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**Annual Report**

**2019-2020**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report which covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The report is published by the 3 statutory partners: Herefordshire County Council, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. These agencies are jointly and equally responsible for putting in place effective arrangements to support the co-ordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of activity to safeguard children in the county. The partners have published this report as required by statutory guidance and have asked me to review the report in my role as Independent Scrutineer; a role I took up in November 2019.

I have reviewed the report against the requirements of Working Together 2018 which determines that the report should:

* set out what partners have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice
* evidence the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
* provide an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
* detail the decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report’s period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
* set out the ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

I consider that partners have provided an overview of the activity that has taken place as a result of the new arrangements and also via the previous arrangements that were in operation for about half of the period covered by this report; however, the report is limited in detailing how effective these arrangements have been in practice. This is because the work of the partnership to date appears to have primarily focused on the completion of tasks through a range of sub groups; some of which have been successfully completed although partners report that the transition to the new arrangements created some delay in delivering agreed work programmes. More significantly, a focus on tasks or process on their own, will not, of themselves, result in sustainable improvements in safeguarding practice as these are dependent on a culture of shared accountability, visible leadership, and robust governance.

Positively, the report details the *impact* of the work of partners in terms of the delivery of early help support and this includes feedback from children who have received support at this level of need which is, in my view, the best way of measuring impact. The absence of performance data, including benchmarking, the lack of multi-agency audits to evaluate front line practice and data that evaluates the impact of training on practice means that the impact of partners working together to safeguard children cannot readily be discerned from the report. It is however important to recognise that this does not mean that children and young people are not being helped to achieve good outcomes in Herefordshire.

Partners have been transparent in this report and identified where progress has not been achieved. They have also reported activity to learn from serious child safeguarding cases and the actions planned to implement the learning from the Serious Case Review that was published in the period covered by this report. In future reports, partners will have the opportunity to more fully describe the *impact* of actions taken in response to the learning from serious child safeguarding cases.

Finally, whilst the report states that the views and experiences of children are considered in key decision-making forums for individual children e.g., Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews, statutory partners recognise that there is a need to develop an approach to seeking and utilising feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

As required by statutory guidance, this report will be published; it will also be taken through the appropriate internal governance structures in the 3 statutory partners. In addition, I recommend that the delegated representatives of the 3 safeguarding partners meet with their organisational lead representative to discuss this report so that these individuals, who are ultimately accountable, are both sighted on the work/effectiveness of the Partnership and given the opportunity to influence its future ways of working.

**Liz Murphy**

**Independent Scrutineer**

**December 2020**

This Annual Report covers the year 2019-20 and details the work that was originally commissioned by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board, which was the regulatory entity at the start of the year, which the replacement Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership concluded.

The reason and method for introducing this change will be detailed further within the report.

**The local context**

Illustrated is the number of children assessed as in need, numbers of children with a Child Protection Plan and numbers of children in the care of the local authority as at 31st March 2020

**180**

**children in need**

**358**

**children in care**

**135**

**children with child protection plans**

185

children in need

**334**

**children in care**

**111**

**children with child protection plans**

This compared with the position at the end of 18/19, shows a small reduction in children in need over the year although children in care and children with protection plans has increased. This information is regularly reviewed over the year.

**Herefordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board**

This multi-agency Board, which preceded the current Safeguarding Children Partnership, held a development day, reviewing information provided from all partners and set the strategic priorities for the year 2019-20.

It is important to acknowledge that throughout this transition period relevant partners have remained engaged in the shared vision that children are safely cared for by their family because services work well together, and with their families

The work to support the priorities was carried out by four sub groups who reported into an Executive group which was responsible for overseeing this, resolving any issues arising, breaking down barriers to implementation and reporting progress into the Board.

**Update on 2019-20 strategic priorities**

The following tables outline the work that the sub groups have undertaken over the year to meet the strategic objectives as commissioned by the previous HSCB.

