement: an example of tackling exploitation. Police received information that a child was being exploited by a ‘known drug dealer’. Joint agency work was completed in terms of safeguarding and engagement. The exploiting adult was issued with a Community Protection Notice preventing them from contacting children. Whilst the investigation did not result in charges relating to criminal exploitation, the alleged perpetrator was dealt with positively by police and a number of control measures were put in place resulting in proactive intervention and disruption. As a result the child of concern went missing less frequently and there were no further reports of exploitation.

Sussex Police recognise that much work still needs to be done to reduce criminal exploitation in the city. This work includes the need to continue to develop collaborative relationships, at local and national level to tackle exploitation.

In February 2021, ‘**What’s in your pocket**’ a short film production, centred on raising awareness of child criminal exploitation, was shortlisted for The London Rolling Film Festival. Filmed in Brighton & Hove by students and ‘Smokescreen Visuals’, it highlighted issues of child exploitation, debt bondage, abuse and coercion which are integral to illegal drug supply. The students collaborated with community partners including Sussex Police, YMCA and Crimestoppers.



National Probation Service (NPS)

The NPS is part of the Criminal Justice System working with offenders who may pose either a direct or indirect threat to children. We are responsible for managing the risk’s posed by working closely with partnership agencies including the Police and Children’s Services and ensuring that effective and robust risk management plans are in place to ensure the safety of children. We support the partnership by :

- Chairing Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings, bringing together a range of partnership agencies, to ensure a collaborative approach is taken with regard to the management of those subject to MAPPA.
- Work closely with Sussex Police to deal with perpetrators who carry out sexual offences against children.



Ensuring Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meetings focus on the protection of both adults and children who are at risk of domestic abuse.

During Covid 19, the NPS adapted its delivery model, working to an Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) using technology and remote ways of working to engage and communicate with service users.

The focus during this period has been to maintain frequent contact with those posing the highest risk, in particular those who have contact with children. Engagement with child protection conference work has been prioritised.

“One of the main consequences of Covid 19 has been the lack of home visits and face to face contact. These enable us to build a holistic picture of the Service User and their family, and also allow us to see first hand how things are in the family home. Other measures have been put in place to compensate, e.g. doorstep visits, telephone calls and video messaging.”

The NPS hopes to install a designated member of staff co-located one day a week at the Front Door for Families, following the re-unification of Probation Services in June 2021; this is in line with practice elsewhere in Sussex.

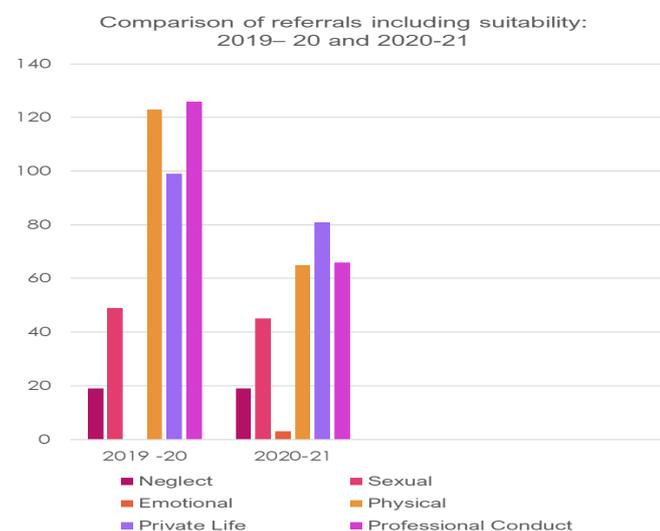
Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO is responsible for the management of allegations and concerns regarding adults who work with, care for or volunteer with children. This includes providing advice about safer recruitment and selection practices and safer working practices.

Referrals during 2020-21 were 279, down by 35% on 2019-20 (426) referrals. This reduction was directly attributable to Covid-19 measures. The highest number of investigated allegations regarding professionals were: schools (43), residential settings (32) and foster care (21).

During 2020-21 There were:



- ◆ 158 initial evaluations with no further action (323 the previous year).
- ◆ 16 staff suspended, of which 5 were reinstated.
- ◆ 49 strategy discussions leading to 24 s47¹¹ investigations.
- ◆ 1 police conviction during this period, with 29 live investigations leading to 3 charges and 6 further cases awaiting advice from the Crown Prosecution Service.

Key challenge: lack of central government position regarding data capture to ensure a consistent national approach to recording and managing allegations.

Key achievement: The LADO maintained a high standard of response rate during this period, despite being called upon to support capacity at the Local Authority's Front Door for families.

Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT)

SPFT provide a range of adult and child focussed specialist mental health services. All staff have a responsibility to raise safeguarding children concerns wherever they arise. We have been continuing to promote staff to be aware of the criteria and function of Early Help and referrals into this service.

SPFT's safeguarding team provides clinical consultations, support, supervision, core and specialist safeguarding training. We are also the first point of contact for partners regarding external agencies to ensure safeguarding needs and standards are met.

