



Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership **Annual Report 2020/21**



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Introduction



When I wrote my foreword to last year's annual plan Covid-19 was just starting to impact all communities across the world. I think very few people would have expected that our personal and working lives would still be affected by the pandemic over 12 months later. I am pleased to say that, throughout the crisis, Buckinghamshire recognised the continuing priority of safeguarding and appears to have responded well. I witnessed changes to working practices to ensure that services continue to be delivered and saw a renewed energy to share information and resources, where possible.

This report provides an update on the progress that has been made in the priority areas and within the subgroups. It was great to be involved in an excellent virtual conference on contextual safeguarding. This was an important output of the thematic case review into serious youth violence and provided an update on latest research and good practice and an opportunity to set out what needs to be done in Buckinghamshire. I will look forward to seeing how that enthusiasm translates into action.

Learning from case reviews is a key priority for all organisations and the Partnership has an important role to play in facilitating and scrutinising this. Over the last year four case reviews have been published. Speaking to families prior to publication they were all keen to ensure that improvements and learning came from their family's tragedies. Whilst there have been some notable successes in the last year, it is also clear from the Section 11 audit that new ways to embed the learning must be explored. For example, it is disappointing to note that less than 3% of respondents used the neglect toolkit.

It is important there are effective links between BSCP and other local boards and partnerships. A revised joint protocol for Buckinghamshire partnerships, changes to community safety made because of moving to a single council and the setting up of a domestic abuse board will all help this. We share many common themes, such as serious youth violence, domestic abuse and exploitation, and tracking progress and performance in the appropriate forum is critical.

Whilst it was good to see visible and available leadership during Covid-19, it is also true that some key work has been delayed over the last year. This annual report sets out the priority actions for the next year and in my role as independent chair of the partnership I will provide leadership and support to help to achieve them, but will also ensure that there is effective scrutiny and challenge when needed.

Sir Francis J S Habgood, QPM
*Independent Chair for Buckinghamshire
Safeguarding Children Partnership*



About Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

The BSCP is a statutory, multi-organisation partnership coordinated by a business unit, which oversees and leads children's safeguarding across the Buckinghamshire Council area. The main objective of the BSCP is to gain assurance that local safeguarding arrangements, comprised of partner organisations, are working effectively, individually and together, to support and safeguard children in its area who are at risk of abuse and neglect. The BSCP acts as a critical friend and a champion for best practice.

Over the last year the work of the Partnership along with that of its partner agencies has been significantly affected by the Covid pandemic. We have continued to work towards all our key priorities whilst being flexible to the changing landscape in relation to demand for services, impact on children and availability and resilience of the workforce. Along with our partners we are grateful for all the efforts to across the multi-agency arena to continue to drive activity to ensure that we have met or worked towards the key priorities.

Whilst the single business unit, comprising business functions of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board, became embedded, we were also adapting to a largely online 'world'. The business unit continues to plan and move forward with joint strategic work, making best use of some of the working practices which have now become business as usual. The former three year business plans for both the Partnership and Board, which were designed to bring together the two structures and support a move towards contextual safeguarding, will continue. To this end the Executive agreed in April to a revision of the business plan to ensure that we are responsive to the change in needs and demand. In addition, the Executive agreed the joint training, learning and development approach, which we look forward to implementing in 2021.

Quality assurance remains our key driver across all the subgroups, using frameworks that will measure the impact of subgroup activities and challenge those working in the safeguarding arena. We also continued to ensure that our policies and procedures are embedded in the work we carry out, that toolkits, guidance and procedures draw on the knowledge of subject experts locally and nationally to inform them, and that we can demonstrate the impact of learning that has taken place.

The Partnership has an Independent Chair who provides leadership, vision and support and who is responsible for ensuring that all organisations contribute effectively to the work of the BSCP. The Chair provides accountability for the work undertaken by the BSCP by way of reports to relevant strategic committees and boards. Effective communication between the Business Manager and Chair ensures that there is a clear link between the subgroups and executive group, enabling risks, themes and opportunities to be highlighted at an executive level, and challenge, direction and opportunities to be shared into subgroups. This is supported by meetings for subgroup Chairs to provide clarity about the role of each subgroup in the priority areas and to raise any process or participation issues with the Independent Chair.

In 2020/21, the issues affecting children the most and, therefore, our priority areas remained:

- Domestic abuse
- Child exploitation
- Neglect
- Commitment to a high level improvement plan.

The Board is currently supported by five subgroups that carry out the day to day work in order to help deliver the Board's objectives and Strategic Plan. This year the new Education and Learning Subgroup has been established to maintain the joint working between the Partnership and colleagues in the education sector. This creates an opportunity to share learning and risk information, seek assurance relating to education specific themes, and to improve our 'reach' into a broader section of this workforce, for example further education, alternative provision, and the independent and faith sector. In addition, we have continued to work in accordance with the vision and aims of the Joint Protocol for cross-board working on themes such as domestic abuse, youth violence and child exploitation.

Our Vision

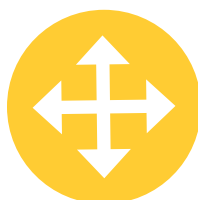
To work together to enable children and young people in Buckinghamshire to live a life free from fear, harm and abuse.

To ensure our approach is focused around 'talk to me, hear my voice' and it is central to everything we do.



SAFEGUARDING

Making safeguarding personal and the responsibility of everyone.



ENABLING

Enable children and young people to have choices and control over how they want to live.



COMMUNICATING

Ensure there is effective communication with youth communities in Buckinghamshire.



LEARNING

Learning from our experiences and improving how we work.

Our Partners

Working Together 2018 is statutory guidance that provides children's safeguarding with a legal framework, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners.