| **Strategic Priority 1: NEGLECT** | **The early identification and appropriate response to childhood neglect.** |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy and Practice sub group** | Maintain up to date LSCB procedures that align with regional arrangements, legislation and statutory guidance. |
| **Progress** | The Regional Safeguarding Procedures Group refreshed the regional guidance on neglect in 2020. The local Herefordshire neglect strategy expired in 2020. That document successfully launched the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) initiative to raise awareness and help identify and address child neglect in Herefordshire. Towards the end of 19/20 a dedicated task and finish group was commissioned to draft the new Neglect Strategy for the period 2020/23. The Policy and Practice sub group refreshed the multi-agency referral form (MARF) and the Threshold Guidance. Both documents ask the reader to consider child neglect in the household.During 2019, alongside Herefordshire Council colleagues, the safeguarding children partnership launched the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and support initiative to help families address neglect at an early stage. This early help approach sits alongside the GCP2 intervention as a completed GCP2 assessment is advised for completed EHA’s where neglect is identified.Between April 2019 and the end of March 2020 35 EHAs were submitted identifying child neglect as a factor. However, anecdotally it is clear that completing the Assessment is the first stage in putting in place support for a family and subsequent engagement identifies issues such as neglect in the family home.The Herefordshire Neglect Strategy for 2020/23 will address the issue of measuring the impact of neglect interventions for Herefordshire families as work is required to evaluate that impact. |
| **Communications** | Deliver a launch event for the HSCB Childhood Neglect Strategy and associated changes to business practice. |
| **Progress** | A Summit event focussing on child neglect is programmed for early 2021 to sit alongside the launch of the new Herefordshire Neglect Strategy.  |
| **Training and Workforce****Development sub group** | To continue to deliver GCP2 and to evaluate the effectiveness and impact on practice. |
| **Progress** | Neglect and GCP2 training continued during 2019/20. Five multi-agency neglect GCP2 training sessions were held with a total of 75 delegates attending from various sectors and organisations including; Children and Families (Herefordshire Council), health, schools and education, independent service providers, the youth offending sector and the MOD. In addition, in June 2019, a workshop was held for 20 practitioners licensed to use the GCP2 tool that required some additional guidance to use the tool.All the GCP2 courses are evaluated to identify learning. During 2020 onwards there is a requirement to follow up to identify the impact of training practitioners to use the GCP2 tool and how this benefits the families they are supporting. |
| **Performance and Audit sub group** | Through case audit and performance information, report on the use of the GCP2 assessment tool and the extent of the understanding of neglect between partner agencies.Case audits to pick up on findings from SCR/ PLR’s in relation to childhood neglect |
| **Progress** | Due to the changes in safeguarding arrangements which led to the Quality Assurance group being dissolved the scheduled audit did not take place.To be able to report on the use of GCP2 changes are required to the case recording system, this work is scheduled for 20/21. |
| **Case Review** | Ensure the actions identified from previous SCR’s and PLR’s into childhood neglect cases are properly embedded within LSCB training (link to workforce development sub group) and action plans are properly completed.  |
| **Progress**  | The training officer continually updates the training offer with relevant findings from reviews.  |
| **The voice of the child and family** | The evaluation of the GCP2 should include the views and experiences of children, young people and their families |
| **Progress** | The 2020/23 Herefordshire Neglect Strategy must address the issue of engaging with families, children and young people who are being supported to address neglect in the home. |

**Evaluation of progress and impact:**

During this year an additional 75 multi-agency front-line practitioners have been trained in GCP2. These practitioners are from Targeted Early Help, Social Care, Housing, schools and colleges, Early Years providers, Police and Health.

Evaluations from practitioners who attended the training includes:

* GCP2 helped to recognise the strengths and areas of improvement for families showing signs of neglect and support them to make changes to care for their children in the best way possible.
* This will give me aid my assessment by evidencing neglect
* A better understanding of families and procedures
* It will make a huge impact to my role
* Ensure relevant referrals are made and being clear in the type of help and support needed
* to be more accurate and objective in the way I assess family
* This will provide me with the tools and skills to support the parent within areas that need some support.
* More equipped
* Be able to advise more on the little steps
* It will help me to support other members of our team assessing neglect. It will make the information we submit to CS more universal and succinct
* Generally more aware of the potential signs of neglect and how this can impact a child/young person’s life. Will be good to use this alongside other agencies working with the family and child.
* Enhanced knowledge and practice.
* It will support all the families I work with.
* Trying to think of more ways to provide the information as a setting not doing home visits! I do believe however that working with HV will help us use this tool effectively.
* Early intervention clarification
* It will help social worker understand more about the family environment

The use of the GCP2 is still low in Herefordshire. Two main reasons have been given for this:

* It takes time to build enough rapport with the family before this can approached and
* The assessment being time consuming.

This feedback, and the low use of the GCP2 is consistent with the national findings. Research also suggests that full implementation of a new model can take two to four years.

A change to the local authority case recording systems to include a GCP2 marker enables practitioners to cross check that all children and young people on a plan for neglect have been assessed using this tool, which is proven to be effective in identifying neglect and supporting parents to recognise neglect and make the necessary improvements in parenting.

GCP2 tool has successfully been used in court proceedings to evidence continued neglectful parenting.

The use of GCP2 is well embedded within the local authority Early Help service and has contributed to successful outcomes for families:

* We have more routine and everything runs smoothly now.
* Showed me a different life style and looking forward to other things. Over coming stuff I didn’t think I would.
* The household function more like a home, others are helping around the house and using the rota.
* It has helped organise the household and helped give me perspective to what is realistic to expect and what is achievable. And how to make achievable targets. Helped to clean up the house and garden which is much better now.

