

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Never standing still

October 2019 - September 2020 Annual Report

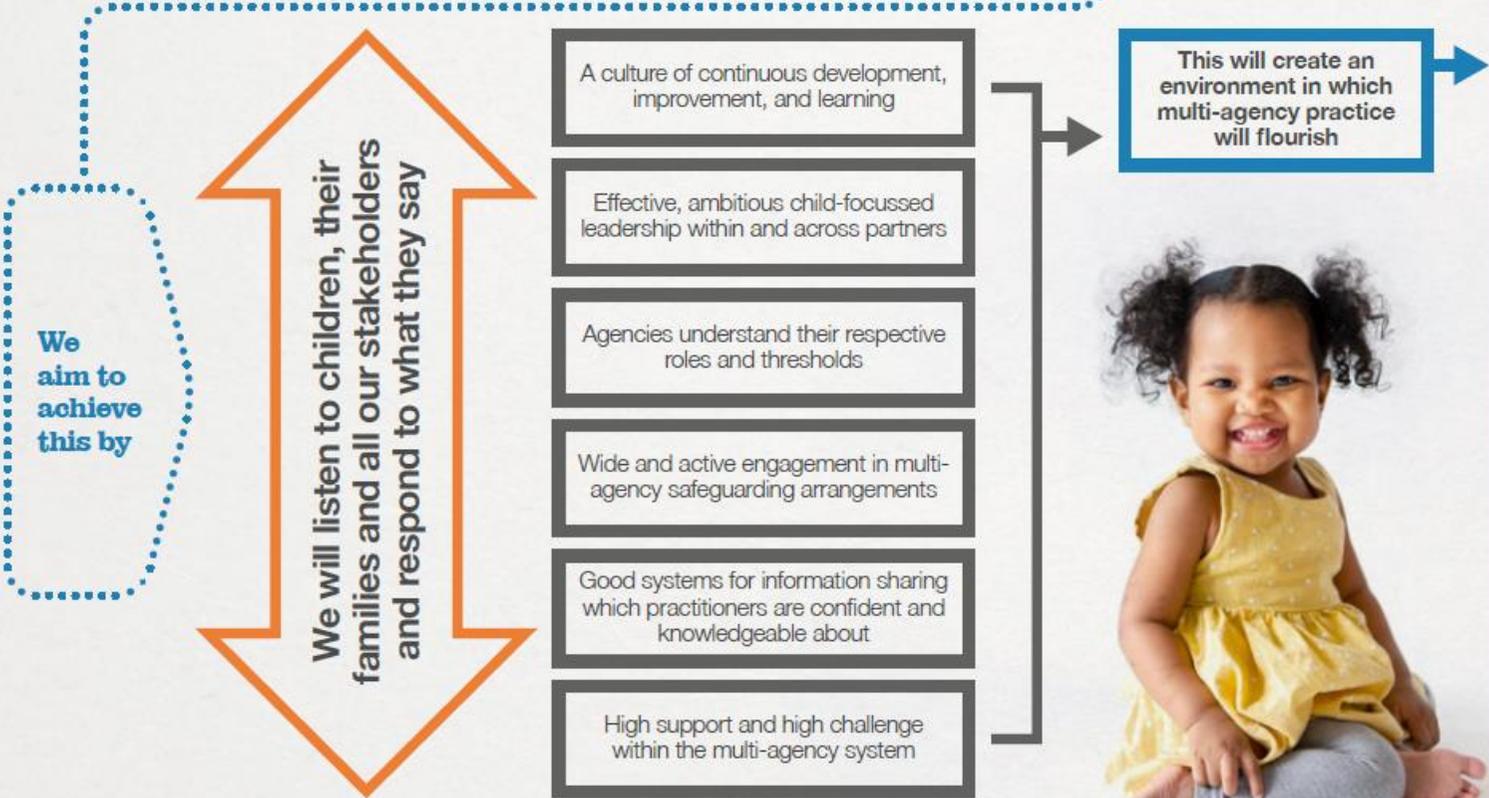


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Partnership Vision

In Bolton we want to give all our children the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed, be safe and happy.



This will lead to improved outcomes for children:

Early help is being used effectively to co-ordinate preventative responses to help meet children's needs

Children and their families tell us that they are able to access services at the right time from the right person and in the right place

Children tell us they have been able to develop trust with their key workers

Parents/carers tell us practitioners have listened and helped them

Children tell us that they have been listened to and involved in their care and service improvement

Practitioners tell us they are confident in local processes and understand what is out there to support children and families

More children will remain in the care of their family unit and will not need to be supported by statutory services

Multi-agency audit highlights that outcomes for children are being met, that there is high quality practice, a good understanding of thresholds and that people are aware of different roles and responsibilities across the partnership



Partners Welcome

Welcome to our first annual report about the work and effectiveness of our local safeguarding children arrangements. We are writing this report in unprecedented times, where the demands of a global pandemic have challenged, and continue to challenge us all, both personally and professionally. As the pandemic emerged and restrictions were placed upon us, our primary thought was how we keep children safe, and this became our core priority. Covid-19 has put huge strain on the workforce and made previously straightforward visiting and monitoring more challenging, with the additional risks of not always being able to see children and talk to them alone. A key part of effective health visiting and early years engagement. School closures from March 2020 added increased risk for some children and reduced their visibility to key agencies supporting them, especially pastoral teams in schools. The response to keeping in touch with these children and their families by schools was phenomenal, and effective in reducing risk for some children.

