Introduction and forewords

This is the first annual report of the new Warrington Safeguarding Partnership (WSP), it covers the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

I welcome this report as Chair of WSP during this set up year. This report recognises the progress WSP has made throughout this year and the challenges that remain that we will continue to address in 2020/21.

At the end of this period the global pandemic Covid-19 affected everyone in the Warrington community. Overnight partners had to change the way many services were delivered, to keeping schools open for key workers’ children and vulnerable children, to working out how to keep services running without face to face contact, to ensuring key workers are able to operate safely within PPE and safeguarding requirements. I believe this brought out the best in our partnership working as everyone has worked together to ensure children remain central to all service and that our approach to protecting the most vulnerable has remained steadfast.

Amanda Amesbury, Chair, Warrington Safeguarding Partnership 2019-2020

I am pleased to report that Warrington Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) has progressed the new Safeguarding Governance arrangements with a spirit of cooperation and openness.

As independent Scrutiny Lead I have worked closely with the new small team of professionals who coordinate the work of the safeguarding Partnership, This team has been strengthened over the period to respond to challenges such as developing the training offer and strengthening the training evaluation process. The annual report contains examples of key data that is shared between partners and reviewed regularly. I am satisfied that the new WSP structures enable partners to maintain a wide view and ensure that services remain responsive to current and emerging risk.

The Partnership has conducted audits focused on themes identified through partnership discussion. These audits have been robust and searching processes. WSP Partners have been candid in identifying areas for improvement and also recognised a huge amount of good practice where it is apparent that safeguarding partners in Warrington are very focused on keeping children safe, often demonstrating great tenacity and dedication in challenging circumstances.

Positive progress has been made in engaging with front line professionals through the Practitioners Forum to ensure that WSP hears from and through them the voice of children and young people and understands the difficulties and risks that they face. There is more to do here and I will continue to work with the WSP in finding the most effective methods of engaging with a very busy working and population.

Richard Strachan, Independent Scrutiny Lead, Warrington Safeguarding Partnership
Who and What is the Warrington Safeguarding Partnership?

This revised strategic partnership replaced the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board and is the mechanism by which the safeguarding partners safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the local area in a coordinated way that reflects local needs.

The Warrington Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) must therefore support and enable a system that:

- Safeguards children and promotes their welfare
- Encourages collaboration between partner organisations and agencies
- Fosters appropriate challenge and accountability
- Develops early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- Promotes learning and reflective practice
- Embeds effective information sharing that supports improvements for families.

WSP wants to work beyond organisational boundaries to ensure effective protection of children by building trusted working relationships with children and their families.

Our core partners are Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cheshire Constabulary (Police), however we engage all local agencies as needed to meet their safeguarding responsibilities. This may be as permanent members of groups within the model or fluid members that are virtually linked, attending specific events or learning processes.

Similarly, there are national bodies that may be required to engage in specific roles at certain times, such as British Transport Police (BTP). A prime example of this is Trafficking or Missing operations where BTP may need to engage and support activity for specific operations.

The locally relevant agencies list is likely to change over time, due to the nature of commissioned services. Therefore, WSP will be promoting that if a service is identified as a relevant agency, it must support the approach. However, those maintaining virtual links will still remain accountable for meeting their statutory safeguarding responsibilities and engaging with the arrangements as requested.
How the partnership works

The partnership arrangements are set out in the Arrangements Document published on the WSP website.

Independent Scrutiny

As set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the decision for how to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny became a local consideration. Warrington Safeguarding Partnership developed a model in which an independent scrutiny lead would be able to gain important insights into how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families. It brought opportunity to talk to practitioners about the partnership and safeguarding activity, and also gain an understanding of the leadership of the partnership. It took the role of critical friend, and asked partners to work reflectively in seeking continuous improvement.

