



West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report - October 2020 to March 2022



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FOREWORD

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

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

As the Independent Chair of the Partnership, I am consistently impressed by the professionalism, drive and hard work of all who are involved in safeguarding. West Sussex is fortunate to have leaders from all agencies who are committed, professional and understand the value of corroborative working. Please be assured that whilst they do not always agree they are resolute in their joint objective of improving outcomes for West Sussex children.

This report is unusual in that it details the achievements made over an extended eighteen-month period. Whilst this is not ideal it has become necessary to complete an extended report because of resource pressures experienced during that reporting period.

It is important that I acknowledge that this lack of a consistent, fully functioning support team has resulted in some basic expectations not being met. Some of our sub-group meetings have gone on without administrative support, timeliness of papers has been an issue and some safeguarding practice reviews have been difficult to service, causing delays. The statutory partners have supported recruitment and at the time of writing this report a new team has been recruited. This is a real positive for WSSCP going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this report, in particular the WSSCP Interim Board Manager who has created a document that is fair, informative and balanced.

On a final note, I want to thank everyone involved in the WSSCP for their tireless work over the reporting period. West Sussex is blessed with some excellent safeguarding professionals who go 'above and beyond' to protect our children. It is fair to say that safeguarding cases often create negative press that seek to blame agencies or individuals. Whilst it is right that we seek to learn and constantly improve, I would ask that you also consider the tireless work that goes on across the county to safeguard children. The fantastic, positive work that is done rarely hits the news; I hope when you read this report you will become aware of its impact on our children, families and communities.

Chris Robson,
Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

LOOKING INTO THE GOLDFISH BOWL

The Lay Member's Perspective

My name is John Thompson, and I have celebrated my 10th year as the now only Lay Member of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership. That means that I have worked with every Independent Chair and every Board/Partnership Manager since the beginning.

So, what does a Lay Member do? Originally the plan was for a two-way communication between the Board as it was then and the community. More recently it has moved towards a "scrutiny role". The one asset I bring to the Partnership is my extensive experience and networks in Health, Local Government and especially Schools.

What do I see in the goldfish bowl?

- The first thing is the massive impact of Covid-19 on the services we provide to support the young people we see – with the cost-of-living crisis things are not going to get better anytime soon.
- A real desire to do all we can for our children.
- Amazing dedication from front-line staff – going the extra mile – to support the children allocated to them.
- Some real successes – Operation Warren.
- Excellent responses to new challenges – around violence reduction i.e. setting up a youth violence thematic review
- Better engagement with fathers and men – ICON and Dad Pad.

But!

- There is too often a knee-jerk reaction when something goes wrong – LCSRs (Local Child Safeguarding Review) and RRs (Rapid Review) are not always the most effective way of identifying areas for improvement and more importantly delivering real improvements for young people.
- Far better to acknowledge what went wrong and get the learning briefs and training in place – some LCSPRs have been running for a long time.
- The Partnership Business Team have very finite resources – they need to be used to maximum effect and, if necessary, supplement them from other agencies.

For the last seven years, I have sat on what is now the Improvement and Assurance Group. The last year has seen really encouraging improvements in the way that the group works. We have a plan to do audits that support improvement work and/or examine emerging issues. Also, we are now actively looking at identifying and removing where possible barriers to improvement. We now have an iteration of the Data set that will be easy to maintain and of wide use.



John Thompson MBE
WSSCP Lay Member

INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to present this Annual Report on behalf of the three statutory partners of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership. The report covers a range of activities carried out between October 2020 and March 2022.

WSSCP has made good progress in delivering its existing priorities of tackling Neglect and Exploitation and ensuring effective multi-agency safeguarding practice. It has also undertaken robust action to address the mental health challenges that have emerged partly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes the inception of Operation Warren, a multi-agency partnership giving an active response to support children who are at risk of suicide. This has been an excellent example of effective, focused and flexible partnership working and the lessons from this project should help to inform our approach to children's safeguarding moving forward. Recently Op Warren, which has now been renamed was recognised with a national award for Mental Health Initiative of the Year.

We have also undertaken a number of rapid, thematic and local child safeguarding practice reviews, which while outlining some areas of good practice, highlighted others where partner agencies need to make improvements to their work.

Therefore 2022/23 will be focused on further implementing the actions from those reviews, including continued actions on mental health and a renewed focus on safeguarding under-2s, and the steering group will receive regular reports on progress. We will continue to prioritise key safeguarding issues including Neglect and Exploitation

In September, Chief Superintendent Jon Hull left Sussex Police to take up a new senior role at the College of Policing. We want to take this opportunity to thank Jon, our Police Strategic Lead Officer for his hard work over the years. He ensured that the Police continued to be an engaged and committed partner in addressing children's safeguarding in the local area.

We remain grateful to all who work to support children, young people and families in West Sussex; none of what has been achieved would have been possible without the hard work of practitioners and volunteers. We are especially grateful to the children and families whom we have worked with. The voice of children and families will remain at the centre of our work and ensure that the Partnership remains focused on their needs.



Jon Hull

**Detective Superintendent –
Public Protection, Sussex Police**



Naomi Ellis

**Director of Safeguarding &
Clinical Standards, NHS Sussex**



Lucy Butler

**Director of Children, Young
People and Learning, West
Sussex County Council**



1. THE WEST SUSSEX DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

West Sussex County Overview

West Sussex is a large area in Southeast England. It is a diverse area which comprises seven districts and boroughs. Much of the coastal area of Arun, Worthing and Adur is urban in character and densely populated; inland, Chichester, Horsham and Mid Sussex districts are characterised by countryside and market towns. To the north is the large town of Crawley, with Gatwick international airport adjacent. There are good transport links, with major roads, bus and train stations and ports.





Demography & Ethnicity

According to the 2021 census, the population has increased by 9.4% from 2011 to 882,700, which is a larger rise than for other areas in Sussex. While figures show that West Sussex has an ageing population, the percentage of under-17s has increased by 7.8% since 2011, which is higher than the average English increase of 5%.

In West Sussex, 88.9% of the population is White British (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish), a higher proportion than for the population of England and Wales (80.5%) and the Southeast (85.2%).

West Sussex is less ethnically diverse than English averages. Overall, 43.6% of the population who are not White British belong to the White Irish, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller or Other White ethnic groups. A further 31.7% are Asian and 11.2% are of Mixed or multiple ethnic groups. The most diverse areas in the County are Crawley, where 72.1% of the population is white British.

The County also has a substantial transient population which includes travelling families and seasonal migrant workers, some of whom are employed within the agricultural sector. The demography and numbers of these groups are harder to establish; however, in 2011, the census recorded 58,000 people as Gypsy/Traveller in England and Wales, with a further 4,000 recorded in Scotland.

In line with national figures, the number of male and female West Sussex residents comprises a 50:50 split for all age groups up until the 65+ year group.

Local data on sexual orientation and gender reassignment is limited. Survey data taken from the ONS 2011, suggests that roughly 2.5% of the adult population in the Southeast identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGBTplus). This is slightly higher than the England percentage and has seen a rise in recent years.

Deprivation

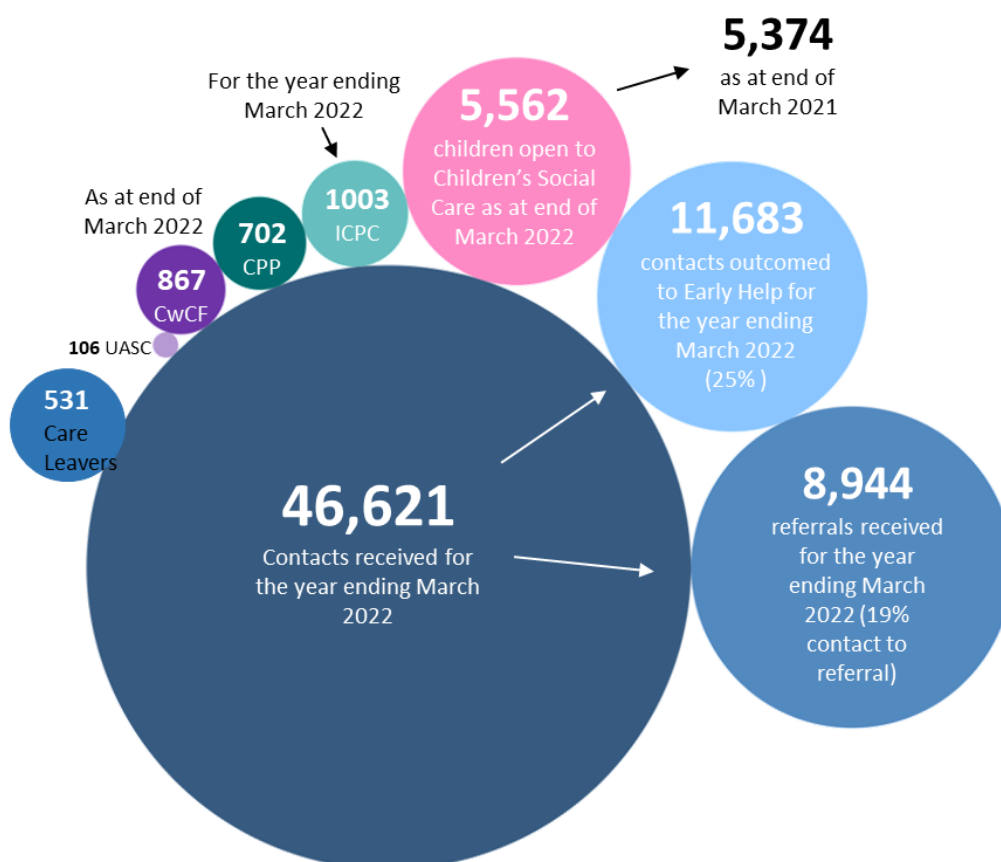
West Sussex is a relatively affluent area. Using the Index of Deprivation 2019, West Sussex is ranked 129 out of 151 upper tier authorities (1 being most deprived, 151 being least deprived). The County therefore remains one of the least deprived areas in the country. In relation to neighbouring authorities, West Sussex is relatively less deprived than East Sussex (ranked 93) and Brighton and Hove (ranked 87). Crawley ranks as the *most deprived* district area in West Sussex, followed by Arun, Adur and Worthing. West Sussex is a county of considerable contrasts. Within the County there are some neighbourhoods (in Littlehampton, Bognor and in Broadfield, Crawley) that rank within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.