From a statutory perspective the three legally required bodies are:-

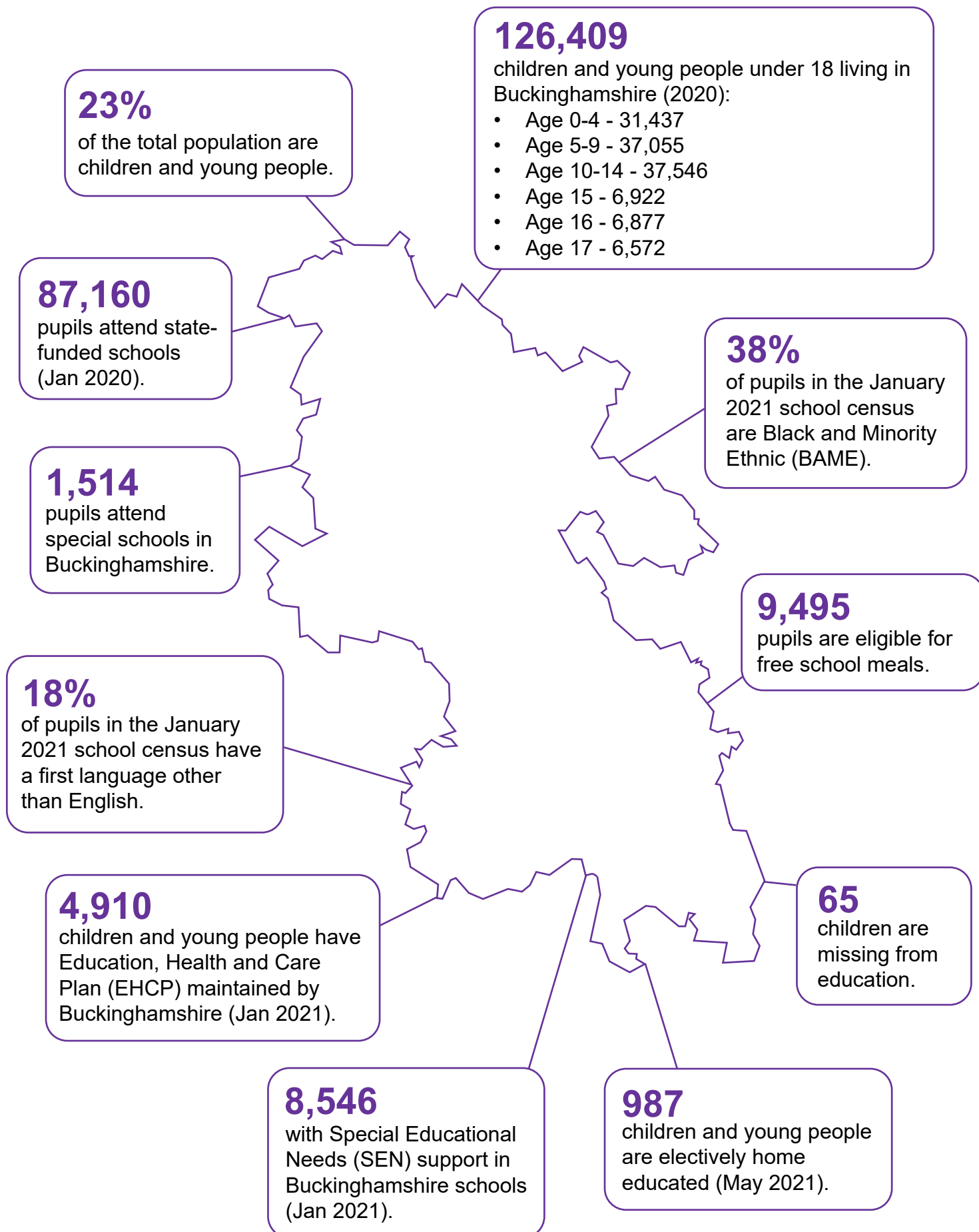


However, we work closely with a range of other partners:

- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- National Probation Service
- Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company



Children and Young People in Buckinghamshire





Schools in Buckinghamshire

184

primary schools (including 36 academies/free schools).

38 infant schools

23 junior schools (inc. five academies)

123 combined schools (inc. 31 academies/free schools)

34

secondary schools.

13 selective (all academies)

21 non-selective (inc. 16 academies/free schools)

123 combined schools (inc. 31 academies/free schools)

2

All Through mainstream schools (including one academy).

2

nursery schools.

3

Pupil Referral Units
(inc. one academy).

10

Special schools
(inc. two academies).

What We Achieved 2020/2021

In August 2019 the business functions of the Safeguarding Adults Board merged with the Safeguarding Children Partnership to form one business unit. 2020 was a challenging year to embed ways of working across a newly formed joint partnership. However, the partnership, the staff and agencies which it comprised of rose to the challenge and demonstrated commitment, flexibility and resilience. The three year business plan set out a number of actions needed to reach the required outcomes and many of these have been met or are in progress. These include:

Priority 1. Talk to me, hear my voice

This year has seen an increased emphasis on contextual safeguarding with a partnership-led online conference to support this. Joint working with the Safeguarding Adult Board has also enabled us to seek assurance about the quality of referrals, assessments and plans relating to capturing the voice of family members and significant adults in order to properly assess risk and need. This is a priority reinforced by the learning from recent safeguarding practice reviews and audits and this message has been taken forward by subgroup Chairs over the year.

The team delivered on their commitment to have two learning events a year (one learning event and one online conference on exploitation) but we are committed to re-establishing in-person events whenever safe to do so. In addition, the training plan signed off in April 2021 ensures that we are seeking to provide learning opportunities which reflect the needs and experiences of vulnerable children in Buckinghamshire.

We have embedded robust commissioning and tracking processes to ensure LSCPR's are completed and action plans are embedded in a timely way. Work is continuing to ensure that the Partnership can measure changes to practice which is supported by joint working with other subgroups, such as policy and quality assurance.

Engagement with black and minority ethnic communities to capture their feedback has not progressed as hoped due to restrictions but remains a key priority, with some partnerships planned to advance this for 2021/22.