In workshops and at sub-group meetings, partners worked to decide how this could best work for Warrington. They agreed that an independent scrutiny lead would be present at the strategic group, act as a facilitator of the practitioners forum, and participate in multi-agency audits in order to incorporate an objective and broad perspective across all of the work of the partnership.

By April 2020, much of this process was in place and the independent scrutiny lead, Richard Strachan, whose comments about this year’s activity opens this annual report alongside the chair for 2019-20, was recruited during the same time period. We would like to thank Richard for his unflinching and careful advice and challenge, as well as his in-depth and considered feedback after key events such as the early help audit. These perspectives have helped us to understand more deeply the progress that we have made this year and have helped us focus on areas in which we would still like to improve. The role will continue to be developed as we move forward and we look forward to Richard’s feedback and advice during 2020-21.
Safeguarding in Warrington—Population data

WSP produces an annual safeguarding profile (link) which captures all of the data around safeguarding activity and population information. Key data shown below gives a snapshot of the data for the end of March 2020 alongside annual data from 2019-20.

Key themes to note from 2019-20 are that the number of Children in Need has decreased slightly, the number subject to a Child Protection Plan has decreased significantly and the number of Children in Care at the end of March has also decreased from the previous years. There were high numbers of children open to Youth Work Services and Family Support Services.

On a quarterly basis updates are provided by partners in relation to these key measures and subject to scrutiny through the Quality Assurance group.
Safeguarding in Warrington—Performance and activity measures

There are a number of measures that the WSP monitor across the partnership. These are all included within the Safeguarding Profile report published on the WSP Website.

Some of these are included here as part of the annual report as key areas of focus of safeguarding activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q1 2019/20</th>
<th>Q2 2019/20</th>
<th>Q3 2019/20</th>
<th>Q4 2019/20</th>
<th>Total 2019/20</th>
<th>DOT from 2018/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Help Assessments completed</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to Children’s Social Care</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>1658</td>
<td>🔺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-referrals</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>🔸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Plans started</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>🔼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd or subsequent CPP</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>🔼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children starting in care</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>🔼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical part of monitoring these measures however is not the numbers, but the scrutiny and challenge they are subject to as part of the Quality Assurance framework. Partners share their information, through the use of Storyboards and their performance reporting in order for all agencies to have oversight of performance and any issues that are arising. Partners work together to support each other to address areas of concern and to promote achievements and successes across the partnership.
Progress on our priorities

Our vision is:

To ensure every child and young person in Warrington is safe, healthy and has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our priorities were:

- Establishing an effective Practitioners Forum
- Revising the local review process for cascade of learning
- Establish a learning framework
- Upskilling the workforce with a local training offer

Key outcomes we want to achieve based on this are:
- Widespread awareness of good practice
- Improved recognition of abuse and neglect
- Professional access to quality core training
- Help offered to children and young people in need

Develop a challenge and assurance approach

Our main areas of work will see us:
- Ensuring partners work fully to safeguard children
- Establishing a quality assurance framework to measure success
- Reviewing partner data that reflects safeguarding in Warrington
- Launch the neglect strategy and Graded Care Profile 2 tool.

Key outcomes we want to achieve based on this are:
- Better experiences for service users
- Safeguarding is part of everyday practice
- Understanding of local priorities, ensuring appropriately targeted resources
- Strong partnership approach to resolve issues in Warrington

Develop our model and embed a new way of working

Our main areas of work will see us:
- Create a dynamic and responsive strategic safeguarding partnership
- Identify the key partners and what they need to do
- Work with service users to build strengths and support networks
- Ensure adult services are engaged in the partnership

Key outcomes we want to achieve based on this are:
- Awareness of WSP throughout Warrington
- Agencies fulfilling responsibilities according to safeguarding agenda
- Service users enabled to achieve potential
- Partnership can identify and respond to local needs
Priority 1: Create a Culture of Learning that seeks to improve our practice

Our main areas of work were to:

- Establishment an effective Practitioners Forum
- Revise the local review process for cascade of learning
- Establish a learning framework
- Upskill the workforce with a local training offer

What we have achieved:

The Practitioners Forum
The development of the Practitioners Forum has been a key focus for the year. Its aims being to provide a meaningful engagement with practitioners, and to enable their voice to be heard at a Strategic level to hold the partnership to account.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Process
The process for responding to requests for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review was agreed in principle by the partnership and these principles were used for cases referred to in the case review section of this report. Further work will need to be undertaken to provide further structure around the review process. This will be a priority for 2020.