However the impact of Covid-19 has inevitably increased concern for more vulnerable children and has resulted in escalating demand in Children's Social Care and across the police with domestic abuse and violence seeing real increases during this period. The commitment and response from our workforce across the partnership to safeguarding and supporting children at a critical time has been excellent. We are extremely proud of the way partners have worked together and are still working together to ensure our safeguarding arrangements remain effective. The strength of Bolton's partnership are the practitioners who work across it and, as the statutory partners, we have been humbled by their efforts and their resilience. We commend and thank each and every one of them for making a difference for children in 2020.

Children and young people have also taken a lead in promoting safety and welfare during this time, and our particular thanks go to Bolton's Youth Voice. This group of young people have not only shared with us their experiences and thoughts on what's needed during the pandemic, but also supported us to share important messages about keeping safe and getting help. Their contributions have helped keep children at the heart of the partnership and we want to express our thanks to them.

Despite the demands of the pandemic, our vision and ambition for keeping children safe has remained strong. We want children in Bolton to grow up living in safe family networks and communities, gaining the skills they need at home and in education to become healthy, independent, confident adults and achieving their full potential. Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership is the strategic vehicle to drive forward the children's safety and welfare element of 'Bolton Vision 2030'. We believe that while we are still in the early stages of development, and there is more to do, we have made progress in this first year.

This year has seen a continued and relentless challenge for all partners to focus on safeguarding children. The complexity of individual cases and the pressure on the safeguarding workforce across all partners has been palpable and has made the effective governance of the partnership even more critical. Regular communication and ongoing work has meant that senior leaders have ensured risks are overseen and practitioners are supported to work across the multi-agency system to ensure children continue to be visited and their health, education, and broader social needs are understood and any risks are escalated quickly.

Whilst progress against the partnership business plan and other workstreams has been encouraging it has been impacted by the demands of Covid-19; we are acutely aware that the next twelve months are likely to continue to present considerable challenges for our children and young people, our communities and our local partners. It will be essential that

we develop our understanding of the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic on children's safety and welfare and we keep children's voices at the heart of this. A strengthening early help system will add more value to the partnership oversight and despite cuts in services in 2021 we will continue to focus on key thematic areas to ensure children can have the best start in life. Our strategic governance will facilitate the strengthening of communication and the targeting of key resources to sustain local services and we will continue to safeguard children at the earliest opportunity and where safe, work with families to keep children at home.

We hope this annual report demonstrates where we believe safeguarding arrangements are strengthening and where we need to make further improvement. But most importantly, we want to ensure the report gives an open and transparent view of our partnership activity to children, families and all practitioners. We would welcome your views on whether we have achieved this!

Finally we would once again like to take the opportunity to thank all our practitioners in Bolton. It is the commitment, dedication, care and passion that they give to children and their families on a daily basis that is the beating heart of our arrangements and personifies the 'Bolton Family'.

Tony Oakman
Chief Executive
Bolton Council

Su Long
Chief Officer
**Bolton Clinical
Commissioning Group**

Stuart Ellison
Chief Superintendent
**Greater Manchester
Police**

Bolton in Numbers

Bolton's Children

Children's Demographics: -

- There are 67,433 children in Bolton aged 0-17
- Percentage of population who are children: 23.7% in Bolton compared with 21.3% in England
- There are 7,020 young people in Bolton aged 16 and 17; 4.2% of these are not in education, employment or training
- 3,104 children have an open early help plan
- 852 children are on a child in need plan
- 340 children are on a child protection plan
- 647 children are looked after in Bolton
- 1,598 children with special educational needs

Poverty levels in Bolton versus England:

- 20.1% of children in every class live in poverty compared with the national average of 17%

Children with free school meals in Bolton versus England:

- 15.2% of primary pupils eligible and claiming free school meals compared with the national average of 13.7%
- 16.1% of secondary pupils eligible and claiming free school meals compared with the national average of 12.4%

Domestic abuse incidents involving children:

- 2,719 domestic abuse and violence incidents recorded in Bolton as having a child present (390 incidents per 10,000 children)

Bolton's Services

- 1 Police Service – GMP
- 1 Hospital and community health provider – Bolton NHS Foundation Trust
- 50 GP Practices
- Mental health services provided by Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust
- 1 University
- 3 Nursery Schools
- 2 Further education establishments
- 98 Primary schools
- 20 Secondary schools
- 6 Special schools

Partnership Development

In May 2016 the Government accepted the recommendations of the [Wood Review Report](#) (March 2016) which summarised the findings of a national review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). The recommendations in the report led to a change in legislation (Children and Social Work Act 2017) and a revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) and removed the statutory requirement of local authorities to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board. The statutory responsibilities for safeguarding moved to three key agencies namely Bolton Council, Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group and Greater Manchester Police.

The new arrangements were published on 29 June 2019 and implementation was underway by September 2019. Our full arrangements can be found [here](#). The table below highlights the key points of our journey

National
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 2016 Wood Report on review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards• May 2016 Wood Review recommendations accepted by government• April 2017 Children and Social Work Act becomes Law• July 2018 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) published, alongside transitional guidance to Local Safeguarding Children Boards• April 2019 Child Safeguarding Practice Review Guidance Published• June 2019 Safeguarding Arrangements to be published by local areas• September 2019 Safeguarding arrangements to be operational• March 2020 Review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements led by Alan Wood in progress• Winter 2020 Findings from Wood Review of safeguarding arrangements published
Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• July 2018 Update to Bolton Safeguarding Children Board on Working Together key changes and initial discussion on transition to new arrangements• August 2018 Transition plan developed• September 2018 Project group established to lead transition• April 2019 Partnership development session; first draft of revised safeguarding arrangements• May 2019 Partnership development session – agreement on final draft arrangements