Priority 2. Neglect, exploitation and abuse

Effective joint working with Safer Buckinghamshire Board and relevant groups ensured we have a mechanism to achieve a joint approach to shared themes such as youth violence. BSCP has worked with the TVP violence reduction unit's pilot and informs a key strand of the Safer Buckinghamshire Plan around prevention of violence. Again, efforts to seek meaningful engagement with young people have been adversely affected by the pandemic but will be restarted as soon as possible. This year the Education and Learning Subgroup have defined their work plan to ensure that neglect, exploitation and abuse are leading aspects of improving services to children and young people. All subgroup work plans will be revisited after the business plan has been reviewed to take into account the effects of Covid.

The action to adopt the Exploitation Protocol's Principles to support multi-agency working to combat and disrupt sexual and criminal exploitation has been completed and the messages about this were reinforced with pop-up messages on the website and in our newsletter.

Priority 3. Ensure smooth transitions between children's and adult's services

This remains a key priority and the joint nature of the Partnership gives us increased scope to work together effectively on this. Some complex case discussion, which included transitions, took place but the role of the BSCP in scrutinising outcomes has progressed slowly. There have been positive changes to structures and processes in both children's and adult's services (local authority and partners), and while it was prudent to allow these to take place it is clear that this needs to be driven forward in 2021/22. Recent work relating to reviews has shown there is still a key area of practice to be explored, particularly where the person moving between services is care-experienced or has additional needs.

Priority 4. Training, learning and development

In April 2021, the Executive signed off a training plan which sets out how we will deliver both multi-agency training, and learning and development opportunities. This will include a range of methods, including commissioning subject experts, in-house/partner subject experts and experts by experience. Practice development will use methods, such as action learning sets, and we will seek to speed up the dissemination of learning from the Partnership using accessible methods, such as animations, commissioned creative pieces, videos and TED talks (using our website). In order to support the networking function of training we have agreed to return to in-person events as soon as it is possible to do so, in a way that is equitable to all colleagues (i.e. does not exclude those who may still need to practice caution with social contact). BSCP is clear that while it has been adversely impacted by Covid, capturing the feedback and insight from vulnerable children is essential to the quality of any provision and we will take this forward in the revised business plan. The route for action and assurance for all the recommendations arising from the serious youth violence thematic practice review have been agreed and these are being driven forward by the Partnership. Additional learning around this subject was shared via an online conference.

The review of the joint protocol that exists between the Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Safer Stronger Bucks Board was completed and published, which led to a more concise 'user friendly' protocol. This document, which sets out ways of working to ensure efficient and connectivity between the four boards/partnerships, is a key to ensuring more cohesive strategies to support our local communities. This is supported by the Joint Chairs meeting led by Chief Executive Rachael Shimmin.

Safeguarding Children Subgroups

The Safeguarding Children Partnership has five subgroups that lead on various areas of business and help the Safeguarding Adults Board deliver on a range of priorities identified in the strategic and business plan. Each subgroup has a nominated chair and representatives from across the multi-agencies. In addition, in April 2021 the partnership started a joint Learning and Development Subgroup to drive both the implementation of the agreed training plan and also drive innovation and pace in the dissemination of learning and practice development.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup

Working Together 2018 states that a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) must be undertaken by the Safeguarding Children Partnership where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and either the child has died or the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concerns to the way in which the authority, their partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

LCSPR Reports are published on our Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

During the period 2020 to 2021 the subgroup published four Safeguarding Reviews. These reviews related to Baby N, Child V and Baby S and a thematic review into serious youth violence across Buckinghamshire.

Learning from all reviews undertaken is shared within the multi-agency arena to develop and inform working practices and improve services to children, young people and their families who need support.

Some key learning themes have been taken from the LCSPRs during this period of time include recommendations that partners should:

- Ensure that the voice of the child or young person is heard, and their lived experience is captured appropriately by those working closely with them.
- Seek assurance about how agencies approach working with parents who have learning difficulties/disabilities.
- Improve communication between Adult Mental Health services and Children's Social Care when a parent has, or is suspected to have, a mental health condition.
- Seek assurance about the quality of assessments and pre-birth procedures.
- Routinely capture the voice of fathers/significant male carers and whole family view needs to be visible in assessments and records by frontline practitioners. This ensures a rounded and holistic view of the entire family to enable practitioners to make effective and informed decisions when safeguarding the child or young person including decisions based on risk.
- Ensure that partners work closely with agencies from other authorities when there are cross-border concerns in any safeguarding enquiry.
- Seek assurance that staff and agencies are able to effectively manage risk and that assessments of any kind are live documents which should be updated and triangulated with any significant event.

The LCSPR Subgroup found that some of those invited to be LCSPR panel members, or those attending the practitioner events, were not always confident about what was expected of them or what the purpose of the meetings were for. As a result of this, the subgroup developed guidance documents detailing the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process that will now be sent to those participating in LCSPRs.

Currently learning from reviews relies on communication from subgroup and panel members back out into their workforce. While this has been effective to some extent it was recognised this year that this did not achieve the pace and reach that is needed to bring about change in practice. As part of the work plan for the subgroup there will be the development of learning tools, e.g. '7 Minute Briefing' documents, short animated videos on subjects such as professional curiosity, assessing neglect and the use of anonymised case studies used in the BSCP Learning and Development Plan. The development of the BSCP Learning and Development Subgroup will also support more prompt and creative sharing of learning from LCSPRs.

The LCSPR Subgroup have two remaining reviews ongoing; these are Family T, including the associated practice review that supports the learning from the lived experience of Family T, and Child AA, including the associated Mental Health Homicide Review report commissioned by NHS England.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup

What difference did we make?

We made an impact by;

- Providing a diverse safeguarding workforce with information so that they can reflect on their practice, identify changes and help to prevent the need for future reviews.
- Acting on the wishes of family members affected by the incidents that resulted in a report by demonstrating our willingness to learn and prevent future incidents.
- Changing our processes so that we can get learning out of the Partnership more quickly to relevant agencies so that we can improve the pace of change.