Training Offer
In 2019/20 690 delegates attended multi-agency training. 37 multi-agency training safeguarding courses were offered during the year. Courses included Responding to Domestic Abuse, Early Help and Safeguarding Children, Sexual Violence Workshop, Safer Recruitment, Licensed GCP2 (Graded Care Profile), Working Together to Safeguard Children, Presenting Evidence in Court and an Introduction to Attachment. These were delivered by the WSP in-house Training Pool. The challenge moving forward will be to retain and strengthen the membership of the training pool in order to provide training that is needed.

Ongoing work:

- Development of the Training Offer
- Reestablishment of the WSP Training Pool
- Rewrite the WSP Training Strategy
- Effective evaluation and quality assurance process is devised that considers the measurement of impact of training over time.
- Development of the Practitioners Forum
Priority 2: Develop and Challenge and Assurance approach

Our main areas of work were to:

- Ensure partners work fully to safeguard children
- Establish a quality assurance framework to measure success
- Review partner data that reflects safeguarding in Warrington
- Launch the Neglect Strategy and Graded Care Profile 2

Ongoing work:

- Embed the use of the GCP2 tool across agencies and increase the use of the tool
- Review the success of the Neglect Strategy
- Refine the process for defining and operating a multi-agency audit
- Continued development of the processes used to analyse and challenge qualitative and quantitative safeguarding data provided by partners

What we have achieved:

Quality Assurance Framework
The WSP agreed a quality assurance framework through which the work of the partnership and its members could be analysed, intelligence gathered and business planning could be developed. This is available on the WSP website. A key element of this was the formation of the Safeguarding Profile (link) and intelligence gathering using the Storyboards for each agency/sector to provide their information to the partnership.

Audit Days
In April 2019 and February 2020 multi-agency audit days were held in relation to the themes of Fabricated and Induced Illness and Early Help. Briefings have since been published on the WSP website. The process of audit was informed by feedback from practitioners and this is further developing our process to share the learning from the cases audited.

Independent Scrutiny
The process for Independent Scrutiny was a key work programme for the partnership during the year. The agreed model (included within the revised Arrangements Document) includes different strands of Independent Scrutiny from lay members, practitioners, families and the key role of the Independent Scrutiny Lead.

Priority Focus: Neglect
Neglect was identified as an area for priority focus in the 2019-20 business plan, with key activity such as launching the Neglect Strategy and the implementation of the Graded Care Profile 2 across the partnership. Three lunchtime workshops were held in autumn 2019 with 78 practitioners attending to launch the Neglect Strategy. 19 practitioners were trained by NSPCC as Trainers for GCP2. 17 GCP2 Licensed Practitioner courses were held in November – March with 228 practitioners trained across a range of agencies.
Priority 3: Develop our model and embed a new way of working

Our main areas of work were to:

- Create a dynamic and responsive strategic safeguarding partnership
- Identify the key partners and what they need to do
- Work with service users to build strengths and support networks
- Ensure adult services are engaged in the partnership

Ongoing work:

- Adult services to be engaged in the partnership
- Development of a Citizens Forum
- Voice of the child is at the centre of the work of the partnership

What we have achieved:

Developing our model

The intention of the partnership model was to be reflexive and change as the needs of the partnership required. Each of the groups has developed their terms of reference and amended them in line with the model of Independent Scrutiny as that was agreed in December 2019. The Arrangements document for the partnership was also updated in December 2019 to ensure that it reflected how the partnership had developed.