Key achievement: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 3 months of additional safeguarding children funding was provided between January - March 2021 to provide additional support for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) within Sussex. This equated to an extra day of safeguarding provision for Brighton and Hove.



This additional resourcing has had a positive impact by increasing engagement with CAMHS, perinatal and Learning Disability (LD) CAMHS services.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that all SPFT children's safeguarding training had to be revised so it could be delivered online and to feature the changes in safeguarding services both internally and externally. We chose to continue to deliver training live via webinars so that conversation and exploration could happen with participants virtually. Our training programme was reviewed, e.g. with specific focuses on neglect, learning from child safeguarding practice reviews and the role of men in safeguarding.

To note: Looking to the future, we welcome opportunities for Children's Social Care to have a placement within the SPFT safeguarding team and CAMHS teams. This could be a reciprocal arrangement; as we are keen to promote working alongside our partners.

Updates from Partner Agencies and Organisations

Sussex Community Foundation Trust

- ◆ SCFT offers a range of Children's Community health services which includes the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) 0-19 years which is delivered by Health Visitors and School Nurses offering a Universal, Universal Plus and Universal Partnership Plus service to children and their families.
- ◆ The Sussex wide Children's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (CSARC) is operationally managed by a SCFT Consultant Community Paediatrician and a Specialist Nurse.

Key challenge: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, contacts by staff working with children in SCFT have been mostly 'virtually', via video call or by telephone. This has been a huge challenge for building relationships and safeguarding children as they were very often not seen face to face.

Key Achievement: Learning from child safeguarding practice reviews, being shared through webinars and learning events and co presenting on the CSA webinar.



Looking to the future

- ◆ SCFT as a Health Provider have not been so actively involved in leading the Partnership's direction since the new arrangements were implemented in 2019. There are no direct health provider representatives on the Steering Group; however, the CCG are core members. Although partners attend the partnership meetings it would strengthen the working together, if providers were involved further in steering the partnership's strategic direction.
- ◆ A Partnership Board meeting was cancelled in June 2020 due to Covid-19, decisions are now potentially made without health providers' involvement. The Partnership Board needs to involve all agencies in working together to ensure children and young people in Brighton & Hove are effectively safeguarded.
- ◆ The impact of the partnerships' work could be measured by evaluating training attendance and revisiting those audits that bring in the same learning over again.



Children's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (CSARC)

The main achievements of the service this year have been to continue to provide good care during the Covid-19 pandemic and to continue to improve the experience for the children and families that attend CSARC. The CSARC has completed its sixth year and continues to develop and improve the service by acting on feedback from children, parents and carers and by ensuring the ongoing professional development of staff. In addition, the CSARC offers open days and pathway awareness training to safeguarding partners across Sussex.

Budget April 2020 - March 2021

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states “ the safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate,to support the local arrangements....and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.” The three lead safeguarding partners funded the majority of the costs of the partnership for its first full year in operation.