- **June 2019**
Safeguarding arrangements published following independent scrutiny
- **September 2019**
Partnership operational and working groups developing
- **October 2019**
'Question Time' Event with Bolton Youth Voice to challenge the partnership on the local emotional health and well-being offer
- **December 2019**
Exploitation workshop with practitioners to inform strategic development
- **January 2020**
Agree peer review with Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership
- **March 2020**
Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions imposed; partners agree to suspend current workstreams (including peer review) and focus partnership attention on effective safeguarding arrangements and risks to children's safety arising from restrictions
- **July 2020**
Workstreams re-started; practitioners webinar delivered to outline work of partnership during covid-19, promote 'Safe4Summer' campaign, increase awareness of Emotional Health and Well-being resources and update on Early Help
- **August 2020**
Peer review with Salford starts
- **September 2020**
Partners endorse revised exploitation and neglect strategies and plans; partnership webinar to launch suicide and self-harm pathway

Priority Areas

Four local priorities were agreed for the first year and we will give an overview of the progress made to date in each. These are: -

- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Domestic Abuse and Violence
- Safeguarding Thresholds

We will also outline in this section our response to Covid-19.

Achievements

- Revised and launched multi-agency exploitation strategy
- Extended the scope of local exploitation response to include criminal exploitation, trafficking and modern-day slavery as well as sexual exploitation
- A co-located police and social care team to deliver the wider scope and integrate partners
- Agreed pathways and operating protocol for multi-agency exploitation team
- Revised Child Exploitation and Missing Meetings to focus on vulnerabilities to strengthening planning and interventions
- Strengthened data collection and reporting mechanisms
- A common set of values and behaviours agreed

Intended Impact

- Bespoke partnership response to exploitation and other complex safeguarding issues
- Clear and consistent referral pathways ensure timely recognition of exploitation
- Full engagement of partners in delivering support and improved co-ordination of the help offered
- An accurate needs and threat analysis of child exploitation in Bolton

Exploitation

Children are safe and keep safe from all forms of exploitation

“I have learned to keep myself safe and honest with my mum and I feel things are a lot better with my mum now”

Young person’s experience of support

Areas for Strengthening

- It is early days for the revised strategy and evidence of effective impact for children and their family’s will be evaluated in the coming year
- Raising awareness of criminal exploitation, trafficking and slavery signs and indicators needs to be embedded
- Developing the Early Help pathway and tools to support active prevention should be a focus in the next twelve months
- Hearing and responding to the experiences of children and their family’s will help us to continue to improve

“I want to say thank you for your support especially when things have been bad. You listened to me I trust you.” with everything. told you and you supported me

You have always given me the right support and Advise

Young person’s experience of support

Achievements

- BSCP Neglect Strategy has been finalised and approved by the BSCP
- The Strategy has been presented at the Children and Young People's Board with challenge as to how they will support this work
- A small group within health are progressing work around obesity and medical neglect
- A small group has started work to identify and clarify the appropriate tools to support the identification of neglect in Bolton

Intended Impact

- Developed out local tools and confidence in practitioners to recognise and intervene to address emerging neglect, or patterns of neglect at the earliest opportunity
- Practitioners accessing and using evidence-based tools to understand and respond to the impact of neglect
- Reduced number of children being re-referred to Children's social care for neglect and a reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan for neglect

Neglect

No opportunity is missed, and no opportunity is ignored to respond to child neglect

"At school, you can't concentrate on the subject because things are bad in your life and then you feel it's unfair because you get told off"

"It's hard having no friends and other kids don't realise how difficult that is"

95% of parents surveyed in Bolton said we should talk to them and their children openly about neglect

Areas for Strengthening

- The revised strategy is yet to be fully launched and it will be essential to ensure awareness and engagement with the strategy by all statutory partners and relevant agencies
- Developing our neglect data set to improve our understanding and identification of themes and trends
- Working with Children and Young People's Board to address key issues such as poverty
- Engage with children and families to better understand what make a difference to them

Lived Experience of Neglect -

Steven was 15 when he tragically took his own life.

Steven would have likely said that he was invisible, that he had no one looking out for him, no one to talk to, no friends to hang out with, that he was scared at home by the violence and drug use and that he was frightened by his feelings which he did not understand. He was not encouraged or supported to attend school, he was not taken for medical appointments, including CAMHs even though there were concerns about his obsession with cleanliness. In the 10 months before his death he was not seen.

Achievements

- Review of current progress in re-developing local thresholds document
- Drafted revised 'levels of need' indicators and sought practitioner perspectives
- Agreement to retain current levels of need and strengthen to reflect familial and extrafamilial

The Framework for Action is Bolton's partnership threshold document. It has been developed with partners and remains rooted in strong multi-agency working to achieve the best for Bolton's children. All services and practitioners, including commissioned services, working in Bolton should ensure their policies and practice embeds the requirements of the Framework for Action

Thresholds

Right help, at the right time from the right people

Areas for Strengthening

- Launch the revised document from late Autumn, linking in with Early Help developments
- All statutory partners and relevant agencies in Bolton ensure an understanding of the threshold document is embedded within internal training and induction for practitioners
- Evaluate impact with strategic leaders, practitioners, children and their families

Intended Impact

- Support practitioners to understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities and apply thresholds appropriately
- Strengthen and support early help priorities
- Ensure levels of need reflect familial and external safeguarding risks to children
- Promote consistent response and action to safeguard children
- Provide clear guidance to support effective challenge

In a recent practitioner survey about the impact and quality of safe arrangements; 81% of practitioner felt local arrangements were effective or very effective, however 20% also identified that challenge across the partnership could be strengthened