2. THE WEST SUSSEX SAFEGUARDING CONTEXT

Despite this relative affluence, West Sussex is a complex area with a number of specific challenges affecting the welfare of children, young people and their families, as explained below. The WSSCP aims to be intelligence-led, basing its priorities on evidence of local need.

Children’s Social Care Safeguarding Data

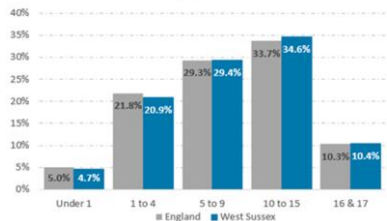


20% children and young people as a % of total population



● 0 - 17 ● 18 and over

Children and Young People by age band - mid-2020 population estimates



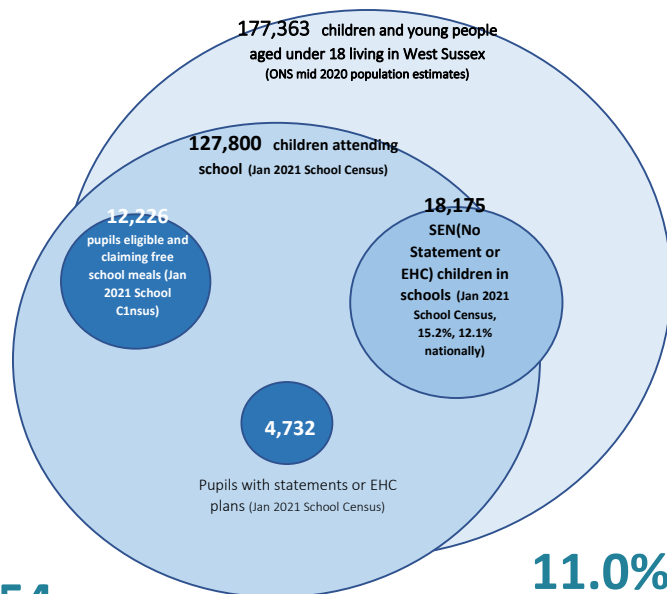
13%

children under 18 who are BME

13%

children living in relative poverty

5,288 families turned around and claimed for against national vulnerability criteria (Supporting Families Programme – Sep 21)

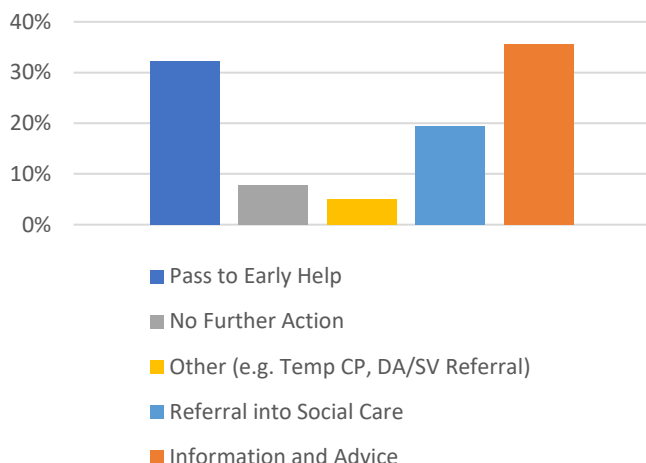


154 Care Leavers who are NEET (40%, Mar-22)

11.0%

pupils classed as persistent absentees in 2020/21 autumn term (13.0% nationally)

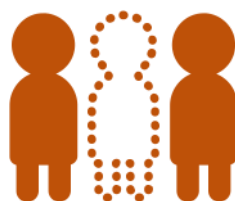
MASH referrals 2021/22



48,150 children were referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) during 2021/22, with Police being responsible for the most referrals, and the NHS improved its contribution by increasing the specialist health resource.



There are around 4,154 children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) currently in West Sussex. (Social Care Data)

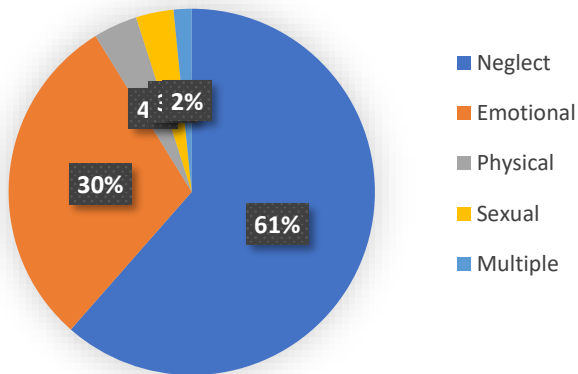


In March 2022 there were 693 children on Child Protection Plans in West Sussex. This has reduced from 954 as at the 31st of March 2021. (WSCC data)

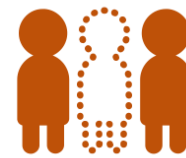
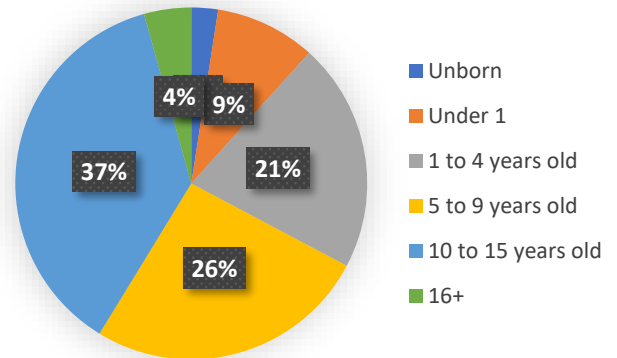


Looked after children make up 0.5% of the West Sussex population of children under the age of 18 years. (ONS data)

Child Protection Plans by type at 31st March 2022 (West Sussex)

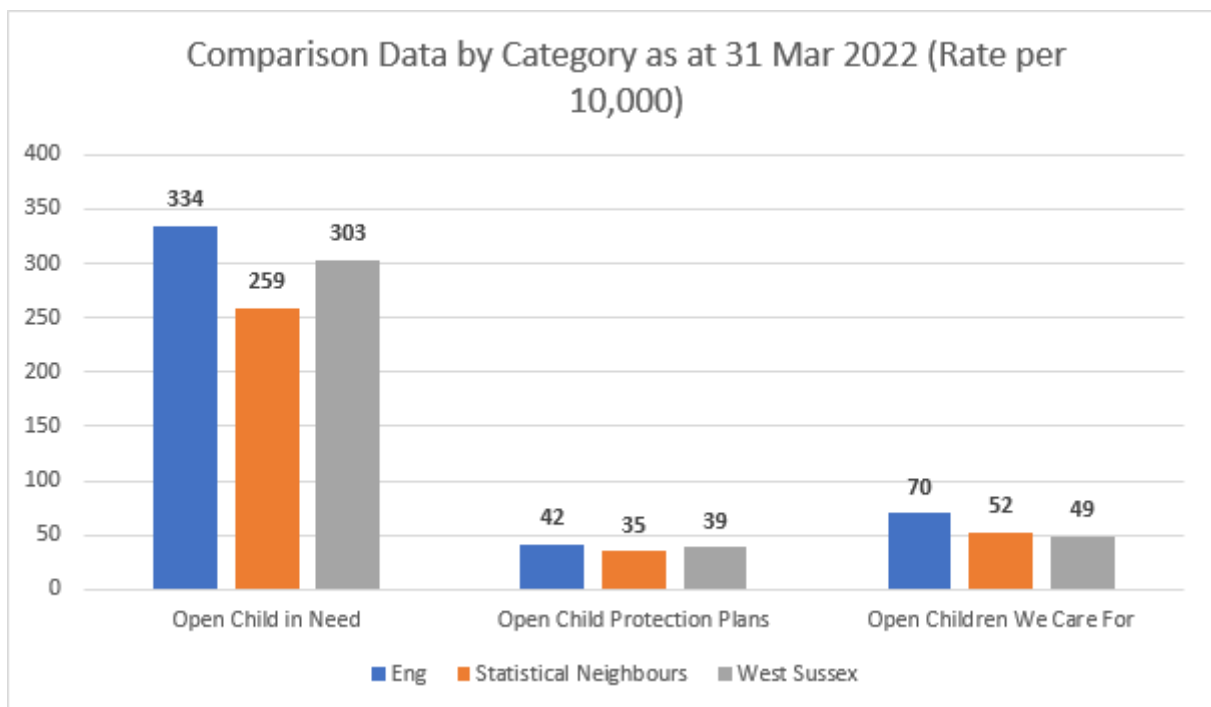


Child Protection Plans by Age



As of March 2022 there were 693 children subject to Child Protection Plans in West Sussex. This has reduced from 954 as at 31st of March 2021, (WSSCC data), the largest category being Neglect.

Using data from the DWP, in 2021 there were over 23,000 children in West Sussex living in low-income households; this is likely to increase given continued cost of living pressures. (DWP data)



3. THE WEST SUSSEX SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) is led by three Strategic Lead Partners: Police, Health and the Local Authority, whose role, functions, and operations are set out in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.

Statutory partnerships are required to work together as joint and equal partners to shape bespoke arrangements which respond to local need. The Wood Review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements emphasises the need for strong leadership from partners.

The following paragraphs summarise the agreed vision, principles and priorities of the WSSCP:

Vision

An assured safeguarding partnership which collectively engages with children and families enabling them to thrive.