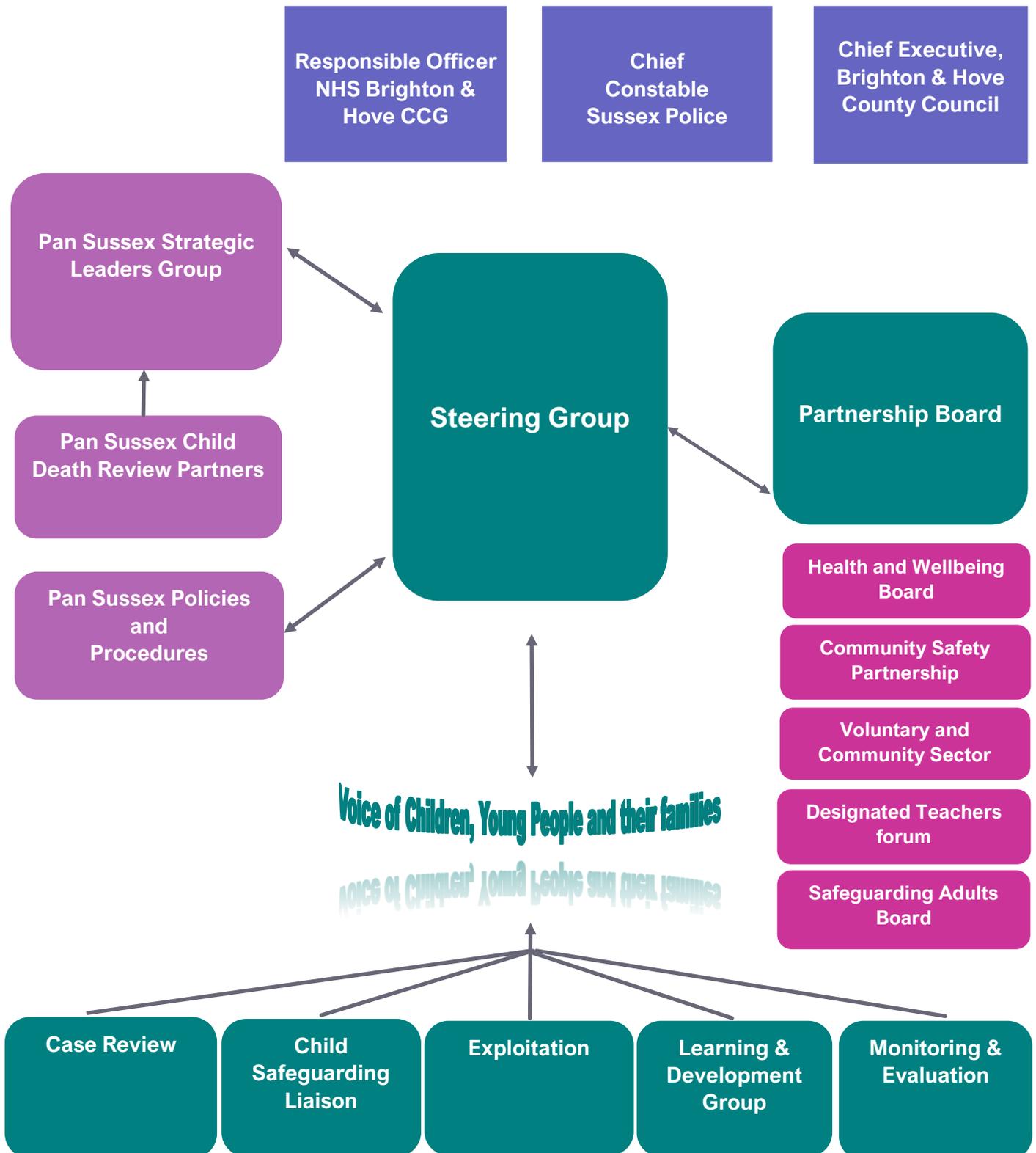
2020-21: Partner contributions		Expenditure: Headline costs	
CCG	66,783.00	Staffing	139,964.00
Local Authority	102,140.00	Independent Scrutiny	22,505.00
Police	35,000.00	Training	10,350.00
KSS CRC	2,786.00	Learning reviews	10,400.00
NPS	1,083	IT/Equipment	3,907.00
Total (Partner contributions)	£207,792.00	Miscellaneous costs*	5,666.00
		Allocated funds for 2021-22 (Includes conferences and learning reviews)	15,000.00
C/F from 2019-20 (not included in total income)	40,000.00	C/F from 2020-21 (not included in total income)	40,000.00
Total income	£207,792.00	Total expenditure	£207,792.00

The Steering Group agreed to carry forward funds of £40,000 and allocated a further £15,000 to complete projects which commenced or were commissioned during the business year. Given the relatively small budget learning reviews can account for 5-10% of the partnership’s annual cost so this flexibility enables the partnership to continue to meet its financial commitments.

BHSCP budget: Sir Alan Wood’s phase one report (July 2020) noted the significant additional demands placed on local service provision to keep children and families safe. Although his final report (May 2021) post dates the period of this report he reiterates this point and it is of note that he concludes that the complexity of funding issues should be addressed by each area when determining the SCP budgets. The BHSCP budget for 2021-22 remains at similar levels to 2020-21.



BHSCP groups and strategic partners



Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership: Our Partners



Sussex
NHS Commissioners



East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service



Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership

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Jack Sager	Sussex Police
Mehdi Fallahi	Sussex Police
Becky Surman	Brighton & Hove City Council, Early Help
Jo Tomlinson	Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups

References

1. [Wood Report](#) Sector expert review of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangement (published May 2021: HMG). The Department for Education appointed Sir Alan Wood CBE to review how the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for local areas (introduced in July 2019), are addressing criteria set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance.
2. [Brighton and Hove Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)
3. [Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#) places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
4. The three lead partners are responsible for ensuring that partners work across the city to safeguard children and young people and promote their health and wellbeing. Further information can be found in the [BHSCP's partnership arrangements](#).
5. [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) (WT 2018)
6. [Supporting vulnerable children and families during COVID-19](#), Practice Briefing (December 2020)
7. Rapid Reviews: "When a serious incident becomes known to the safeguarding partners, they must consider whether the case meets the criteria for a local review.The safeguarding partners should promptly undertake a rapid review of the case". Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
8. The [national case review repository](#), launched in November 2013, is the most comprehensive collection of case reviews in the UK. It provides a single place for published case reviews to make it easier to access and share learning at a local, regional and national level.
9. [Out of routine](#): A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm.
10. ["It was hard to escape"](#) Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation (HMG 2020).
11. The local authority **must** investigate if they have good reason to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering (or is likely to suffer) significant harm. A section 47 investigation (Children's Act 1989) is undertaken where a child at risk of significant harm.

Page 7 MACE/MACSE: Multi-Agency Child (Sexual) Exploitation.

* AVR: Adolescent Vulnerability Risk Meeting.

BHSCP's vision and values:

The Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership has a vision that: Children and young people in Brighton & Hove live a life free from fear, harm, abuse and exploitation, enabling every child in every part of the City to achieve their potential.

This is underpinned by our Core Values:

□ A child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

□ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each citizen, practitioner and organisation should play their part.