Quality Performance and Improvement Subgroup (QP&I)

The subgroup has remained active throughout the pandemic and has demonstrated its tenacity to function effectively within the new normal of non-office based work. However, the impact of the pandemic has also brought about some loss of continuity and organisational memory (e.g. the group has had three Chairpersons). Despite this the subgroup is comprised of a multi-agency membership across eleven services with an average attendance of nine participants at each meeting. Emphasis on multi-agency perspective has been encouraged and is evident in the recent activities of the group. Accomplishments include the 2021 Section 11 Audit to ensure partner agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare, specifically picking up themes from recent serious case reviews. The group participated, implemented and promoted this audit that included 145 participants, representing 18 services across the statutory, voluntary, health, education and police sector.

The group has oversight of multi-agency and single agency audits, in order to analyse performance data consisting of quantitative information relevant to safeguarding children. The members all have sight and input into the performance dashboard so as to capture the key performance indicators of each service and intervention they provide. Moving forward, there will be specific meetings focusing solely on the narrative of this data in the aim of capturing what is or isn't working well and why. This will thus inform the directive for the group to explore. The group has continued with its multi-agency audit plan by employing regular health checks as a standing agenda item. This means agencies provide internal audit briefings to the subgroup via diary invitations to partner agencies for them to present. This has proved useful in highlighting any concerns in the aim to assist with good practice.

The group have also led in the production of the most recent and new version of the Safeguarding Children's Threshold document, otherwise known as the Continuum of Need. Input for this document was sought and encouraged from multiple sectors and professionals in the aim to produce a holistic but also user-friendly effective resource for all. The presentation, content and promotion of the new Continuum of Need has proved successful and in the next phase we will be producing alternative versions to support frontline practitioners (i.e. fold down versions, online updates). In addition, the subgroup responded to sector specific feedback about the use of this new guidance. It was thus apparent that the quality of this document is sufficient but a refresher of 'how this document should be used' is needed to rebuild confidence and strengthen effective and appropriate use of this guidance as a resource. The document can be found here: www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/professionals/continuum-of-need/

The group are also looking at BAME referrals to CAMHS, the recognition of what is neglect and how recognising it is being addressed, as well as exploring children returning to Child Protection plans within two years. There is yet to be a decision for the use of Graded Care or Oxford Health Model and with the completion of the pre-birth assessment there are multiple activities taking place within this subgroup.

Quality Performance and Improvement Subgroup (QP&I)

What difference did we make?

We made an impact by;

- Asking partners to tell us about their safeguarding work, through this dialogue we can target our offer (training, resources and what we seek assurance on) to improve outcomes for children.
- Ensured that decisions made for children are based on up to date guidance (the continuum of need) so that they can be offered the right services at the right time.
- Keeping partners informed about each others performance, risks and emerging themes. Where there is a need for multi-agency collaborative working, this can be identified and acted on.

Policy, Procedure and Practice Subgroup (PP&P)

The PP&P subgroup has remained consistently well attended with stable membership and meetings over the past year. The group has 15 members with an average attendance of 10 at each meeting, representing 11 services. The group continually review the forward plan which consist of over 60 different policies and guidance, including accessing need, joint working, children in specific circumstances and adults who pose a risk to children. Updates are provided by subject experts within the group or sourced by a group member and national/legal updates are provided by an external partner agency. The status of each document is captured with recorded updates and regular review to allow for the scrutiny and upkeep of each policy or guidance. The aim is to ensure through a system of timely and relevant updates that any member of the workforce can access relevant and helpful information. Examples of areas of progress include the Neglect Guidance Toolkit and making sure the relevant professionals are invited for input. The Schools Self Harm Guidance initiated a gathering exercise from all subgroup members benefiting from health and mental health expertise. It was also established that a re-focus on the child, not just the agency, would improve the quality of this guidance. The overlap of various documents has also highlighted and encouraged better communication between subgroups across both children and adults, as well as between agencies. This has not only supported the reduction in duplication but also the reinforcement of a joint partnership working practice.

Other areas of progress include agencies sharing their training needs and methods and how these are addressed. This has proved an effective and transparent way to monitor good practice and act on any gaps which are identified. With the group's input into the recent Section 11, good practice was captured based on feedback from frontline staff, for example, safeguarding training in the first year of employment is considered a strength in terms of it being provided and received. However, further quality assurance is needed in order to understand the impact of its effectiveness. For this reason, future audits will have an increased focus on frontline staff and service users.

The group have also worked in conjunction with the business team to update the Partnership website to not only provide correct and current information but also to have insight into who is using it and how often certain documents are viewed. This provides an understanding of the audience and it is hoped that this will develop into analysis of whether use increases, e.g. after a policy is updated or when there is learning shared from reviews. Like the PQ&I subgroup, this group also have sight of performance data and will invite the relevant subgroups highlight any areas of emerging risks or strengths. It is helpful that various members and their colleagues sit across two or more of the different groups as this further strengthens the collaborative work ethic.

Policy, Procedure and Practice Subgroup (PP&P)

What difference did we make?

We made an impact by;

- Being a central resource that anyone can access if they want to understand more about safeguarding processes.
- Ensuring that the workforce have information and policies to follow relating to current issues, e.g. the increase in self-harm.
- Providing resources for free in different formats to promote proactive improvements in practice rather than 'looking up' a policy once something has already taken place.

Children and Young People's Exploitation Subgroup

The Children and Young People's Exploitation Subgroup is a multi-agency forum that aims to support the strategic development of an effective and coordinated multi-agency response to all forms of child and young people's exploitation, including actual or likely significant harm due to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation ('county lines'), modern slavery, trafficking, radicalisation, exploitation as a result of being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and in respect of being a missing child/young person. The subgroup also provides assurance about the way agencies are working individually and collectively to safeguard and support children and young people at risk of exploitation. The subgroup oversees and monitor the delivery of any multi-agency action plans and recommendations designed to safeguard and protect children, including children and young people with disabilities, who are at risk of harm as a result of exploitation.

Notable achievements over the year include:

- The introduction of the Exploitation Protocol. The purpose of this protocol is to support professionals to understand how to access support for children where there are concerns regarding exploitation. This is applicable to external professionals and local authority staff. Agencies across Buckinghamshire are committed to safeguarding children and young people from being sexually and/or criminally exploited, and children are recognised as victims of abuse. This protocol aligns with local arrangements to safeguard children and sets out a clear pathway by which to ensure all organisations work together to provide the best service possible for children and young people either at risk of exploitation or who have experienced exploitation in Buckinghamshire.
- The introduction of the Missing Children Practice Guidance, this guidance outlines what is meant by the term 'missing', defines the roles and responsibilities of the partners when a child is missing and clearly shows the processes which should be adhered to.
- The implementation of the guidance document, *Appropriate Language: Child/Adult – Sexual and/or Criminal Exploitation*. This document can be used by professionals when discussing the exploitation of children and young people, including when escalating intelligence and delivering training. It is imperative that appropriate terminology is used when discussing children and young people who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation. Language should reflect the presence of coercion and the lack of control young people have in abusive or exploitative situations and must recognise the severity of the impact exploitation has on the child or young person.
- For the first time within Buckinghamshire, a Spotify and Instagram campaign was used in partnership with the local authority. The aim of this was to raise awareness of child exploitation and education the community in what to do and who to contact should they have concerns.

The BSCP continue to raise the profile of child exploitation within the newsletter.

Representatives from the Children and Young People's Exploitation Subgroup are also working to action the recommendations from the Thematic Review Into Serious Youth Violence (Ibbetson) as part of the youth violence priority under Safer Buckinghamshire Board action plan. This ensures that they are working effectively to the Joint Protocol and making best use of existing partner arrangements, both seeking and providing assurance within the joint meetings.

Children and Young People's Exploitation Subgroup

What difference did we make?

We made an impact by;

- Being innovative and reaching a different audience with Instagram and Spotify messages about the harm caused by exploitation and how to get help.
- Promoting the use of the most appropriate and non-oppressive language when speaking to children. This improves relationships between services and children and which can lead to better assessment, plans and engagement.
- Sharing a review which describes the experience of young people in Buckinghamshire who were involved in serious violence, educating our workforce and requiring agencies to make change.

Child Death Overview Panel

The death of a child is always tragic and leaves families with a sense of shock, devastation and loss. However, it is important that we review child deaths to see whether we can learn any lessons to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of other children, or to improve the support for bereaved families. As set out in *Working Together 2015*, the BSCB has a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) which fulfils this function.

In the period 2019-2020 the Panel reviewed 22 child deaths. None of these were referred to the Children Safeguarding subgroup for consideration of a serious case review. 12 deaths have now been closed and 10 remain open. Of those remaining open there are ongoing processes that are being concluded to allow closure to take place.

The below data provides a very brief overview of child death. CDOP will provide their own annual report that will be available in 2020:

- 24 deaths in 2019/2020.
- 48% male, 52% female.
- 19 deaths between the ages of 0-9 and 5 deaths between 9-17.
- 19 cases involved white children.
- No cases were referred to the Safeguarding Children Partnership for consideration of a serious case review.

Child Death Overview Panel

What difference did we make?

We made an impact by;

- Understanding where there were any modifiable factors which could be used to improve the life chances for other children in Buckinghamshire.
- Responding to any of these by sharing resources in our newsletter and on the website so that anyone accessing them has up to date information.
- Bringing together a multi-agency group so that we can understand modifiable factors from different points of view, making us able to better understand the experience of children.

Budget for BSCP for 2020-2021

£304,469.00 was received from partner's contributions, training courses brought an income of £41,330.00.

Board costs	Actual Year End 2020-21
Partners contribution	-£304,469.00
Training	-£41,330.00
Total	-£345,799.00
Expenditure	£219,971.00
Total	-£125,828.00

What's next for 2021/22?

Despite the considerable environmental challenges, the Partnership, driven by the business unit, remains committed to its role as critical friend and champion of best practice. Our vision remains the same but we will update our business plan to ensure that we:

- Are able to describe and understand the impact of the pandemic on our workforce, residents and priorities.
- Have a data set (performance paper) which sets out activity, themes and multi-agency risks, which is completed by all relevant partners.
- Have a quality assurance framework that demonstrates how we will effectively scrutinize key safeguarding areas using what methods and how that will inform improvement.
- Have a completed and costed training plan with a date for implementation.
- Develop the pace and impact of the Learning and Development Subgroup so that we can disseminate learning quickly using a range of methods to reach those who need it.
- Drive the neglect piece, strategy, learning and key practice skills, including tools and integrated working.
- Market the work of the Partnership, including key documents such as the continuum of need to ensure we are clear how our work can support partners.
- Demonstrate how we are sharing learning from reviews and work more closely with the Quality Assurance and Policy Subgroup to measure changes to practice as a result.
- Update our ten year review of (former) serious care reviews to include the local child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Re-focus scrutiny on the issue of safe and supportive transitions from adults to children's services
- For any new piece of work in the subgroups, we document how we have:
 - used the voice of the service user, resident or expert by experience to inform the work.
 - agreed that we will share the learning from it (how and who do we intend to reach).
- Agreed how we will measure the success of the work.

What's Next For 2021/22?



Review plans for a joint training provision with the Safeguarding Adult Board.



Provide a new website for the Children Safeguarding Partnership.



Develop a new three year business plan.



Deliver two themed conferences.



Establish a Learning and Development Subgroup

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Section 11 Report 2021

**Having regard for the need to
safeguard and promote the welfare of
children.**



MARCH 2021

**Buckinghamshire Safeguarding
Children Partnership**

Authored by: BSCP Business Team

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Purpose of the Section 11 Audit

A multi-agency approach

This 'Section 11 Audit' was designed to allow the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), to ensure that agencies placed under a duty to co-operate by this legislation are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The Children's Act (2004) places statutory obligation for named agencies and individuals to co-operate to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Section 11 of the Act makes clear to whom this duty applies and indicates that they must make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote welfare of children.

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP).

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) replaced the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board in 2019. The current arrangements place joint responsibility for safeguarding children and young people on the Council, Thames Valley Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The aim is to strengthen our local delivery and build on the improvements that have been made in recent years.