Achievements

- Local DHR has identified and reported findings to date for keeping children safe
- A new IDVA contract with Fortalice, strengthening a family approach
- Exceptional Delivery Model implemented in response to Covid-19 which includes operational weekly meetings with providers to identify and respond emerging challenges and threats
- Strengthening and developing MASSS domestic abuse daily risk meetings to include additional partners
- Publicity campaign delivered during May 2020 to support access to services

Intended Impact

- DHR learning has been incorporated into workforce training to improve staff responses
- Continued provision of specialist high risk provision for victims of domestic abuse, linked to MARAC and MASSS daily risk meetings
- Ensured services and projects continue with support during restrictions and enabled emergency funding to be allocated effectively to manage and reduce risk and harm to families
- Increased awareness and contact with local resources

Domestic Abuse

“Sessions have helped me to cope with my situation...look at my situation in a different way. It has helped me help others also...help others who feel some of the similar things I felt. I learnt a lot from the worry cycle, learning not to avoid the things that make me scared...avoiding them makes my worry worse.”

Areas for Strengthening

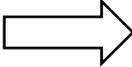
- Desktop review of revised Domestic Abuse Strategy to ensure new emerging agendas are accounted for, e.g. living with COVID, the new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Bill, Neglect Strategy and revised thresholds document
- Refresh membership and functions of the DAV Partnership Board and underpinning structures and maintaining effective links with safeguarding children partnership
- Work with specialist providers to support the implementation of the new Early Help model

“I don't know how to thank you for everything you have done for me. Before I came to see you, I thought I would have to stay quiet and suffer all on my own. Since I have met you, I have not had to hide away or worry because I know I have someone who can help me.”

Covid-19

It would not be possible to write an annual report for 2019-2020 without giving due consideration to the impact of Covid-19 on partnership safeguarding arrangements. As a developing partnership Covid-19 presented us with unprecedented challenges in terms of safeguarding children. Statutory partners took the swift decision in late March 2020 to suspend planned work areas. They wanted to concentrate on ensuring a coordinated strategic response to deliver effective safeguarding arrangements during restrictions, and beyond.

- The partnership identified key objectives: -
- Organisations know and are in touch with their vulnerable children to make sure they can be as safe and healthy as possible
 - Partnership safeguarding arrangements are as clear and effective as they can be during this challenging and ever-changing period
 - Practitioners co-ordinate work to keep children safe, keep in touch with other practitioners and offer support to each other while understanding that roles may change and adapt as we respond to the demands from Covid-19
 - Consider what can be done to keep children safe, even if this is outside usual working practice
 - Partnership provides strong, visible leadership to support practitioners to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to keep children safe
 - Identify and respond to areas of risk



- To achieve these objectives the partnership: -
- Met weekly to seek assurance that all partners had processes in place to identify and respond to their vulnerable children and to communicate with partner agencies to co-ordinate a partnership approach
 - Published a safeguarding arrangements guide to outline how our key multi-agency safeguarding processes should be delivered during restrictions; with the emphasis on retaining our core approaches but adapting delivery and using technology to support this
 - Developed and regularly reviewed a partnership risk assessment ensuring a co-ordinated response to emerging threats; one example that has strengthened responses to domestic abuse and violence (DAV) incidents is the inclusion of voluntary sector and probation partners in the daily DAV triage meeting
 - Brought together a range of safeguarding e-learning resources and developed an online partnership safeguarding training programme
 - Commissioned a questionnaire to understand how services were delivering interventions, identify barriers and agree action

Assurance Areas

Early Help

In Bolton there is a strong emphasis on partnership working to provide Early Help, with a shared vision that Early Help support is led by those who know the child or young person best and where practitioner relationships with the family already exist. The partners recognise that a significant review of early help in Bolton was completed in 2018-2019 and that much of the current focus is on responding to the findings.

Given the significance of preventative support across the safeguarding arrangements, it was agreed by the statutory partners that an understanding of current progress, strengths and areas for development within early help arrangements was required.

Strengths

- A strong commitment from all partners to deliver effective early help
- Maturing understanding of the effectiveness of assessment, intervention and the impact at the early help stage is maturing
- Since January 2020, work has been undertaken to align the aims and establish some key proposals for the new Early Help Model and the implementation of the Team Around the School model
- Project to provide specialist support to the Designated Safeguarding leads in Bolton schools; develop the sector's skills, knowledge and confidence to tackle some of the more complex problems within the school age populations, prevent escalation of issues and identify and respond to children in need using early help approaches
- Serious Violence grant is providing funding to support Early Help Youth Work provision, with a focus on tackling issues early and working with young people identified as at risk of becoming involved in serious violence

Developments

- Consolidate early help electronic recording systems to promote and support consistent recording practice and improve data accuracy to evidence of impact of early help support
- Development of a clear and accountable governance arrangements with the Children and Young People's Board, underpinned by a partnership performance and outcomes framework for Early Help
- Fully implement the Team Around the School model to deliver effective locality based early help and improve information sharing
- Review and further strengthen the multiagency workforce development offer to support the delivery of effective and timely Early Help in practice
- Review of the current Early Help Assessment and associated processes to address barriers to engagement and as acting as Lead Professional
- Improve the access to Early Help information and services for children, their families and practitioners

The progress made to date, and in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 restrictions, is assuring. However as the proposed developments are being implemented and embedded, under the governance of the Children and Young People’s Board, the partners would welcome further assurance and evidence that for all those living and working in Bolton there is: -

- A clear direction and vision for Early Help that is understood and integrated by all
- Easy access to Early Help support and advice for all
- Sufficient resources and skills across Bolton to lead, develop and deliver effective Early Help
- Families are enabled to develop safe, sustainable solutions to meet their family’s needs

Emotional Health and Well-being

Children’s emotional health and well-being was a focus for the partnership’s predecessor, Bolton Safeguarding Children Board. In 2016-2017 the Board commissioned and accepted the findings and recommendations from an independent thematic review into the deaths of six young people who either died by their own hand or by suicide between 2014 and 2016. The partnership agreed that it would be timely to review the progress made in relation to the learning and seek assurance that when a child is living with emotional and mental ill health difficulties practice to support the child and their family is responsive, well-co-ordinated and effective.

