

# Annual Report 2019/20



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## Foreword

I am writing this piece in extraordinary circumstances. Covid-19, has changed life completely. Whilst no longer in a lockdown, I (and so many others) am working remotely. For me there is no return to Birmingham in sight. The political priorities of juggling life and livelihood is affecting us all. Inevitably, the impact on the vulnerable is most acute. In the second city, the youngest city in Europe, many of those are the children. I would like to recognise the commitment of all partners in working together to rise to the challenge of sustaining our safeguarding priorities, whilst moving with speed to improve early and local help.

This is an Annual Report and so although last year seems like another country, we must look back, evaluate progress and learn, in order to continue to build on progress. 2019/20 was a year of steady progress and consolidation in safeguarding practice. It was the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA).

In Birmingham, we agreed to build on the changes we had made in the past few years and not opt for radical change. Specifically, the lead partners: Local Authority (BCC); Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT); Health (BSol CCG) and Police (WMP) determined that they wanted to keep an Independent Chair rather than moving to a more hands-off Independent Scrutineer function. We have prioritised building on progress, and this has been validated by external inspection and assessment.

We have concentrated on building partnership confidence and learning from practice, locally, regionally and nationally. Whilst we have only published one Serious Case Review during this time, we have continued to produce learning bulletins. Our quarterly Practitioner Forum and annual conference have been much valued.

Partnership developments have been focussed on the Birmingham Children's Partnership and its priorities, in particular the development of a locality based Early Help Offer and improvements for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). My contribution has been one of independent support and challenge. I very much welcome the growing priority being afforded the Children's agenda in the country's youngest city, and I trust that the planning for resurgence after the pandemic, can include an ambitious, hopeful and kind agenda for Children, Young People and Families.

I am struck by the commitment and energy that partner organisations and their practitioners have brought to working together in the Children's safeguarding arena over the past year. Already, it is enabling a robust, creative and effective response to the challenges of 2020, and some new ways of working which will be sustained. Many thanks, especially to those who have played a part in leading and supporting our Sub-Groups and delivering our work programme.

Good luck for the future. Stay safe.



**Penny Thompson CBE, Independent Chair**





## Introduction

This Annual Report sets out how agencies have worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Birmingham. The report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of these arrangements during the financial year, commencing 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2020.

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership have been developed to:

- Facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries.
- Ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families.

The Independent Chair Penny Thompson CBE works alongside statutory 'Safeguarding Partners' and 'Relevant Agencies' to continuously improve the safeguarding arrangements and ensure that the statutory role and functions as defined in the national guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' are effectively discharged.

The published Annual Report is available to read and download from the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership website [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk). Penny Thompson CBE will formally present the Annual Report to the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Birmingham Children's Partnership and the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A copy will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care. The report comprises five sections:

### **Part 1 - Context and Key Facts about Birmingham**

This section provides background information and statistical data to provide a local context to protecting and safeguarding children and young people in the second largest Local Authority in Europe.

### **Part 2 – The Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements**

This section of the report focuses on the first year of the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21 evaluating progress made on the four key priorities:

1. Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;
2. Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;
3. Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;
4. Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### **Part 3 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements**

This section examines the funding arrangements, resource utilisation and the impact of the Executive Board and Sub-Groups.

### **Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

This section provides a summary of decision and action taken by partners to implement learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

## Part 5 - Conclusion and Priorities for the Year Ahead

The conclusion reflects on the challenges and progress in the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and sets out the safeguarding priorities for the year ahead.

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Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

This Report can be downloaded from the BSCP website: [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk)

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## Part 1 – Context and Key Facts about Birmingham



Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK, with an estimated population of over 1,141,000 residents. The vibrant heart of the city is home to iconic buildings such as Grand Central, the Library of Birmingham and Selfridges. The city stretches from Sutton Park in the North, to Longbridge Technology Park in the South and is home to the famous Bull

Ring Shopping Centre. With accessibility to air and rail transport links to the rest of the UK and beyond, living in Birmingham can be both exciting and challenging. Birmingham has more green space of any European city, more canals than Venice. But...**41%** children growing up in poverty. **19%** of households experiencing acute Mental Health problems, Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse.

Birmingham is a super-diverse city. Around 42% of residents come from a minority ethnic group (national average 14%), with about 50 languages spoken in the city [ONS Census 2011].

The population is expected to grow by 14.9% over the next twenty years. This growth will have an impact on public services, such as Education, Housing and Health. Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe, with an average age of 35 and 84,000 children under the age of 5.



**772** Disabled  
Children received a  
specialist Social Care Service

**1,295**  
Number of Children with a  
Child Protection Plan



**2,356** Children in Families  
supported by Family Support  
and/or Think Family

**1,929**  
Children in Care



**35.6** children live in  
poverty  
(Local Indicators of Child Poverty 2017-18).



**17.1%** of children in Birmingham have a  
recognised SEN. **3.24%** have a statement of  
EHCP. A further **13.9%** receive SEN support. (National figure  
15.5%, 3.2% and 12.1% respectively)



**84,000** of children are under the age of 5.  
**78%** of our under 5's live in **40%** of the most deprived areas. **6,829**  
children per 1,000 are homeless. **14.4%** of households are overcrowded.



**40.3%** of children at age  
11 are obese & overweight.  
Higher than the National  
average

**8.5%** (2018) of 16 to 17 years  
olds are not in employment  
education or training .  
(National figure 5.5% 2018)



Birmingham has a **3.65**  
Youth Re-Offending rate.  
Lower than the  
National average of 4.05

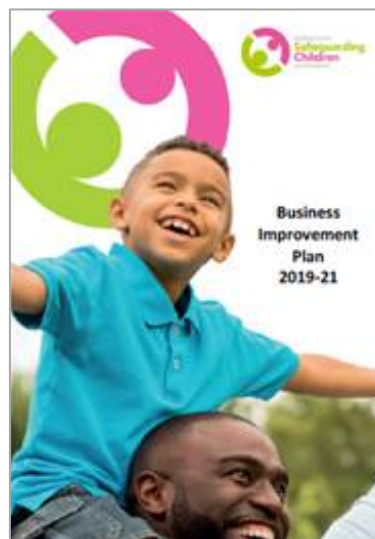
## Part 2 – The Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) published a two-year Business Improvement Plan for 2019-21 (Figure 1), setting out four priority areas for the continuous improvement of the partnership arrangements to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Birmingham and realise our ambition:

***‘Birmingham is a family city where children will flourish, feel safe, listened to, learn and grow up, able to actively contribute to society’.***

This section focuses on progress made within the first year of the plan.

**Figure 1: Business Improvement Plan 2019-21**



The Safeguarding Partners share equal responsibility for ensuring effective oversight and implementation of the Business Improvement Plan, which commenced on 1st April 2019. The plan builds on the strong foundation left by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which the new safeguarding partnership arrangements replaced. The Partnership has worked collaboratively to streamline and strengthen the existing arrangements to further improve how agencies work together to safeguard and protect children and young people across the city.

The four key priorities are:

**Priority 1:** Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;

**Priority 2:** Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;

**Priority 3:** Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;

**Priority 4:** Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.





All our work will be underpinned by a consideration of the views and experiences of Birmingham's children and young people. We acknowledge that successful implementation of the Business Improvement Plan will be judged on the difference it makes to the safety and wellbeing of Birmingham's children and young people. We intend that progress will be reported to the Birmingham Children's Partnership as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on an annual basis.




Figure 2 provides an overview of progress against the fifteen specific actions set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21. The first column highlights the 'What we set out to achieve'. The second column provides a summary of 'Progress End of Year 1'. The final column provides a RAG rating: Green indicates action completed; amber shows that the action is progressing and on schedule for completion within agreed timescales and red indicates significant slippage, requiring strategic intervention. 80% (12 out of 15) of the workstreams have been completed. Significant progress has been made on the outstanding actions, with the launch of the Empower-U Contextual Safeguarding Hub, however the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on finalisation of the citywide Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and conference programme. This work has been incorporated within year two of the work programme.

**Figure 2: Overview of progress against the sixteen specific actions**

Priority 1 - Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. The BSCP Executive Board oversees effective implementation of the Business Improvement Plan and associated Work Programmes.	March 2020 Executive Board reviewed progress on year 1 of work programme. Published BSCP Annual Report 2019/20	😊
2. That the BSCP Independent Chair and strategic leaders from the 'Safeguarding Partners' are core members of the Birmingham Children's Partnership tasked with making the city's ambition a reality.	Independent Chair BSCP is member of the Birmingham Children's Partnership.	😊
3. The BSCP Executive Board maximise the opportunity to learn and improve partnership practice through its workforce development programme, quality assurance framework and the findings of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs).	The Partnership published learning from LCSPRs and audits which informs the development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding practice, procedures and training.	😊
4. Extend public awareness campaign 'Keeping Children Safe is everybody's business' Focused on preventing child abuse and neglect in 2019-21.	Original campaign being developed to incorporate 'Who's in charge' on the impact of drugs and alcohol on parenting capacity.	😊



Priority 2 - Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. The BSCP to host an Annual Safeguarding Practitioners on 'Adolescent Neglect' on the 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019, to launch the new strategy and awareness campaign.	'Tackling childhood Neglect in Birmingham' – Conference 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Villa Park	
2. BSCP invite the nominated Senior Responsible Officer for implementation of the Neglect Strategy to provide a six-month report on progress.	Assistant Director of Safeguarding Chairs a Neglect Operational Group to oversee effective implementation of the strategy.	
3. Learning & Development Sub-Group to provide a comprehensive programme of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training to deliver high quality of face to face training, e-learning and seminars. To include application of Neglect Assessment Tools (Graded Care Profile 2 and Outcome Star).	Implementation of the BSCP Multi-Agency Training Offer 2020/21 is overseen by Learning & Development Sub-Group. During the Covid-19 pandemic virtual training and webinars have replaced face-to-face training to enable the workforce to access training whilst working from home.	
4. Learning & Development and Quality Impact & Outcomes Sub-Groups to collaborate with the Birmingham Early Help Partnership to deliver bespoke training for and evaluate the impact of the 'Lead Practitioners' role in supporting 'Our Family Plans'.	The development of the locality based Early Help and Support model has provided new opportunities and challenges around workforce development. Training Needs Analysis is being undertaken to target safeguarding training for Lead Professionals.	

Priority 3 - Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual and Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. BSCP Executive Board to support the Contextual Safeguarding Board in developing the city's Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2020-22.	In year two of the plan the BSCP will support the Birmingham Children's Partnership in developing a citywide Contextual Safeguarding Strategy, building on the success of the Empower-U Contextual Safeguarding Hub.	
2. Learning & Development Sub-Group to work in collaboration with the Contextual Safeguarding Board to develop bespoke training to enhance partnership practice in responding to contextual safeguarding.	Multi-agency training offer 2020/21 endorsed by Executive Board 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2020.	
3. The BSCP to host an Annual Safeguarding Practitioners Conference on 'Contextual Safeguarding' in June 2020.	Planning for Practitioners Conference on 'Contextual Safeguarding' scheduled for June 2020 has been postponed until 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2021 due to Covid-19. However, a virtual Contextual Safeguarding Conference is planned for November 2020.	

Priority 4 - Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year	
1. BSCP Executive Board to undertake a 12-month review of the effectiveness of the new governance and accountability arrangements to identify areas for improvement	A review of the Governance Arrangements was presented to Executive Board on 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	😊
2. The Learning and Development Sub-Group to provide the Executive Board with an annual evaluation of the quality and impact of multi-agency safeguarding training delivered	An evaluation of multi-agency training was presented to Executive Board on 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2020.	😊
3. The BSCP Executive Board to publish on its website an Annual Report providing evidence of impact on the priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan.	The Annual Report to be published in September 2020. The Independent Chair to present the findings to the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Education & Children Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	😊
4. The BSCP Executive Board will notify and send a copy of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews to the National Panel and Secretary of State for Education	In compliance with national guidance the BSCP have undertaken 7 Rapid Reviews and published one Serious Case Review.	😊



## Part 3 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

This section examines the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Birmingham, which have been designed to support and enable agencies to work together in a system where:

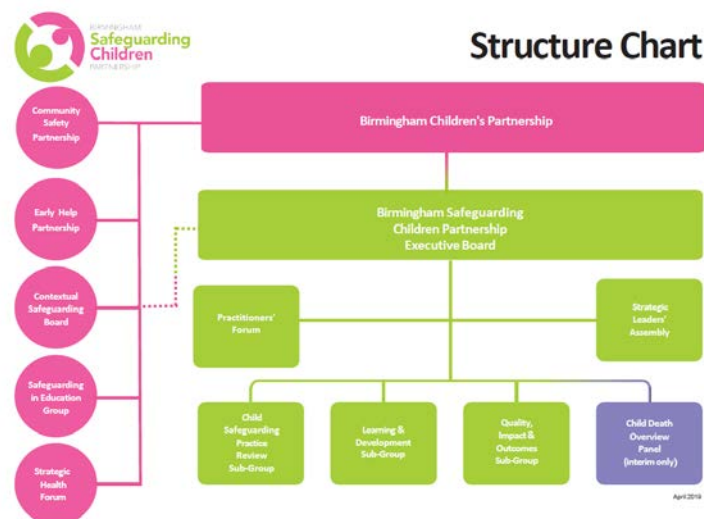
- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted;
- Partnerships and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children;
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively;
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats;
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice;
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

### Executive Board

The Executive Board provides independent oversight of the city's safeguarding arrangements, creating an environment where support and challenge are the norm, targeting strategic intervention where improvement is required. Throughout this first year, the focus has been on workforce development, cascading learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Audits aimed at enhancing safeguarding practice.

Since the launch of the BSCP on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the Partnership Executive Board has focused on forging closer links with the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board and the Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board enhancing system leadership and partnership collaboration across the city. The Executive Board and Sub-Group structure and the key relationship with statutory partnerships is detailed in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Safeguarding Structure**

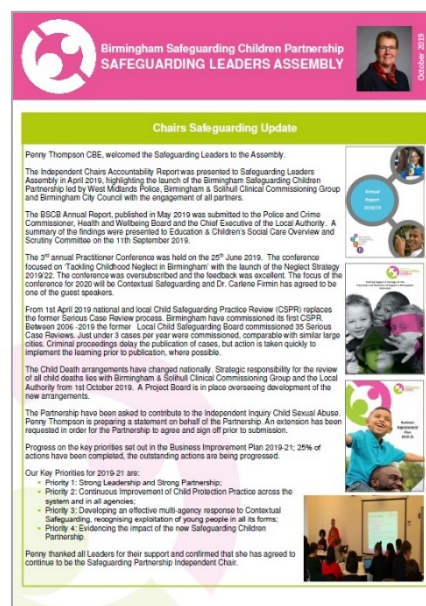


## Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly

The Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly meets twice-yearly bringing together Chief Executives, Chief Officers and Strategic Safeguarding Leaders from Safeguarding Partners and all 'relevant agencies' to share good practice, discuss emerging safeguarding challenges and agree a collective way forward and importantly to evaluate progress on implementation of the shared priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan.

This year the assembly invited Dr Carlene Firmin MBE, Principal Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire to discuss the development of a contextual safeguarding approach and implications for policy and practice for Birmingham. Following each assembly, a bulletin is produced to capture and disseminate the key decisions. (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Safeguarding Leaders Assembly Bulletin**



## Strategic Health Forum

The Strategic Health Forum (SHF) is hosted by Birmingham and Solihull CCG (BSOL CCG) and membership comprises Chief Nurses from acute and community provider trusts across Birmingham and Solihull, and Directors of Public Health. The SHF was established in July 2019 with an aim to ensure that there are clear governance processes in place for leadership and communication for safeguarding children and adults across the health economy for Birmingham and Solihull.

Members concur that the SHF provides a welcome opportunity to discuss and debate key challenges and prospects in terms of the safeguarding children and adults' agendas, which in turn serves to inform and shape discussions within Child Safeguarding Partnerships and Adult Safeguarding Boards. This reflects two key objectives of the SHF: to assist in piloting the strategic direction of adult and child safeguarding across Birmingham and Solihull and to ensure that the voices of children and vulnerable adults are heard.



The operational functions of the SHF are discharged by the Health Safeguarding Forum: a network also hosted by Birmingham and Solihull CCG, incorporating Safeguarding Leads, Named and Designated Professionals from acute and community provider trusts across Birmingham and Solihull.

Throughout 2019/20, the SHF received escalations of concern from the Health Safeguarding Forum; endorsed plans to address these areas of concern and sought system-wide assurance around the safeguarding agenda. This included requests for evidence that learning from statutory safeguarding reviews, including Serious Case Reviews, had been entrenched and subsequent action plans executed. SHF members are encouraged to note that since the forum was reinstated, in addition to the Health Safeguarding Forum, a number of robust systems and operational groups have been developed across the health network in collaboration with safeguarding partners across a range of agencies. The SHF will continue to convene throughout 2020/21 to sustain this collaborative working and to continue to develop and promote the development of effective assurance frameworks for Birmingham and Solihull.

### Education Safeguarding Group

The Education Safeguarding group has been hallmarked by significant changes to membership. The churn in membership reflects the changes to Local Authority leadership for the Director, Assistant Director and Head of Service for Education Safeguarding. Head Teacher representation has remained constant and has enabled the group to continue and deliver continued improvement outcomes for safeguarding in education as detailed below:

- **S175 development** - the group have designed and reformatted the annual Safeguarding in Education Self-Assessment (S175) which has been well received by schools. The S175 audit return for 2019/20 identified a gap in safeguarding training provision for school governors. This gap mirrored the wider concerns around the safeguarding governor role evidenced through Education Safeguarding team school audits. To support this development a manager from Education Safeguarding has joined the School and Governor support service to enable a strengthening of safeguarding governance in schools.
- **Early Help** – The Education Safeguarding Group worked closely with BCT and schools to deliver 10 workshops for schools across the city. Representatives from 240 schools attended. Sessions focused on Right Help, Right Time (RHRT), Children’s Advice and Support Service (CASS), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help processes. Following these sessions 99 schools extended a setting-based invitation to the new BCT Early Help team. Early Help processes were reviewed, and schools were supported to complete Early Help Assessments (EHA). Following this intervention BCT report a significant and sustained increase in EHA’s initiated by schools.
- **Contextual safeguarding** - The Education Safeguarding Group has provided opportunity for the Local Authority and schools to share concerns and best practice in the development of an Educational response to criminal exploitation. Education Safeguarding and the Education and Skills Post 16 team have placed managers into the Empower-U hub to attend daily briefings, disruption meetings and map educational histories and relationships. These actions have enabled better attendance and more effective intervention for young people in their school setting. The team are working across the directorate to secure alternative education placements for the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) cohort and ensure that SEND needs of young people are addressed.

## Sub-Group Structure

The Executive Board is supported by four Sub-Groups which discharge the statutory functions:

- Identifying and embedding learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews;
- Providing a comprehensive multi-agency training offer that enhances partnership safeguarding practice;
- Constantly seeking to improve the child protection system, through a robust assurance framework that enables challenge and evaluation of performance;
- Systematically reviewing the death of children, to learn what happened and why, and prevent future child deaths.

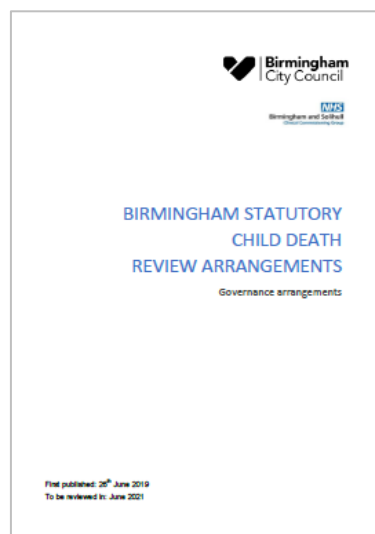
The Independent Chair, Executive Board, Sub-Group Chairs and the Business Manager are collectively focused on priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21.

## Learning from Child Deaths – New Child Death Arrangements

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 statutory responsibility for the review of child deaths transferred from the BSCP to BSOL CCG and BCC. The BSCP have worked with the two lead agencies to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements, brought about by Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Details of the new arrangements (Figure 5) are available through the council and CCG websites. A separate analysis of learning from child deaths will be published annually.

**Figure 5: Child Death Review Arrangements**



## Quality, Impact and Outcomes Sub-Group

The Quality, Impact and Outcome (QIO) Sub-Group have developed a Quality Assurance Framework (Figure 6) to triangulate qualitative, quantitative and experiential data to help evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding children and families across the city.

**Figure 6: Triangulation of Data**



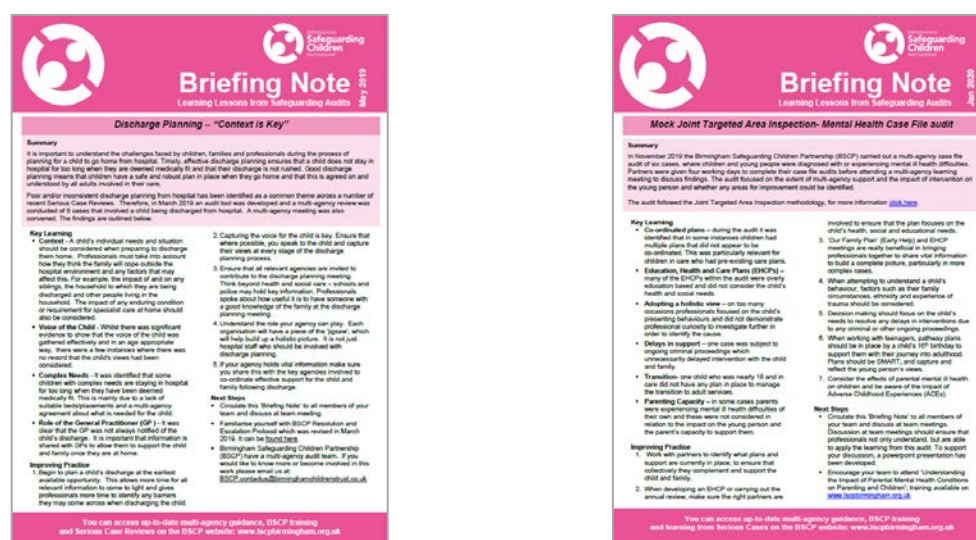
The Sub-Group examines outstanding practice both regionally and nationally to identify transferable learning that can be shared across the Partnership. This work incorporates the review of findings from inspections of statutory partners in Birmingham to identify trends and themes and seek assurance from strategic leaders that the learning has been taken forward.

The QIO Sub-Group analyses safeguarding data and identifies trends in performance that help inform the audit programme for the year. The dataset has been expanded to include quality and timeliness of discharge planning from hospital in cases where there have been child safeguarding concerns, contextual safeguarding data particularly children known to be at risk of exploitation including child sexual exploitation (CSE), children out of education (such as exclusions) and the outcome of police child protection investigations. The audit programme has focused on children's discharge planning, children's mental health services, resolution and escalation policy and CSE. The group also coordinated two safeguarding self-assessments of education settings and statutory partners, hosting a peer review of safeguarding practice to moderate the findings and cascade sector lead learning.

**Discharge Planning:** Several Serious Case Reviews have highlighted inconsistency in the quality of discharge planning. An audit was commissioned and the outcome led to the development of a city-wide discharge planning process for children in Birmingham Hospitals. A briefing note was published in May 2019 to cascade the learning to frontline practitioners (Figure 7).

**Behavioural issues:** Analysis of data identified potential delay in the discharge of children with behavioural rather than mental health problems and a gap in service provision for this cohort of children. An audit of mental health utilising the Ofsted Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) methodology for children and families with mental health concerns was undertaken. The work from these audits has been shared with Mental Health Commissioners to influence the new 0-25 Mental Health Services being developed for the city and concerns around Education, Health Care Plans have been raised with the SEND project group which is one of the priorities of the Birmingham Children Partnership. An audit briefing note was also issued for frontline practitioners in January 2020. (Figure 8)

**Figures 7 & 8: Audit Briefing Notes**



**Resolution and Escalation:** At the BSCP conference in June 2019 a survey of 123 frontline practitioners' was carried out in relation to the application and understanding of the Resolution and Escalation Protocol. It is important that professionals can understand and challenge other professionals' decisions and the Resolution and Escalation Protocol provides a process to be followed. The survey identified that 60% of respondents were aware of the Protocol. Of those that were aware nearly half had used the Protocol, and of those 83% had successfully resolved their concerns. Work has been undertaken to further promote the 'Resolution and Escalation' Protocol through social media and partners internal communications.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** Recent trends identified a significant decrease in the number of CSE cases being reported. An audit was undertaken which identified concerns around the use of screening tools and the need for greater professional curiosity from partners. The findings were shared with the Contextual Safeguarding Hub helping to refine screening tools and guidance for professionals on completing requests for support for any children who are at risk of exploitation.

**Primary School Exclusions:** Primary exclusions are higher than comparable cities. An audit scheduled for spring of 2020, to aid understanding of the reasons behind the rate of exclusions, has had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Analysis of the increase in the number of children subject of child protection was a positive indication of improvements in the child protection system in Birmingham where children are safer. Similarly, the numbers of Children in Care (CIC) has increased in line with the national trend, this should hopefully stabilise in the next 18 months.

**Section 11 Self-Assessment:** Statutory partners complete a safeguarding self-assessment bi-annually. The results of the last years self-assessment were moderated, and quality assured at a multi-agency peer review event, which also looks to share good practice across the system. Two training needs were identified one to raise professional awareness of process around allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers; the other good practice around Safer Recruitment/DBS Checks. As a result, two morning training sessions were arranged for partner organisations, both courses were well received.

**Education Safeguarding Self-Assessment (section 175):** Every year education settings are required to complete an Education Safeguarding self-assessment tool known as the Section 175. The self-assessment has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and school closures and will not be completed until the start of the new academic year.

### **Learning & Development Sub-Group**

During 2019/2020, 192 multi-agency safeguarding training events were planned. Due to Covid-19, 11 courses were cancelled reducing the total to 181. These were delivered to 3,066 delegates across the children's workforce. A Practitioners conference – 'Tackling Childhood Neglect in Birmingham' which included 8 workshops was also delivered to 230 delegates.

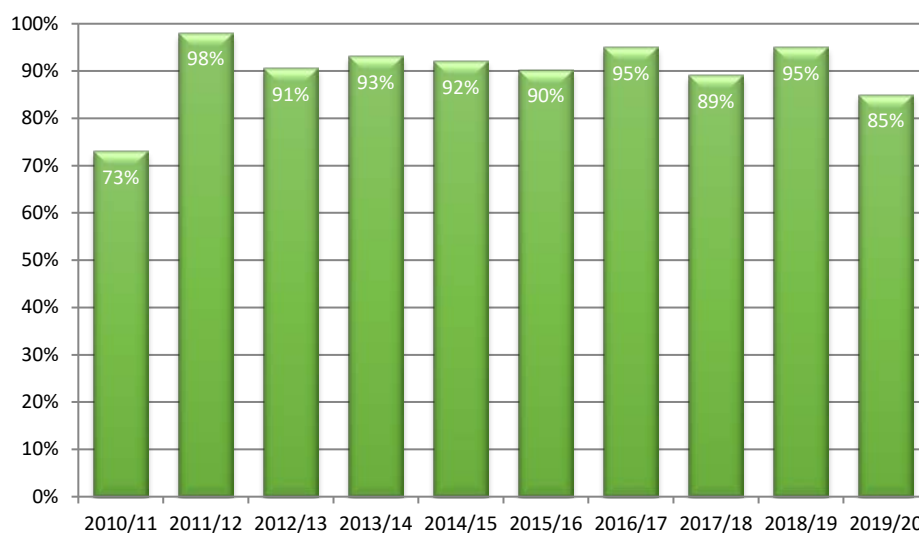
Learning & Development (L&D) Sub-Group oversee an ongoing annual programme of reviewing all training courses to ensure that they remain up-to-date, relevant and focused on improving safeguarding practice.

This year the Sub-Group have focused on:

- Revising and refreshing the multi-agency training offer to ensure all safeguarding training incorporates Contextual Safeguarding, Practice Standards around the voice and lived experience of the child.
- The delivery of the multi-agency Training Programme 2019/2020.
- Developing new core modules on Domestic Abuse: Advanced, Coercive Control, Attachment Theory and Brain Development and Right-Wing Extremism & The Far Right.
- The Delivery of a Practitioners Conference on improving child safeguarding practice.
- Developing and embedding a new on-line evaluation tool.
- Further developing the 'train the trainers' concept and Trainers Network to deliver core modules around Early Help.
- Developing and launching an e-learning version of Right Help, Right Time' threshold guidance'.
- Preparing the safeguarding workforce for the introduction of Neglect – Graded Care Profile 2
- Observing and evaluating training courses delivered during 2019/2020.

During 2019/20 – 3,540 training places were offered of which 3066 delegates attended equating to a course utilisation rate of 85% (Figure 9).

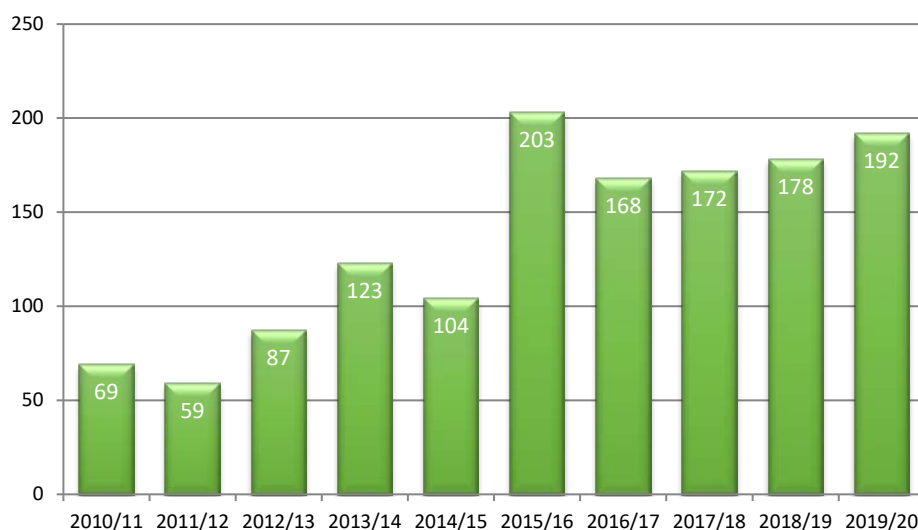
**Figure 9: Course Utilisation**



There was a slight increase in the number of training events commissioned during 2019/20 up from 178 to 192 due to an increase in demand for specific courses, such as Domestic Abuse, Coercive Control and Right-Wing Extremism & The Far Right (Figure 10).

Action to improve course utilisation is being overseen by the L&D Sub-Group to maximise take up rates for this important training. This includes; rigorous enforcement of the Charging Policy: Non-Attendance at Multi-Agency Training, use of targeted advertising for specific staff groups, the use of Trainers Network to promote new and existing courses and the constant review of courses material to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date.

**Figure 10: Training Events Commissioned**



**Priorities for the Forthcoming Year:** The Training Offer for 2020/21 is structured around four key objectives set out in the Business Improvement Plan, each area is supported by a Task and Finish Group:

- Continue to develop the 'Contextual Safeguarding' multi-agency training offer.
- Review, revise and evaluate existing training courses and use intelligence to inform future commissioning intentions.
- Develop, design and deliver a programme of 'safeguarding master classes'
- Expansion of e-learning programme to include: Early Help and Support and Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Review and revise safeguarding training modules, 'target group' to improve attendance by statutory partners.

### Serious Cases Sub-Group

Serious Cases Sub-Group oversees the commissioning of independent reviews when a child dies or is seriously injured, and child abuse is suspected to be a contributing factor. Whenever these cases come to our attention, a Rapid Review will be immediately undertaken to maximise learning and ascertain if there are any national implications or whether a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) should be commissioned to identify and cascade learning to front-line practitioners. The Sub-Group is also responsible for ensuring agencies can demonstrate how learning has been implemented and what difference it has made to improving partnership practice. Please see Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

**Ensuring lessons are learnt:** - The Partnership closely monitors the effective implementation of and compliance with the key recommendations and learning points from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), LCSPRs and alternate reviews commissioned. Serious Cases Sub-Group have established a 'Learning to Action' Group who meet on a bi-monthly basis to review progress on any outstanding recommendations and learning points. Quarterly reports continue to provide the Executive Board with reassurance of how learning is being embedded into front-line practice.

### Communications and Public Engagement

The BSCB campaign 'Keeping children safe is everybody's business' focusing on child abuse and neglect has been extended. The key aim was to raise community awareness of '*What to do if you are worried about a child*' and most importantly to encourage members of the public to telephone the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) to report their concerns. (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Keeping Children Safe is everybody's business**



## Regional and National Collaboration

The BSCP have been actively engaged in helping to shape and influence both national and regional initiatives during the year. The Partnership contributed to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse providing evidence to investigation of Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings and lead a Department for Education Early Adopter Project for the development of a regional framework and practice guidance to support the introduction of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Both the Independent Chair and Business Manager play an active role in leading and participating in cross border initiatives through the West Midlands MASA Network, commissioning on-line safeguarding procedure and practice guidance, cascading learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and streamlining and improving Safeguarding Self-Assessments across the wider West Midlands region.

## Finance

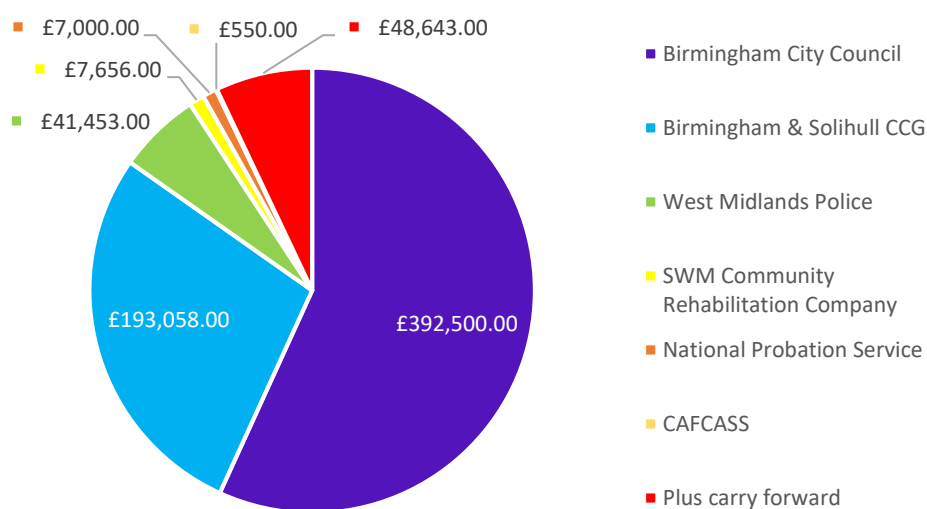
The total contributions by individual agencies for the financial year 2019/20 amounted to £642,217 and there was a carry forward from 2018/19 of £48,643, this included £12,835 from the Early Adopters Programme grant. Therefore, the BSCP overall budget was £690,860.

Figure 12 provides a breakdown of the budget and details individual agencies contributions. Figure 13 provides details of expenditure during 2019/20 which concentrated on five core business areas.

At the end of the financial year the BSCP raised invoices for non-attendance at training amounting to £5,400, which is included in the carry forward to the 2020/21 budget.

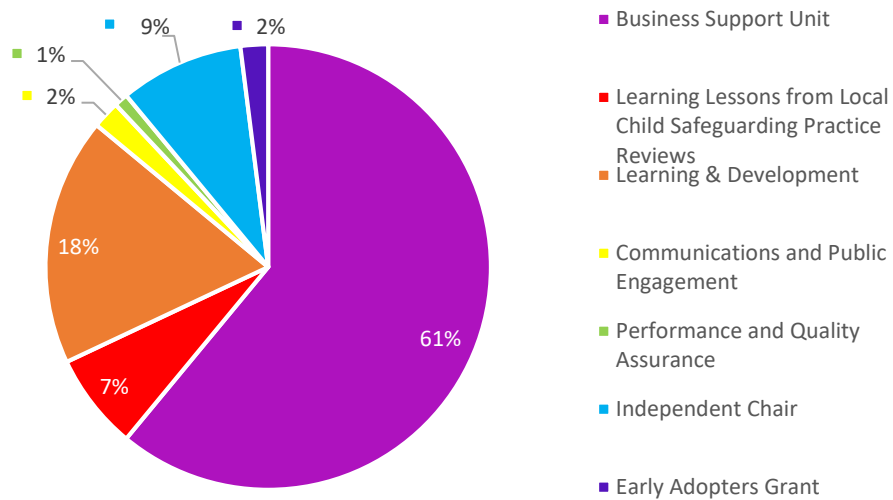
BCC and BCT also continued to make a significant contribution in kind, by the provision of office accommodation, IT, Legal, Financial and HR support for the BSCP Business Support Unit.

**Figure 12: Breakdown of the budget and individual agencies contributions**





**Figure 13: Expenditure during 2019/20**



## Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

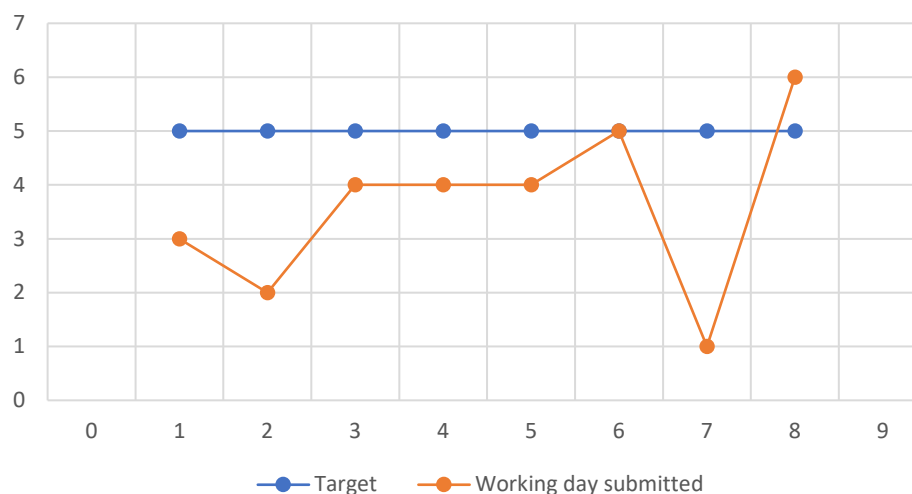
From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the new LCSPRs replaced SCRs. At this point Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) formally handed over six SCRs to the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements to oversee completion and publication. Additionally, during 2019/20 the Partnership has commissioned two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

### Rapid Reviews -Timeliness and Quality of Decision Making

The National Panel has prescribed specific timescales for Local Authority notifications of serious childcare incidents and completion of Rapid Reviews.

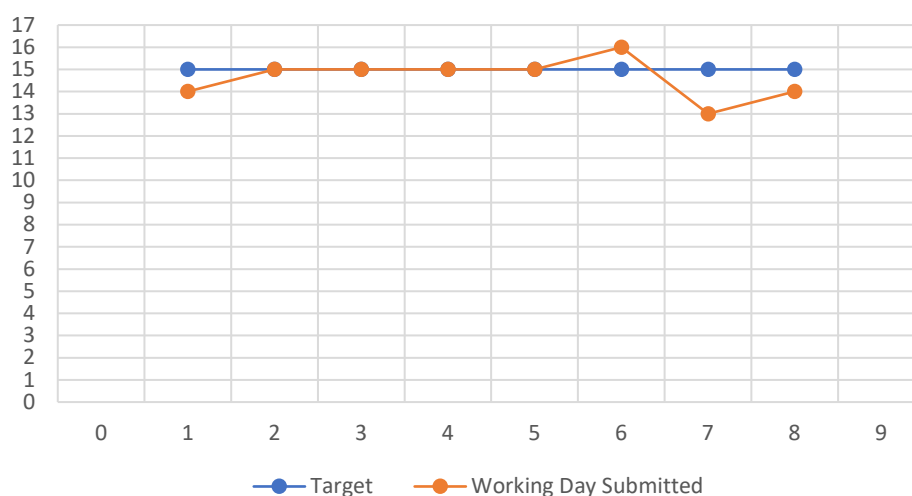
**Timeliness of submission of the notification by the Local Authority** - Local Authorities are required to notify the National Panel within five working days of being made aware that a child has died or has been seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is suspected. BCT has made eight notifications since November 2018 which have triggered the Rapid Review process. Figure 14 provides a breakdown of timeliness, only one notification was outside the five day submission target.

**Figure 14 – Timeliness of submission of the notification by the Local Authority**



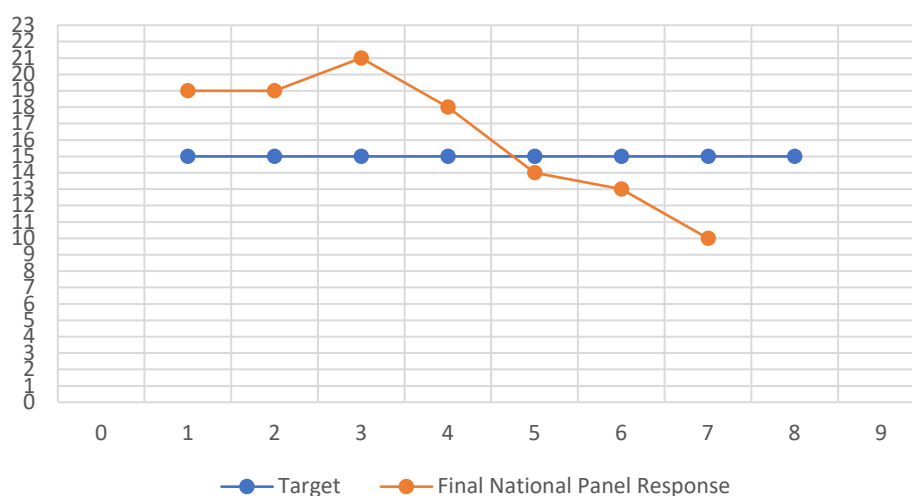
**Timeliness of submission of the Rapid Review decision to the National Panel** – Figure 15 provides a breakdown of the timeliness of Rapid Reviews against the national submission target of 15-working-days. The BSCP consistently meet the submission target. Nationally only 51% of Rapid Reviews are submitted on time, with almost half taking more than four times the expected time to be submitted.

**Figure 15: Timeliness of submission of Rapid Review decision to National Panel**



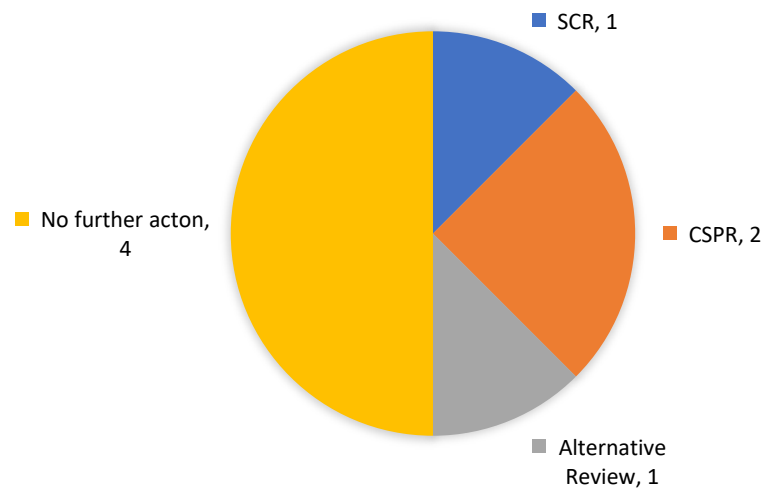
**Timeliness of response by National Panel to Rapid Review decision** - The National Panel is required to respond to the Safeguarding Partnership within 15 working days. The National Panel has only achieved this target on three occasions. (Figure 16)

**Figure 16: Timeliness of National Panel response to Rapid Review decision**



**Effectiveness of Decision Making** – Figure 17 provides a breakdown of Rapid Reviews by outcome for Birmingham. The National Panel has endorsed the rational and decision of every Rapid Review submitted by Birmingham. This compares very favourably with national performance where the National Panel have only agreed with 67% of Rapid Review recommendations.

**Figure 17: Rapid Review outcomes**



**Development of Regional Framework and Practice Guidance** - Birmingham led an 'Early Adopter' project funded by the Department for Education to develop a Regional Framework and Practice Guidance for commissioning new LCSPRs and dissemination of key learning. The new Regional Framework and Practice Guidance, which evidences the region's commitment to be an improving and learning system, was published in May 2019 and has received recognition nationally as good practice. (Figure 18)

**Figure 18: Regional Framework and Practice Guidance**





## Publication and Dissemination of Learning

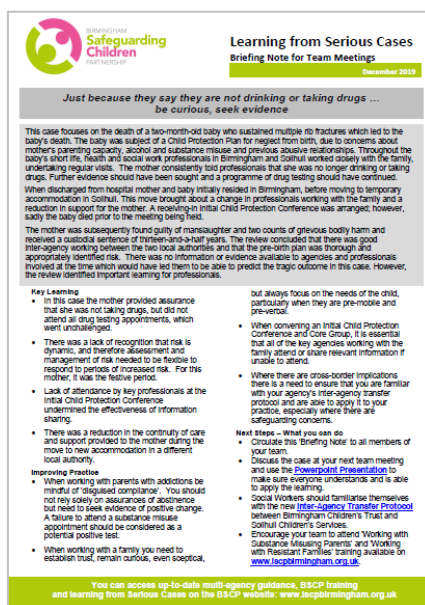
- **Serious Case Review** - In December 2019 the findings from a Serious Case Review were published. The case focused on the death of a two-month-old baby who sustained multiple rib fractures which led to their death. The baby was subject of a Child Protection Plan for neglect from birth, due to concerns about mother's parenting capacity, alcohol and substance misuse and previous abusive relationships. The full report is available through the BSCP [website](#).
- **Deep Dive Review** – During the year the Partnership, in conjunction with the Birmingham Guns, Gangs and Organised Criminality Partnership, published the findings from a Deep Dive Review into two cases involving County Lines and the distribution of Class A drugs. The review considered all aspects of agencies' involvement over the lives of the two boys and their immediate family. The purpose was to develop an understanding of their behaviour and lifestyles and the impact of agency intervention to divert the young people away from criminality. A copy of the Briefing Note is available through the BSCP [website](#).
- **Discharge Planning – Babies born prematurely with Complex Health Needs** - A common theme identified from a number of safeguarding reviews relates to the lack of robust discharge planning from acute hospital settings around babies who have either been born prematurely and/or present with complex health needs, requiring long-term follow up for chronic health conditions in the community, often with a variety of health specialities and providers involved. Research identifies that premature babies, babies with low birth weights or babies requiring initial special care baby unit nursing, potentially pose challenges to their parent(s) over and above the considerable demands of any new baby. A Briefing Note on this theme developed by BSOL CCG (in conjunction with the BSCP) is available through the BSCP [website](#).

## Maximising from Serious Cases

The key learning from SCRs, LCSPRs and alternate review processes inform policy development, training delivery, communication and public engagement, and audit activity to evidence that learning has been effectively implemented.

During 2019/20 the Partnership published three 'one page' briefing notes to support the dissemination of learning from serious cases (Figure 19). The briefing notes provide a summary of the review, identified key learning and highlighted areas for practice improvement. In addition, to support team meeting discussions, a PowerPoint presentation for each briefing note is developed and made available through the Partnership's website.

**Figure 19: Learning from Serious Cases Briefing Note**



The key messages for frontline practitioners and managers work with and supporting children and families:

#### **Attendance and participation at multi-agency meetings:**

- When a child from Birmingham is found in a different part of the UK and there are concerns, an urgent joint strategy discussion should be undertaken to ensure risks are identified and appropriate interventions are in place. The strategy discussion must include relevant agencies from Birmingham and the Local Authority and Police Force where the child was found.
- When convening an Initial Child Protection Conference and Core Group, it is essential that all the key agencies working with the family attend or share relevant information if unable to attend.

#### **Cross border working:**

- Where there are cross-border implications there is a need to ensure that professionals are familiar with their agency's inter-agency protocol and can apply it to their practice, especially where there are safeguarding concerns.