Working Together 2018 is statutory guidance that provides children's safeguarding services with a legal framework, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners. By working together, we aim to enable children and young people in Buckinghamshire to live a life free from fear, harm and abuse.

Methodology

This 'Section 11 Audit' was designed by the BSCP to gather details on the practices and procedures agencies have in place to ensure that they have arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding. The Section 11 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Whilst the BSCP requests a Section 11 audit return from all member agencies, we recognise that there are a wider number of agencies working with children and young people in Buckinghamshire. This includes a range of commissioned services voluntary, health, education and police and for this reason the audit was cascaded to the following services from various sectors:

Youth Offending Service (YOS)	Buckinghamshire Council
Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust	Oxford Health Foundation NHS Trust
CAFCASS	Action4Youth
Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG)	Youth Enquiry Service
Children & Adolescents Mental Health Service	Street Triage
Barnardos	Thames Valley Police
Stoke Mandeville Hospital	Healthy Minds
BHT Sexual Health Services	Children's Services Education – SEND
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust	

It is important that robust safeguarding arrangements are in place within all settings. Although not all organisations are always bound by the same legal framework as statutory organisations, they are still expected to have arrangements in place that reflect the importance of safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Where such organisations are commissioned by statutory agencies to provide services on their behalf, contract monitoring arrangements must consider whether robust safeguarding arrangements are in place. This audit tool can also be used by commissioners as part of these arrangements.

Methodology

Questionnaire

Questionnaires were the chosen method to collect information from various organisations and services, to establish their approach to safeguarding children outlined in the Children's Act Section 11. These questionnaires comprised of 31 questions in total broken down under 7 areas of consideration. The same questions were sent to Heads of Service and senior staff to be completed in full. An additional survey was also sent to front line staff and staff in less senior positions to obtain feedback from across the board from practitioners in all positions and at all levels. The survey consists of 16 questions in association to the senior staff questionnaire.

The rationale behind the focus of the audience for both questionnaires is to gain feedback from senior and non-senior staff. The feedback allowed a comparative to be made in terms of what senior staff know to be in place for their staff teams and how the staff teams receive, understand and implement these procedures and practices. For example, if senior staff answer that they support staff, but the survey results demonstrate a lack of support from management then it would allude to a conflict or miscommunication which will need to be explored further. The audit also allows services to identify what they are doing well and where they can improve. An analysis will be done on the responses received to allow the Partnership to gain an overview of the general position throughout the County.

The questionnaires consist of closed and open questions as well as RAG scales. This allows for qualitative and quantitative data which further contributes to an effective understanding of how services and practices deliver robust safeguarding measures.

In total 145 completed questionnaires were received from across the Voluntary, Health, Police, Social Care and Educational sectors.

Results

Senior Staff Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to 11 senior representatives across the various sectors and consisted of 31 questions under the following headings. The nature of these questions would only be able to be answered by those in a senior position:

1.0 Leadership and A

2.0 Policies and Procedures

3.0 Recruitment and Selection

4.0 Training and Development Introduction

5.0 Complaints, Allegations and Whistle Blowing

6.0 Information Sharing

7.0 Listening to Children and Young People

Q: There is a contact at senior board level to take leadership responsibility for the organisations safeguarding arrangements.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: There is a named professional for safeguarding within the organisation		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: There is evidence that the named professional has sufficient time and support to carry out their responsibilities, and an annual appraisal reviews the job role.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has a clear written accountability framework for safeguarding and promoting the safeguarding of children that applies to		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has written policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children that is accessible to all staff,		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has recruitment and selection procedures for all personnel, including volunteers, which is in line with BSCP's Safer Recruitment policy.		
Yes	11	No 0

Q: The organisation has a clearly communicated training plan/programme, that ensures all staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in line with Working Together 2018.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has a mandatory induction process for all staff and volunteers that includes familiarisation with their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as outlined in Working Together 2018.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: Staff working with children receive regular supervision / appraisals on an individual or group basis as appropriate and this supports continuous professional development.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: Your organisation has a programme/system of internal audit, review and findings (inc external inspections), that are disseminated to appropriate staff and volunteers.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has effective policies & systems in place to enable whistle blowing on an organisational and individual level.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has effective policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has a named senior officer or senior manager(s) with responsibility for ensuring the organisation follows these procedures effectively.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: All complaints and allegations of abuse are recorded, monitored and available for internal and external audit.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has information sharing guidance which sets out the process and principles for sharing information, relevant to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, and are aware of the 7 golden rules for sharing information.		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: Staff have been provided with how to report signs of abuse, in line with Working Together 2018		
Yes	11	No 0
Q: The organisation has effective policies & systems in place to manage concerns, complaints and compliments from service users or other professionals.		

Yes	11	No	0
Q: Staff participate in multi-agency meetings appropriate to their role. They take an active role in sharing information with partner agencies and address any barriers in information sharing.			
Yes *	10	No *	1
Q: As per the Safer Recruitment policy do you ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel has received accredited or quality assured Safer Recruitment training.			
Yes	8	No *	3
Q: Where relevant to the role, there is clear & accurate activity of case recording.			
No effective impact	0	Partially effective impact	Effective impact
	4		7

* detailed reason for this answer, see appendix.

NOTE: There is a total of 31 questions of which 20 are presented above. Please see appendix for answers to all 31 questions.