What was learned?	What’s in place now?
Practitioners and children are not clear about how Bolton services work together to prevent suicide and help children respond to their own or another’s emotional health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolton’s Local Transformation Plan which provides an overview of the whole system approach to improve emotional health and well-being/mental health outcomes for children • Developed ‘Bekindtomymind’ website with children and young people to reduce stigma and promote access to help and support services • Assurances has been provided that the Bekindtomymind’ website will be further developed to include a practitioners section • Awareness sessions have been held across the partnership to increase knowledge and understanding of how services work together • A Children and Young People’s mental health practitioner survey was rolled out in March 2020 and 150 responses were received
Practitioners want to help and support children but often don’t know what to do and worry they may make things worse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide and Self-harm pathway has been developed and launched across the partnership • A range of emotional health and well-being/mental health training is available for practitioners; assurance have been

	<p>provided that this offer will be further strengthened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of two Children and Young People’s emotional health and wellbeing practitioners to coordinate the voluntary sector offer of mental health support; this will enable practitioners and families to better navigate the support and to have a need's led assessment and support • Regular presentations to safeguarding leads and pastoral support practitioner in the education sector with supporting resources distributed • Pathways for support strengthened and will be reviewed for effectiveness
<p>Parents need help to recognise their children’s vulnerability and know how to support them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are gaps in this area; assurances has been provided that the Bekindtomymind website will be further developed to include a parents section • Engagement sessions with parents/carers planned in Spring 2020 were cancelled owing to Covid; alternative ways to engage to enable are being explored • The Kooth offer has been extended and offers parent engagement sessions to describe the Kooth offer and demonstrate how it can be used to support a child's mental health • Chat Health is providing support to parents/carers and has seen an increase in utilisation during the pandemic
<p>The impact for a child living with a parent with emotional health needs is often not recognised or responded to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are beginning to operate in a whole-family approach to address wider factors impacting on children and young people • Young carers service provides holistic family assessments for children who are caring for a family member with mental health difficulties • Children’s bereavement service, Thrive Alliance and the planned ‘Team Around the School’ all focus on a family needs approach • Further work is needed on how to address all aspects of this findings and to evidence impact
<p>Children need education and key messages to be able to support and signpost other children effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Ambassadors from the Healthy Minds Youth Group are raising awareness of the support available and break down the stigma

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many secondary schools have created student Mental Health Champions to support peers and run assemblies to talk about key issues • Young people are leading a review of Bekindtomymind website and will share their findings with strategic leads to ensure the resource is 'fit for purpose' for children
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In addition to reflecting on the distance travelled since the thematic review, we also worked with colleagues in the CCG over Spring/Summer 2020 to explore the views of practitioners. In particular we were keen to understand their views on the training offer, multi-agency working and thresholds for support in the area. 150 responses were received; health and social care agencies each accounted for 30% of respondents, 10% each from education setting and the voluntary/community sector and 18% described as 'other'. The average length of time respondents had worked in Bolton was over 7 years. The results told us: -

64% of respondents agreed that information sharing works well and 66% agreed they are actively involved in multi-agency planning

48% of respondents agreed they can access the right help to support the children they work with

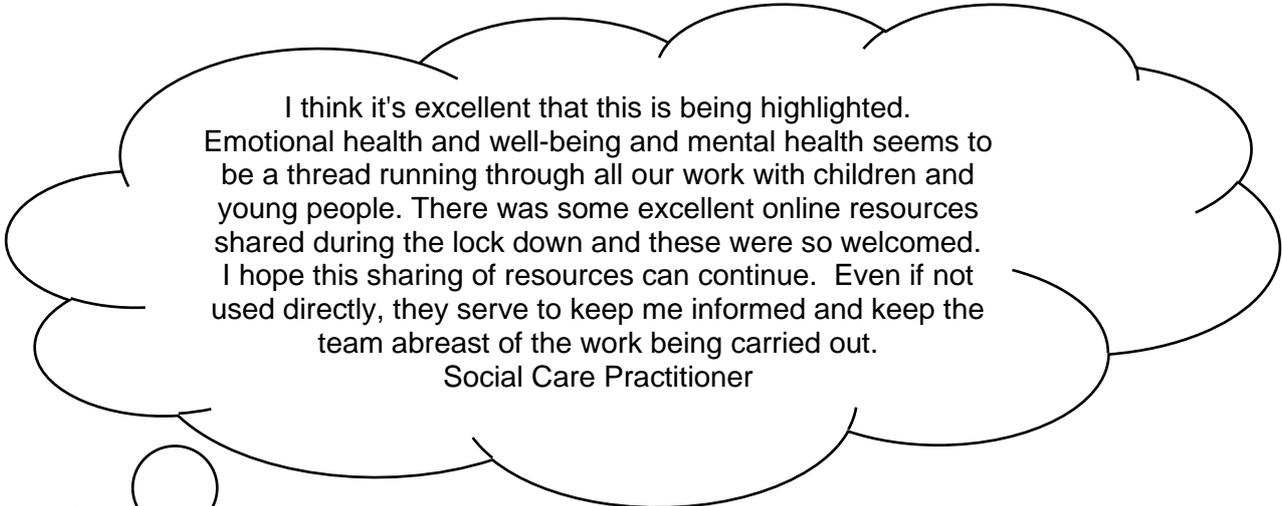
36% of respondents agreed there is suitable help for parents