Delivering our vision will mean that:

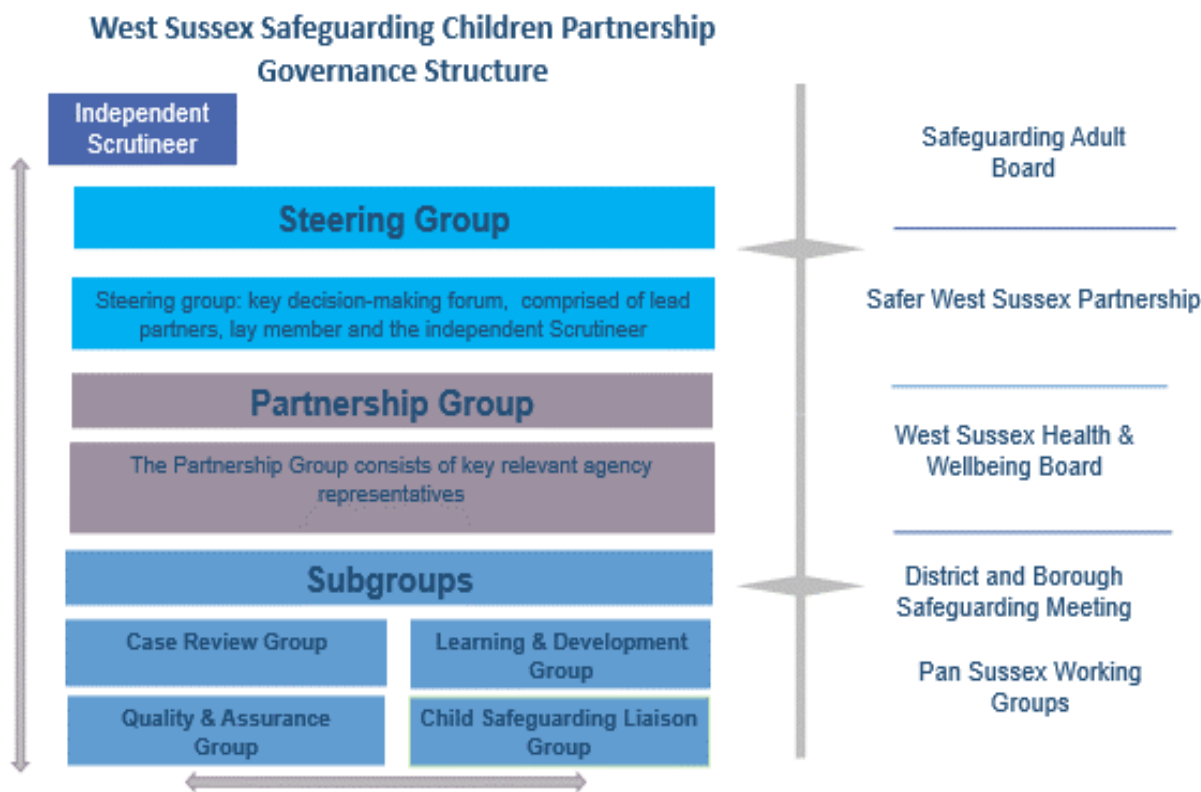
- Children and young people are safe from harm and able to thrive within their family units.
- Children and young people enjoy a healthy life, including good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Families are resilient and feel supported within their communities, via bespoke community-led work to meet their needs.
- Our wider networks, including schools and colleges, keep our children and young people safe and help to support and equip them with the skills they will need for their adult life.
- We will disrupt criminal activity and hold offenders to account, so that children and young people are protected from harm.



4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) supports local organisations and agencies to work together in a system which ensures children and young people are safeguarded and their well-being promoted.

The WSSCP is supported by the WSSCP Business Team which, when fully staffed is made up of 4 officers, who provide the Secretariat for the Partnership.



Steering Group

The Steering Group acts as the Executive group of the Partnership, responsible for strategic direction and decisions, including business plans and sign-off for major reports and reviews. Each of the statutory partners are represented at senior decision-maker level at this group; the Partnership Group and subgroups report to and will escalate issues to this group. The Steering Group manages performance by ensuring that subgroups deliver against their agreed actions. It is also responsible for horizon-scanning and making sure that national guidance is implemented locally.

Partnership Group

The Partnership Group has a wide membership from partners across the voluntary and community sector. Its role is to provide challenge and an external perspective on the WSSCP work. This enables the WSSCP to consult with a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring that priorities and actions reflect the needs within the area.

The Partnership Group was reviewed in 2021, and it was agreed that it would enhance its role by supporting the development of children’s participation, ensuring greater engagement with the voluntary and community sector and taking a more thematic approach to meetings.

Case Review Group (CRG)

This subgroup is responsible for receiving notifications of serious safeguarding practice incidents: death and serious harm involving neglect/abuse. The CRG is required to review cases that are referred to it,

which are taken to rapid review using a set criterion. It convenes Rapid Reviews and makes recommendations to the Independent Chair as to:

- whether a local or national child safeguarding practice review should be carried out (and if a local review, the methodology that should be used)
- whether a child safeguarding practice review should not be completed but another type of review should be undertaken and the methodology to be used, or whether other action should be taken by the WSSCP

The CRG meets on a monthly basis, and as part of its role monitors the delivery of child safeguarding practice reviews. The CRG uses the learning from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews to inform policy, practice and the WSSCP learning and development programme.

Quality and Assurance Subgroup

The main purpose of the Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup is to support the WSSCP to fulfil its monitoring, evaluation and scrutiny functions, as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* in order to continuously improve safeguarding practice across the Partnership.

The group is responsible for ensuring practice improvement across the whole Partnership, leading the quality assurance and scrutiny processes in accordance with the WSSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework. It is also responsible for leading all audits and scrutiny processes, ensuring that they are delivered in line with best practice and that practice improvement actions are implemented promptly.

Following review, the Quality and Assurance Group became the Improvement and Assurance Group in May 2022.

Child Safeguarding Liaison Subgroup

The local Child Safeguarding Liaison Subgroup (CSLG) is an inter-agency forum that meets every two months to consider joint working practice in respect of child safeguarding arrangements. The role of the group is to discuss cases that have complex and challenging issues, with a view to identifying and sharing learning and improving frontline practice and communication.

The group identifies and shares learning from cases where there have been concerns about practice and how agencies could have worked differently, as well as learning from cases of good practice. This enables them to learn from good practice and support positive working relationships while maintaining quality communication between all agencies.

Learning and Development Subgroup

The WSSCP Learning & Development Subgroup will support the WSSCP Learning & Development Framework to promote and strengthen a learning culture across partner agencies in West Sussex, to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The Learning and Development Subgroup is responsible for overseeing the planning of the multi-agency training programme, and for responding to learning from reviews in ensuring that practitioners in partner agencies take part in training opportunities.

The group is responsible for creating a learning and development workplan based in part on a bi-annual training needs assessment.

Discussion

The membership and purpose of each subgroup was refreshed and reviewed in 2020 to ensure that there was appropriate representation from each agency.

WSSCP continues to improve its governance arrangements; financial reporting and other processes are being developed to ensure that statutory leads can effectively manage risks. In 2022, we began planning awaydays for each of the subgroups, with external facilitators to support them in setting objectives and developing SMART action plans. The first of these was an awayday for the Quality and Assurance subgroup, the planning for which began in early 2022.

Key achievements

The achievements of the Steering Group, Partnership Group and Subgroups in the period under review are included in Section 5 below (Achievements Against Business Plan Priorities).

Links to Other Partnerships

- **Safer West Sussex Partnership** - WSSCP and the Safer West Sussex Partnership have worked together to deliver outcomes to safeguard children affected by exploitation and youth violence. This includes:
 - WSSCP supporting the development of the West Sussex Exploitation Strategy 2019/24
 - A joint Exploitation and Violence Reduction Board
 - Working together to deliver rapid reviews and practice reviews related to youth violence and exploitation, domestic abuse and exploitation
 - Working together to implement learning from Domestic Violence Homicides
- **West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board** - WSSCP and Public Health have worked closely together in response to children who have completed suicide, for example through the implementation of the multi-agency response which included Operation Warren. As part of work to support mental health and wellbeing more broadly, partners have collaborated on the development of mental health and emotional wellbeing support in schools, such as through the implementation of Mental Health Support Teams and provision of self-harm support resources.

- **West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (WSSAB)** - WSSCP and the WSSAB have worked together to improve the safeguarding support provided to young people transitioning from Children to Adult services.
- **District and Boroughs (D&Bs)** - Adur & Worthing, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex are key partners. The WSSCP Manager attends a regular meeting with district safeguarding leads to exchange information and support actions to safeguard children. Districts and Boroughs are represented on the Steering Group and Partnership Group.



THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

WSSCP aims to include the voice of the child in all aspects of the Partnership's work.

WSSCP undertakes a number of activities to promote children's participation both at a practice and at a policy level. As part of our multi-agency audit process, the Partnership reviews case files to ensure that as far as possible practitioners consider the voice of the child. WSSCP also enables children's participation at a strategic level; for example, children were included in the challenge session during the Section 11 audit process (see Section 6).

During 2022/23 we plan to further build on this work by developing processes to include diverse children's voices as part of the WSSCP governance structure, building on the existing participation structures of partners such as Social Care, SPFT and voluntary and community sector agencies.



5. ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITIES

The West Sussex Safeguarding Partnership identified three key practice priorities and two overarching priorities in 2020, based on the needs of the area. The priorities were agreed based on data as well as engagement and consultation with key partners, including representation from children, families and stakeholders in the voluntary and community sector.

The achievements in this section include both the work that the WSSCP has undertaken, as well as some key work that partners have carried out in line with our priorities. In addition, we have added an update on actions to address mental ill health and improve emotional wellbeing.

As mentioned in the Introduction, while mental health was not identified as a priority in 2019, it has become an emerging area of focus due to the increased need in the area.

The main practice priorities are:

1. Neglect
2. Child Exploitation
3. Ensure effective Multi-Agency Safeguarding practice

The overarching priorities are:

4. Lead and consolidate effective partnership arrangements
5. Revise and embed a Learning and Improvement Framework

Shared principles that underpin our key priorities are:

- **Child Centred Practice** - the Partnership will ensure that children and young people have opportunities to participate and collaborate in the work of the Partnership, and that the voice of children is embedded in multi-agency practice.
- **High support - high challenge** - the Partnership will promote a culture of high support and high challenge to develop working environments where growth and learning are accelerated.

- **Promoting Practice leadership** - the Partnership will involve practitioners in the continuous learning process of quality assurance and scrutiny in a supportive and challenging way, in order to build practice leadership capacity across the Partnership.
- **Restorative approach** - the Partnership will take the approach of 'working with' rather than 'doing to' with key stakeholders, including children and families.
- **Promoting a culture of continuous learning** - the Partnership will create the environment for learning, recognising the way systems influence each other and the benefits of working together rather than as individual agencies. We will ensure that we learn from best practice, case reviews and multi-agency audits, including monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

Working in this way we will ensure our core safeguarding practice is of high quality, is responsive to the needs of our communities and improves outcomes for children and families in West Sussex.



Practice Priority 1 – Neglect

Strategic Outcome - Practitioners across the Partnership can identify, assess, and intervene early to prevent the harmful impact of neglect on children

Evidence of need

WSSCP agreed that Neglect would be one of its key priorities, since its impact on children and young people is significant. Neglect can cause great distress to children, leading to poor health, educational and social outcomes. It can also increase a child's vulnerability to other forms of abuse, so addressing and preventing neglect can improve outcomes for children across a range of indicators.