Results

All Staff Questionnaire

To make sure the views of those working at all levels across the Partnership are captured, a further questionnaire was sent. The questionnaire answered by 134 staff members across the various sectors consist of 16 questions in total. Open questions can be seen in the appendix, all other questions are as follows:

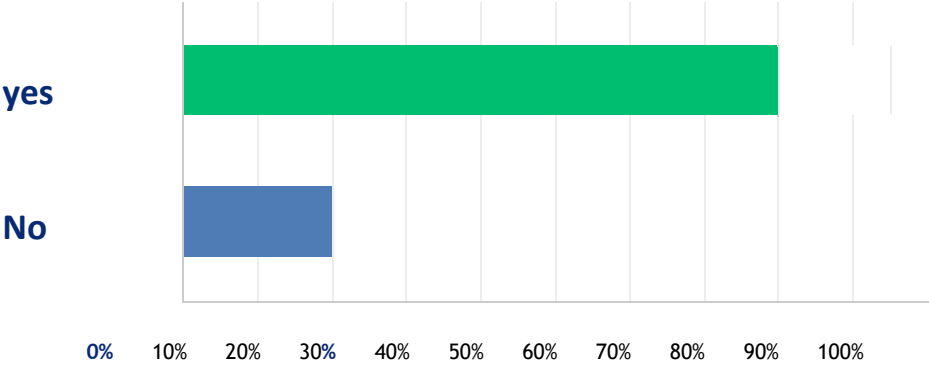
Q2 Which of the following processes have you used during any children's safeguarding work you have been involved in? Tick ALL that apply

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Internal Safeguarding Policy & Procedure	67.91%	91
Safeguarding Board Policy & Procedure	28.36%	38
Consultation with your safeguarding lead	54.48%	73
Consultation with the safeguarding team	57.46%	77
Best Interests Assessments	5.97%	8
Domestic abuse pathway	12.69%	17
Neglect Toolkit (Children's)	2.99%	4
CSE/CE Tool (Children's)	11.94%	16
Early Help Assessment (Children's)	17.16%	23
Multi-agency chronology (Children's)	12.69%	17
Safeguarding Thresholds Matrix (Adults)	7.46%	10
Safeguarding Thresholds Matrix (Children's)	26.12%	35
None of the above (please specify what other tools you have used to help you in safeguarding work)	11.19%	15

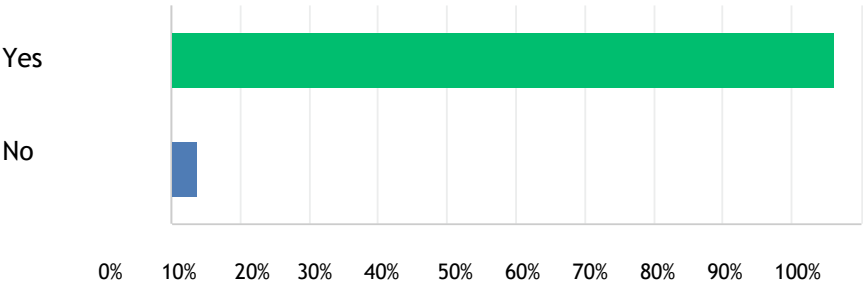
Q3 When did you last have safeguarding training?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In the last 6 months	38.06%	51
6 months to 1 year	29.85%	40
1 year to 2 years	14.93%	20
2 years to 3 years	4.48%	6
More than 3 years ago	8.21%	11
Never	4.48%	6

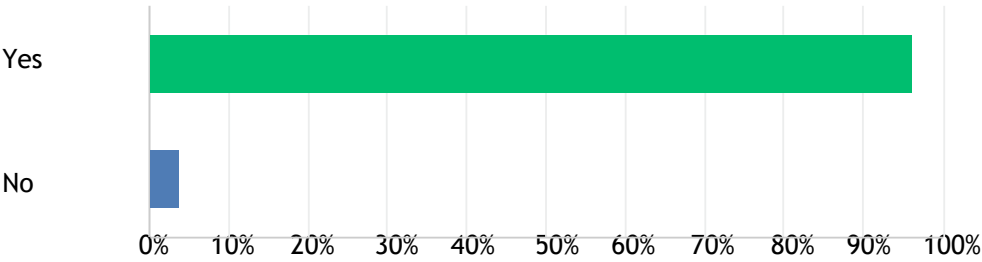
Q5. Has your organisation clearly communicated a training plan/program, to ensure you are competent to carry out your role?



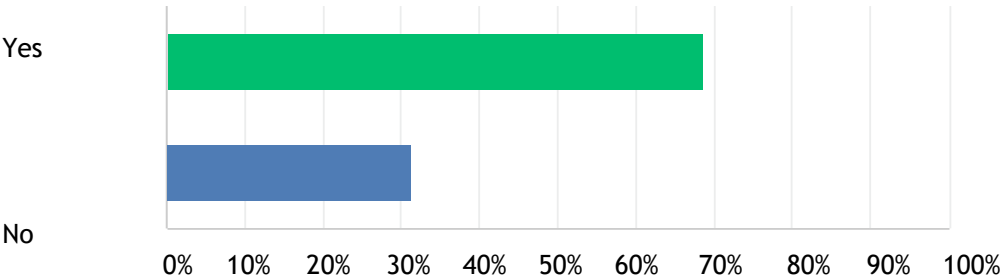
Q6. Do you feel at ease or encouraged within your organisation, to discuss safeguarding concerns or questions you may have?



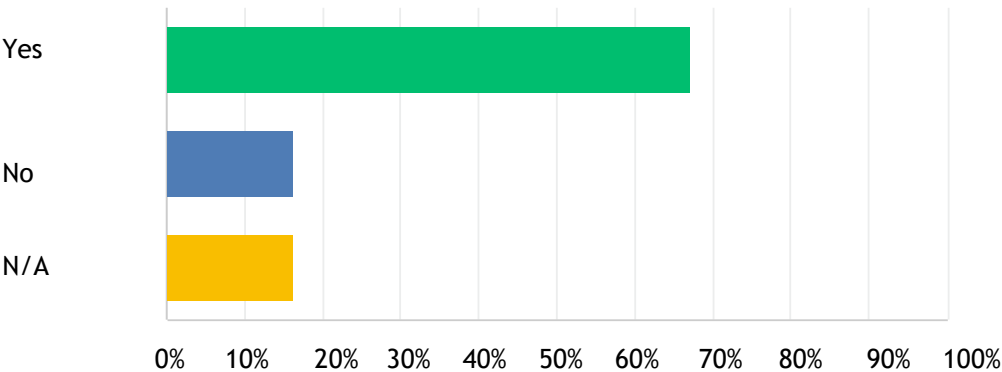
Q10. Do you know how to escalate a child safeguarding concern or incident?