It is recognised that more work is required to embed the use of GCP2 across the multi-agency workforce and to better evidence the impact that this has on outcomes for children and families, this work will continue through 20/21.

| **Strategic Priority 2: CHILD EXPLOITATION AND MISSING** | **Identification, prevention and response to Child Exploitation and children who go missing, County Lines, Trafficking, Slavery, digital exploitation and transitional arrangements** |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy and Practice sub group** | Review ‘Children who abuse others’ procedure and ensure appropriate guidance is available to practitioners within Herefordshire.Ensure policy and procedures around sexually harmful behaviour are promoted and multi-agency partners are aware of this  |
| **Progress**  | March 2020 saw the launch of a number of Herefordshire documents and tools to support practitioners identify child exploitation/ child criminal exploitation. These included; the multi-agency exploitation risk assessment tool, flow chart and the CSE / CCE Safety Plan Practice Guidance.In July 2019 the Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned the NSPCC to carry out a system wide audit on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) in Herefordshire identifying the prevalence and support available for victims and for those demonstrating harmful behaviour. Results from the assessment are due in 2020.The Regional Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures group updated the regional guidance on HSB and this is due for further updates in 2020/21. The Brook Traffic Light Tool is used and recommended for Herefordshire practitioners to use to help identify HSB.Agreed inter-agency local policies and procedures for managing children going missing and return home interviews. |
| **Child Exploitation and Missing sub group** | Sub Group to widen the focus of the group to identify the extent of and develop an understanding of Exploitation, County Lines, Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Digital Exploitation.Group to also review transitional arrangements of exploited children into adult services. |
| **Progress**  | The sub group is currently finalising a prioritised plan for identification, prevention and support for children and young people vulnerable to and at risk of child exploitation. An updated dataset is in the process of being completed.Part of this plan will include involving young people in the process by gaining their feedback around what they feel they need to support them.Involvement of projects such as CLIMB will be integral in assisting with this. Funding proposal for dedicated CLIMB project agreed. Use this link to find out more.  [Climb | The Children's Society](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/climb)Work is also underway to look at how Herefordshire will raise awareness about the risks to young people and what to be aware of- one of the outcomes will be for Herefordshire to launch specific publicity and communications for all agencies including its own branding to help focus this issue locally. Various funding options are being looked at to assist with this.A multi-agency task and finish group has been set up with some members of the group and other relevant agencies to look at the whole process of transition.Child exploitation service established and multi-disciplinary Prevent and Disrupt group to share intelligence and develop joint care and support plans |
| **Training and Workforce Development sub group** | For the group to scope what training exists, both multi and single agency in relation to areas of exploitation to include County Lines, Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Digital Exploitation. |
| **Progress**  | The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership successfully launched the Contextual Safeguarding training course for professionals. This was developed by the Herefordshire Council Children and Families Directorate, West Mercia Youth Justice Team and the Partnership Team, and is co-delivered by those teams. Four courses were run between October 2019 and February 2020 for 76 learners from multiple agencies. Feedback from delegates was excellent and further evaluation will try to identify the impact the training has had on identifying and putting in place support for victims and potential victims of child exploitation |
| **Performance and Audit sub group** | Develop the quality of commentary accompanying the CSE scorecard.Through audit: Check the effectiveness of the response to previous CSE audit findings.To clarify police information that supports understanding of CSE.Annual audit to include cases where younger children have been exploited (under 10 years of age). Also to include cases where children who have been exploited have moved into adulthood (transitions).Understand the quality and availability of post abuse support to victims of CSE and other forms of exploitation.Identifying messages and lessons from case audits to improve practice Multi-disciplinary and Member spotlight review on CE (including peer on peer abuse) resulted in an action plan  |
| **Progress**  | The quality assurance group undertook an audit into children who had gone missing 3 times or more in a 90 day period.Actions identified included:* Changes to reporting to ensure all professionals are aware when a child goes missing
* Changes to the local authority case management system
* Improvements to the operational groups methodology in sharing appropriate information
* Implementing a contextual safeguarding course
* Improving attendance at risk management meetings.

All other identified tasks within the work plan were not undertaken due to the quality assurance group being dissolved |
| **Case Review**  | Identify opportunities to review Herefordshire partnership response to ‘peer on peer’ abuse and identify/disseminate any learning for partner agencies. |
| **Progress** | A review of peer on peer abuse has been undertaken and is available on the Herefordshire Council website. The Partnership has also commissioned the NSPCC to work with partner agencies to audit their own responses to Sexual Harmful Behaviour (including Peer on Peer abuse) and produced an action plan to improve efficacy.  |
| **The voice of the child and family** | Secure qualitative feedback from victims of exploitation and their families in relation to the services received/ experience of agencies to inform improvement in service. Led to development of proposal around a volunteer mentoring programme to meet the needs of young people. |
| **Progress** | The Prevent and Disrupt Group link directly with children, young people and their families. Their feedback is shared with the CE and Missing Group for consideration. |

**Evaluation of progress and impact:**

The improved policies and procedures for managing children going missing and return home interviews has led to earlier intervention, identification and access to the right support.

The spotlight review action plan progress is monitored and evaluated with measurable results in terms of development of safer practice for young people and improved outcomes.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funded a number of opportunities for practitioners to attend a day of training to raise awareness of a variety of topics including Vulnerability, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) / Gangs, Modern Day Slavery, Consent for Sexual Activity, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and other Criminal Exploitation, Appropriate Language and Use, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), GDPR / Disclosure and Pathways / Diversionary Tactics / Sharing of Intelligence

168 professionals attended this course.