The Safeguarding Partnerships team, who support the work of the WSP alongside that of the WSAB, were appointed during the past 12 months, with a new structure and some new personnel. Reduced capacity during recruitment processes has delayed some progress, however since January 2020 the team is fully established and progressing priority areas of work, including embedding how the model works.

Priority Focus: Knife Crime

In response to concerns from the Youth Council a scoping exercise was undertaken across all agencies to look at the level of knife crime in Warrington, and what was being done about this. This linked to work being undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership, in combination with the Cheshire Constabulary Knife Crime Strategy.

Understanding the Early Help Agenda

Members of the WSP sit on the developing Early Help Partnership Board to ensure that the two partnerships work together and with shared aims. Early Help was also chosen as the focus for the WSP Audit in February 2020 and key learning from the audit will be shared with the Early Help Partnership Board.
Case Reviews

The partnership has a legal duty to undertake Practice Learning Reviews where neglect or abuse is suspected, a child has either died or been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern about the way in which partners have worked together.

As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 the partnership should promptly undertake a rapid review of cases, in line with any guidance published by the National Panel. The aim of this rapid review is to enable safeguarding partners to:

• Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time;

• Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children’s safety and share any learning appropriately;

• Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;

• Decide what steps they should take next, including whether or not to undertake a Safeguarding Practice Review.

In the year 2019 / 2020, the partnership published a serious case review, Child R. the published report can be found here.

Child R

The decision to undertake a Serious Case review was taken by the Chair of WSCB. The review considered whether there were local lessons in relation to working with neglect, and found that in this case a more holistic assessment would have supported a more productive plan, better communication between early help and CSC could have made a difference in the case, and continuing to develop understanding around the importance of recognising risk factors in neglect would be an important part of learning arising out of the Child R review. It was recommended that the neglect strategy was revised, that the local authority should provide assurances to the partnership about how cases are handed between child in need plans and early help, and for the inclusion of steps requiring routine communication with parents about decisions impacting on exercise of parental responsibility. At the time of writing this report, the action plan developing and embedding the learning identified in the SCR has been completed and agreed by the partnership.
WSP Training and Development

Training opportunities offered through WSP are designed to meet the diverse needs of staff and volunteers at different levels within the wide range of organisations that work with children, young people or adult family members.

The WSP training programme focuses on key strategic priorities, with learning from Local and National Safeguarding Practice Reviews being fully integrated into training material.

In 2019/20, 690 delegates attended multi-agency training.

37 multi-agency training safeguarding courses were offered during the year. Courses included Responding to Domestic Abuse, Early Help and Safeguarding Children: A Shared Responsibility (Basic Awareness), Sexual Violence Workshop, Safer Recruitment, Licensed GCP2 (Graded Care Profile) Training, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Presenting Evidence in Court, and an introduction to Attachment. These were all delivered by the WSP in-house Training Pool. The challenge moving forward will be to retain and strengthen the membership of the training pool in order to provide training that is needed.

During 2019 / 2020 the Working Together to Safeguard Children training was strengthened to include practice gaps gleaned in audits. Two such areas being the inclusion of the escalation policy, high support, high challenge and building relationships with multi-agency partners.

The WSP recognises that training is only one way in which practitioners develop expertise; with learning often being the result of a complex set of experiences that include the quality of line management, effective and reflective supervision, peer support and self-learning.

It has been recognised that the evaluation process for training and development and measurement of the longer term impact on practice has not been well established. This is a gap, as we need to evidence the links between improved practice and better outcomes for children and young people. As such it is a recommendation that during 2020 / 2021 an effective evaluation and quality assurance process is devised that considers the measurement of impact over time.
Campaigns and Awareness Raising

The WSP have continued to support a range of campaigns to increase awareness across the borough, below are the key areas that we have focussed on throughout 2019/20:

**Domestic Abuse**

Throughout 2019/20 the WSP focussed on increasing awareness of Domestic Abuse across Warrington for both partners and the general public. The awareness raising took place in a range of ways including a pop up event at Warrington Hospital, the WSP Team alongside Safeguarding Nurses and the Hospital IDVA provided staff and patients with the information and resources.

**ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope**

The WSP have promoted the ICON Campaign sharing useful information and resources to practitioners and using our social media channels to increase awareness to the general public, sharing informative videos and helpful resources. We will continue to promote and increase awareness of ICON during 2020/21.

**Safer Sleep Week**

Throughout 9th-13th March 2020 the WSP participated in the Lullaby Trust’s Safer Sleep Week that focussed on surviving sleep deprivation. Tiredness can be overwhelming and sometimes lack of sleep can make safer sleeping difficult, WSP partners increased awareness

**Cheshire Tackling Weapons Conference**

**Operation Warrington Safe**

**Online Safety**
Learning from the frontline

During the period two multi-agency audit days were held, with the themes of Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII) and Early Help. The process of audit includes a mixture of management led reviews of the cases and meeting with practitioners to discuss their views of the case and the work undertaken.

Learning from the audits is provided in briefings published online, and shared across the partnership.

- Fabricated and Induced Illness Multi-agency audit briefing
- Early Help Multi-agency audit briefing

Key Themes & Actions Taken

Both audits linked to the use of the Escalation Policy and practitioners confidence and understanding of using this when there is professional challenge or disagreement. As a result the WSP are reviewing and relaunching the Escalation Policy as a priority in 2020-21.

Audits identified that the Working Together training course required further development to include more information on Information Sharing. In addition a session of the Practitioners Forum was focused on Information Sharing.

A key piece of the work undertaken as a result of the FII Audit was the review of the FII Protocol. Finalising and launching this is a priority for 2020-21.

It was identified that for some families where the parents/ adults involved have complex needs that the focus is not always on the child at the centre of the plan. As a result it was identified that practitioners needed further support in relation to capturing the lived experience and voice of the child. This is a key piece of work for 2020-21.

It was also identified that professionals needed more opportunities to develop their professional networks and relationships. As a result, the development of the Practitioners Forum remains a priority for 2020-21.
The Year Ahead

Covid-19 impact
As we went to print this report, the global response to the devastating coronavirus pandemic had been in full swing for several months, and there hadn’t been an aspect of any of the work of partners, including within strategic safeguarding, that had not been touched by changes in practice as a result of this response. It is inevitable that next year’s report will be particularly focussed on all of the many ways these changes affected practice, including those areas in which we found new ways of working, found examples of good practice and also identified areas in which we need to improve.

Case Reviews
Case AB was the first child safeguarding practice review undertaken by the partnership under the new arrangements, this will be reported on in detail in next year’s report, in which we will also look at how the partnership is responding to the new approach to reviews under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Training and Impact
2020-2021 will see development of the training offer and the likelihood of a transition to provision of virtual training for a short time. The training pool will be increased to allow for provision of good quality training that addresses local practice and need. The training strategy and competency framework for multi-agency training will be rewritten. Effective evaluation and quality assurance processes will be developed to consider the measurement of impact of training over time. WSP Impact group will continue to respond to actions from the Early Help and Contextual Safeguarding Audit. Development work on the WSP website will continue to provide the Warrington workforce with good quality resources and easily accessible advice and guidance on all safeguarding matters.

Quality Assurance
The focus for the Quality Assurance activity for 2020-21 will be to continue the drive to assure the partnership that agencies in Warrington are working to Safeguard children and deliver high quality services. This will be undertaken through the routine exercises such as Section 11 and Section 175 audits and the now established quarterly storyboards. Testing of the systems and practice will be undertaken through audit activity which will be developed further to look at feedback from children and families. This will feed into the work around developing a Young People’s Advisory Forum and supporting the WSP to achieve its aim of being driven by the voice of children and families.