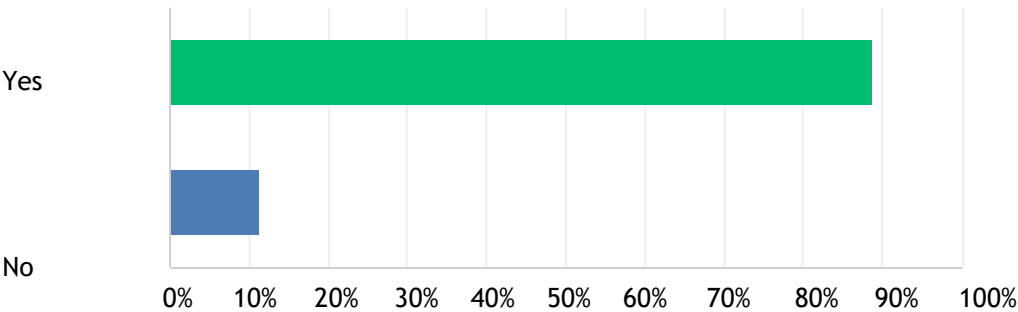
Q11. Do you receive regular Safeguarding supervision / appraisals on an individual or group basis (as appropriate), to support your continuous professional development



**Q12. Do you participate in multi-agency meetings appropriate to your role?
For example, you take an active role in sharing information with other Safeguarding services such as Police, Education, Health or Social Care?**

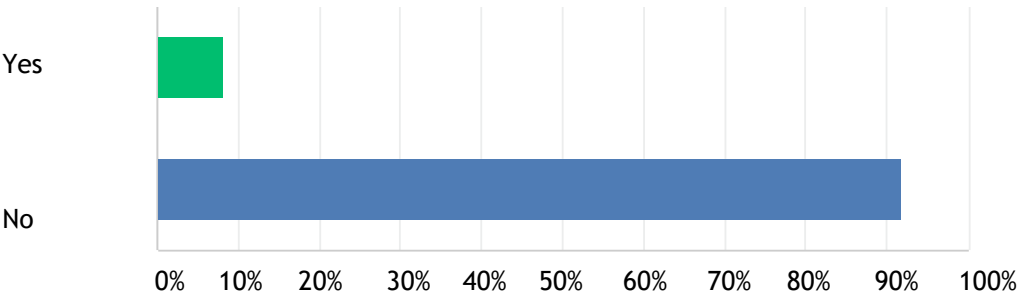


Q13. Do you feel that the children’s Safeguarding lead has been available during the COVID-19 crisis (since March 2020)?



Q14 In light of your answer to question 13, has there been a change in the availability of your Safeguarding lead since the COVID 19 crisis?

Answered: 134 Skipped: 0



NOTE: Please see appendix for answers to all 16 questions.

Results

Summary

It's important to look at the replies from each service to establish a pattern that may exist within that organisation. However, for the purpose of this summary the results look at the answers in there entirety.

➡ From the results of the senior questionnaire there is an overwhelming strength in the implementation of safeguarding representatives, acknowledgement and policies from board level down. Senior staff convey a robust training program of which 90% of the all staff questionnaire agree that there are effective training programs in place.

➡ From the senior staff responses, information sharing is conveyed as a unanimous positive area of practice with the all staff responses confirming a majority attendance to share information with multiple agencies.

➡ All staff responses show that just over 30% have not received a clearly communicated training plan/program, to ensure their competence to carry out their role. However Management replies unanimously reply that this area is achieved.

➡ Sources/tools for support appear in the main to be the use of internal policies and safeguarding leads/teams. Less than 3% of respondents said they used the neglect tool kit.

➡ Just under 70% of all staff respondents have had training in the past year. However, 6 respondents confirmed that they have had no safeguarding training.

➡ Over 90% of all staff respondents feel at ease or encouraged to discuss or escalate safeguarding concerns.

➡ Over 30% of all staff respondents do not receive safeguarding supervision.

➡ Results show that CYPF feedback is sought actively, consistently and creatively.

➡ 32 out of the 134 respondents did not know who the BSCP are. Those who were aware preferred updates from the BSCP via webinars and newsletters.

➡ The results demonstrate an effective and positive response to being kept up to date with safeguarding matters. Examples in the main include team meetings, supervision and training. There also appears to be a pro-active approach to take the initiative to seek updates for one's own personal development.

➡ The comparative between the two questionnaires suggest in the main that the same message is being received and conveyed from senior staff to staff at all levels.

➡ **Impact of COVID 19**

Nearly 90% of the all staff respondents confirm that there has been a visible lead and availability has not been hindered since March 2020 when Government Covid-19 restriction came into force. The areas of concern and change highlighted were in association to the complexities of how to contact children and families and the clarity around when contact is allowed and to what degree. However, more effort and creativity to engage was acknowledged. Feedback suggest a greater awareness of safeguarding need, more alert and better multiagency working. Nevertheless, there are concerns that families are struggling in the home with children and many young people may fall under the radar.

Recommendations & Learning

- Agencies to provide assurance that staff are supported to fulfil their CPD obligations.
- Explore apart from training, did professionals engage in other safeguarding work?
- All agencies to provide evidence that mandatory training relating to safeguarding is up to date within 6 months.
- Earlier identification and appropriate intervention, highlighting the need for a multi-agency, systems approach to early help.
- Agencies to explore how to improve use of assessment tools by staff, i.e. neglect tool.
- Assurance that staff have the opportunity to access safeguarding supervision
- Explore reasons for the difference in response by senior leaders and frontline staff regarding successful training plans.
- Future questionnaires completed by managers to incorporate evidence to demonstrate reason for response. Also, consideration to gain more detail from front line staff and service users to establish implementation of safeguarding practice.
- Agree and implement an action plan based on the findings of this audit.

Appendix:

Full questionnaires and answers including link to Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP).

For queries about the full questionnaires and answers please contact bscp@buckinghamshire.gov.uk for queries relating to children or bsab@buckinghamshire.gov.uk for queries relating to adults.



<https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/>