In addition, our figures show that in West Sussex, in 2019 at the beginning of the strategy, for 53% of the total number of children who are subject to child protection plans, this is due to neglect. This is higher than the national average of 43.8% of children on child protection plans due to neglect ([West Sussex Neglect Strategy 2020-2023](#)). Our initial aim was to bring figures more in line with the national average. The end-of-year figure for March 2022 showed that this had increased to 61% against a national figure of 47%. This increase could be seen as a positive as it reflects practitioners' improved ability to identify and therefore address neglect. An audit is being undertaken during 2022/23 to test this hypothesis.

Objectives

In order to improve the response to neglect across all agencies in the area, the WSSCP agreed the following objectives:

- **Recognise:** Front line staff in all agencies will be able to recognise the signs of neglect and ensure that families receive the support they need at the point of first contact.

- **Respond:** Each agency will provide robust and timely responses to children, young people and their families to meet their needs and prevent neglect from escalating.
- **Quantify:** The extent and range of neglect in the county will be identified through the agreed Impact Framework.
- **Evaluate:** The scrutiny and evaluation of progress will be carried out via individual agency quality assurance mechanisms, to track and evidence progress against action plans. The progress of the action planning will also be reviewed against each individual agency action plan at the regular multi-agency Neglect Working Group.

Progress – Between October 2020 and March 2022, the above objectives were delivered in the following ways:

- **Effective implementation of the Neglect Strategy across all agencies, which has resulted in improved practice to address neglect across the Partnership. This includes:**
 - increased use of the ‘a day in my life’ assessment tool, with 85% of front-line practitioners stating that they like the tool and the impact chronology.
 - Setting up Neglect Champions within all partner agencies, who are responsible for promoting good practice within their organisations.
 - Reviewing and relaunching the Neglect data dashboard.
- **Delivered multi-agency training in order to improve response to neglect across all agencies within the Partnership.** Between April 2021 and March 2022, 101 people attended training; 91 were from WSCC, 4 were from the Private and Voluntary sector and 6 were from Education. Training evaluation found that while there has been attendance from a range of agencies, more work needs to be done to ensure better representation from organisations other than WSCC. There are plans to address this through discussions within the Learning & Development subgroup to ensure all agencies are included in the development of content for new courses. This will ensure they meet the needs of different agencies, taking into account the importance of training in a multi-agency learning environment, promoting training across the Partnership and challenging those agencies that do not attend multi-agency training.
- **It was agreed to test the effectiveness of the Neglect Strategy through multi-agency audits, evaluation and the scrutiny process.** A Neglect scrutiny event was completed in November 2020 which resulted in the development of thematic action plans; this enabled lead officers to take forward improvement actions within their own organisations, overseen by the Partnership.

In March 2022, planning began for a multi-agency audit, and the training and other learning activities are subject to regular evaluation. This will help us test whether the increase in Neglect-related plans is truly an indication of improved practice.

- **The Strategy comes to an end in March 2023.** Working with the Neglect Action Plan group, the WSSCP team is seeking to refresh the Strategy and relaunch it for 2023/26.



Practice Priority 2 - Child Exploitation

Outcome - All partners can demonstrate how they recognise, respond and evaluate the risks in relation to Child Exploitation

Evidence of Need

Unfortunately, in common with other areas in the country, children in West Sussex, particularly vulnerable children are at risk of criminal exploitation.

Exploitation can affect children differently depending on their background. For example, girls are at higher risk of being sexually exploited and there is an over-representation of ethnic minority children who have been identified as being exploited and this number is increasing.

Given the good links to London and other large cities, County Lines (criminals using children to transport drugs out of the main urban areas) feature in the patterns of child exploitation. West Sussex does not have disproportionately high numbers of children and young people who are at risk of exploitation. However, given the very negative impact that being exploited has on children's life prospects, addressing exploitation will continue to be a priority for the Partnership.

West Sussex has received additional funds to address the needs of exploited children through the Home Office Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) fund. WSSCP is working closely with the Safer West Sussex Partnership to support the development of interventions. ([West Sussex Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2022](#))

Objectives

In 2019, working with the Safer West Sussex Partnership and the West Sussex Safeguarding Adult Board, WSSCP developed a Strategy to address Exploitation. WSSCP's role was specifically concerned with addressing the safeguarding element of child exploitations. The Exploitation Strategy contains the following objectives:

- Work with communities and our partners to **raise awareness** of the warning signs of exploitation.
- **Empower** the whole community to adopt a proactive, zero-tolerance response to exploitation.
- **Assist** those who have been abused or are at risk of abuse – as well as their family members, friends, and the wider community.
- **Protect and support** those who have experienced exploitation as they **recover**.

- Ensure our response to perpetrators of exploitation is **restorative** and proportionate, whilst balancing the need for **rehabilitation and recovery** - especially where perpetrators may themselves have been groomed and exploited.
- **Improve** how professionals, organisations, and systems respond to the needs of exploited individuals.
- Develop services that can respond and adapt to **meet unmet needs**.

Progress

Between October 2020 and March 2022, the above objectives were delivered in the following ways:

- **Delivered a multi-agency training programme to improve practitioners' ability to assess and support children at risk of exploitation.** Between April 2021 and March 2022, 74 practitioners attended child exploitation training; this included 70 WSSC-based practitioners, 1 police officer and three attendees from the voluntary sector. Evaluations stated that 100% of attendees not only felt the training enhanced their knowledge of exploitation, but also that it improved their confidence in identifying and tackling this aspect of safeguarding. One learner stated, "I'm going to be more curious and alert to possible signs of child exploitation when working and supporting with families, children and young people, I've already had a conversation with my children after attending this course".
- **A survey was used to explore multi-agency practitioners' experiences, knowledge and confidence relating to child exploitation.** A learning and development work plan is being developed in 2022/23 to meet the Partnership's identified learning and development needs; this will include commissioning specialist training around trauma-informed practice and a focus on Adulthood particularly as it affects ethnic minority groups.
- **Worked with neighbouring areas to improve the pan-Sussex WSSCP response to children at risk of exploitation.** WSSCP supported the development of pan-Sussex policy and procedures on safeguarding children at risk of exploitation.
- **Started two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Thematic Reviews (LCSPRs)** featuring Exploitation and began the process of implementing learning from the reviews ahead of final publication, planned for late 2022 (see Section 7).
- **WSSCP carried out a Child Exploitation Scrutiny in July 2021.** The Audit consisted of a case sample of twelve children who had been deemed at risk of exploitation and had been presented to the Missing & Exploitation Operational Group (MEOG) within the past six months (Dec 2020-May 2021). The Audit found some good practice, such as robust multi-agency working, as well as some areas for improvement, such as the need for better use of common tools. The recommendations from the Audit were translated into an Action Plan overseen by the Quality and Assurance Subgroup. This Action Plan has led to an improved understanding of and response to children affected by exploitation.

- Districts and Boroughs have been active in supporting our exploitation outcomes. All Districts operate a local multi-agency **Peer Group Conference (PGC)**, involving Community Safety, Secondary Schools, Police, Children’s Social Care/Early Help, at which matters of concern, including individual children are discussed. They may operate in slightly different ways (monthly or quarterly). These are not in-depth discussions of individual cases, but are valuable for sharing information, and may lead to onward action – e.g., referral to Children’s Social Care or targeted police intervention. Information on referral types and other specific case-related responses are not currently available. There is also District and Borough representation on the MEOG group convened by WSSC.

A new analytical report was conducted by Safer West Sussex partners into ‘Understanding and Reducing Drug Demand - Bognor Regis Analysis - December 2021’. The report informed the work of the Safer Arun Partnership and supported an understanding of the drivers and implications of drug demand in the locale of Bognor Regis.

- A new CSC Exploitation and Missing Team has been developed. This team has direct implications for enhancing safeguarding in a multi-agency context.



Practice Priority 3 - Ensure effective Multi-agency Safeguarding Practice

Outcomes - All partners can demonstrate that core safeguarding practices are effective and embedded within their agencies and are keeping children safe

Between October 2020 and March 2022, the following improvement actions were delivered:

- **Improved our response to children moving from children to adult services.** The WSSCP participated in WSSAB’s multi-agency Safeguarding Transitions audit in October 2020, from which a resulting action plan focussed on ways of improving the transitions safeguarding pathway, including developing guidance on transitions, referral pathways & progression of preventive work. The outcome of this audit was the development and implementation of a joint protocol with WSSAB for **Safeguarding Young People 17.5+** which was implemented in July 2021.
- Oversaw the launch and embedding of the **ICON programme** to help parents cope with a crying baby in the correct way and undertook the first stage professional and public evaluation of its impact (see Case Study and West Sussex conference).
- **Supported the development of the Family Safeguarding model** whereby multi-disciplinary teams work together to support children and parents, tackling domestic abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse to improve children's lives. The Family Safeguarding model went live in February 2022.
- **Started to improve the use of data.** A new tool is being used to advance joint agency data collection and sharing. The phased plan will allow the local authority access to a dashboard

customisable to its needs. The dashboard will include frequently missing children, children arrested, children involved or witness to domestic incidents, etc. West Sussex will be joining this programme of work shortly.



Emerging Priority - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Evidence of Need

According to national surveys of children and young people aged 5-16 years, there has been an almost 25% increase in the number of children and young people with a mental health disorder between 2017/18 and 2021 (NHS. Series / Collection Mental Health of Children and Young People Surveys. NHS choices 2021). Based on findings of these surveys, the estimated number of children aged 5-16 years with a mental disorder in Sussex increased from 29,470 in 2017/18 to 37,200 in 2021. In 2020/21, over 5,850 pupils were identified with social, emotional and mental health needs, 3,063 of whom were of primary school age and 2,788 of secondary school age across the three local authorities in Sussex: (Special educational needs in England. Gov.uk March 2022).

The WS Public Health team reviewed evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on CYP mental health in order to support the development of the Sussex-wide 'Foundation For Our Future' strategy and actions.

Young adults have been particularly affected. When compared with other Sussex Health and Care Partnership local authorities, West Sussex has a significantly higher prevalence of mental health disorders in our young adult population. West Sussex also has the highest number of young adults with eating disorders. (NHS Digital 2021. Wave 2 follow up to the 2017 survey on the Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2021).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBTplus) children and children affected by autism are over-represented in national suicide data (University of Manchester 2022).

Specific mental health and emotional wellbeing outcomes will be developed during 2022/23 and will be incorporated into the next iteration of the Business Plan. However, between October 2020 and March 2022 the following key achievements were delivered:

- Development of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team. This is a team that provides in-school support to vulnerable children, including a multi-agency triage team. Between October 2020 and December 2021, 339 vulnerable children were triaged.