Contextual safeguarding course was attended by 76 practitioners from assorted agencies, this develops an ability **to understand** and **respond** to, **young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families**. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Evaluations from practitioners following the training include:

* To encourage early years practitioners and teachers to broaden their safeguarding knowledge by attending, realizing that younger siblings can be significantly affected by what is happening within the family.
* Amend my assessment framework and keep asking questions!
* It will inform the way I work with and support CYP and their families, the 1:1 and group support I deliver.
* I work with young people at risk of exploitation and unhealthy relationships so very relevant thinking of the wider picture of safeguarding and safety planning.
* By working in partnership and contacting relevant agencies when necessary using the correct procedures explained to me today.
* I work with many young people at risk of exploitation so this will help greatly
* Working with looked after young people between the ages of 16-18 years old this training was more than important as it applies directly to the young people I support.
* Having a greater knowledge, awareness and understanding of what contextual safeguarding is, how it is managed and what I can do as a support worker to ensure the safety of the young people I support has been thoroughly beneficial.
* In identifying risk and concerns to our young people within the context of where they live/'move around' i.e. through schools, parks, shopping centres etc. I am able to apply theories of contextual safeguarding to my approaches in working with young people and identifying risk outside of their home/school environments.
* Have a greater understanding of the issues raised in my work with families
* Awareness with everyday work with families, to look out for the signs. Know what to do.
* By being alert to information shared with me by young people which may indicate any risk of exploitation either related to themselves, or others

The early work of the Prevent and Disrupt service has achieved measurable outcomes for young people e.g. keeping young people safe and in education, employment or training.

| **Strategic Priority 3: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES** | **Children with disabilities are safeguarded in all aspects of their lives and when in receipt of services. Ensure that any significant harm of likelihood of harm is recognised and responded to.** |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy and Practice sub group** | Ensure that the Levels of Need document reflects the needs of children with disabilities.To ensure there is a common multi-agency procedure and guidance in relation to safeguarding children with disabilities.  |
| **Progress** | The Herefordshire Levels of Need / Thresholds document was updated in 2019 and includes information for consideration regarding children with disabilities. |
| **Communications** | To consider how best to communicate the message of how to safeguard children with disabilities |
| **Progress** | No specific communications have been developed with this message, if requested any of the HSCP documents could be adapted to an alternative format.  |
| **Child Exploitation and Missing sub group** | To identify any particular vulnerable groups within this, i.e. Children with Disabilities and identify the responses. |
| **Progress** | The CE and Missing group aim to ensure that the responses available are suited to all children and young people regardless of age, nationality or disability |
| **Training and Workforce****Development sub group** | Review multi-agency safeguarding training and single agency safeguarding training in terms of Safeguarding Children with Disabilities.  |
| **Progress** | The Safeguarding Children Partnership targeted multi-agency training course called ‘Working Together’ is regularly updated and content included to inform learners of additional risk experienced by children with a disability. |
| **Performance and Audit sub group** | Performance and Audit to devise an appropriate case audit tool to report on Children with Disabilities.Based on the report regarding CWB (presented to April 18 Board), to agree the performance information to be reported to the Executive. |
| **Progress** | The audit group include children with disabilities in all audits Performance information is available from the CWD team and was scrutinised at the quality assurance meeting for any outliers or anomalies. The sub group has now been dissolved. |
| **Case Review**  | To highlight any findings from reviews relating to Children with Disabilities to inform actions and learning. |
| **Progress** | The sub group reviews the learnings from local and national reviews and where relevant uses these to update the local training offer and policies. |
| **The voice of the child and family** | Receive feedback from children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan or who are looked after, to understand the effectiveness of the local safeguarding system. |
| **Progress** | Views of children and families have been obtained both from meetings with professionals and through audit, this feedback has improved the experience of those children and families, making them more person centred. |

**Evaluation of progress and impact:**

All activities reported under other priorities also apply to the CWD priority, this was not managed as a standalone theme but included under Neglect, Child Exploitation and Missing and Early Help.

The one discrete activity that took place under this priority was a workshop. This was an independently facilitated event attended by 30 professionals from agencies including Childrens Social Care, Adult Social Care, Wye Valley Trust, 2gether Foundation Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group and Schools.

The workshop content was based on a serious case review carried out by an unnamed safeguarding board, Child Z a child with disabilities. Factors included the adversarial stance of the parents, mother’s mental health and multiple agency input. Also included was an exercise around invoking resolution of professional disagreements policy.

Professionals at the conclusion of the workshop were posed a single question “What needs to change?”

From the responses there are four clear themes to consider:

1. Referrals and responses

Suggestions include better feedback on MARFs that are NFA’d, clarity over thresholds, examples of what a good referral looks like, the need for a more meaningful discussion to take place in SPORT

1. Workforce development

Advanced communication skills training for all staff, specialist multi-agency safeguarding CWD training, multi-agency safeguarding supervision in particular around families continuously flying under the radar.

1. Information sharing

What, where, when how and to who? Framework needed for how to share information legitimately between professionals without informing parents.