45% of respondents agreed that children can access help and support directly

86% of respondents felt confident to talk about mental health with children and their families

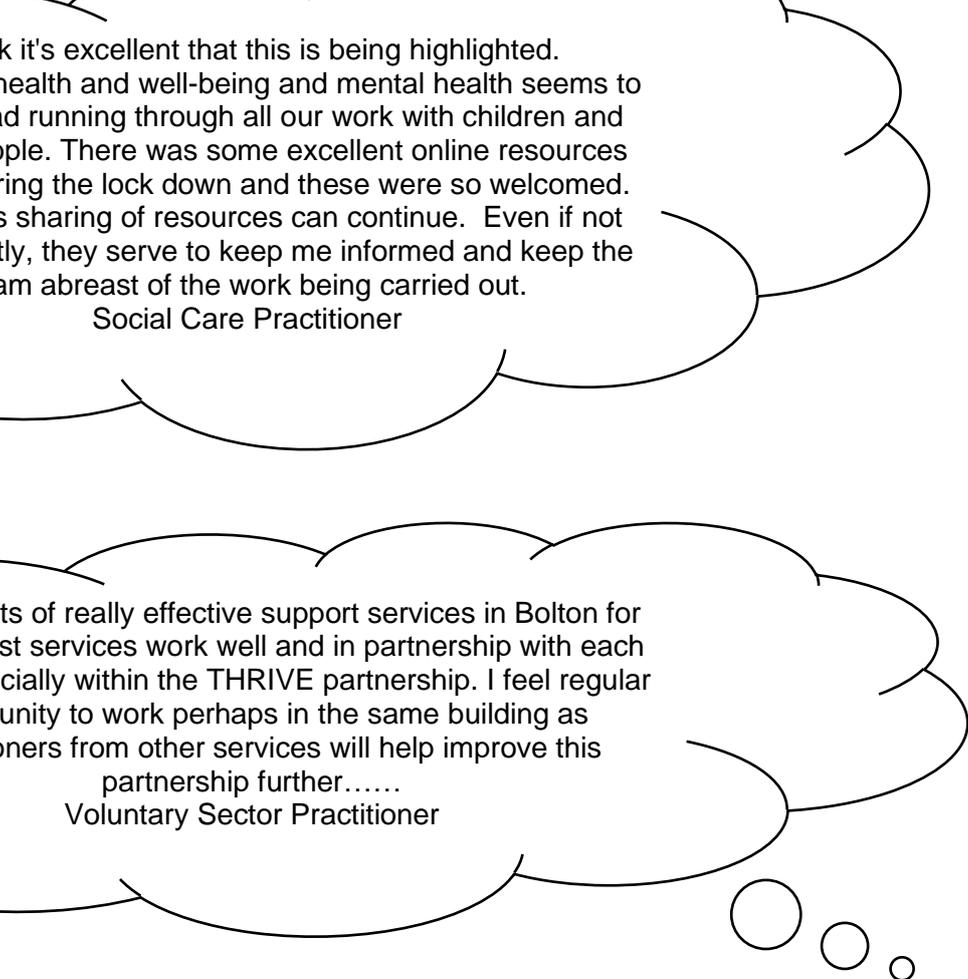
86% of respondents felt confident they could spot emerging signs of mental health needs

93% of respondents felt confident recognising safeguarding concerns linked to mental health



I think it's excellent that this is being highlighted. Emotional health and well-being and mental health seems to be a thread running through all our work with children and young people. There was some excellent online resources shared during the lock down and these were so welcomed. I hope this sharing of resources can continue. Even if not used directly, they serve to keep me informed and keep the team abreast of the work being carried out.

Social Care Practitioner



There is lots of really effective support services in Bolton for CYP....most services work well and in partnership with each other, especially within the THRIVE partnership. I feel regular opportunity to work perhaps in the same building as practitioners from other services will help improve this partnership further.....

Voluntary Sector Practitioner

The initial findings from the survey have identified and confirmed areas of strength but also some key areas for further development; in particular the help and support we offer to parents and carers. Further work is ongoing to fully analyse the survey findings and this will be taken forward via the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Group, with progress reported and tracked by the Children and Young People's Strategic Board.

As a partnership we will be keen for the progress made to date to be sustained and further developed, and that the positive engagement with children to shape local responses continues to be strengthened, as does their role in holding us to account.

Workforce Development

Commissioning and delivering an effective multi-agency safeguarding children training programme and maintaining a local training pool had been a key focus for Bolton Safeguarding Children Board. Bolton's multi-agency training pool consists of over 40 members delivering approximately 70 training courses each year with topics ranging from early help, to child protection, domestic abuse and child exploitation. This programme has been well received by the workforce with high rates of attendance.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 the partnership agreed that all planned face-to-face delivery would be cancelled until July 2020. In doing this we recognised that this would leave a significant gap, perhaps at a time of most need. With this in mind, the partners directed the Multi-agency training officer to explore and identify how staff development could be delivered

during the lockdown and preparing for the likelihood of on-going restrictions. A safeguarding E-learning offer was swiftly collated by the training co-ordinator and promoted across the workforce, via the partnership website. The 'one-stop' e-learning menu brought together in one place relevant on-line safeguarding packages, sourced from recognised and reputable providers.