- During the reporting period a number of children completed suicide. The impact of these tragedies on families, friends, professionals and communities has been felt across West Sussex. The Partnership's thoughts continue to be with all of those affected. To address this, a robust multi-agency response was initiated, modelled on emergency response structures and complex safeguarding procedures. Operational delivery included Operation Warren, a multi-agency response that included wrap-around support to at-risk children. Multi-agency wrap-around meetings were held a minimum of weekly, chaired by the Head of Safeguarding, addressing broader issues such as support for family, extended networks, memorials, funerals, letters etc. Agencies involved include Police, Social Care, CAMHS, Schools and Early Help.
- To address the over-representation of LGBTplus groups in mental health statistics, Allsorts (www.allsortsyouth.org.uk), has provided training on gender and sexuality; learning briefs and guidance on gender identity have been published on the WSSCP website.
- There are a number of partnership actions underway to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in West Sussex, which the WSSCP is able to feed into through their partner members:
 - SPOA (Single Point of Access) set up in 2022 and running in West Sussex – offering easier access to services
 - Mental health in schools teams targeting the most disadvantaged areas of Sussex
 - Targeted early intervention services commissioned – Youth Emotional Support (YES) and Community Mental Health Liaison (CMHL) (liaison) in West Sussex
 - Review and redesign of Neurodevelopmental Pathway across Sussex
 - Parent carers fora across Sussex to ensure parents and carers are involved in pathway and service redesign
 - Enhancing and expanding CAMHS to be able to respond more quickly
 - Enhancing work across Sussex to prevent suicide in young people – West Sussex: suicide prevention strategy; continued and enhanced delivery of self-harm learning networks amongst professionals; increased access to training on responding to disclosed intention to complete suicide
 - Continuation of the Self-Harm Learning Network training offer to schools, parents and carers and professionals
 - Continuation of the schools' self-harm toolkit and self-harm resources page



Overarching Priorities

Overarching Priority 1 - Lead and consolidate effective partnership arrangements

Outcomes - The Partnership is assured that the arrangements are delivering both the strategic priorities and improving multi-agency practice

WSSCP has undertaken a number of activities in order to improve the Partnership so that it can function effectively to deliver its priorities. Progress on this has been impacted by several issues, including the aforementioned lack of capacity of the Business Support team.

Progress

Between October 2020 and March 2022, the following improvement actions were delivered:

- In March 2021, WSSCP updated its Statement of Purpose and Engagement for the Partnership Group: Partnership meetings will be thematic to provide focused input and discussion.
- The Child Exploitation Subgroup was moved to the joint Violence & Exploitation Board to ensure synergy with the wider exploitation agenda and strengthen strategic and operational responses.
- Improvements were undertaken to the Q&A Subgroup, including peer support from Oxfordshire LSCP and consultancy-led improvement events, with the aim of improving outcome-focused QA work and insight from the Partnership dataset.
- The Learning and Development Group revised training and resources on learning from reviews, and an improved training offer is in place, including training on Exploitation and joint Social Care and Health training on motivational interviewing. (See Training, Section 8 for Learning and Development activity).
- The Child Safeguarding Liaison Group (CSLG) has discussed and reviewed a number of cases in each meeting, with issues ranging from complex mental health, multi-agency management of non-accidental injury (NAI), genital injuries/CSA and harmful sexual behaviours. Due to professional networking through this meeting, there has been an improvement in inter-agency communication, with the additional benefit of better resolution of inter-agency issues in acute situations.



Overarching Priority 2 - Revise and embed a Learning and Improvement Framework

Outcomes - The Partnership is assured that the arrangements are delivering both the strategic priorities and improving multi-agency practice

In March 2022, the WSSCP published a Learning and Improvement Framework, which is intended to strengthen and support a learning culture across partner agencies in West Sussex, in order to continuously improve services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. An overview of these activities is given in the Improvement Actions below (Section 6).



6. PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

The Partnership has a range of improvement mechanisms to enable ongoing analysis of practice and performance. Some of these processes are well embedded, for example Section 11 audits, whilst others like Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Local Learning Reviews are responsive to specific incidents.

The quality assurance and scrutiny processes need to be robust and include learning from research, local intelligence leads, benchmarking with statistical neighbours and national best practice, to ensure evidence-informed actions and learning.

In 2020, the WSSCP published an Improvement Framework which outlines the principles that drive our approach to quality improvement across the Partnership and ensures there is a coherent and consistent methodology taken by all partners.

Improvement actions include:

- Section 11 audits
- Multi-agency audit
- Thematic scrutiny
- Learning from reviews
- Learning and development programme

Section 11 Audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure that their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In 2020, WSSCP carried out a Section 11 Audit, in partnership with other areas and in line with its statutory responsibilities. Twelve agencies and organisations working across at least two local authority areas were assessed under the pan-Sussex Section 11 process.

Four agencies were invited to a challenge event where they had to provide more details on their returns. This event was also attended by children from West Sussex County Council's Youth Cabinet to provide additional challenge and ensure that the voice of the child was represented. During 2022/23 a further

Section 11 audit will be carried out which will provide WSSCP with the opportunity to assess impact and measure whether there have been any overall improvements.

Multi-agency audits

Partnership audits include single and multi-agency audits. The audits may be thematic or focus on a specific area of safeguarding. Recommendations from audits are turned into action plans which are overseen by the Quality and Assurance Subgroup. Between October 2020 and March 2022, the WSSCP carried out the following audit work:

- **Child Exploitation Audit** - The Audit consisted of a case sample of twelve children who had been deemed at risk of exploitation presented to the Missing and Exploitation Operational Group (MEOG) which is a multi-agency group (See Exploitation, Section 5). Recommendations were incorporated into the Violence and Exploitation Action Plan being overseen by the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Board (VERB).
- Preparation for the pan-Sussex multi-agency audit on Elective Home Education (EHE) (Pan-Sussex Working, Section 9) which was held in May 2022 and the Neglect audit which was held in July 2022.
- Started implementing the recommendations of the under 2s Audit carried out in 2020.

The Quality and Assurance Subgroup is responsible for overseeing the implementation of audit recommendations across all partner agencies and collaboration with other WSSCP subgroups.

Independent Scrutiny

Independent scrutiny is critical to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. The value of focused, impartial and robust independent scrutiny to drive practice improvement and identify areas for development is key to helping inform WSSCP's improvement journey.

As outlined in *Working Together*, independent scrutiny is part of a wider system that includes the independent inspectorate single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

Scrutiny projects were implemented in line with commitments from the 2019/20 Business Plan. This included:

- Neglect Scrutiny in November 2020
- Child Exploitation Scrutiny with the report being finalised in May 2022. Recommendations from the report are being used to develop a workplan which will be overseen by the WSSCP.

7. LEARNING FROM RAPID REVIEWS AND LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS

Working Together 2018 sets out that: The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel)¹ and at local level with the safeguarding partners.

Therefore, the Partnership has a duty to consider and if necessary undertake Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SPR). These have replaced Serious Case Reviews (SCR) or local learning reviews when a child dies or is seriously injured, and abuse or neglect is suspected. The Partnership must also ensure that the thematic learning from these reviews is disseminated widely and embedded in multi-agency practice.

Partner agencies such as health, the police, local authority district and boroughs and the voluntary sector are key to the effective delivery and implementation of learning from reviews. Our partners have invested considerable resources in supporting the review process, for example sitting on panels.

We are now making good progress in delivering several complex safeguarding practice and learning reviews. The reviews undertaken in the period are summarised below.

SCR/SPR - Local Reviews - Rapid Reviews 2020/21		
2020	Local Learning Review	Sexual exploitation
2021	Local Learning Review	Death by suicide
2021	Rapid Review	Serious Violent Attack perpetrated by older children
2021	Rapid Review	NAI Under 1
2021	Rapid Review	Death by suicide
2021	Rapid Review	Death by suicide (LCSPR)
2021	Rapid Review	Death by suicide
2021	Rapid Review	Death by suicide
2022	Rapid review	Death by possible suicide
2022	Rapid Review	Death of 6-month-old

¹ National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is an independent panel commissioning reviews of serious child safeguarding cases of national interest, and will advise if a local review is required. Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel works with the Department for Education.

Learning from Reviews

From the above reviews the following practice and systems improvement needs were identified. These are outlined below with the response and the impact:

YP Suicide	Learning & Practice Improvement Areas		
	Finding	Response	Impact
	Early recognition of Mental Health needs	Joint Commissioning Unit (JCU) have commissioned the Yes Service to provide early intervention to vulnerable children, and partners across West Sussex have improved systems and pathways	There is now better recognition and support around mental health with improved care pathways to refer children into appropriate care
	Understanding challenges and improving responses to working with declared intent	Operation Warren has developed an effective response with people at risk of suicide (Section 5 and Case Study in Section 10)	Improved multi-agency response to addressing mental health which has been recognised nationally
	Identifying safeguarding needs and/in Mental Health (not all MH needs will be safeguarding)	There is a plan to roll out training on mental health across the Partnership, which will include links between safeguarding and mental health	The aim is that this will improve understanding of mental health by practitioners, which will be measured by course evaluations
	Impact of early trauma & neglect for older children/adolescents	Trauma informed practice being rolled out across West Sussex partner agencies. Senior officers from all partnership agencies have been asked to input into the training	Increase in trauma competent practitioners able to address the needs in their particular agencies
	Timeliness of referrals to ensure early multi-agency response	Operation Warren has helped improve referral timelines. WSSCP I&A subgroup is exploring a role in keeping an overview of referral timelines	Improved response to children with mental ill health
	Supporting children and young people for whom issues of identity are critical	Allsorts training being rolled out and we have published guidance on Safeguarding and Gender Identity on the WSSCP website. In addition, a learning briefing is being developed	Improved understanding of gender identity matters and development of better processes around this issue, with appropriate escalation to WSSCP for action where necessary
	Recognising when parental response to MH needs is adversely impacting child	Family Safeguarding Model (Section 5) and SPOA are able to provide support and facilitate access to mental health support	Improved response to parental mental ill health, particularly as part of pre-birth work

Supporting parents to respond positively to their child's MH needs	SPOA are able to provide support and facilitate access to mental health support. Action being undertaken to publicise so that families who need mental health services are able to access it.	Families are better able to access appropriate support services
Safeguarding System Improvement Areas		
Finding	Response	Impact
Practitioner confidence in responding to declared intent	Development of the Operation Warren response to suicide and the schools	Improved response to mental health in schools, for example through daily triage meetings where needed
Practitioner confidence in responding to gender identity needs	See above response to gender identity training	Better understanding of gender identity matters with work being undertaken to improve procedures to guide practitioners' work
Role of Schools – recognised as critical responder with need to recognise impact on school community	Development of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (see Section 5)	Improved response to mental health in schools and with clear processes to support them. E.g. daily triage meetings, consultation in complex cases
Access to services (Level 2 below CAMHS) directly and via professional network	Commissioning of Yes and the development of the SPOA (see Section 5) process on mental health	Better early intervention response and more accessible services
Access to gender identity support and services	West Sussex County Council commissioned Allsorts who provide support to young people around gender identity and have disseminated information on the gender identity service	See above
Support for adolescents, especially those coming into semi-independence	Development of 17.5 plus protocol with plans to further improve the support to young people as they move between children and adult services	Improved pathways for young people moving from children to adult services, with practitioners understanding the role of different agencies
Practitioner confidence in responding to declared intent	Mental Health and Wellbeing Team includes consultancy to support practitioners on particularly complex cases	Practitioners more confident in responding to declared intent as they have the policies to support them
Practitioner confidence in responding to gender identity needs	Learning briefing on gender identity published on WSSCP website	Improved understanding of gender identity matters

Learning & Practice Improvement Areas			
Under 2s	Finding	Response	Impact
	Continued need for professional curiosity during assessments, visits and presentations	The Healthy Child team lead monthly safeguarding workshops; this included courageous conversations (how to talk about safeguarding); bruise protocol guidance and the 'Myth of Invisible Men' presentations and Bringing Baby Home. This work is supplemented by multi-agency training	Improved practice in all agencies. Evaluation of training showed increase in practitioner confidence
	Need for improved pre-birth assessments specifically	There continues to be a focus on ensuring that pre-birth assessments are shared, especially when closed prior to the Health Visitor becoming involved with a family	West Sussex Children's Services pre-birth work has been an area of significant improvement, with a dedicated pre-birth specialist who retains oversight of all unborn babies on the system.
	Identifying and being curious about unknown adults within household and changes in relationships	Learning re: curiosity about men in the household, prebirth assessments and respectful challenge have been disseminated through practitioner supervision	The understanding of the importance of a whole family approach now mainstreamed
	Management oversight and support including on effectiveness of virtual visits	Management training in place	Improved practice in all agencies
	Responding to non-engagement in young parenting support	The pre-birth worker is now linked into the Young Parents champion meetings	Resulting in improved support for young parents

Safeguarding System Improvement Areas		
Finding	Response	Impact
System improvements to enable access to completed pre-birth assessments	Performance dashboards provide good quality data which supports all managers to track progress and outcomes of referrals, assessments and safeguarding birth plans	Improved processes to support pre-birth assessments and appropriate escalation of issues through the WSSCP governance structure where needed
Confidence in effectiveness of virtual visits	Audit planned for 2022/23	Assurance of the effectiveness of visits with robust improvement actions where needed
Awareness of support available for young parents	The pre-birth worker is linked into the Young Parents champion meetings Family Nurse Partnership provides specialist nurse support to young parents through their first pregnancy and the first years of their child's life	Young parents have more understanding of the support available to them

Youth Violence	Learning & Practice Improvement Areas		
	Finding	Response	Impact
Professionals' engagement to work effectively with challenging and intimidating parents/families	It was decided to commission a youth violence thematic LSPR to enable the Partnership to further explore these themes and develop recommendations to address them		
Importance of maintaining professional network when working with challenging and intimidating parents			
Good practice shown through use of multi-agency reflective group supervision, recognising impact of difficult cases			

	Need to focus on child protection plan outcomes, not compliance		
	Recognition of vulnerabilities to exploitation		
	Working with children to recognise peer influences		
	Recognising and responding to impact of family/parental criminality on children		
	Recognising and responding to impact of domestic abuse (coercion/control)		
Safeguarding System Improvement Areas			
Finding	Response	Impact	
Improving system response to enhance educational attainment for children in alternative provision, displaying threatening & other behavioural challenges	It was decided to commission a youth violence thematic LSPR to enable the Partnership to further explore these themes and develop recommendations to address them		
Working with other partners to improve safeguarding and child protection responses to youth violence			
Understanding types and risks of exploitation for children locally (embedding contextual safeguarding)			

Most of our reviews concern non-accidental injury, youth violence and suicide which could be reflective of rising national rates due to the strain on families countrywide as a result of the pandemic.

Over the course of 2022/23, work will be undertaken on improved measurement of the impact of the actions above.



8. WEST SUSSEX TRAINING PROGRAMME

This year has seen more creative training techniques introduced, so that practitioners are able to access a range of resources in different formats. This has included eLearning and a podcast. A Train the Trainer programme has also been developed to support those professionals who are delivering the WSSCP Training Programme. Courses delivered and their take-up is summarised in the following tables:

1. WSSCP Training Programme 2021/22 figures²:

a) WSSCP Training Programme in Line with WSSCP Business Priorities -

Course Title	Number of sessions delivered	Total Number of attendees	Pan Sussex Offer?	% of Spaces Used	Core Offer?
Neglect	8	101		63%	Y
Working Together to Recognise & Respond to Child Exploitation	3	30		20%	Y
Recognising and Responding to Child Exploitation Using a Contextual Safeguarding Approach	4	44		44%	Y

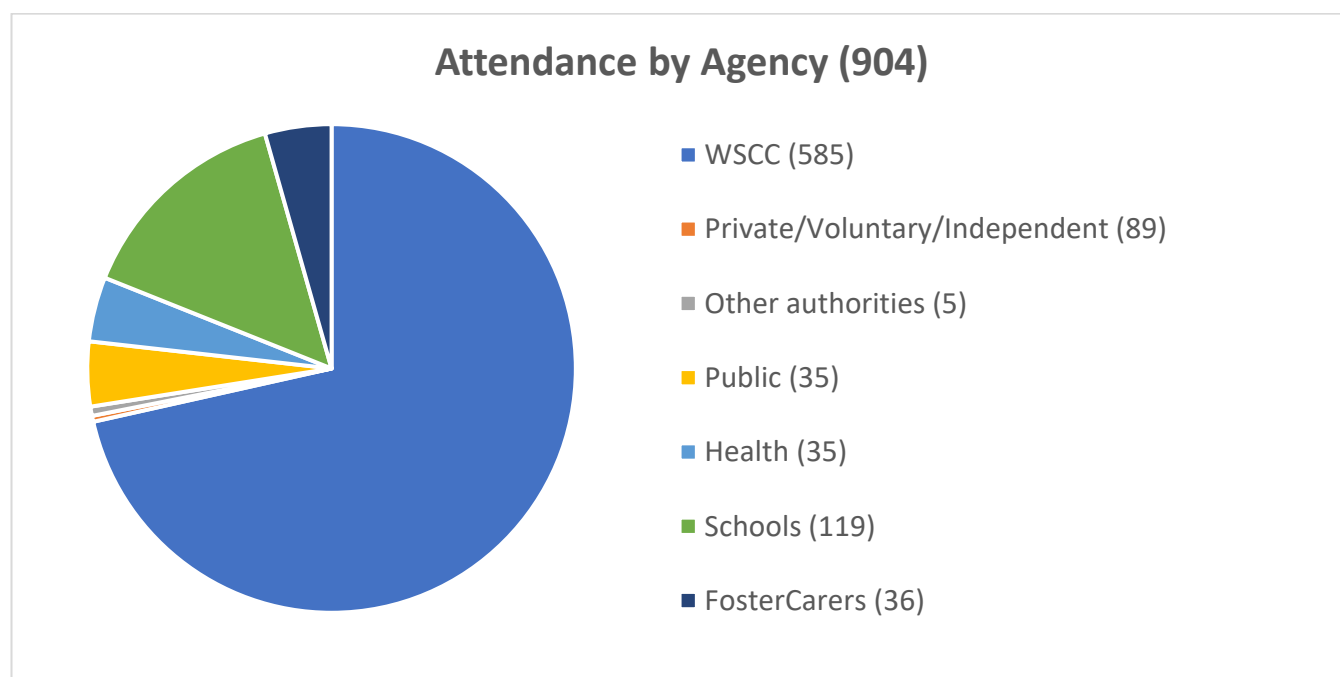
b) WSSCP Training Programme for Whole Training Offer -

Course Title	Number of sessions delivered	Total Number of attendees	Pan Sussex Offer?	% of Spaces Used	Core Offer?
Professional Curiosity	10	114		59%	Yes
Working Together to Safeguard Children	11	143		69%	Yes

² It is important to note that there are some challenges with the way in which data is gathered and categorised from the Learning Gateway. When practitioners register for an account to access training it is their responsibility to choose a “best fit” category for their organisation. This is open to some interpretation and is something to bear in mind when looking at the data for the agency of each attendee. This is something that is currently being looked into and it is hoped that it will be improved for future reporting.

Working Together to Safeguard Children Refresher	9	113		72%	Yes
Safeguarding Hot Topics – Non-Accidental Injury	3	39		52%	Yes
The Role of the LADO	10	113		56%	Yes
Improving Outcomes for Children Looked After	6	39	Yes	88%	Yes
Pan Sussex Safeguarding Under 1's Conference	1	59	Yes	100%	No
Safeguarding Hot Topics – Child Sexual Abuse	3	28	Yes	37%	Yes
Safeguarding Hot Topics – Fabricated / Induced Illness	2	40	Yes	80%	Yes
Harmful Practices – Female Genital Mutilation / Breast Ironing	2	5	Yes	28%	No
Harmful Practices – Forced Marriage / Honour Based Abuse	2	9		50%	No
Child Protection Conferences – Reports & Plans	4	27		35%	No
Total Number of Attendees		904			

c) Attendance by Agency to All Training



2. Training Programme overview

The WSSCP Training Programme offer has been well received and the numbers of practitioners booking a place has been maintained. There is currently no date confirmed to move back to the delivery of face-to-face training, although once this is agreed, it is likely that the WSSCP will offer a hybrid of training delivery, so that the same course can be accessed both face-to-face and virtually, to meet the needs of those working from home/the office and those who prefer to attend a classroom-based session.

The training offer has broadened over the past year and there are now more courses available, with more planned. There have been some capacity issues in the WSSCP Business team, which has impacted in terms of practitioners not being charged for late cancellation and non-attendance. This is reflected above in the percentage of places filled. The message that practitioners will be charged, in line with the WSSCP Cancellation and Non-Attendance policy has been lost over the past year, whereas previously consistent charging for those not attending or cancelling late was reaching partner agencies, and these figures were accordingly significantly lower. There are plans to address this, but staff consistency and capacity remains an issue.

The Train the Trainer programme was developed with an expectation that all professionals who deliver on behalf of the WSSCP should attend. This was introduced to ensure continuity across the Training Programme and also that each trainer was confident to deliver, able to manage a group of learners and knowledgeable about how to successfully assess delegates' learning, responding appropriately to different training situations. Six trainers attended and there are currently 19 professionals in the WSSCP Training Pool.

2021/2022 has provided the WSSCP Training Programme with challenges in terms of the way training is delivered and the capacity of trainers; however, the way in which learning is shared and disseminated has progressed. Because of this, and the increase in the use of online learning, information has been shared using a range of methods, enabling practitioners to choose to receive information in the way that suits them best.

Reducing Parental Conflict project

In September 2021, the WSSCP agreed to temporarily hold a grant awarded to Early Help by the DWP. This was to provide free training and resources to support the work carried out by professionals on reducing parental conflict.

Introductory and Advanced sessions were planned for May and June 2022, and these were to be accompanied by a wide range of resources including visual cards, a relationship app and an animation to support work around this often-challenging topic. All these tools and resources will be available to all agencies working with children, young people and their families.

Other ways learning has been shared / staff have been trained

- Podcast – Safeguarding the Under 1s, developed and led by practitioners
- Basic Awareness of Safeguarding Children eLearning – a West Sussex specific eLearning course has been developed and is a pre-requisite for attending the Working Together to Safeguard Children training

- Regular Lunch and Learn ‘online’ briefings including briefings on non-accidental injuries (NAIs) provided by the designated paediatrician
- Sessions delivered on “Case Review Briefings - Early to Middle Years”

Evaluating the Training Offer

Those attending WSSCP training courses are required to complete an evaluation prior to receiving their certificate of attendance. Evidence of how attending a WSSCP training course has benefited the practitioner is also gathered through a feedback form which is available to access on the Training Calendar page of the WSSCP website. There are plans to gather impact evidence through a sample of attendees from different courses by telephone to create anecdotal information. This has not been possible up to now because of capacity issues.

Out of those who completed a post-training evaluation (309), 91% reported an increase in knowledge following attendance at training and 89% reported an increase in confidence.

Other feedback gathered from post-training evaluations included:

I liked the use of the case study to consider risks and vulnerabilities. Exploring the concept of using conversations to move things forward - then asking "Why" again to gain a more rounded perspective and the triangulation of information - Professional Curiosity training

It has helped me to look at possible signs of fabricated induced illness caused by the care giver and possible reasons why – Safeguarding Hot Topics – Fabricated / Induced Illness

Relevant to my role in assessment team assessing young people who are likely to be exploited – Working Together to Recognise & Respond to Child Exploitation Using a Contextual Safeguarding Approach

I have just started as an FSW so this training will be very useful in identifying neglect in families I will be working with – Neglect

It will help me identify non-accidental bruises on children and give me more confidence in doing this. I will be referring any dad's I work with in future to check out 'Dad Pad' – Safeguarding Hot Topics – Non-Accidental Injury

Updated my understanding of procedures and refreshed my knowledge – Working Together to Safeguard Children Refresher



9. PAN-SUSSEX WORKING

The WSSCP works closely with its colleagues in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove to improve processes and services and deliver interventions across Sussex to enhance outcomes for children. Pan-Sussex working enables consistent practice and development of procedures across Sussex and can result in improved efficiencies due to economies of scale. This is particularly true of the training programme.

Between October 2020 and March 2022, the following pan-Sussex projects were delivered:

- **Pan-Sussex Learning & Development** opportunities –
 - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA)
 - Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children
 - Harmful Practices
 - Suicide Prevention
 - *Planned training in development: Cultural Competency*
- A number of pan-Sussex awareness campaigns occurred, including “**ICON Week**” held at the end of September 2021.
- West Sussex is part of the pan-Sussex Procedures Working Group which is responsible for developing safeguarding and child safeguarding processes. West Sussex contributes to a part-time post which is responsible for coordinating the pan-Sussex group that develops the procedures. The group meets quarterly and is represented by the West Sussex Partnership Business Manager and the Head of Children’s Safeguarding.
- **The three partnerships worked together to deliver a conference on Safeguarding Children under 5 which was delivered on 5 November 2021.** This covered sudden unexpected deaths, the engagement of male carers, and parent and infant relationships. It incorporated safe sleep in response to national panel learning ‘Out of routine’; it stressed the importance of understanding the role of fathers and reinforced ICON messages. It also looked at infant mental health.

Around 100 practitioners from across Sussex attended, with 59 from West Sussex. There were 25 from the Local Authority, 1 from the Police, 14 from Health, 10 from Early Years and 9 from the Voluntary and Community sector; 78% reported an increase in their knowledge and understanding of non-accidental injuries and how this could present to them as practitioners.

- The four business managers worked together to develop arrangements for the pan-Sussex Elective Home Education multi-agency audit. The audit was held in early May 2022.
- **WSSCP working with the other partnerships in the area to deliver the statutory Section 11 audit.** See Improvement Actions (Section 6) for further details.
- **A Sussex Strategic Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention group** (with a specific children and young person's subgroup) was established at the beginning of 2022 to develop and take forward a strategic approach to prevention. This group is chaired by the Director of Public Health in East Sussex. A children and young people emotional wellbeing group (reporting to the Children First Board) works on the implementation of recommendations made in the Foundations for our Future strategy.
- **Pan-Sussex Strategic Leaders Group** Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Lead Partners from West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove hold a regular meeting to ensure that national and local safeguarding good practice is implementing across the region, to horizon-scan emerging risks and opportunities and to identify opportunities for efficiencies through economies of scale.
- The 2021/22 Pan Sussex Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report contains a summary of the activity conducted by the Panel - activity which seeks to drive improvements in children and young people's health across the three areas represented: East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

10. CASE STUDIES – BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES



The ICON Programme is a preventative programme, based around helping parents cope with a crying baby.

The programme emphasises that:

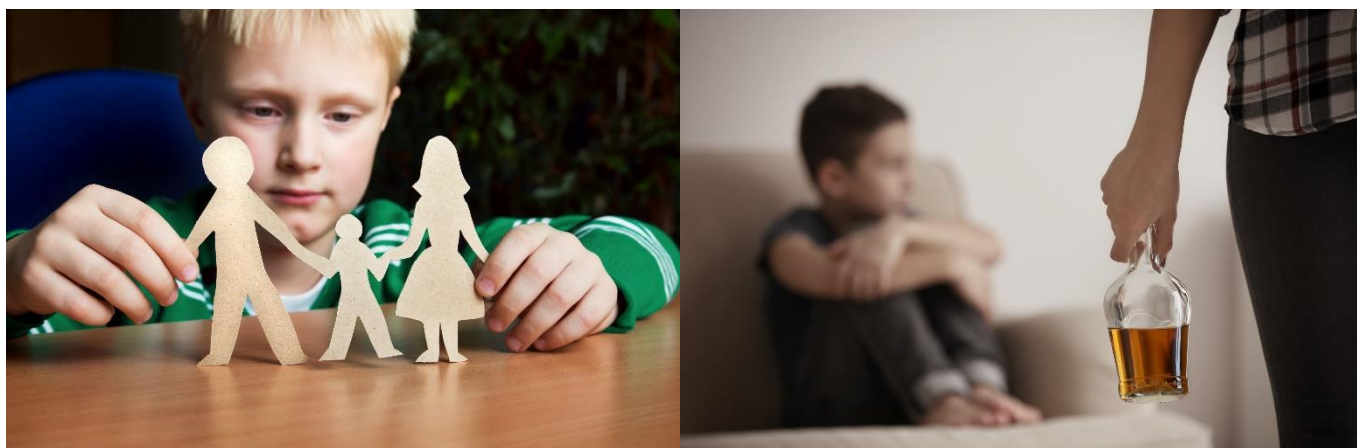
- I – Infant crying is normal
- C – Comforting methods can sometimes soothe the baby
- O – It's OK to walk away
- N – Never, ever shake a baby

West Sussex was amongst the earliest adopter local authority areas in the country to introduce and embed the ICON programme. We have invested in DadPad to help engagement and practical support for male care givers.

ICON training is aimed at multi-agency audiences and is adaptable for individual service needs. Services trained include a number of Health services, Children's Social Care, Fire service, Police, Probation, Early Help & Early Years teams.

Multi-agency partners in the County were trained to use this message in order to reduce the prevalence of babies coming to harm through abusive head trauma. Multi-agency staff are now equipped with the knowledge to support parents to understand normal child development stages including babies crying, in order to support families to develop a strategy to manage this through the sharing of the ICON messaging including the 'crying plan'.

ICON and Safe Sleep national campaigns have been embedded in the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) across Sussex. This has involved close working between HCP providers and commissioning leads. NHS Commissioning Safeguarding leads have taken part in this work.



Addressing Parental Substance Misuse

Supporting Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents

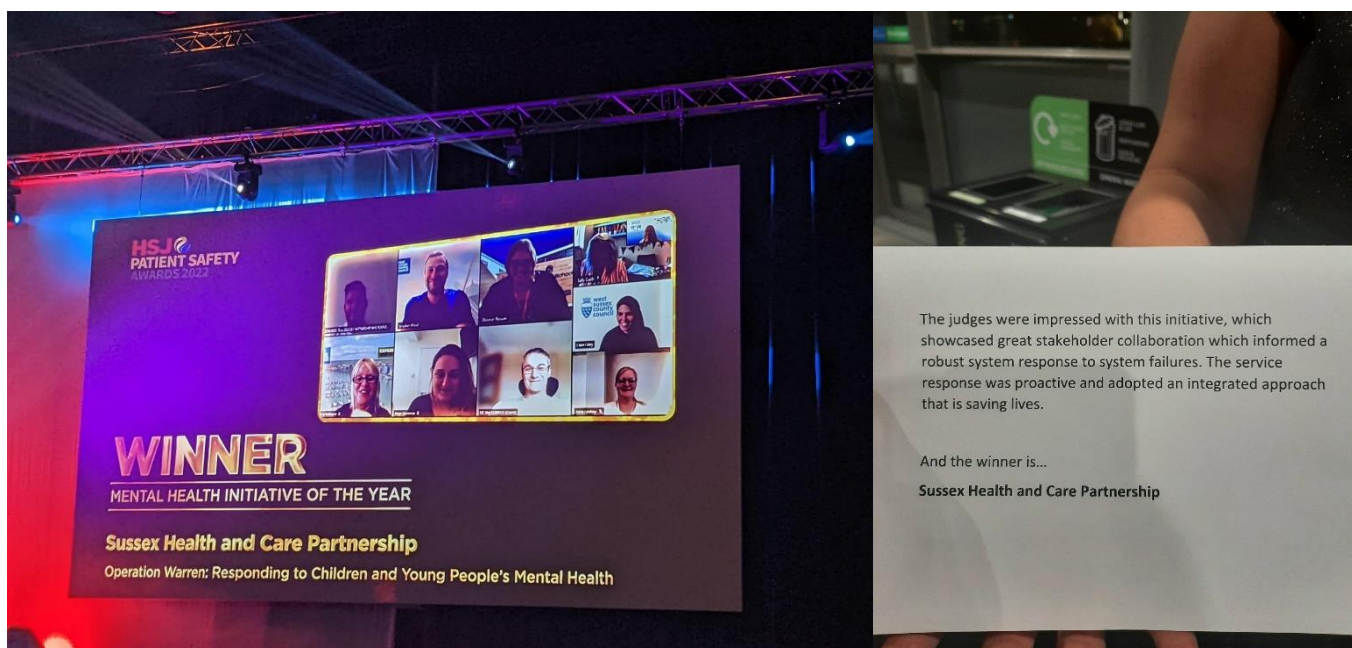
In December 2018, West Sussex had been one of nine local authorities nationally that secured innovation funding from the Department of Health and Social Care and Department of Work and Pensions, through (then) Public Health England.