4 Multi-agency meetings

There was clear desire for a forum such as this to better understand individuals’ roles and responsibilities and to share ideas on better ways of working together

The responsibility for delivering the activities to address these sit within the children with disabilities team.

| **Strategic Priority 4: EARLY HELP** | **The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children’s needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.**  |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy and Practice sub group** | Update of multi-agency referral form (MARF) and Threshold guidance.Particular regard should be given to how the HSCB procedures address certain vulnerabilities in relation to children and young people’s safety and well-being, for example children living with substance misuse, domestic abuse within the family and children with disabilitiesHSCB procedures support the early help strategy. |
| **Progress**  | During 2019 the Policy and Practice sub group refreshed the multi-agency referral form (MARF) and the Levels of Need / Threshold guidance. For referrals below level 4 / 3 advice is given to consider completing an Early Help Assessment.In 2019, alongside Herefordshire Council colleagues, the Safeguarding Children Partnership launched the Early Help Assessment and associated guidance. The Herefordshire Council Early Help Team provide training on how to complete an EHA.Work is required for the next 12 months to appraise the effectiveness of the EHA and early help support for those with additional vulnerabilities. |
| **Communications** | Raise awareness of early help support available and appropriate referral routes.  |
| **Progress**  | The information about early help has been updated on the council website and it is now more visible i.e. the number of tiles required to go through to access the information is less. WISH – Wellbeing, Information & Signposting Herefordshire website. Resource has been put into improving the quality and amount of information for children, young people and their families on WISH. This is the place families are signposted to help themselves and address their own needs.Early Help business cards have been produced for the Police (accompanied with training), to hand out to families. The cards have information and the contact details of the early help service to access information, advice and guidance or support.  |
| **Child Exploitation and Missing sub group** | Cases where early identification of risk of CE is being identified by Early Help and responded to appropriately. |
| **Progress** | Early help shares intelligence at the group and gives advice and guidance of the services available through early help to the group. There are currently 40 active early help cases where CE has been identified.  |
| **Training and Workforce****Development sub group** | Continue to ensure that Early Help Practitioners attend HSCB multi-agency safeguarding training. |
| **Progress**  | Early Help Practitioners have the opportunity to attend multi-agency safeguarding training. |
| **Performance and Audit sub group** | Undertake multi-agency case audit whilst this remains a priority of the Board.Early help services are recognising and responding to early safeguarding concerns, reducing the risk of children suffering significant harm.Local authority Early Help practitioners are engaged in the GCP2 training and are using the tool in practice. To review, analyse and then report to the Executive and Board in relation to performance data provided through early help services.  |
| **Progress**  | The local authority early help service has a comprehensive monthly audit programme. All audit actions are completed timely and checked through monthly supervision. A quarterly audit report is produced with analysis and actions which are followed up with all the teams through team meetings, supervision and training.  |
| **Case Review**  | Use Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) learning to influence partnership activity to address modifiable risk factors to reduce the likelihood of future child deaths.  |
| **Progress**  | CDOP in conjunction with the Case Review sub group identify both local and national learning and develop learning briefings for professionals |
| **The voice of the child and the family** | The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children’s needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.  |
| **Progress** | Local authority Early Help practitioners capture the voice of the child in every contact and this is recorded on mosaic. When a case is closed all members of the family complete a service evaluation form, capturing their views of the service and the support they have received. The form is tailor made to the age group including smiley/sad faces for the under 5’s and scaling questions for the older children and parents. The evaluations are collated and analysed on a quarterly basis.  |

**Evaluation of progress and impact**

The updated Multi-Agency Referral Form now signposts professionals completing this form to the Early Help service, ensuring greater take up.

The training from the local authority Early Help team in completing the EHA ensures professionals from all agencies are enabled to act as lead professionals in early help cases.

The updated information available both on the local authority website and WISH ensures both professionals and families understand what services are available to assist them.

The impact of the help provided is reported by families themselves. Quarter 4 2019/20 included 41 evaluations, 9 from the 5 -10 group where they all felt things had got better following the interventions. 10 from the 10 -16 group where they all felt happier at home, there were less arguments and it was easier to talk about their feelings. The average scaling score at the end of the intervention was 8.5 out of 10. Parents fed back positive comments about the service and the average scaling score at the end of the intervention was 7.9 out of 10.

Whilst outside the reporting period, the new thresholds guidance now relaunched as “Right Help Right Time” was launched at a virtual event along with a series of video clips to support decision making.

Over 220 practitioners / managers were in attendance from across the partnership. The overall feedback has been positive with the Partners already receiving feedback on how it has positively supported decision making and is having an impact on practice

**Learning from Serious Case Reviews**

The case review sub group published one serious case review through 19/20.  The key learning from the case was:

Escalation, there were many opportunities that were not taken

Actions:

* A new policy will be developed making clearer the route to resolution of professional differences,
* Training to introduce the new policy will emphasise the need for culture change to empower practitioners to respectfully challenge if not in agreement with decision making.

Professional practice: there were missed opportunities to better understand the lived experience of the child.

Actions:

* Improved recording of children and young people’s relationships and sharing information with regard to alleged perpetrators
* Better use of risk management meetings and risk assessments to better understand cumulative risk
* Introduction of improved risk assessment tool that better informs with regard to risks outside the home environment.

Contextual safeguarding: Not all professionals understood the situation they were facing.

Actions;

* updated multi-agency training, building in additional strands of CSE, including criminal exploitation,
* provided information to practitioners about use of appropriate language to describe behaviours, not victim blaming
* Commission NSPCC to undertake Harmful Sexual Behaviour audit and produce action plan, to commence 2020.

Work streams were implemented in respect of the key learning:

A series of multi-agency learning events were held and these were attended by over one hundred and thirty professionals.

The case review sub group has also successfully implemented the new Rapid Review methodology introduced by Working Together 2018. There have been 5 rapid reviews undertaken through 19/20.

The rapid review outcomes identified learning for a number of agencies and follow-up of single agency actions has concluded that all agencies have implemented their actions.

Multi-agency recommendations have been made to address the learning identified, as a proportionate response. The learning has been included in existing work streams.

The outcomes from the reviews have been shared with the National Panel and in all cases they agreed with our recommendations

**LADO**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for the management and oversight of all enquiries into allegations against those working with and who volunteer with children in a Position of Trust.

339 contacts were received by the LADO during the period of 2019/2020. This is a slight increase compared with 2018/19 period where 293 contacts were made. 119 referrals met the criteria for LADO involvement in 2019/20. 52 referrals did not meet the criteria. 134 contacts were requests for advice or consultations regarding professionals working with children. 18 were LADO referrals that met the criteria and were referred onto LADOs in neighbouring authorities and 16 were forwarded to adult safeguarding as the subject in a position of trust worked solely with adults. Not included are the contacts regarding general safeguarding advice and safer recruitment.

Last year’s annual report highlighted the need for continued LADO awareness raising to maintain professional awareness. Training and awareness raising has continued in 2019/20. Training has been provided to both independent, maintained and academy schools and the feedback from this sector remains positive with working relationships established.

[LADO Annual Report 2019-20](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/8746/herefordshire-lado-annual-report-final-2019-2020.doc)

**Training**

The Business Unit has commissioned and delivered training on behalf of the Partnership, and over the course of the year has provided the following to delegates from many agencies including Childrens Social Care, Adults Social Care, Police, Fire and Rescue, Education and Health.

| **Course** | **April 2018 - March 2019** | **Apr 2019 - March 2020** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Working Together | 179 | 253 |
| Child Protection Conference | 41 | 50 |
| CSE | 42 | 7 |
| Contextual safeguarding (replaces CSE) |  N/A | 76 |
| GCP2 | 263 | 75 |
| MARAC Awareness | 65 | 0 |
| Neglect Conference | 95 | N/A |
| Domestic Abuse | 52 | 109 |
| Practitioners Forums | 136 | 359 |
| Working to Stop FGM, FM, FGM | 39 | 0 |
| GCP2 Workshop | 21 | 20 |
| Making Safeguarding Personal |  N/A | 43 |
| Taxi Driver Training |  N/A | 138 |
| SCR Briefings |  N/A | 138 |
| Total | **933** | **1268** |

Between April 2019 and March 2020 HSCP had training places filled on 45 different learning events. This was despite the curtailed programme with events being cancelled in February and March 2020 due to extensive flooding in Herefordshire and the onset of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020.

During the year a number of courses had their content refreshed to reflect changes in policy and local child protection risk factors. The Contextual Safeguarding course was successfully launched in 2019 focusing on child exploitation and sexual assault. Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understand and respond to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Contextual safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems, recognising extra - familial risks requiring safeguarding response.

The HSCP also commenced exploitation and safeguarding training for taxi drivers. Working with Herefordshire Council Licensing and Trading Standards the course became mandatory for licenced taxi drivers and 138 drivers were trained at the latter end of 19/20. This will enable drivers to spot trafficking and the exploitation of young people.

2019/20 also saw the continuation of the multi-agency Practitioner Forums being held in Herefordshire. Five Forums were hosted with 359 delegates attending in total. Forum highlights included the June 2019 forum covering Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practice (128 delegates), the September session on Harmful Sexual Behaviour (79 delegates) and several dates of Exploitation and Vulnerability training with a total of 168 delegates.

**Family feedback**

There is little evidence that has been made available to the partners with regard to involving children and families in ways of working, or how they have influenced the ways we work. The new strategic plan and accompanying delivery plan will strengthen the effort in making a difference to children, young people and their families. The preceding pages of this report have detailed the work that was originally commissioned by the previous Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board and continued under the new arrangements. The partners acknowledge that some focus was lost over the transitioning period and this is reflected in the review of the arrangements (appendix 1 to this report).

It is also to be acknowledged that there are other influences that effected the delivery of the work of the Board / Partnership; the lack of a Business Manager with the focus that they bring, the impending restructure of the Business Unit, the flooding in February 2020 and the emerging pandemic.

**New Safeguarding Arrangements**

Following a review of the previous HSCB arrangements, and in wide consultation with relevant agencies, members of the existing Board and its sub group members, new partnership arrangements were introduced in September 2019. Within these arrangements the safeguarding partners sought not only to reduce duplication and streamline arrangements but to maximise the opportunities the legislation offers to increase clarity around strategic leadership and accountability for improved outcomes for children. Primarily, the work of the partnership is to promote high standards of safeguarding work and to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Through its work the partnership will identify and act on identified weaknesses in services and measure how improvements are having an impact on children & families.