Alongside the e-learning offer, a series of 'webinar briefings' were scheduled between May and the end of July 2020. In this period 14 webinars were held on topics including domestic abuse, forced marriage, children and young people's emotional health and well-being and child bereavement. A total of 483 delegates registered to attend these events over the spring/early summer period. To ensure we delivered relevant content and maintained the quality of our training offer, particularly as we were commissioning services we had not previously worked with, we sought delegate feedback: -

Child Bereavement Training

- *Truly expert because Shirley was able to put a sensitive and complex emotional issue across with clarity, models, examples and solid, good guidance.*
- *The training met both my expectations and the course objectives and I would certainly look for further training like this both for CPD and more so, to be of sensitive and effective support when it's needed.*
- *I learned that The importance for carers to be honest and not shy away from using the word death. A reminder of the need for honesty alongside nurture and warmth for the process of grieving to take place.*

National Centre for Domestic Violence

- *Tony was great - I appreciated the opportunities provided for participants to ask questions and that we were not overwhelmed with information.*
- *I learnt that someone other than the police can be involved in getting a restraining order etc. And that there are many different sides to domestic abuse.*

Forced Marriage

- *I learned how keeping their (family) honour intact is far more important than anything else, including the safety, happiness, wellbeing and development of their family to the point of severe abuse and murder.*

Female Genital Mutilation

- *This was a refresher for me to remind me of the things that I need to be mindful of as a practitioner. i.e. extended holidays in the school summer break, risks during the pandemic. The flow chart of the GM wide action to be taken will be helpful going forward. i.e. who to contact within my LA.*

Due to the workload and working arrangements during the initial emergence of the pandemic it was recognised that gaps existed as not all courses were able to be easily replicated within an on-line/virtual environment. During August 2020, the multi-agency trainer worked with members of the training pool to identify and prioritise the courses that needed to transfer, namely Advanced Children Protection and Child Exploitation.

We have also published a revised training offer from August 2020 to March 2021, which as a minimum offers 59 trainer lead courses, with capacity to engage a minimum of 1000 practitioners.

Delivering Advanced Child Protection in a Virtual World

Designated Safeguarding Leads in many settings are required to access training that provides them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This training should be updated at least every two years.

As a partnership we recognised from the outset of the pandemic that a significant proportion of practitioners in this role would not be able to evidence compliance with this requirement as their training certificates would be out of date. To address this risk it was agreed: -

- To extend all existing certificates, on request, to the end of September 2020
- To redevelop the current training materials and create an engaging and interactive virtual course

Over the summer the multi-agency training co-ordinator and lead trainer for the course worked together to develop the content and supporting resources. The result being we have turned what was a full day's course into a three-module approach delivered over two weeks: -

- **Week 1, Module 1** – key legislation, significant harm threshold, child's lived experience, making timely and effective child protection referrals
- **Week1/Week 2, Module 2** – self-directed learning; delegates use the week between the sessions to complete tasks related to child protection processes and their roles and responsibilities in this
- **Week 2, Module 3** – delegates reflect on learning re: child protection processes, information sharing, engaging children and young people

From roll-out in early September 2020 we have delivered three Advance Child Protection courses to 68 delegates, evaluations from the sessions have told us: -

- **100% satisfied that course met their expectations and course objectives (80 % strongly agree / 20 % agree)**
- **87% strongly agreeing that the online approach and course structure was effective**
 - **96 % rated the course as great**

"I enjoyed the discussion work and also the homework module as I spent time reading around each meeting."

"The presentations and case studies really helped. The best use of resources during the present Covid restrictions. Thank you."

Learning from Reviews

Safeguarding partners must make arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. A serious child safeguarding case is one in which abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has died or been seriously harmed. Learning from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews forms part of the partnership quality assurance framework.

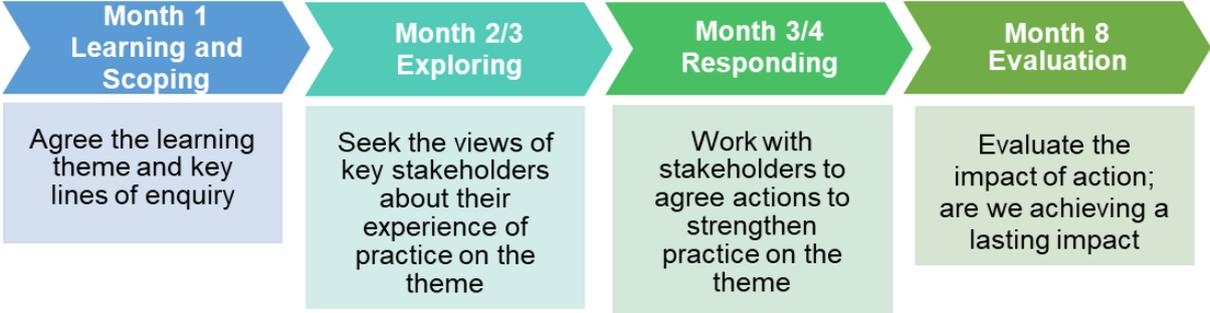
Carrying out learning reviews enables local partners to understand not only what happened but also why things happened as they did. They provide opportunities to reflect on whether or not different systemic approaches or actions are likely to reduce the probability of serious incidents recurring. Following the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the partnership revised its practice review guidance to ensure: -

- Robust and transparent arrangements are in place to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
- Timely and effective Rapid Reviews are completed and where required Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are commissioned
- Learning from reviews leads to improved safeguarding arrangements

Over the last year, ten Rapid Reviews have been completed and submitted to the National Children Safeguarding Panel. Female children accounted for most of the review notifications, with the majority of notifications being made in response to suspected or actual serious harm from abuse or neglect. 40% of notifications related to physical abuse with sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse each accounting for 20%; children’s ages ranged from three months to seventeen years.