#### **Disguised compliance:**

- When working with parents with addictions there is a need to be mindful of 'disguised compliance'. Professionals should not rely solely on assurances of abstinence but need to seek evidence of positive change. A failure to attend a substance misuse appointment should be considered as a potential positive test.

#### **Taking a holistic view:**

- When working with a child and their family there is a need to consider historical concerns and the impact any previous support had when determining safeguarding measures and interventions. Failure to do so could result in not achieving the desired 'lifestyle' change.

- Assessments should be a dynamic and holistic process which analyses and responds to the changing nature and level of risk faced by the child from both within and outside the family. The Assessment Framework (Working Together 2018, p.27) should be utilised to ensure professionals focus on the needs and views of the child.

#### **Information sharing:**

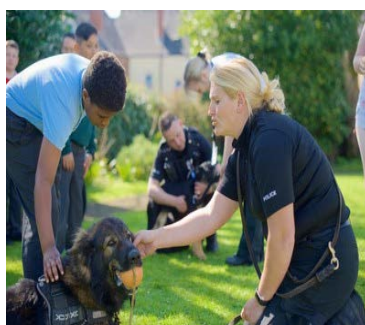
- Robust information sharing and effective work with colleagues and other agencies is vital – there must be good liaison between hospital and community teams and primary care.

#### **Discharge planning:**

- It is important to identify a lead health professional for the period after discharge in complex cases, where the child will require follow up.
- The lead professional should support the co-ordination of the health response to a child's complex needs and ensure communication between hospital trusts.

#### **Practitioners' responsibility:**

- Where there is a known history of criminal activity amongst family members, practitioners need to be curious, ask the right questions and try to explore and understand the relationships and influences that these may have on the young person.
- There is a need for practitioners' to be more persistent in their approach to engage families and build trust. This may require them adopting a more flexible approach and if appropriate using extended family members, friends or other professionals working with the family to act as advocates.
- When working with a family practitioners' need to establish trust, remain curious, even sceptical, but always focus on the needs of the child, particularly when they are pre-mobile and pre-verbal.
- Support should be offered to parents to manage various appointments – a timetable of appointments and home visits could be planned out with the family to avoid clashes.
- When working with a family it is good practice to complete a chronology to capture the family's history. This can support practitioners' understanding of the family history, current context, and identifying emerging patterns of behaviour.
- To fully understand both household composition and significant others outside of the home (partners, grandparents, extended family) it is good practice to complete a genogram.



## Part 5 – Conclusions and Looking Forward

In this first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements the 'Safeguarding Partners' have concentrated channeling partnership endeavor on delivering on our shared safeguarding priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21. The 'Safeguarding Partners' have also sought independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the transition and impact of the new arrangements, through the statutory inspections, analysis of data, audit findings and the work of Independent Chair, who published a separate 'Accountability Report' in March 2019.

The Department for Education have commissioned Sir Alan Wood, the architect of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to undertake a review of the impact of the new arrangements nationally. The 'Safeguarding Partners' had invited Sir Alan to join the Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly on 22nd April 2020; however due to Covid-19 this has been postponed until later in the year.

### Independent Chair's Accountability Report

The Independent Chair has published her Accountability Report for 2019/20 (Figure 20). This is her fourth Accountability Report and is a personal reflection on progress that the Safeguarding Partnership is making in achieving its Ambition, Purpose and Priorities. The Independent Chair's assessment is that it is too early to tell if the streamlined structure is making the requisite impact on improving safeguarding practice. There has been a welcoming widening of the partnership system with the introduction of the Children's Partnership, with particular emphasis on Early Help, locality working and partnership with the community and voluntary sector.

This is enabling the BSCP to focus on its specific safeguarding purpose, emphasising leadership, partnership, practice, learning and communication. There is clear evidence of action and progress on all these fronts. Birmingham's approach to Rapid Reviews has been recognised as valuable well beyond our borders, with the emphasis on quickly identifying learning and taking positive action.

However, as a system there is still need for improvement. Early Help, SEND, and Mental Health offers for children, young people and their families require rapid and fundamental development, there is commitment and plans are in place to make the necessary improvements. The 'Accountability Report' is available on the BSCP website.

**Figure 20: Chair's Accountability Report**



## Review of the Governance and Accountability arrangements

The 'Safeguarding Partners' conducted a review of the governance arrangements reflecting on the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to identify areas for further improvement. The findings were presented to the Executive Board on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and seven proposals to enhance the current arrangements were endorsed for implementation during 2020.

1. BCC to identify an Assistant Director/Head of Service to Co-Chair the L&D Sub-Group.
2. Strategic Safeguarding Leaders from WMP, BSOL CCG, BCC and BCT to undertake the Vice Chair role on an annual rotational basis.
3. Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive Officer, BCT to Vice Chair from 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
4. Scheduled succession changes to the Co-Chairing of the L&D and QIO Sub-Groups to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
5. The L&D Sub-Group model of working to be adopted by all Sub-Groups.
6. The Governance Arrangements will continue to be subject of an annual review and refresh.
7. Disestablishment of the two posts within the Business Support Unit associated with the creation of the new Child Death Review Team.

The review also highlighted the need for closer collaboration between the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Community Safety Partnership in developing a strategic response to the challenge of Contextual Safeguarding, County Lines and Knife Crime. The revised Governance Arrangements are available to download from the partnership website (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Governance Arrangements**





## Looking ahead - Safeguarding Priorities 2020-21

In March 2020, Covid-19 brought about a virtual lock-down, the city's response has demonstrated effective leadership and robust collaborative working in the endeavour to save lives, whilst remaining focused on identifying and supporting those most vulnerable and at risk of significant harm. The partnership's mantra has been to support agencies and the reduce bureaucracy wherever possible during these truly unprecedented times.

The Partnership will continue to focus on ensuring effective implementation of the four key Safeguarding Priorities set out in Business Improvement Plan (Figure 22). But will also examine the impact of pandemic to help inform the continuous development of services for children and families in Birmingham.

### Our Ambition:

***'Birmingham is a family city where children will flourish, feel safe, listened to, learn and grow up, able to actively contribute to society'.***

The key priorities are:

- Priority 1:** Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;
- Priority 2:** Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;
- Priority 3:** Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;
- Priority 4:** Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The golden thread that links these priorities is ensuring that the voice and lived experience of children and young people informs and influences the continuous improvement in partnership working across the city.

**Figure 22: Business Improvement Plan 2019-21**



**The Independent Chair and ‘Safeguarding Partners’  
want to express their gratitude to the  
whole of the children’s workforce  
for their outstanding contribution and  
continued commitment to  
safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of  
children and young people in Birmingham.**



## Glossary

BASB	Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board
BCC	Birmingham City Council
BCSP	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership
BCT	Birmingham Children's Trust
BSCP	Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
BSOL CCG	Birmingham & Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group
CASS	Children's Advice and Support Service
CIC	Children in Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
EHA	Early Help Assessment
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspections
L&D	Learning and Development
LCSPR	Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
MASA	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
QIO	Quality Impact and Outcomes
RHRT	Right Help, Right Time
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SHF	Strategic Health Forum
WMP	West Midlands Police



BIRMINGHAM

**Safeguarding  
Children**

PARTNERSHIP

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