The new partnership arrangements are called the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The lead safeguarding partners (Local Authority, CCG and Police) in Herefordshire come together to provide overall strategic leadership and direction to the arrangements. Throughout the development of the new arrangements, they emphasised that their new shared lead responsibilities will in no way diminish the importance of the responsibilities and contributions of all the other agencies in Herefordshire who play such a vital role in safeguarding children & young people.

Following a highly engaged period of consultation and review, the number of sub groups overall has reduced, with quality and effectiveness being placed at the centre of these arrangements. The centrality of the role of early years settings, schools and colleges, and the challenges of enabling wide representation and engagement of these settings has also been recognised through the consultation and as a result the existing education and early years groups are encompassed within the new model. As they have always done, the lead partners will take responsibility for sharing the further development and chairing of the new groups.

To read the full account of the new arrangements as they currently stand and how they will work follow this link:

[New Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Arrangements](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/6643/safeguardingcypherefordshire.pdf)

A review of these arrangements has been undertaken and is available at appendix 1.

**2020-2021 Strategic Priorities**

The Safeguarding Partners have agreed as priorities for the forthcoming year and will be concentrating multi-agency activity on:

* Neglect: We aim to recognise, prevent and reduce neglect to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Herefordshire
* Child Exploitation: We aim to prevent and reduce child exploitation and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Herefordshire
* Right Help at the Right Time: We will seek to provide children and families with the right help and support at the right time through a coordinated multi-agency approach
* Leadership: Through the leadership of the three statutory Partners, promote a culture of collective responsibility, accountability and professional challenge built on guiding principles of respect and openness to forge an effective safeguarding children Partnership with strong governance, shared work practices and meaningful engagement with children and families.

**The Partnership Unit**

To deliver the above, the Partnership Unit is used, which is a multi-agency funded team overseeing the work of the Partnership and its sub groups. The unit is funded as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **AGREED BUDGET FOR 2019-20** |
| Children's Wellbeing | 133,569 |
| Adults Wellbeing | 103,000 |
| Clinical Commissioning Group | 80,190 |
| West Mercia Police | 53,510 |
| Probation/CRC | 6,136 |
| CAFCASS | 550 |
| Youth Justice Service | 1,144 |
| **TOTAL GROSS BUDGET** | **378,099** |

Contributions from statutory partner agencies for 2019-20 remained the same as in previous years at a total of **£378,099**.

**Note:** This total contribution is for the support of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership

|  |
| --- |
| **BUDGETED COSTS FOR 2019-20** |
| Salary costs | 278,814 |
| Transport costs |  1,300 |
| Independent chair costs |  38,520 |
| Consultancy costs |  34,200 |
| Training expenses |  28,000 |
| Office expenses |  65,781 |
| Training income |  -13,000 |
| Total | 433,615 |

The £55,516 overspend is largely down to the unprecedented number of safeguarding reviews that were commissioned during the year across the children and adults safeguarding arena and was drawn down from reserves.

The work of the Partnership continues to evolve, the Strategic Plan and associated work plans will be developed and shared with all relevant agencies over the summer months.

For continuity and progression the existing sub groups will continue to work on and help fashion the new priorities.

The Partnerships commission of the review of the new arrangements will align better to work plans and they will make the necessary amendments to ensure the effectiveness of the Partnership in delivering its vision.

**Our Vision:**

“*Children are safely cared for by their family because services work well together, and with families”*

Appendix 1

**Summary report of review of Partnership arrangements**

**Background**

The new Safeguarding Children and Young People in Herefordshire arrangements reflect the fundamental legislative changes to the Children Act 2004, which was amended by the Children & Social Work Act 2017. The changes are covered in the updated Working Together 2018, which sets out a number of changes in the way in which agencies are required to work together to safeguard children and young people.

The new arrangements for Herefordshire were outlined in a comprehensive plan which was published in June 2019 and was implemented in September 2019. Partners committed to review the arrangements in April 2020 and to publish any revised arrangements in June 2020 following that review.

**Methodology of the review**

There was a delay in commencing the work as a result of the Covid Pandemic and the capacity for the Business Unit to support the process, consequently the review of the new arrangements ran from July 2020 – October 2020.

In order to provide a broad illustration of the impact and effect of the new arrangements, a range of evaluative activities were undertaken. These activities were:

* 1:1s with a range of professionals with differing roles
* Focus groups / subgroups
* Desktop exercise
* Analysis from undertaking elements of the ‘6 Steps to Scrutiny: *‘a tool to reflect on the safeguarding children plan with desired outcomes, to look together at constraints and ways forward, to facilitate inquiry and collaboration in the best interests of children’*

*[Pearce, J (2019) Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding children arrangements. Institute of Applied Social Research, Luton, University of Bedfordshire’]*

*–* This includes

* + Three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation
	+ The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children
	+ Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children
	+ Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing
	+ There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews
	+ There is an active program of multi-agency safeguarding children training

Through the review activities, the following list of measures were evaluated:

1. How effectively have the 3 statutory partners identified and communicated their strategic safeguarding children plan including the desired outcomes for children and families and progress made in delivering the plan?

2. The extent to which contextual safeguarding features in the strategic plan and the robustness of reporting and scrutiny arrangements for exploitation.

3. How effectively SCYPiH works with and alongside other strategic partnerships.

4. The degree to which the wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children? (This includes voluntary and community sector, early years and education).

5. The level of contribution made by children, young people and their families to planning, service improvement and scrutiny/assurance.

6. The robustness of the quality assurance arrangements and the impact of independent scrutiny.

7. How well learning from serious incidents is identified and integrated into practice and service delivery and the relevance and impact of any learning opportunities available to front line staff.

8. Developing commitment to Signs of Safety as the practice model being adopted by the council and its work with partners.

9. The effectiveness of governance arrangements for work streams/programmes.

**Findings**

The Signs of Safety core 3 questions have been used to group the findings for ease of analysis and proposing recommendations for future amendments to the arrangements:

**1 - What’s working well?**

The review found that there was a commitment and willingness to engage in the safeguarding agenda from partners and some evidence of willingness to engage in change to improve how they work.

There was recognition of a nucleus of good collaboration and partnership working within the structure and positively; a clear set of agreed values and principles to base their work on.

1. **- What are we worried about?**

Without a strategic plan there is a concern that there is not a clear, shared direction for the partnership with no delivery plans in place.

With or without a plan, the absence of an agreed multi-agency dataset to analyse, a task and finish group to scope this has been commissioned and this will be available ongoing, and no true multi-agency audit activity taking place, although single agency audits are being produced and discussed across a multi-agency fora, there is a concern of not being able to evidence or measure how partnership activity and influence is making a difference.

It was also noted that when ensuring that the professionals undertake all of the processes to adhere to policy and procedure, the focus could be drawn away from the child and family. Finally, as a result of the training contract ending with Hoople as part of the new arrangements no improvements to the training offer following findings from case reviews were made. Training as delivered from the existing pool of training providers continued to be delivered.

1. **- What needs to happen?**

The review identified a strength in the partnership for a willingness to engage and to work together and it is therefore proposed that this ethos, together with the strategic oversight of the 3 Partners, will drive the improvements that need to take place as listed below:

To have governance fit for purpose with consistency and clarity on priorities and work activity

* Set up a delivery group (‘engine room’ of the Partnership) with key partner representation to consider the findings of the review and ensure the response for improvements are integrated into the delivery plan – March 2021
* For the delivery group to drive forward the development of the strategic plan and delivery plan - March 2021
* For the Partnership to publish the strategic plan and delivery plan - by March 2021
* For all subgroups of the partnership to have work plans in place, aligned to the strategic plan and delivery plan - by March 2021

Up and down leadership and co-ordination of effort on priorities of the Partnership – responsibility and accountability at all levels

* For the Safeguarding Partners to agree a revised governance structure proposed by the delivery group from the findings of the review - by March 2021
* Identified sponsors for key priorities and areas of work to be agreed by the Partners and published within the strategic plan to ensure progress and accountability of the partnership activity - by March 2021

To be more impact focused - how we are making a difference / measures of success

* To set up a Performance Group to agree a multi-agency dataset - by February 2021
* Secure the capacity for dedicated analyst support to draw together multiagency data - by April 2021
* Develop a multi-agency safeguarding dashboard with dedicated support analysis secured to provide an illustration of how well the partnership is keeping children safe – by May 2021
* An agreed programme of multi-agency audits agreed to feed into the Performance group – January 2021

To provide a learning and development offer

* To produce a Learning and Development Strategy that sets out the capacity for the partnership to provide a learning and development offer by end of February 2021

To ensure the learning from serious incidents is identified and put into practice

* To produce a revised approach to disseminating the learning from serious incidents – by March 2021

To engage with children and families to inform how we work

* Through the Development & Practice group, we will work with young people to co-produce an engagement strategy that sets out how we will ensure the views of children and young people and their families inform the work that we do – by June 2021
* Within this work, we will seek to adopt the national participation standards by September 2021

Partners to agree an annual programme for independent scrutiny

* In order to ensure an objective evaluation of the partnership and its agreed strategy is effectively undertaken, Partners will agree a programme for independent scrutiny by March 2021

To increase the level of engagement and involvement of wider partners

* As part of revising the governance, the delivery group to consider how senior leaders of relevant agencies can be better engaged in the work of the partnership – by March 2021

Development of the Partnerships values and behaviours into a pledge

* Work with children and young people to gain an understanding of what they think our partnership values and principles mean – by March 2021
* Develop a partnership pledge, informed by children and young people, at the Spring Summit - March 2021
* Test out the pledge through a range of activities identified at the summit and supported by the delivery group – by October 2021

**Summary**

It has been agreed by the 3 Partners that finalising the Strategic Plan 2020 -23, (with an attached delivery plan) is imperative in achieving the appropriate response to the evaluation measures.

Once published, the delivery plan and associated work plans will identify the tasks and steps needed to be undertaken to address the improvements that need to be made.

It must also note that all areas of work will need to be either owned by a current group cited in the Partnership Structure or ‘sponsored’ by one of the 3 Partners to ensure close monitoring of progress and accountability.