This enabled the development and implementation of a new service aimed at early identification and support to people drinking alcohol during their pregnancy, as well as the county-wide expansion of an existing specialist therapeutic service for children and young people (CYP) affected by parental alcohol use. Additional funding from NHS partners enabled the scope of the therapeutic service to be extended to children affected by parental drug use.

Local evaluation by West Sussex Public Health identified some positive outcomes, including reduced alcohol use reported by pregnant and new parents, and improved outcomes in CYP receiving therapy.

Maternity Stop Smoking Support Pilot

Public Health have worked closely with Maternity (as part of Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust at the time) to develop and resource a Midwifery-led Stop Smoking Support Pilot, in order to inform future Maternity Stop Smoking Support Services in response to the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan.



Operation Warren - Response to Suicide

Education Psychology, the Education Safeguarding Lead and the Children's Mental and Emotional Health team ensure that support is available on the first working day to a school where a child is believed to have completed suicide, in order that immediate support can be offered to staff and vulnerable young people. Support is also provided in respect of communications to parents and the broader school community, to ensure containment and to reduce the risk of escalation.

In-school support is provided by Education Psychology, Children's Mental and Emotional Health team, Early Help and CAMHS from Day 2, in order that we can work with the school to identify vulnerable/impacted pupils and consider the best next steps to ensure their safety, and reduce the risk of further suicides and clusters.

Multi-agency wrap-around meetings are held a minimum of weekly, chaired by the Head of Safeguarding, addressing broader issues such as support for family, extended networks, response to memorial, funerals, letters and other follow-up actions.

Operation Warren ended in July 2022 with 13 schools being a part of the triage process. Over 300 young people were discussed during 2022, and over 600 have been discussed at triage with over 1000 children discussed within the operation and the in-schools response team. Feedback from schools have been overwhelmingly positive.

The ongoing commitment of partner agencies, CAMHS, SPFT, Police, YMCA, Early Help, and Youth Emotional Support (YES) has been guaranteed for 2022/23, with the development of the Multi-Agency Mental Health Education Triage (MAMHET) being established. This will allow the positive work begun through Operation Warren to continue.

11. FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

WSSCP Finance

As a result of staffing vacancies there has been an underspend in the WSSCP budget. Other than staffing, the main expenditure has been on LCSPRs.

WSSCP income and expenditure 2021/22

Income	Contribution
Training Fees	7,800
WSCC Contribution	242,000
NHS Sussex CCG	71,861
Sussex Police	35,000
Crawley Borough Council	1,000
National Probation	1,969
Adur & Worthing District Council	2,000
Arun District Council	1,000
Chichester District Council	1,000
Horsham District Council	1,000
Mid Sussex District Council	1,000
C/fwd. from 2020/21	50,000
Total Funding	415,630

Area	Budget	Expenditure
Staffing	252,700	194,143
Non Staffing Costs		
Travel	2,000	0
LCSPR	67,000	0
Other non-staffing costs	83,900	8,689
Total Expenditure	405,600	202,832

Underspend		212,798
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WSSCP income and expenditure 2020/21

Income	Contribution
Training Fees	7,800
WSCC Contribution	167,500
NHS Coastal	46,637
NHS Horsham & Mid Sussex	15,667
NHS Crawley	9,557
Sussex Police	35,000
Crawley Borough Council	1,000
National Probation	1,969
Kent Surrey and Sussex Rehab	2,625
Adur & Worthing District Council	2,000
Arun District Council	1,000
Chichester District Council	1,000
Horsham District Council	1,000
Mid Sussex District Council	1,000
C/fwd. from 2019/20	50,000
Total Funding	343,755

	Budget	Expenditure
Staffing	232,000	216,835
Non Staffing Costs		
Travel	2,000	1,005
LCSPR	30,000	12,196
Other non-staffing costs	31,900	11,661
Total	295,900	241,697

Underspend		102,000
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Appendix A

Overview of Steering Group, Partnership Groups and Sub-Groups Membership as at October 2020

STEERING GROUP	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
<p>Executive group of the Partnership. Responsible for strategic direction and decisions: including business plans, sign-off for major reports and reviews. Other groups report to and will escalate issues to this group.</p>	<p>Chair - Independent Chair/Scrutineer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSCC Director of Children’s Services • Sussex Police Superintendent Public Protection • NHS Sussex CCG Director of Safeguarding • Detective Superintendent • Safeguarding Investigation Unit, Sussex Police • Head of Safeguarding and Looked After Children • Chairs of Sub-Groups • Assistant Director Children’s Services (with responsibility for the Partnership) • Lay Member • District and Borough Representative • Named Nurse for Safeguarding • Designated Doctor • Head of Safeguarding, WSCC • Partnership Business Manager
PARTNERSHIP GROUP	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
<p>This is where the wider Partnership members meet to share current issues, challenges and best practice.</p>	<p>Chair - Independent Chair/Scrutineer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead partners plus safeguarding leads from all relevant agencies • District & Borough Councils • Schools, colleges and other educational providers • Early Years incl. childminders • Adult Social Care/Safeguarding Adults Board • Housing Services/providers • Probation Service • UK Visas, Immigration and Border Force (Gatwick) • CAFCASS • British Transport Police • West Sussex Voluntary, Community Sector, Sports Clubs and Faith Based organisations • Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust • Sussex Community Foundation Trust

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Hospitals Sussex • West Sussex Public Health • West Sussex Youth Justice Service <i>(Three Lead Safeguarding Partners)</i> • <i>West Sussex Local Authority Children’s Services</i> • <i>Sussex Police</i> • <i>Sussex CCG</i>
CASE REVIEW GROUP (CRG)	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
Responsible for receiving notifications of serious safeguarding practice incidents: death and serious harm involving neglect/abuse. Required to review cases, gather agency information, review decision-making, monitoring recommendations from reviews.	Chair - Independent Chair/Scrutineer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Social Care Head of Safeguarding • Children’s Social Care Head of Service Family Safeguarding • CCG Head of Safeguarding • CCG Designated Doctor • CCG Named GP • WSCC Early Help Head of Service • Sussex Police Det Sgt Review Team • WSCC Education Safeguarding • WSCC Youth Justice Service • WSSCP L&D Lead • WSSCP Manager
QUALITY ASSURANCE GROUP (QA)	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
The main purpose of the Quality Assurance (QA) Subgroup is to support the WSSCP to fulfil its monitoring, evaluation and scrutiny functions as set out in <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018</i> in order to continuously improve safeguarding practice across the Partnership.	Chair – Ass. Director Quality and Performance CSC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Safeguarding, WSCC • Head of Safeguarding & Looked after children, Sussex Community Foundation Trust • Designated Nurse for Looked after Children • Head of Safeguarding, CCG • WSSCP Manager • Head of Quality Assurance, WSCC • Service Lead for Early Help • Police • Probation • Safeguarding in Education • Lay member
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT GROUP	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
Oversee planning and engagement of multi-agency programme, and response to learning from reviews.	Chair – Designated Nurse CCG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Nurse • Workforce Development Manager • Children’s services – Principal Social Worker • Training and Development Consultant Fostering Service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help service representative • Training and Development Consultant Adult Social Care • WSSCP Learning and Development Officer Manager
CHILD SAFEGUARDING LIAISON GROUP (CSLG)	
PURPOSE	MEMBERS
<p>The local Child Safeguarding Liaison Group (CSLG) is an inter-agency forum that meets on a bi-monthly basis to consider joint working practice in respect of child safeguarding arrangements. It discusses cases that have complex and challenging issues with a view to sharing learning.</p>	<p>Chair – Designated Doctor/ CSC Head of Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services • Western Sussex Hospitals Trust • Clinical Commissioning Groups • Sussex Police • SCFT (including CSARC) • Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust • Probation • Education safeguarding lead

Appendix B - Links to other statutory partner strategies

Statutory Partner	Strategy	Shared aims
Health	<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy: <i>West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024</i> (West Sussex JSNA Website)</p> <p>Sussex Health and Care Partnership: <i>Sussex 2025 - Our vision for a healthier future</i> (www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk)</p> <p>Shared objectives include:</p>	<p>Improved mother and baby health and wellbeing, especially for those in most need.</p> <p>Children growing in a safe & healthy home environment with supporting and nurturing parents and carers.</p> <p>Good mental health for all children.</p> <p>Children and young people leaving care are healthy and independent.</p>
Local Authority	<p>Children and Young People's Plan: <i>(Children and Young People's Plan - Your Voice West Sussex website)</i></p> <p>The three key priorities for this Plan have initially been identified as:</p>	<p>Keeping children and young people safe.</p> <p>Addressing poverty and closing the disadvantage gap.</p> <p>Improving emotional health and well-being.</p>
Sussex Police	<p>Police and Crime Commissioner: <i>Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2021/24</i> (sussex-pcc.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Protecting children from criminal exploitation by raising awareness and increasing the reporting of these offences against children, in partnership with Sussex Police and other agencies.</p> <p>Ensure that child victims receive the support they need and that offenders are brought to justice.</p>