From the ten rapid reviews completed, two are progressing to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and these will be completed in 2021; some delay in completing reviews has been experienced owing to the impact of Covid-19. The National Panel have agreed with all our local recommendations and their feedback on the quality of our Rapid Reviews has been positive. Where immediate action was required to safeguard children, the Rapid Review group have ensured this has progressed.

A partnership approach to respond to learning has also been developed and agreed over the first year of the new arrangements. The learning cycle is described below: -



As part of developing our learning model a review of local themes from the last three years was undertaken, in addition to the themes emerging from Rapid Reviews. The purpose of this was to highlight where there may be commonly recurring practice areas. This identified the following: -



We have agreed to focus on 'Information Sharing Across the Multi-agency Network' as our first learning theme and are currently applying our learning model to seek stakeholder views. Given this is the first time we have used the learning approach, we will also reflect on its effectiveness as a model.

Scrutiny and Assurance

The statutory partners made a commitment in their published arrangements to use a range of evidence, including learning from reviews, to help understand how well local safeguarding arrangements are implemented and the impact they make in improving outcomes for children. They committed to developing a partnership quality assurance approach in addition to independent scrutiny. The framework would be delivered over a two-year planned cycle with responsive assurance undertaken as required.

It is fair to say that Covid-19 has impacted significantly on some of our assurance and scrutiny plans, in particular our ambition to complete a peer review by May 2020, but that had to be delayed until August 2020. The purpose of the peer review is to help the safeguarding partnership and component partners reflect on the effectiveness of their children's safeguarding partnership arrangements. This includes:-

- Effectiveness of meeting their statutory responsibilities and how well the partnership has implemented and embedded the requirements of Working Together 2018 (WT18)
- How well they work together as a partnership and understand the impact of their work and of services within the local area
- Effectiveness of specific components of a safeguarding partnership

The approach provides a critical friend in assessing strengths and identifying areas for improvement from the point of view of peer reviewers against their own experiences and government guidance. At the time of writing the annual report we are awaiting a report on the findings from our peer partners; however we have benefitted from early learning from practitioners experiences of the new arrangements.

Peer Review Learning

As part of the peer review process, the partnership were keen to understand practitioner views of the safeguarding arrangements. The survey domains were adapted from the National Children's Bureau (NCB) 'early adopter' survey, originally carried out in February 2019. Schools/ Colleges accounted for 58% of responses, health 14%, Local authority Children's Services 10% and the Voluntary Sector 8%; the remain 10% were made up from GMP, Mental Health Trust, Housing providers, leisure and regulatory services.

The survey told us: -

- 81% of respondents had the view that children are safeguarded effectively or very effectively (73% in the national survey)
- When considering how effective Children's welfare is promoted by services, 78% responded with effective or very effective (75% in the national survey)
- 78% stated that they feel supported or very supported across the partnership and know where to go for Information
- The three challenges to address current safeguarding issues in their area are
 - The right services and resources to safeguard children and how well agencies work together
 - Data and intelligence on emerging safeguarding issues to inform service design and delivery
 - Information sharing at an operational level

It provides assurance that over 80% of respondents are positive that local arrangements keep children safe, however it will be important to understand why the remaining 19% do not feel they are effective.

Highlighted below is an overview of the activity we have completed in the last year, as part of our development for the coming year, the partnership will be identifying how we can progress the activity delayed owing to Covid-19.

PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE

QA Activity	2019			2020									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Partnership intelligence dashboard						Dashboard development - Impacted due to COVID-19 pressures				Q1			Q2
Mystery shopper						Suspended during COVID-19							
Young inspectors / Young Scrutineers	Question Time Event on EHWB					Suspended during COVID-19							
Back to practice / Walk-in the footsteps review						Suspended during COVID-19							
Thematic audits		Thresholds		EHWB					Police protection powers review	CP plan tracking during COVID-19			
Online surveys / questionnaires						EHWB Practitioner survey				BSCP Webinar Feedback	Peer review - Awareness of arrangements		
Compliments / Complaints critical incidents													
Thematic peer review			CSE			BSCP Peer review - delayed due to COVID-19							
Rapid reviews		RR Completed				RR Completed		RR Completed	RR Completed		RR x3 Completed	RR x2 Completed	
Safeguarding assurance from Commissioning													
Section 11													
Assurance areas	EHWB							Early help				Develop revised S11 Approach	
Independent scrutiny							6 month health check - Delayed due to COVID-19					Annual scrutiny - Delayed to January	

Plans for the Coming Year, 2021-2022

It can be seen from the annual report that 2019-20 was a busy year for the newly formed BSCP and that this summary of activity across our key workstreams, provides assurance that partnership arrangements to keep children safe continue to develop and strengthen. We recognise that we have not been able to achieve all out planned work for the year, but that we have adapted to the challenges that have been presented to us in this unprecedented of years.

During 2020-21 the Partnership will drive forward with the strategic priorities and continue with the work of the subgroups, whilst engaging with and listening to the voice of children and young people to reflect their priorities for keeping them safe from harm. Our key aims for 2021-2022 will be: -

- Carry forward assurance activity and in particular the experiences of looked after children
- Maintain a priority focus on neglect and exploitation
- Launch and test effectiveness of our revised threshold document
- Continue to develop and embed the learning model
- Respond to learning from peer review
- Evaluate the impact of financial pressures and explore opportunities for further alignment with other partnerships including Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding A
- Continue to track and evaluate the impact of Covid-19 on children's safety and welfare

Are you worried about a child?

If you're worried about the safety and wellbeing of a child, it's important to take action.

To discuss your concerns, contact a member of our team on 01204 331500.

For further information about the arrangements, share your experiences of safeguarding in Bolton or get involved in the work we do, contact: -

Phone **01204 337479**

Email **boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk**