

Bracknell Forest

Local Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report

April 2013 to March 2014



Chairs Foreword

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are local strategic partnerships working together with a collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

As the Independent Chair of the Bracknell Forest LSCB I am delighted to present this Annual Report for the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

This report describes the achievements and challenges for the Board and its partners in ensuring the ongoing improvement and development of safeguarding practice for children and young people in the borough.

As a Board we have made significant progress in addressing safeguarding issues for our children and young people but we recognise the importance of ensuring this is sustained going forward.

The LSCB Business Plan is a key document for the Board and our work this year has been focused on ensuring we have been able to address the targeted priorities identified in the plan, in addition to fulfilling core statutory responsibilities.

Much of our work is achieved through strong partnership working which is the only way to address some of the complex challenges that face people on a daily basis.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMGov, 2013) demonstrates the Government's Commitment to strengthening the role of LSCBs in monitoring and scrutinising the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. Since November 2013, LSCBs are now subject to a review of their effectiveness by Ofsted and their ability to hold partners to account and improve safeguarding practice.

This Annual Report provides evidence of the scrutiny and challenge that has been undertaken throughout the year and highlights partner's contributions to developing a culture of constructive challenge and continuous improvement.

As the Chair of the LSCB I would like to record my thanks to all those who are involved in the Safeguarding Children Board and to all those in the workforce who continue to demonstrate their commitment, passion and energy to protecting children and young people to secure positive outcomes and positive futures.

Alex Walters

Independent Chair, Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Children Board

Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	About Bracknell Forest	4
1.2	Vulnerable Children and Young People	5
1.3	About the Local Safeguarding Children Board	6
1.4	How does the LSCB Operate?	7
1.5	Regional Collaboration across the Thames Valley	9
2	Effectiveness of the LSCB	10
2.1	Section 11 Self assessment	10
2.2	Individual Case Reviews	12
2.3	Review of Safeguarding Incidents and Case Review	13
2.4	Child Deaths	14
2.5	Performance Monitoring and Reporting	15
2.6	Involvement of Children Young People and Families	17
2.7	LSCB Sub-Groups	19
3	LSCB Targeted Priorities	26
3.1	Priority Areas for Further Development	30
3.2	Additional Areas of LSCB Activities and Challenge	31
3.3	Financial Information	31
4	Summary and Key Messages to Partners and stakeholders	33
	Appendix 1 – LSCB Structure Chart	
	Appendix 2 – LSCB Membership	
	Appendix 3 – Performance Data Routinely Collected	

1. Introduction

This Annual Report is published by Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and is intended to give those working with, and planning services for children, young people and their families an overview of the work of the LSCB, its achievements and the challenges for its work in the future.

The first section of this document provides information about Bracknell Forest and about the context in which the LSCB undertakes its role, its statutory mandate and the structure of the Board, LSCB Forum and its Sub Groups.

The remainder of the report provides details the range of work undertaken during the year to ensure children and young people are appropriately safeguarded, their welfare is promoted through services delivered locally and the way in which partner agencies are held to account on the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements.

This Annual Report will be presented to the Bracknell Forest Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.

1.1 About Bracknell Forest

Bracknell Forest lies 28 miles west of London, at the heart of the Thames Valley and within the county of Berkshire. The town of Bracknell was developed as a 'new town' after the Second World War initially housing families who relocated from London. Since its inception as a new town the population has grown from 23,408 in 1951 to 115,058 (ONS mid 2012 estimates based on 2011 Census).

Bracknell Forest contains six parishes, 18 wards and covers an area of 109 sq km. Bracknell Forest Council is a small authority which gained unitary status when the former Berkshire County Council was split up in 1998.

The Borough's population is 115,058 of which 28,500 (25%) of the population is aged between 0 – 18 years.

There has been a decrease in the 0 – 14 age group as a percentage in Bracknell Forest from 21% in 2001 to 19% in 2011; this is still slightly higher than the national average which is 18%. There has been an increase in the 0 – 4 age group from 7,699 to 8,027; this increase has significance in terms of school place planning.

Bracknell Forest is one of the least deprived areas of the country (ranked 291 out of 326 local authorities in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010). Property prices and levels of car ownership are significantly higher than the national average and average free school meals eligibility remains relatively low in the national context 8.5% in January 2013.

These headline figures mask significant pockets of deprivation. Five wards in the borough have free school meal entitlements ranging from 11.9% to 17.3%. Poverty in Bracknell Forest has risen and is now 11.4% (as defined by the Department for Work

and Pensions). Six wards in the borough have child poverty figures above the South East average of 14.6%, and one ward is above the England average of 20.1%.

The 2011 Census showed that 84.9% of the population of Bracknell Forest was White British' and the BME population was 15.1%. The presence of the Ghurkha regiment at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst has led to a significant settled Nepali community in the Borough.

Since 2001 the proportion of school pupils from Minority Ethnic Groups has increased steadily from 6% to just over 17.9% in January 2013.

9.6% of pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and 79 different languages are spoken in our schools, although many of these in very small numbers.

The % of pupils at the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development was 58%, compared to 52% nationally during 2013/14.

In 2013, 90.8% young people achieved 5 + A* to C grades in GCSE, and 63.4% achieved 5+ A* -C including English and mathematics. Both are above the England and South East averages for attainment.

The number of Bracknell Forest students who took A level examinations in 2013 has risen to 414 (366 in the previous year). 99% of these resulted in a pass grade, with the average points score increasing to 741.

Approximately 16,468 pupils are on roll in primary, secondary and special schools in Bracknell Forest. There is some cross-border movement of pupils between Bracknell Forest and neighbouring authorities, primarily Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead, Hampshire and Surrey.

1.2 Vulnerable Children and Young People

There are 28,500 children and young people (25% of the total population) in Bracknell Forest aged 0 – 18 and the large majority of these children will be happy healthy and achieving well.

A small minority of children and young people will be affected by events in their lives which will mean they require some support from professional agencies; the severity of the events will determine what level of help may be needed.

The LSCB has a key responsibility to have oversight of the safeguarding practice of all those agencies working with children and young people with a particular focus on children and young people who are more vulnerable.

The information below identifies the numbers of children who have received support from Children's Social Care during the year 2013/14 and the children who have received early help support through a Common Assessment Framework (CAF or Family CAF) or a referral to the Early Intervention Hub (more information on early help is included later in this report).

Child Protection Plan:

On 31 March 2014 there were **108** children and young people made subject to a child protection plan because they were likely to suffer significant harm. This is slightly lower than the number at the end of 2012/13 which was 112 children.

This is the equivalent of 40.6 per 10,000 of the under 18 population of children and young people, which is above the previous years average for the South East region (32.1 per 10,000) and England (37.9 per 10,000) and is therefore subject of ongoing scrutiny and will continued to be monitored during 2014/15.

**Comparative figures for 2013/14 are not yet available.*

Looked After Children:

On 31 March 2014 there were **113** children and young people who were 'Looked After' by the Local Authority which is an increase on the number at the end of 2012/13 which was 103 children.

This is the equivalent of 42.5 per 10,000 of the under 18 population of children and young people. Although locally the number of LAC is higher it remains lower than the previous year average for the South East region of (47 per 10,000) and that for England (60 per 10,000).

**Comparative figures for 2013/14 are not yet available.*

S17 Child in Need:

On 31 March 2014 there were **554** children and young people who were identified as Children in Need as defined in S17 of the Children Act 1989 (these are children whose health and development was considered to have been at risk of significant impairment). This is similar to the number at the end of 2102/13 which had 555 children identified under S17. This is the equivalent of 208.3 per 10,000 of the under 18 population of children and young people.

Early Help Assessment (CAF):

On 31 March 2014; **345** early help assessments using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Family CAF were completed which is an increase on the previous year of 26% (273 completed in 2012/13).

Early Intervention Hub Referrals:

The Early Intervention Hub is a multi-agency meeting held on a two weekly basis to provide coordinated support at tier 2 (targeted support provided early to avoid the need to escalate a case to tier 3 statutory intervention), received **364** referrals in 2013/14.

1.3 About the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

The LSCB was first instituted as a statutory board in April 2006, and has become an established inter-agency forum that brings together senior managers who represent a broad range of organisations working together to promote the welfare of, or protect, children and young people in Bracknell Forest.

The LSCB is independently chaired and a key element of the Chair's function is to hold to account the partner members of the LSCB, both individually and collectively.

This critical role reflects the statutory requirement recently re-issued in the updated guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMGov, 2013)¹.

This guidance in association with the underpinning legislative obligations² makes clear the requirement for LSCB's to have in place robust scrutiny of partner organisations and to ensure that its independent function is not subordinate to, nor subsumed within, other local structures.

Statutory regulation supporting the implementation of Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 requires that the central focus of the LSCB is to:

- Ensure the effectiveness of local services safeguarding and child protection practice.
- Co-ordinate services to promote the welfare of children and families.

In addition Regulation 5³ of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out the following specific LSCB roles and functions that support the objectives set out below:

- 1 (a) Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority including policies and procedures in relation to:
 - The actions to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention.
 - Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children.
 - Recruitment and supervision of persons with children.
 - Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children.
 - Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered.
 - Cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners.
- (b) Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising the awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so.
- (c) Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve.
- (d) Participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority.

¹ <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/documents/Working%20TogetherFINAL.pdf>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/regulation/5/made>

- (e) Undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and Board partners on lessons to be learned

Regulation 6 provides for the inter-agency LSCB Child Death Review process, with Regulation 5 (3) providing for the LSCB to have discretion in respect of its engagement in any other activities *“that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives”*.

1.4 How does the LSCB Operate?

The LSCB meets six times a year on a bi-monthly basis, it is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the statutory functions required of the LSCBs in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.
- Monitoring progress against the Business Plan.
- Scrutinising and challenging sub group activity.
- Monitoring Serious Case Review and Individual Management Review action plans.
- Receiving and commenting on annual reports on safeguarding activity.
- Agreeing and managing the Partnership Forum agenda.
- Developing the use of shared resources across partner agencies to enable the LSCB to carry out its duties and propose efficiencies.

The LSCB Partnership Forum meets three times a year and focuses on:

- The views of children/young people in relation to safeguarding issues and the services provided to them and their families.
- Discussion areas that are brought to the partnerships attention because of excellence or concerns.
- Sharing information and informing all partners on strategic developments.
- The consideration of national developments local initiatives and associated learning.
- The dissemination of information on 'lessons learned'.
- Supporting partners in their effective communication of safeguarding 'messages' within their own agency and within multi-agency settings.
- Participating in a rolling programme of workshops designed to extend members knowledge and understanding of specific issues to inform strategic governance and prepare for Announced Inspection.

The LSCB Sub Groups (appendix A) report directly to the LSCB. The primary function of the sub-groups is to undertake activity to meet the statutory functions of the LSCB and the strategic priorities identified in the business plan. All sub-groups have terms of reference, which are approved by the Executive, and are subject to an annual review.

The LSCB Independent Chair works closely with all LSCB partners, and plays a key role in holding agencies to account. The Independent Chair provides an effective link between the LSCB and a range of regional and national strategic activity and developments. The Chair is a member of the National Association of Independent

LSCB Chairs and is now the South East regional lead and chairs their regional network meetings and sits on the Board of Directors. The benefit of this is that the Chair is able to represent local views at regional and national level and to bring in new and developing ideas to inform local developments and ideas.

The LSCB Independent Chair meets bi-annually with the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chief Executive and the Director Children, Young People and learning and the Chief Officer for Children's Social Care; the Leader of the council attends this meeting annually. A report is presented to this meeting by the Independent Chair which provides an independent view of the effectiveness of the LSCB and of the safeguarding arrangements within all partner agencies; this report is also shared with the LSCB.

The Chief Executive has a responsibility to hold the Independent Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB (Working Together 2013)

During 2013/14 the number of days allocated for the Independent Chair was increased from 25 to 30 recognising the increased levels of work associated with the role.

Membership of the LSCB is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it reflects the needs and priorities of the Business Plan; work is currently underway to strengthen the LSCB to include representation from adult mental health services and Public Health.

A list of members of the LSCB is attached as appendix B.

Outcome:

Council Members and Senior Officers including the Chief Executive have an oversight of the roles, responsibilities and key issues regarding safeguarding activity and impact. They are apprised of progress and challenges and as a result of a meeting during 2013/ 14, additional resources were allocated to appoint a Quality Assurance Officer for 18.5 hours a week to support the development of the Learning and Improvement Framework for the LSCB.

The Business Manager supports the Chair in the ongoing management of the LSCB, and Forum business activity. The Business Manager works with local organisations and regional networks to support the Chairs of the various sub-groups, providing advice, guidance and undertaking tasks and activities as relevant.

The part time Partnership Performance Officer and LSCB Quality Assurance Officer provide support to the LSCB in implementing a range of tasks and activities associated with its core responsibilities including audit and quality assurance functions.

The Independent Chair, Officers of the LSCB, Forum and Sub-Group Chairs all have a collective responsibility to ensure they are able to represent the LSCB priorities within the range of roles and responsibilities they hold. In addition they ensure that safeguarding priorities and actions are integrated within wider strategic planning and inform partnership plans to secure joint working and the most effective use of resources.

1.5 Regional Collaboration across Thames Valley

The risks to children and young people referred to in this report have increasingly resulted in agencies across the Thames Valley area working more collaboratively. Despite some of the challenges resulting from continued changes in respect of key leaders and officers within neighbouring Board's, Bracknell Forest LSCB has continued to support the development of this approach through more structured management of the shared sub group activity. A regional perspective and oversight of this work is maintained through an Independent Chairs and Business Managers forum. This is intended to ensure better communication and joint strategic planning, while also attempting to secure the most efficient use of limited resources. This forum also provides for collective challenge of key partner agencies where this is necessary.

Outcome:

As a result of the discussions that have taken place in relation to the Pan-Berkshire LSCB sub-groups an agreement was reached that each LSCB would take a lead on one group which will provide greater consistency for the operation of the group and clearer lines of accountability and reporting. Bracknell Forest has the lead on the Section 11 group.

2. Effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Arrangements

This section looks at how well organisations (individually and collectively) work to keep children and young children safe. Consideration will be given to what has worked well and where it has not worked well, how we identify what lessons have been learnt and what might need to change or improve as a result.

The LSCB assesses the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements in various ways, including:

- Section 11 safeguarding self-assessments undertaken by individual organisations.
- Individual case analysis/auditing activity (including Serious Case Reviews).
- Reviews of safeguarding incidents.
- Reviews of all Child Deaths.
- Reviews of performance management information provided by partner agencies.
- Receiving feedback from frontline staff, families and children / young people.
- The work of the LSCB's Sub Groups.

2.1 Section 11 Self Assessments

Bracknell Forest LSCB has an established strategy to support organisations working with children/young people and their parents/carers to undertake self-assessments in relation to the safeguarding standards set out within Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

This work began in 2009 with statutory partner organisations undertaking self-assessments of their performance. Similar approaches were then adopted in regard to schools (including private and independent schools) with consideration then being given to equivalent safeguarding standards within voluntary, community, faith and early years services.

During 2013/2014:

The LSCB continued to work closely with the other five LSCBs operating across Berkshire and collectively sought to audit the Section 11 compliance of 9 statutory partner organisations operating across the region.

The process has been coordinated and monitored by a Pan Berkshire Section 11 Sub Group which has alerted the LSCB to the challenges of undertaking such work with limited resources, and the need for partners to identify additional capacity to support improvement.

During the period covered by this report the sub group further developed the existing strategy and revised its terms of reference which include:

- Improvements to the original terms of reference included the adoption of a new 'mid-term review' at 18 months rather than annually to monitor the progress made against improvements previously recommended.
- A revision of the membership in particular new membership arrangements for NHS England's Local Area Team and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Challenges during the period included:

- *Securing adequate support to fully implement the agreed strategy.*
- *Engaging LSCBs across Berkshire to ensure a 'S11' self-audit was completed in respect of all Local Authorities.*
- *Changes in the commissioning and governance arrangements in health.*

As a result of the challenges outlined above, the panel secured the following assurances:

- That a new sub-group chair should be appointed and provided with dedicated professional support and administration and that attendance at the meetings would be addressed as this had been an issue. Bracknell Forest LSCB is the lead on this.
- That the six Berkshire local authorities would participate in joint S11 scrutiny; progress has been made to ensure this takes place during the autumn of 2014.

Outcome:

Whilst there have been some challenges across Berkshire local authorities in participating in S11 scrutiny, Bracknell Forest has participated fully in the process with each Department of the Council completing a self assessment. They have also continued to review their progress against the required standards and have submitted details of this to the LSCB through the S11 Group.

- That clarification would be provided in respect of the very significant changes in health and how the panel would receive completed audits in respect of tertiary service such as the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).
- That further work is also to be undertaken to address disparity in the approaches being taken by health in regard to s11 in different parts of the county.

Through the work of the S11 Group it has become apparent that most agencies have made progress in the making and sustaining improvements, however the revision of the LSCB's systems for engaging them and capturing evidence of these improvements is of importance and expected to be undertaken by the autumn.

The LSCB continues to monitor the effectiveness of the Pan Berkshire approach via its learning and improvement Sub-Group, which is in turn overseen by its supporting LSCB.

The following areas were common themes of development for a number of statutory partner agencies:

- Ensuring that there is shared responsibility for safeguarding in senior leadership teams i.e. moving from a focus on one lead individual for safeguarding to corporate responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ensuring that safer workforce checks and processes are fully embedded in organisations, including making sure that staff and volunteers know when to contact the LADO.
- Ensuring compliance with Information Sharing agreements, and making sure that frontline staff and volunteers receive training on information exchange (in the context of the pan-Berkshire Information Sharing and Assessment agreements).
- Ensuring that beyond adherence to minimum standards for safeguarding training, organisations clarify which staff/volunteers should attend targeted or specialist safeguarding (Working Together Groups 3-8) training.

Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement

An action identified in the 2012/13 Annual Report was the need for further work to develop the support voluntary, community and faith groups received in ensuring minimum safeguarding standards were in place and understood by staff/volunteers.

The Board has continued to work with Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA) to engage with local groups and has made available a number of consultation events during 2013/14 to develop a better understand of the safeguarding issues they encounter and ensure they are clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people.

Outcome:

As a result, work continues to ensure ongoing links between the Board, BFVA and local groups, as well as improved regular communications through the BFVA newsletter. Use of self-audit materials continues to be developed and it is hoped that a number of groups will choose to access the support offered by Safe Network managed by the NSPCC (www.safenetwork.org.uk).

2.2. Individual Case Reviews:

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)

During the period covered by this annual report, a SCR was commissioned by the LSCB in respect of a child who sustained unexplained serious injury. Charges have now been made in relation to alleged offences committed against the child and are the subject of an ongoing prosecution at the time of completing this report.

As a result of the criminal proceedings underway the LSCB is not able to publish the findings from the review at this time. This section therefore relates to the learning from a new process and further details of the SCR will be included in the 2014/15 report as appropriate.

Once the decision was made that the case met the criteria for a SCR the LSCB made the decision to use the Significant Incident Learning Process (SILP) approach to conduct the review.

An independent reviewer was commissioned and led the process which included a focus on the combined accounts of partner agencies involvement with the child and the child's family, together with the key themes that emerged from 2 inter-agency learning events to which frontline workers and managers were invited.

Outcomes:

Whilst the SCR cannot be published due to ongoing criminal proceedings it is important to note the learning by the LSCB and partner agencies of a new approach to undertaking a SCR has been significant; and the learning events were central in terms of multi-agency engagement in the review and learning from the information as the review progressed. This has meant that practitioners have not had to wait for a report and recommendations but have instead been able to take away the learning and implement in practice within their own agencies in real time.

Although the report is not yet published action plans have been developed in response to improvements identified and will be monitored by the LSCB to ensure required improvements are made and sustained.

2.3. Review of Safeguarding Incidents and Case Reviews

Partnership Review

The findings of the SCR also echoed a number of areas highlighted within the LSCB's 'Partnership Review' which concluded in 2013/14. It commissioned an Independent Author to lead a review in respect of a young child who sustained non accidental injuries, but did not meet the criteria for a SCR.

The LSCB agreed to use a systems approach to consider this case, based on the Welsh Government's Practice Review methodology, the review involved multi-agency front-line staff and resulted in an action plan designed to ensure the following areas of learning were disseminated and included:

- The adversity associated with homelessness and challenges to service provision when families move outside of the jurisdiction of partner agencies.
- The importance of understanding the dynamics and challenges of working with domestic abuse where families deny its existence/reject support offered.
- The necessity to assess individuals parenting/caring responsibilities when commissioning/addressing 'anger management' problems.
- Understanding detail of the range and location of marks that should give rise to concerns in regard to young children as stated within the LSCB Bruising Protocol.
- The importance of early resolution in respect of contradictory medical opinion and necessity for children to be thoroughly examined.
- The learning from the review to be shared with neighbouring LSCB's.
- The need for the LSCB to ensure a range of appropriate safeguarding training is available commensurate with the varying roles and responsibilities of professionals from different disciplines.

The SCR Sub Committee also considered other examples of cases that partner agencies had felt raised concerns in respect of the management of child protection and where learning had been identified.

In Case 1 a young person was alleged to have committed serious sexual offences and the educational establishment they attended had reviewed their response to the emerging concerns regarding inappropriate behaviours and identified learning which has informed their training and policy development.

In Case 2 a young person with serious mental health problems was unable to access appropriate services within the timescales appropriate to their needs. The trust responsible for the provision of services undertook a review and shared the learning that was identified.

2.4. Child Deaths

The LSCB has a statutory responsibility for ensuring that a review of each death of a child, normally resident in their area, is undertaken by a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). This follows a separate but related process in which an initial 'Rapid Response' is made by a team of key professionals who come together for the purpose of enquiring into and evaluating each unexpected death.

Bracknell Forest LSCB works in partnership with 5 neighbouring LSCBs and jointly commissions a Pan Berkshire CDOP to operate as a Pan Berkshire LSCB Sub Group and to fulfil the requirements identified in Working Together 2013.

Panel membership is drawn from organisations represented on the LSCB, but has the flexibility to co-opt other relevant professionals where necessary and that are accountable to the LSCB Chairs.

The key purpose for reviewing child deaths is to learn lessons and reduce child deaths in the future. However, the panel also identify areas in which all professionals, including healthcare and social care professionals can learn and improve the care they provide to children in order to help reduce the rates of child deaths.

As part of its function it routinely collects data on the following risk factors; maternal obesity, maternal smoking, co-sleeping, smoking parent/carer, domestic abuse, IVF, alcohol, late bookings and consanguinity of parents.

Across the six Berkshire authorities there has been a continued reduction in the number of child deaths as shown in the table below:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
80	57	42 (of these 5 related to child deaths in Bracknell Forest)

Due to the small number of child deaths during the period and out of respect for the privacy of their families, details of their individual circumstances are not reported here. However, none of the children were subject to child protection plans or any statutory

orders at the time of their deaths and the learning in regard to the broader themes emerging from the work of the CDOPs is available at:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-child-death-reviews

The local reduction reported last year was fully investigated and while it coincided with a reduction in the numbers of multiple births that year (which are known to carry an increased risk related to low birth weight) it remains difficult to attribute causes for the reduction however, the panel took consistent action to promote:

- Neonatal reviews and thematic risk factor monitoring;
- A 'one at a time' message for those undergoing IVF treatment

Outcomes:

As a result of the findings of the CDOP a consistent set of recommendations for “Safe Sleeping” were developed and adopted by all agencies.

From September 2013, a rota of ‘rapid response’ health professionals has provided cover over weekends and bank holidays to enable these home visits to take place within 24 hour timeframe as required, although the number of cases in which this is necessary has been very small.

In order to provide consistency and clarity across the county, work has begun to review the health rapid response guidelines, in particular to look at the interface between child death rapid response and child protection procedures in those cases where there are concerns that abuse or neglect may have played a part in the death.

Key Learning identified by CDOP:

- Work on genetic conditions that began in 2013-14 will continue in 2014-15 and an evaluation will inform county wide approaches.
- Reducing rates of neonatal deaths remains a priority. Infections are more common in neonatal deaths where the child is born with a low birth weight and risk factors in the household such as smoking may be contributing factors.
- Accidental deaths and in particular drowning accidents are preventable and the panel recommend use of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) swimming pool accident guidance available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg179.htm>

2.5. Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Bracknell Forest LSCB (in collaboration with neighbouring LSCBs) has sought to further consolidate the information it gathers in respect of partner agencies performance. The dataset used during this period reflected local priorities determined by the LSCBs and helped determine the extent to which organisations ensured children and young people were kept safe.

The LSCB aims to collate, analyse and report this data to partner agencies on a quarterly basis and where necessary commission further scrutiny to be undertaken. The information gleaned also informs the Board’s strategic priorities and future business planning.

A list of the data routinely monitored by the LSCB is contained in appendix C

During 2013/14 the LSCB has been encouraged by the following developments which are in addition to the progress made against performance for the targeted priority areas.

Child Protection Plans: There was a small decrease in the number of children and young people subject to Child Protection Plans in 2013-14. At the end of March 2014, 108 plans were in place, a decrease of just under 4% from the same time the previous year. This however remains a volatile area and numbers can increase / decrease on a monthly basis.

The LSCB receives a six monthly report from the Child Protection Conference Chair which provides an analysis of the conference activity and analysis of the key presenting factors; the combination of Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Drug/Alcohol in particular appear to continue to present a major risk in the lives of the children and young people subject to such plans.

School exclusions: The use of the Fair Access Panel has continued to ensure that no children in Bracknell Forest have been permanently excluded from school during 2013/14. This is a positive outcome for our children and young people and reflects a positive approach by schools and the local authority in managing and supporting children and young people who may be at risk of exclusion.

First time entrants to the Youth Justice System: In the last three years there has been a steady decrease in the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system. The number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice system has decreased by 49% from 34 to 26 between 2012-13 and 2013-14.

This coincides with the redirection of focus and resources into early intervention work with young people at risk of offending. The Youth Offending Prevention Service works with young people following the early signs of the risk of offending and deters them from going on to become offenders in the criminal justice system.

Victims of Crime (under the age of 18 years): The total number of children/young people recorded as being victims of crime, and who as a result were injured, reduced by 10% to 44 when compared with the previous year. There was also a welcomed reduction in the number of children/young people who were victims of robberies. This 40% reduction (to 6) is cautiously welcomed given the relatively small numbers who were robbed (10) in the previous year.

Sexual offences against u18 year olds: Although there has not been a repeat in the significant reduction in sexual offences recorded in previous years, it would appear that the trend reported in 2012/13 (66 offences) has not returned to the higher level seen in previous years and despite a slight increase (67 offences) during 2013/14, the overall yearly trend has remained steady.

The LSCB is of course aware that most child victims do not report such offences and while such data is important the findings of research in regard to the true prevalence of sexual abuse is equally important to informing our appreciation of the likely scale of such harm.

The LSCB will continue to monitor performance information and in particular will be focusing on:

The impact of homelessness: The number of families who were statutory homeless in 2013/14 was 110 (compared to 90 in 2012/13), within these families there were 202 children (compared to 110 in 2-12/13). The main reasons for this have been financial problems and loss of tenancies. The LSCB will undertake further work during 2014/15 to gain a better understanding of the issues and the impact on children and young people.

Young Carers: 150 young carers are currently known to Bracknell Forest Council. 70% of these children/young people are between the ages of 10 and 16 and 1/3 of them have a medical, disability or special educational need of their own.

83% are thought to be caring for an adult and 46 % are caring for a brother or sister (some are caring for both).

It is estimated that there is likely to be twice as many young carers in the Borough and following the implementation of the Local Authority's 'Strategy for Young Carers 2013 – 2017', the numbers already identified is expected to increase. The LSCB will continue to monitor the number of young carers, but more importantly receive assurance as to the support they receive and the impact of the care they provide on their health and wellbeing.

Private Fostering: Despite the efforts of the Local Authority and partner agencies to accurately identify private fostering arrangements the numbers of cases reported to them remains very small. In 2012/13 the number of children known to be privately fostered was only 2 and while this had increased to 3 by March 2014, the LSCB is aware that it is very unlikely that this represents the true extent of such arrangements for children/young people in the Borough. As a result this remains an area that the LSCB will continue to scrutinise and proactively raise awareness of with partner agencies.

Missing Children: During the period 1/12/12 to 19/9/13 there were 232 missing children reports, this related to 97 individuals with 46 of those who were missing a number of times (Missing Children Report to LSCB). Work has been underway to review the way in which Missing Children procedures are managed and supported and during 2014/15 Missing Children will be monitored as part of the remit of the Child Sexual Exploitation Operations Group.

2.6. Involvement of Children/Young People and Families

The LSCB continues to encourage partner agencies to ensure children/young people are consulted and/or involved in any area of their work that might impact on their lives. The Board is aware of the ongoing work within local youth services to engage with schools, youth groups and the youth parliament and the progress being made to improve the use of information technology and social media.

Bracknell Forest Survey of Children and Young People:

The LSCB and the Children and Young People's Partnership jointly commissioned the Bracknell Forest Survey of Children and Young People 2013. The survey was undertaken by The Children's Society in order to provide independence and

impartiality. The survey used an online survey to gain the views of 2,500 children between the ages of nine and sixteen living in Bracknell Forest, with an additional 200 children and young people taking part in focus groups which explored further findings from the survey.

The survey questionnaire covered a wide range of aspects of children's lives and provides an important insight into children's well-being in Bracknell Forest.

Key findings from the survey:

- Most children in Bracknell Forest aged eight to fifteen are relatively happy with their lives while around 8% of children have low overall well-being. This proportion is similar to the national average.
- Children's well-being declines with age. Also, children who say they are disabled or have difficulties with learning, those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not living with their family are more likely to have low well-being.
- Children's levels of happiness with many aspects of their lives are similar in Bracknell Forest to the national average. Children in Bracknell Forest are happier than average with their prospects for the future, their money/possessions, and the amount of choice that they have, their home and their school. They are slightly less happy than average with their health and appearance.
- In terms of school and learning, children in Bracknell Forest appear to be relatively happy with most aspects of school life, and slightly happier than the national average with their relationships with teachers.
- Children in Bracknell Forest generally expressed positive views about their local area, on or above the national average.
- Around a quarter of the children surveyed said that they had been bullied in the last three months. This included bullying in school, going to and from school and in their local area, but also bullying online and through texting. Experiences of being bullied are linked with lower than average overall well-being.

The findings from the survey were presented widely to partners and stakeholders including a Member Development Session. A final report with key recommendations has been shared widely with all our partners so that they can consider the issues and respond appropriately to the views expressed in key plans and strategies.

The survey report can be found at:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknellforestchildrenandyoungpeoplespartnership>

Engagement of children/young people in some of the quality assurance activity undertaken to date has not been as successful as had been hoped. The age of the children involved within the serious case review and partnership review precluded their direct involvement, although panel members strove to ensure that the reviews remained child centred and were informed of the impact on the children in question and by similar perspectives within published articles and research.

Agency activity to involve children, young people and families

Whilst the direct involvement of children and young people in LSCB activity has been challenging the LSCB remains appraised of work being undertaken directly with children, young people and families on a regular basis.

This includes:

- The LSCB receives the annual report of the IRO which demonstrates the involvement of children, young people and families in their LAC review process. Child participation is 100% and there are a range of creative ways in which participation is encouraged.
- The Children in Care Council (called SiLSiP in Bracknell Forest) has played an active role in planning and developing services. Supported by a Participation Officer SiLSiP present information to the Corporate Parenting Panel, they have an opportunity to meet with the Director and Lead Member of Children's Services, and in 2013/14 they developed a training package called "Do They Know", aimed at practitioners and managers at all levels; it has been delivered by looked after young people to members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, to the Director of Children, Young People and Learning and other senior managers and a range of practitioners. The training continues to be rolled out and there has been interest from other authorities in the training.
- The LSCB receives the annual report of the Statutory Complaints function which provides an overview of the number and type of complaints made against Children's Social Care under either the Corporate or Statutory Complaints Procedure. The LSCB has noted that in the year 2013/14 there were no complaints made by children and young people and that this has been an area of work identified for further development by the Complaints Service.
- Targeted activity with children and young people in schools includes the use of the Lobster DVD developed by young people on the subject of domestic abuse.
- Ongoing delivery of Chelsea's Choice a drama production for young people in Secondary School about the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- A campaign led by Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership (CSP), is targeted at primary school pupils across the borough. Six schools have already taken part in a pilot of Digiduck's Big Decision Workshop, in which year one children (aged five and six) build on their understanding of jokes and how they can sometimes be hurtful. Another six borough primary schools will be welcoming Digiduck into classrooms this term.
- Each Child Protection Conference provides an opportunity for parents and professionals attending to complete an evaluation form about their experience of the conference. These are completed regularly by participants and feedback is reported to the LSCB through the CP Chair reports and continues to inform development and improvement in CP Conferences. Work is underway to look at how children and young people can be more involved including the use of advocacy in conferences.

In order to ensure more systematic support for the involvement of children/young people in the work of the LSCB, the Partnership Forum committed to redesign its future agenda to ensure that children and young people can directly and indirectly engage with its members. This approach will ensure that at each meeting of the Forum, time will be ring-fenced to ensure members consider the views of children/young people whether or not they physically attend.

2.7 LSCB Sub Groups

During 2013/14 the LSCB undertook a review of its role, functions and structure to ensure that it was able to address key priorities and target resources appropriately through sub group activity with a focus on quality assurance and the development of the new learning and improvement framework.

As a result of the review the LSCB decided that it would rationalise its sub-group structure and streamline a number of groups under the new and emerging learning and improvement framework which led to the following sub groups being discontinued to be replaced by a new LSCB Learning and Improvement Sub Group (LISG) to be in place from 2014 onwards.

- Serious Case Review Sub Group
- Raising Awareness Sub Group
- Quality Standards and Case Review Sub Group

Serious Case Review (SCR) Sub Group

During 2013/14 the SCR sub group met on a bi-monthly basis and through its work ensured that the LSCB was able consider notifications of cases where it was thought that learning could lead to improvements in services for children/young people, including cases requiring a SCR.

To assist the LSCB in managing such notifications the group developed a new SCR/Case Review notification protocol for partner agencies and a process to agree how referrals and requests for information from partner agencies will be dealt with. This included cases that fell below the threshold for undertaking a SCR, but where learning could be established to ensure improvements in local arrangements to safeguard children/young people.

As previously reported, during this period the sub group also oversaw a 'Partnership Review' in relation to a young child who sustained not accidental injuries.

The SCRSG also recommended to that a SCR be commissioned in respect of a child , already referred to in the earlier part of this report and it is anticipated that a report in respect of that review will be published following the conclusion of the associated criminal proceeding.

Outcome:

The LSCB has been keen to embrace the opportunity to adopt different methodologies appropriate to the circumstances of the cases notified. The Partnership Review and the SCR have both used methodologies that have involved front line staff and attempted to engage parents / carers in the process. As a result the LSCB has been able to reflect on the merits of the approaches and plan to undertake formal survey of those involved to inform a set of standards to support the commissioning of future reviews.

The sub group also received the minutes and monitored the actions of the pan Berkshire CDOP Panel, received and discussed national SCRs undertaken and considered the NSPCC's thematic analyses of SCR findings.

There has been excellent agency engagement in the work of this sub group with almost 100% attendance at each meeting which is hoped will continue with this group now becoming part of the Learning Improvement Sub Group.

Quality Standards and Case Reviews Sub Group

During 2013/14 the Quality Standards and Case Review (QSCR) Sub-Group provided an important quality assurance role, combining audit and scrutiny functions to ensure the effectiveness of services to children / young people and their families.

The QSCR sub group has met formally on 5 occasions during 2013/14, but additional work was also undertaken by some members of the group outside of these meetings.

Much of the sub group's capacity has been taken up with conducting Multi-Agency Case File Audits and developing a quality assurance and learning improvement framework. The cases audited support the work of the SCR Sub Group in respect of the reviews commissioned and further enabled the LSCB to identify areas of good practice and those requiring improvement.

Auditing Activity

Substance Misuse

As this was one of the LSCB's targeted priorities, the sub-group commenced an in-depth review of cases where substance misuse was identified as a key issue resulting in child protection interventions. The Findings from these case file audits identified a number of areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement.

Within the practice reviewed, skilled staff demonstrated their ability to engage family members previously identified as being 'unwilling to cooperate'. In contrast to earlier contacts with other professionals, these staff addressed barriers in respect of language, culture and gender and clearly approached these with sensitivity.

The panel also identified a number of specific actions that were immediately addressed by the agencies involved, as well as those that related to themes previously identified and highlighted the need for improvement.

These included the importance of:

- Sensitive engagement with families, recognising the impact of adversity on individuals' ability to co-operate and the use of professional interpreters where this is necessary.
- Thorough assessments of substance misuse during pregnancy, and to ensure a detailed assessment of an individual life experiences is gathered, including evidence of previous substance misuse and engagement with services.
- Staff development plans that promote inter-disciplinary collaboration and consider the merits of work placements within partner agencies / services.
- Employers ensuring staff communicate any significant changes in family circumstances / case management to partner agencies.
- Employers ensuring staff are informed of how to gather, record and present information regarding vulnerable children / young people.

The above recommendations have been combined with existing action plans established from previous audits and have been disseminated within partner organisations. Progress against these actions is now be monitored by the LISG.

Domestic Abuse

The previous audit work undertaken by the Quality Standards and Case Review sub group in regard to Domestic Abuse continues to be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Executive group and also forms part of the above combined action plan monitored by the LSCB Executive.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub Group

The CSE Strategic Sub Group was developed during 2013/14 and supports the LSCB Targeted Priorities (To work with partner agencies to develop a strategy for the coordination and provision of support to young people at risk of CSE).

The Strategic CSE Group has developed a CSE Strategy and has been working closely with the CSE Operational Group to implement and monitor the strategy. Members of the group have attended a number of regional and national events to ensure they are informed of the latest developments in this area of work. The Group also incorporates some of the wider factors that contribute to the risk of CSE including E safety.

In February 2014 there were 27 young people who were being monitored by the CSE Operations Group which has now been reduced down to 17 as a result of improved monitoring and risk assessment tools. The work of the Operations Group includes monitoring missing children as part of its remit.

A key piece of work planned for 2014/15 is 'Problem Profiling' of CSE in the borough which will further inform the LSCB work in relation to this group of children/young people.

The LSCB has maintained a programme of auditing and is conducting an ongoing multi-agency case file audit in respect of CSE. One of the cases in question has been selected for further stage of audit and it is intended that the young person, their parents/carers and professionals (in direct contact with them) will be offered the opportunity to contribute their views in regard to the services provided.

Outcomes:

- Chelsea's Choice has been delivered to schools and targeted around 1,200 young people. A second round planned in 2014.
- E safety training sessions for the workforce.
- Quality Standards and Case Review Sub Group completed an in-depth multi-agency case review of three CSE cases – learning from these audits being taken forward through the new Learning and Improvement Group.
- CSE training programme in operation with targeted multi-agency workshops being delivered to practitioners. CSE e-learning package also developed and available for practitioners.

The CSE Strategy can be accessed at: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/publications.htm>

Training and Development Group

Bracknell Forest LSCB commissions multi-agency training through Bracknell Forest Council and has a strong track record of providing professional development opportunities to a diverse workforce, including staff from both statutory and voluntary agencies.

More recently e learning has supplemented group based courses in respect of specific topics such as CSE and many areas of the LSCBB Training Programme have been developed in collaboration with neighbouring LSCBs.

The delivery of training is co-ordinated by the East Berkshire Training Group, with the overall strategy being managed via a Pan Berkshire LSCB Sub Group. During 2013/14 work was undertaken to develop the evaluation of the training delivered and the merits of different methodologies were the subject of a small scale evaluation.

While the Pan Berkshire collaboration has to an extent ensured good levels of co-ordination, it is an area identified as being in need of further review and evaluation. This work is scheduled to commence in September 2014, following the appointment of a new Chair of the strategic sub group.

Locally, the training provided is detailed in a Training Calendar, which is disseminated across partner agencies and available on the LSCB website. It details a comprehensive range of training available across the scope of universal, targeted and specialist safeguarding training.

During 2013/14 over 50 safeguarding courses were provided across Berkshire offering learning in respect of:

- *Children with Disabilities*
- *Safer Care*
- *Parental Mental Health*
- *Domestic Abuse*
- *Disguised Compliance*
- *E Safety*
- *Child Sexual Exploitation*
- *Substance Misuse*

The provision of training in relation to specific topics, compliments the core Universal and Targeted Training provided on a rolling inter-agency programme of inter-agency training and which is delivered on a single agency basis where the capacity of LSCB training cannot accommodate the volume of staff wanting to access it. This is an area under constant review as the LSCB strongly promotes inter-agency training as its preferred approach.

Outcome:

Analysis of participant's course evaluations evidenced high levels of satisfaction in respect of the inter-agency training attended and in a sample of staff who had attended multi-agency training in East Berkshire 93% reported that it had impacted on their practice. "The survey did however highlight some of the challenges of inter-agency training and it appearing that for some staff such as childminders courses may have contained too much information and been overwhelming. As a result consideration will be given to the pathways for these staff to help prepare them for safeguarding training and revisions made to courses where this is necessary.

A further ongoing theme identified by the LSCB relates to the involvement of men in the lives of their children and the extent to which services engaged with them. As a result the need for improvement in these areas has been included in core safeguarding training and 2 specific inter-agency workshops were commissioned to help explore this issue in more detail.

Early Intervention Group

The Early Intervention Group has met quarterly during 2013/14 and went through a period of reforming due to a change in the terms of reference. This enabled a greater focus on early intervention and the group has regularly monitored the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Early Intervention Hub through regular receipt of reports and data. In addition the group has been able to support the CAF / Early Intervention Officer to address challenges as they arise, this includes practical and organisational issues such as the timings of the meeting, procedural issues and to highlight where there may be gaps in provision.

The LSCB received the annual report for the CAF and the EI hub for the period of 2012/13 this year and will receive the 2013/14 reports later in 2014.

The group has supported a joint Pathways Project with West Berkshire to develop and refine models for early intervention. This project has included the collection of professional views undertaken independently by The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), support of the project leads undertaken by Interface Associates, a joint learning event in July 2013 with West Berkshire which brought together a multi-agency audience to further develop and refine a model for early intervention, a joint training session for practitioners from Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire on family and parenting work, and an independent survey of families who have used early intervention support undertaken independently by NFER.

Outcome:

As a result of the Joint Pathways project a range of practitioners have been involved and consulted on the review of the multi-agency threshold document and contributed to the new thresholds being agreed which clearly identify the threshold for early help and for a referral to the Early Intervention Hub and to Tier 3 services.

The views of families using these systems have been incorporated into the process.

New threshold document can be accessed at:
<http://www.bflscb.org.uk/publications.htm>

The group oversaw the ongoing work commissioned by the LSCB on neglect and a “Really Useful Guide to Neglect” to help practitioners working with children and young people to recognise neglect was produced and published.

Outcome:

The “Really Useful Guide to Neglect” has been widely disseminated to practitioners across Bracknell Forest, and is used in CAF training to raise awareness. The document has been linked on the Pan Berkshire Policies and Procedures pages and is also available on the LSCB web site and the Council’s safeguarding web pages.

<http://www.bflscb.org.uk/publications.htm>

Raising Awareness

During 2013/14 the Raising Awareness Sub Group continued to work closely with a number of the LSCB’s Sub Groups in order to ensure that key messages were communicated to the workforce and wider public.

The work of this group has now been subsumed within the Learning and Improvement Sub-Group where partner agencies will be expected to take greater responsibility for ensuring information is disseminated.

During 2013/14 the group gave prioritisation to ensuring that learning from cases of Child Sexual Exploitation was communicated. Activity to support this involved the co-ordination of productions of ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ (a CSE based drama production), a leaflet campaign to over 1,200 children within local schools and the distribution of guidance for professionals

In addition schools also used a Barnardo’s leaflet to further inform Parents, Carers, Young People and Professionals about CSE. This was further supported by inputs on CSE from CEOP, Barnardo’s and the use of ‘My Dangerous Loverboy’ training materials within in PSHE time in schools.

To support the work to reduce the use of Mephedrone by young people in the Borough, the group produced leaflets for young people and proposed further work be done to ensure feedback is sought from young people on this leaflet and other methods of communicating information to them.

LSCB Conference

The annual LSCB Conference was also a significant achievement with a focus on neglect the key note speaker was The Right Honourable Frank Field (MP) who spoke passionately about the impact of poverty on neglect. Professor Brigid Daniel (Professor of Social Work at the University of Stirling) presented her research and a range of workshops enabled 200 practitioners to learn more about neglect and work underway on a local and national level to identify, understand and address issues of neglect within families.

The conference was evaluated highly with 74% of participants saying it was excellent and 26% saying it was good.

LSCB website: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/index.htm>

Work has continued on the development of the LSCB website as a platform for making information more accessible and to assure its contents more frequently than in previous years. This work remains ongoing with a new format being developed for 2014/15 which will enable improved information and accessibility.

LSCB Safeguarding Cue Card

This was updated by the Raising Awareness Group and over 2,000 copies have been printed and circulated to practitioners giving important guidance on key safeguarding issues such as how to raise concerns, the role of the LADO.

LSCB Newsletter

Key issues relating to safeguarding children/young people were also disseminated with the LSCB Newsletter and further highlighted the key priorities for the Board as well as learning established from the work of other LSCBs.

Policies and Procedures Group

The Group meets on average four times a year and following the agreement for each of the Berkshire LSCB's to host one of the Pan Berkshire Groups the Policies and Procedures Group is hosted by Slough LSCB. A new chair took over the meeting in January 2014, prior to that the Chair arrangements had been less stable. The Group has revised terms of reference to reflect the new arrangements.

A mixed range of activity has been undertaken during the year and a key focus of the group has been in ensuring that the policies and procedures on the system were reflective of the revised Working Together Guidance. Discussion and comparison has taken place across the six Berkshire authorities including an analysis of the similarities and differences in content.

Outcome:

Policies and Procedures supporting the workforce across Berkshire have remained under review and updated as relevant, this includes:

- Updating the CSE Policies and Procedures – there has been agreement across the six authorities to use a single tool to assess risk of CSE.
- Allegations against staff and carers.
- New threshold documents updated on the system and the local authority referral assessment and referral procedures.
- Policy on Female Genital Mutilation updated

3. LSCB Targeted Priorities

The LSCB Business Plan (2011 – 2014) identified a number of targeted priority areas which were felt to be important in safeguarding children and young people. These were:

Targeted Priority 1

Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and families

Targeted Priority 2

Reduce the impact of substance and alcohol abuse on children, young people and families

Targeted Priority 3

Develop an understanding of neglect and the impact this has on children, young people and families.

Targeted Priority 4

Develop and implement the framework for Early Help and monitor the impact this has on children, young people and families

Targeted Priority 5

To work with partner agencies to develop a strategy for the coordination and provision of support to young people at risk of child sexual exploitation.

TP 1: Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and families

The Domestic Abuse Forum Sub Group reports to the Community Safety Partnership which has a lead in the development and implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. The LSCB monitors progress through a regular report on progress presented to the LSCB and through ongoing audit and quality assurance activity.

Examples of progress during 2013/14:

- The level of domestic abuse recorded crime increased when comparing figures for 2013/14 and the previous year. Domestic abuse non-recorded crime (i.e. where a crime has not been committed but the incident has been reported to the police) decreased by 7% during the same period.
- There has been a reduction in the number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse committed by the 2012/13 Domestic Abuse Service Coordination Cohort which was 116 incidents in 2012/13, reduced to 63 incidents in 2013/14.
- In February 2014, 11 children attended a specialist provision for children and young people who have witnessed domestic abuse (PICADA).
- 40 referrals to the Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme (down on the 2012/13 figure of 54 referrals). An evaluation of the project was concluded and published in 2013 http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/WDAB01/WDAB01_home.cfm

- A total of 20 children came off a child protection plan in 2013/14 where domestic abuse was the primary factor, which exceeds the target set of 10, but is lower than the 2012/13 figure of 25.
- Youth Offending Service delivered 2 programmes called “Stepping Up” to young men in year 11 at the Pupil Referral Unit.
- Children’s Centres have been running a “Freedom Programme” throughout the year aimed at low level domestic abuse.
- The number of referrals to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) has increased by 16% between 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- The number of children in the households of cases discussed at MARAC has increased to 127 (this may include some double counting).

The Domestic Abuse Service Co-ordination (DASC) oversees all the ongoing work that is in place with a cohort of medium risk cases where children are on Child Protection Plans or are CIN and where there are high repeat rates of domestic abuse. DASC ensure referrals for support to victims are made to Berkshire Women’s Aid as well as to services for perpetrators of DA. This approach to DA is currently the subject of an external evaluation being undertaken by Cambridge University and whose results are due to be reported in October 2014.

The LSCB is aware that Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) evaluation of local Domestic Abuse had recommended that the number of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) held within Bracknell Forest was fewer than they would estimate should be held for the size of our population.

As a result, the Board was pleased that during 2103/14 the number of MARAC increased by 16% and considered inter-agency responses to cases involving 127 children.

Domestic abuse has remained a key feature in respect of cases coming to the attention of Children’s Social Care. In addition to the Probation Service’s ‘Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme’ (IDAP), the specialist Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service (DAPS) have continued to support the work co-ordinated by the Local Authority in respect of families where children were the subject of Child Protection Plans. The DAPS worked with 32 men during 2013/14 and work also commenced during this period to establish a brief early intervention service ‘Plain Talking’. It is intended that this new service will provide a confidential and anonymous helpline for anyone concerned about their violence and/or abuse towards a partner or ex partner.

The impact of DA on children/young people is well documented and the longer term impact of the work being co-ordinated across the borough will continue to be the subject of further evaluation.

As a result Domestic Abuse remains a targeted priority for the LSCB in the new 2014 – 2017 business Plan.

TP 2: Reduce the impact of substance and alcohol abuse on children, young people and families.

Work undertaken to address substance and alcohol misuse issues is coordinated by the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Group which covers both adult and young people within its remit.

Examples of progress during 2013/14:

- In Bracknell Forest, 65 parents accessed services in connection with their drug use and 75 sought treatment from alcohol services. The number of parents accessing services for alcohol dependency has reduced by 37 (112 in 2012/13).
- The number of young people presenting to treatment was 76 in 2013/14 which is slightly lower than the previous year. Of these the number using amphetamines (which includes mephedrone) is 53% which is higher than the national figure of 10%.
- Young People's Needs Assessment completed and informing the Substance Misuse Strategy 2014 -2017.

National, regional and local analysis of children/young people's experiences demonstrates the harmful impact substance misuse has on their parents/cares capacity and in turn on their children's development.

The LSCB has also identified substance or alcohol misuse as a significant component associated with children/young people in need of protection and note that this along with parental mental ill-health and domestic abuse are the top three issues that impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

While detailed data is gathered locally in respect of adult substance misuse, it has been acknowledged that further efforts could be made to provide analysis of the impact this has on parents'/carer's capacity to ensure the wellbeing of children/young people.

Analysis of children/young people's cases coming to the attention of Children's Social Care services demonstrates a very clear causal link between parents/carers substance misuse and child abuse and neglect. Children/Young People

The combination of substance misuse by parents/cares and that associated with young people's own use has resulted in this area remaining a priority for the LSCB.

TP 3: Develop an understanding of neglect and the impact this has on children, young people and families.

During 2013/14 the LSCB set up a task and finish group to undertake some initial research about neglect and its impact locally. The initial work was completed and a report presented to the LSCB to conclude the task and finish group. The continuation of a focus on neglect was then passed over to the Early Intervention Group; this included the completion of the "Really Useful Guide to Neglect".

Examples of progress during 2013/14:

- The annual LSCB Conference was also a significant achievement with a focus on neglect the key note speaker was The Right Honourable Frank Field (MP) who spoke passionately about the impact of poverty on neglect. Professor Brigid Daniel (Professor of Social Work at the University of Stirling) presented her research and a

range of workshops enabled 200 practitioners to learn more about neglect and work underway on a local and national level to identify, understand and address issues of neglect within families.

- Monitoring of the categories of children subject to a Child Protection Plan shows that at the end of March 2014 of the 108 children subject to a child protection plan 61 (56.5%) were under the category of neglect. In 2012/13 this was 50% so there has been a slight rise in this category.
- During 2013/14 two pieces of research were undertaken in Bracknell Forest, one undertaken internally as an analysis of Children in Need looking at national research, national and local data and an audit of 25 cases. The outcome of this research was presented to the LSCB Forum and key messages shared.
- The second piece of research was linked to the Nfer (National Foundation for Educational Research) as part the Local Authority Research Consortium (LARC) work. LARC 5 had a specific focus on neglect and the final report was published and shared during 2013/14. http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LRCF01/LRCF01_home.cfm

Neglect remains an area of concern for the LSCB, this concern informed by ongoing national issues, and through local research. It will therefore remain a targeted priority for the LSCB Business Plan 2014 -2017.

TP 4: Develop and implement the framework for Early Help and monitor the impact this as on children, young people and families

The LSCB contributed to the development of *“Creating Opportunities – Positive Futures a prevention and early intervention strategy for children, young people and families in Bracknell Forest 2012 – 2014”* and has continued to monitor early help as a targeted priority area.

Examples of progress during 2013/14:

- There were 345 Common Assessment Framework (CAF) early help assessments completed; this is a 26% increase on the previous year where 273 assessments were completed.
- A new Family CAF form has been developed to support more holistic family assessment and of the 345 assessments completed 80 of these were on a Family CAF.
- During the year 2013/14 only 16 CAF’s were referred to Children’s Social Care, less than the previous year where 19 CAF’s were referred.
- There were 364 cases referred to the Early Intervention Hub in 2013/14 (no comparative data available as this is the first full year of operation).
- Of the cases referred to the Hub 60 of these have been as a “step down” from Children’s Social Care.
- 8 cases were “stepped up” to Children’s Social Care from the Hub.
- An evaluation of the Hub based on the first partial year showed that 75% of the cases that stepped down from Children’s Social Care remained closed.
- The number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System continue to fall and was 26 in 2013/14, a reduction on the previous year (34).
- The Early Help Sub Group oversaw the completion of the Pathways Project which informed a review of the thresholds for levels of need, this helped to clarify the

threshold for the CAF (Level 2) and the threshold for the Hub (Level 2a) for more complex cases.

The Early Intervention Hub is an important part of the early help strategy providing the vehicle to support children, young people and families at a lower level of need and providing a forum to “step down” cases and support families to prevent further referrals to Tier 3 services.

Early Help remains a high profile and important element of work and will continue to be targeted priority in the LSCB Business Plan 2014 – 2017.

TP 5: To work with partner agencies to develop a strategy for the coordination and Provision of support to young people at risk of child sexual exploitation

This targeted priority was added to the LSCB Business Plan for the year 2013/14 and a CSE Strategy Sub Group was agreed to develop a strategy and action plan to address the issues emerging.

Examples of progress during 2013/13:

- CSE Strategy Group has continued to develop and implement its CSE Strategy.
- Agreement to use a consistent risk assessment tool across Berkshire and the Operations Group has used the tool and more accurate estimates of young people at possible risk of such abuse has been revised from 27 to 17.
- Members of the inter-agency CSE Operations Group monitored plans that were in place to safeguard them.
- CSE training delivered and e-learning module developed and rolled out.
- Awareness raising for young people in schools through drama productions.
- Focus on issues that contribute to CSE, including e-safety.

The LSCB plans to coordinate further ‘problem profiling’ of CSE within Bracknell Forest in the hope that this will better inform our local strategy which aims to, *Prevent* CSE, *Identify* victims/perpetrators and ensure successful *Prosecution* of those who commit/facilitate such crimes.

The LSCB is aware of the risk of children/young people being trafficked and it is hoped that the ongoing development of the CSE Operation Group will enable better information sharing to inform a more accurate understanding of this. The recent amalgamation of the CSE Operation Group and the Missing Children’s Panel will provide further improvements in the pooling of intelligence and inter-agency planning. CSE will therefore remain a targeted priority in the business Plan 2014-2017.

3.1 Priority areas for future development

There are many areas of data and information that are kept under review by the LSCB through performance monitoring, case reviews and audit activity. In light of the information we have gathered during this year, it is recommended that the following issues are added to the 5 Targeted Priorities and are also routinely monitored by the LSCB:

The impact of Parental Mental Ill-health

It is proposed that the experience of children/young people living with a parent/carer with a mental health problem is monitored through a performance management approach. Consideration will be given to data collection that might assist the LSCB evaluate the robustness of partner agencies actions to safeguarding such children/young people and further auditing activity.

Misuse of technologies

Young people in the Borough have identified Bullying as significant issue and this will therefore be given greater prioritisation by the LSCB and its partner agencies.

During 2013/14 a number of partner agencies also raised concerns in regard to the misuse of technologies and the harmful impact this can have on children and young people. Its links to bullying and CSE are well established and access by children/young people to harmful materials has grown as an area of concern for parents/carers and professionals alike. As a result the LSCB will explore how it can more closely monitor this aspect of safeguarding and what data could inform oversight of the effectiveness of partners work in this area. The Board wishes to acknowledge the work that is undertaken by the Safeguarding and Inclusion Team and the Community Safety Partnership to support this.

3.2 Additional Areas of LSCB activity and challenge

During 2013/14 there have been a number of local issues brought to the attention of the LSCB where the LSCB has applied additional scrutiny and requested reports reports/information to provide further assurance; examples include:

Poverty

The LSCB has remained appraised of the impact of poverty and of the changes in welfare benefits. It continues to be of concern that children/young people face adversity linked to poverty and the apparent increase in extreme experiences such homelessness. The links between poverty and the increased risks of abuse and neglect are well documented within the academic literature and more recently their vulnerability to CSE has been well documented within SCRs. The LSCB notes this is an outcome priority in the Children and Young People's Plan and will seek reports on progress against this priority throughout the year.

Jimmy Saville

The LSCB has received regular progress reports on Broadmoor Special Hospital's involvement in the review commissioned by the Government a following the investigation in to the alleged abuse of children by Jimmy Saville. The Board continues to monitor arrangements for children's visits to Broadmoor and general

safeguarding progress through its S.11 process of audit and representation of the Hospital at its Partnership Forum.

Effectiveness of the IRO role

The LSCB received and discussed the Annual IRO Report which provides an account of the IRO role and the effectiveness of arrangements for Bracknell's looked after children. The report identifies key challenges and good practice. The LSCB notes this report is also presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel and to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The effectiveness of the statutory Complaints Procedure

The LSCB has received and commented on the Annual Statutory Complaints report for Children's Services. This report includes complaints, compliments and concerns and identifies examples of good practice and areas for development when dealing with complaints.

Culturally Harmful Behaviours

The LSCB is mindful that within communities some individuals/families may participate in practices that are harmful to children / young people. It continues to require partners to remain vigilant as to these apparently infrequent but significantly harmful incidences. The issues of Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation are not commonly reported within Bracknell Forest and as a result staff may not develop experience of managing such complex cases. In an attempt to support partners in maintaining awareness of these issues, the inter-agency guidance issued by the Board contains specific reference to local procedures, and links to both national guidance and fact sheets. In addition to the Government's guidance distributed in the previous year the LSCB circulated copies of 'Tackling FGM in the UK, Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting', published by a number of the Royal colleges. As a result proposals have been recently received in respect of a Pan Berkshire FGM Steering Group that will be led by health colleagues and will ensure improved analysis of the situation locally and share learning from colleagues from other parts of the UK where incidents of FGM have been higher.

3.3 Financial Information

The budget is monitored by the Business Manager and reports are provided to the LSCB. The majority of the budget is spent on staffing to support the work of the Board.

The LSCB budget 2013-2014 is made up of contributions from the Local Authority, the CCG, Police, Probation, Broadmoor, CAF/CASS and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Supplies and services include expenditure for the cost of an Independent Chair, updates to the Child Protection Procedures and the costs associated with administering the LSCB training programme and the annual conference. This also covers any printing costs for publicity materials and leaflets.

In addition a small amount is spent under premises to cover the hire of meeting rooms, refreshments and venues for LSCB activities and meetings.

LSCB Partner	Contributions 2013/14
Bracknell Forest Council	£51,840 (+ £17,000 for QA Officer)*
Thames Valley Police	£2,050
Clinical Commissioning Group (on behalf of the health economy)	£20,500
National Probation Service	£1,025
Broadmoor	£550
Heatherwood and Wexham Park Trust	£1,025
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	£1,025
CAFCASS	£500.00
Grant	£7,300
Total	£85,800 (+ £17,000 for QA Officer)*

LSCB Expenditure	Amount
Salary Costs	£68,840 (inclusive of QA Officer post)
Supplies and Services *Includes costs of Independent Chair and undertaking a SCR in year.	£34,764
Total	£103,604

*The overspend in this year has been in part due to the recruitment of a post of a QA Officer which was funded by the local authority during 2013/14, further discussions will be held with the LSCB regarding future funding of the LSCB to ensure there is adequate resource to enable the LSCB to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

4. Summary

The work of the LSCB is very broad and there are many challenges to ensuring that it is able to maintain an overview of safeguarding practice in Bracknell Forest.

The strength of partnership working throughout this report is evident and much of the progress made in the last year could not have been made without the continued support and hard work of the LSCB and Forum members.

This report has highlighted areas of improvement and development over the year which will make a difference to the experiences of children and young people.

Whilst it is an aspiration that children will always remain safe we know that there will always be a number of children and young people who need to be safeguarded and protected from harm and our role is to ensure that this remains “everybody’s business” and that all those who come into contact with children and young people have the relevant knowledge, experience and support to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

In order to achieve our role we will ensure that we continually review, and evaluate the work that is done by or on behalf of the LSCB and ensure a balance of appropriate support and challenge to partner agencies so that we can continue to make a difference to outcomes for children and young people living in Bracknell Forest.

Securing sufficient support and resources to ensure the LSCB’s oversight of these important areas of work will be essential and will require additional resources from partners if progress is to be sustained and its 2014-2017 Business Plan is to be realised.

Key Messages for all partner agencies and strategic partners:

- To ensure that efforts are made by all partners (including those working with adults) to secure **Early Help** for families and those children in need of protection are identified quickly and receive appropriate support.
- To ensure staff **Exchange Information** at the earliest opportunity and proactively challenge decisions that fail to adequately address the needs of children/young people and/or their parents/carers.
- To ensure that work continues to address **Domestic Abuse** and that the evaluation of the local strategy and interventions being made inform future planning of initiative and interventions
- To ensure **Substance Misuse** services continue to develop their role in respect of safeguarding children/young people and that greater evaluation is undertaken in regard to the links between parents/carers substance misuse and the high number of children/young people at risk of significant harm.
- To ensure that partner agencies delivering service to **Adults with Mental Health Problems** develop mechanisms to enable monitoring and reporting of their performance in respect of safeguarding children/young people

- To ensure work being undertaken to tackle **Neglect** is evaluated and evidence of its impact on children/young people informs both strategic planning and service delivery.
- To ensure that strategic planning in regard to the **Misuse of Technologies** is informed by the work currently being undertaken locally in relation to e-safety and bullying, and that this informs the key messages that all partners share with staff and our local community.
- To ensure that the priority given to **Child Sexual Exploitation** by the LSCB is reflected within strategic planning and in partner agencies support for the ongoing work of the Board's sub-groups.
- To ensure that the role of **Voluntary Organisations and Faith Groups** is recognised and increased support is made available to ensure they play their part in safeguarding children and young people

Key Messages for Chief Executives and Directors:

- To ensure that the **protection of children and young people** is considered in developing and implementing key plans and strategies.
- Ensure **the workforce is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities** and can access LSCB safeguarding training and learning events.
- The **contribution of your agency to the work of the LSCB is categorised as a high priority**. Every agency must ensure that it takes into account the priorities within the LSCB Business Plan and the agency's own contribution to the shared delivery of the LSCB's work.
- The **role of each agency in meeting the duties of Section 11 of the Children Act 2004** is clearly understood.
- Each **agency is able to contribute** to the work of the LSCB with **appropriate resources and personnel**.
- Ensure the **LSCB remains informed about any organisational restructures** in order to understand the impact of restructure on capacity to safeguard children and young people in Bracknell.

Key Messages for the children and adult's workforce:

- Ensure you are **booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses** and learning events required for your role.
- Be **familiar** with, and **use** when necessary, the **LSCB Threshold and Safeguarding procedures** to ensure an appropriate response to safeguarding children and young people.
- Be **clear about who is your representative on the LSCB** and use them to make sure the voices of children and young people and front line practitioners are heard.

All Partners are asked to note the targeted priorities in the new Business Plan 2014 – 2017

Targeted Priority 1

Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and families

Targeted Priority 2

Reduce the impact of substance and alcohol abuse on children, young people and families

Targeted Priority 3

Develop an understanding of neglect and the impact this has on children, young people and families.

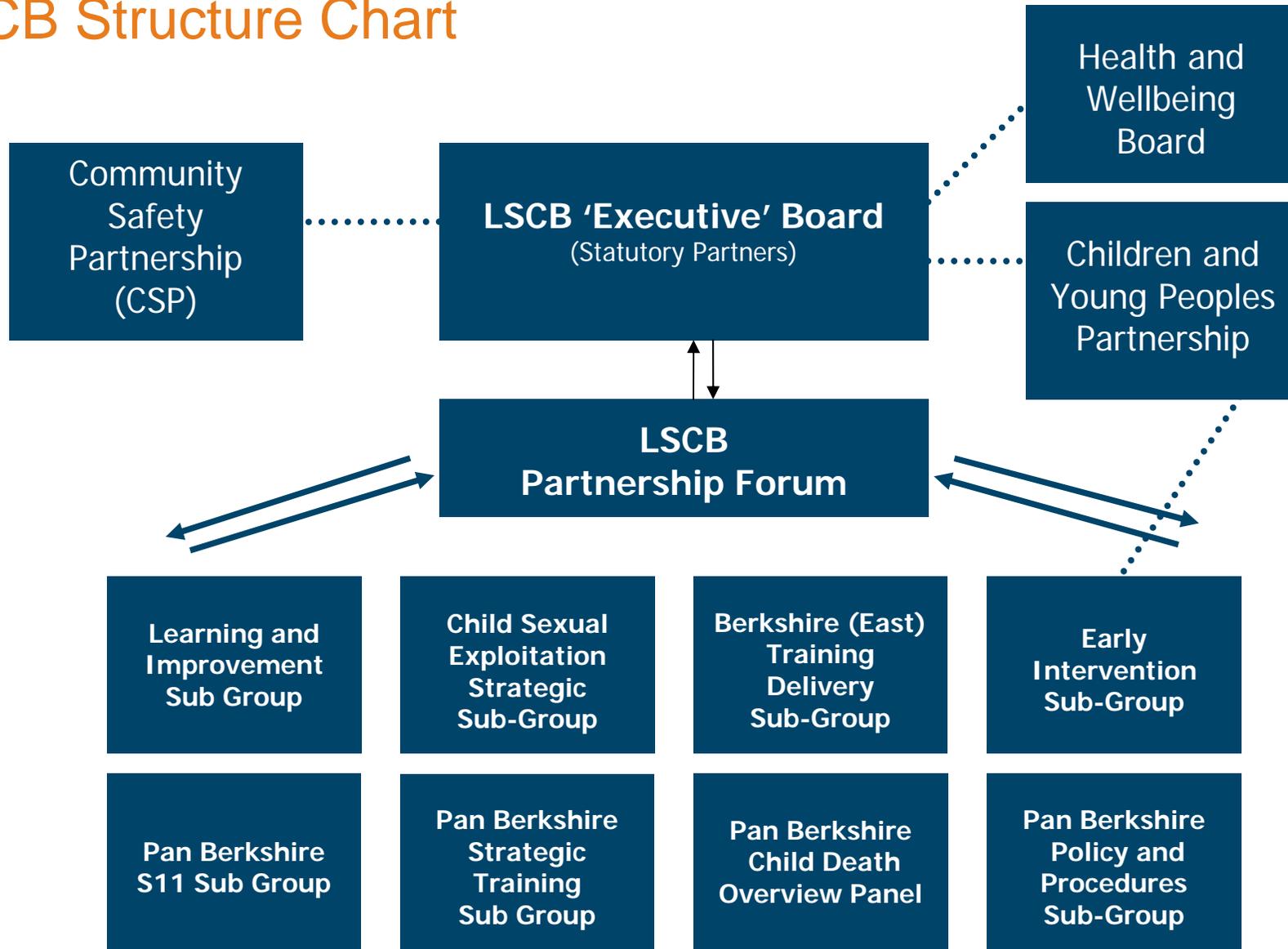
Targeted Priority 4

Develop and implement the framework for Early Help and monitor the impact this has on children, young people and families

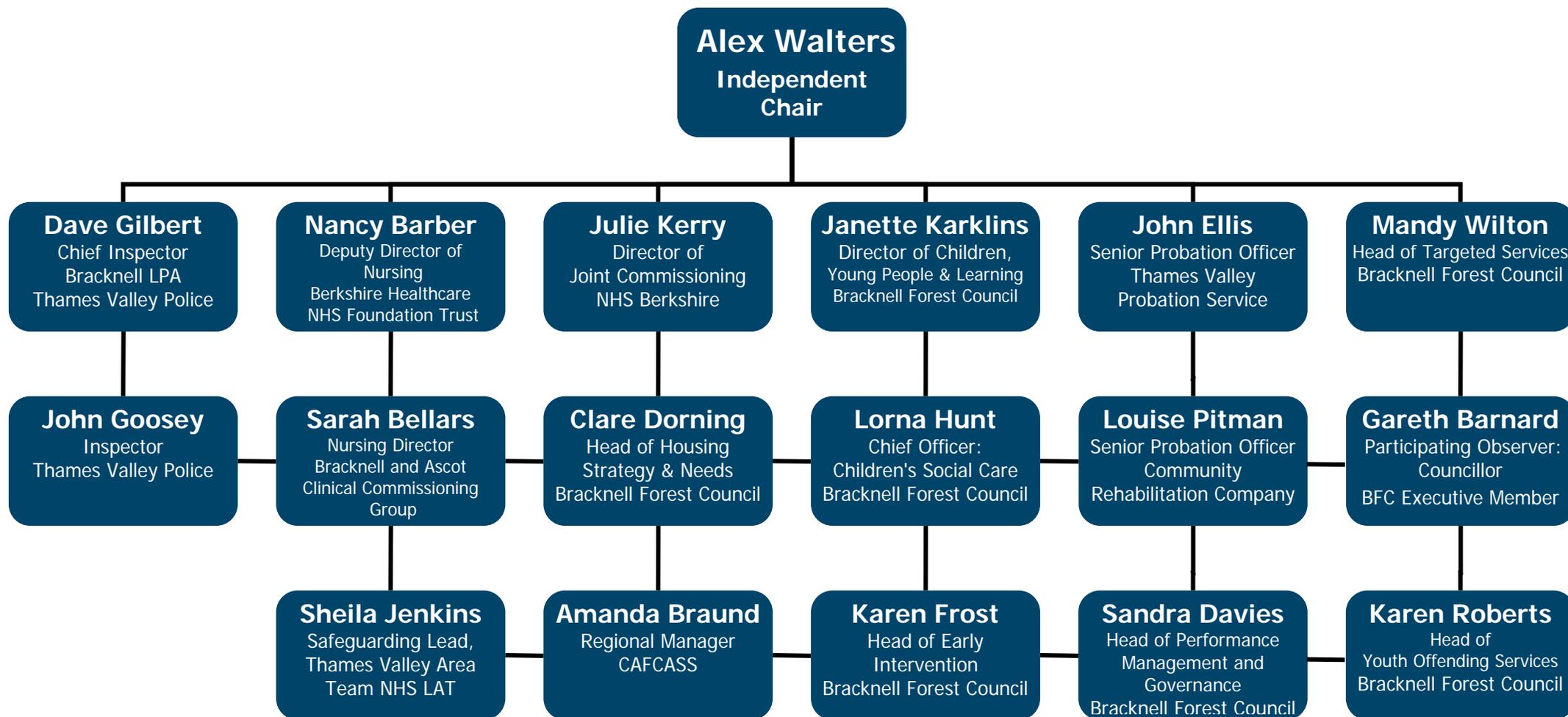
Targeted Priority 5

To work with partner agencies to develop a strategy for the coordination and provision of support to young people at risk of child sexual exploitation.

LSCB Structure Chart



Bracknell Forest LSCB Board



www.bflscb.org.uk

For further information please contact: Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, Berkshire. RG12 1JD. Telephone: 01344 352000 Email: enquiries@bflscb.org.uk

List of Performance Data Routinely Collected and Reported to the LSCB

Number of under 18 deaths in Local Authority area
Hospital admissions caused by unintentional or deliberate injuries to children and young people
Number of under-18s in drug/alcohol treatment year-to-date
Number of children and young people on the CAMHS waiting list
Number of referrals to the CAMHS service per 10,000 population aged under 18
Percentage of referrals to CAMHS leading to assessment
Number of under-18 admissions to hospital for emotional health needs
Number of children and young people diagnosed with ADHD / ASD
Children and young people are sexually healthy
Under 18 conception rate
Number of young offenders who are sex offenders
Children and young people are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
Number of enquiries made to children's services per 10,000 population aged under 18
Number of children and young people with Child Protection Plans per 10,000 population aged under 18
The percentage of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time
The percentage of children ceasing to be the subject of a child protection plan whose plan was in place for 2 years or more
The percentage of Child Protection Cases which were reviewed within the required timescales
Percentage of referrals to children's social care that led to a single assessment (NI 68)
The percentage of initial assessments for social care carried out within 10 (not 7) days
The percentage of referrals to social care that were repeat referrals
The percentage of core assessments for social care carried out within 35 working days

Number of parents/carers in drug/alcohol treatment year to date
Number of allegations against the children's workforce
Percentage of allegations leading to disciplinary action
Percentage of allegations leading to criminal conviction
Percentage of statutory workforce with appropriate and up-to-date CRB checks and vetting
Children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination
Number of children and young people that have been victims of racist incidents in schools in the last 12 months
Number of children and young people that have been victims of homophobic incidents in schools in the last 12 months
Children and young people have security and stability and are cared for
Number of looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18
The percentage of LAC who participated in all their reviews during the period
The percentage of LAC for whom all reviews during the year were carried out within the required timescales
Stability of placements of LAC: number of placements
Stability of placements of LAC: length of placements
Number of children and young people in private fostering arrangements
Emotional and behavioural health of children in care
Percentage of CAFs referred to Social Care / CAMHS
Number of homeless children and young people per 10,000 population aged under 18
Number of evictions of families with dependent children and young people
Children and young people are safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
Victims of crime under 18 years of age: (1) Violence against children with injury
Victims of crime under 18 years of age: (2) Violence against children without injury
Victims of crime under 18 years of age: (4) Sexual offences

Victims of crime under 18 years of age: (3) Robberies

Children and young people attend and enjoy school

Number of children and young people that are electively home educated

Rate of permanent exclusions from school (NI 114)

Children and young people engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school

First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (NI 111)