

Annual Report 2020-21

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership





Introduction and Forewords

Welcome to the annual report of Warrington Safeguarding Partnership for 2020-21.

It is, of course, impossible to talk about last year without reflecting on the impact of the most serious and far-reaching emergency we have had to deal with in most of our careers in our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The potential impact on safeguarding, and the risks presented through this for children, young people and their families were sudden, and required a careful, coordinated multi-agency response to tackle.

Reflecting on this period in August 2021, when most legal restrictions on people's everyday lives have been lifted, we can still see how significant the impact of Covid-19 is, and many challenges continue to face practitioners day in, day out. But looking back, I am proud of the response we made collectively across our partnership last year, when we recall how we rallied together, almost always at first working in new and unfamiliar ways so that we could develop assurances against areas of increasing concern where there was a reduction in normal service levels, narrowing our visibility on those most at risk. In the face of these unprecedented difficulties, this report will show that our partnership made very good progress against our safeguarding priorities

*Michelle Creed,
Chair of Warrington Safeguarding Partnership 2020-21*



This year has seen unprecedented demands placed on all safeguarding partners in Warrington with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been an apparent impact on the safety of children and young people with numbers of referrals increasing and as a result more children entering services. Partners reacted swiftly to the pandemic adopting regular telephone and then video conferencing to maintain strategic safeguarding arrangements that ensured all partners were effectively engaged and informed. Independent Scrutiny was fully involved in these arrangements. Audit and review work has continued throughout the period with a strong focus being maintained on learning and improvement. These arrangements have themselves been subject to independent scrutiny and have been judged robust and searching processes focused on learning.

It is reassuring that partners have been vigilant to the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and worked hard to understand and mitigate risks such as the cessation of many face to face interventions. Technology has been used to good effect to ensure continuity of strategic safeguarding, however it is hoped that a return to some 'in the same room' meetings will support the timely completion of some of the more challenging learning circles. The role of Independent Scrutiny in the partnership has been reviewed and developed throughout the year, more information on this is contained in this report.

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership has worked effectively throughout this extraordinary period; partners have continued to challenge and support each other identifying learning that I am confident will strengthen the safeguarding of children and young people.

*Richard Strachan, Independent Scrutiny Lead,
Warrington Safeguarding Partnership*





Who and What is Warrington Safeguarding Partnership?

The Warrington Safeguarding Partnership replaced the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board in 2019 and is the mechanism by which the safeguarding partners safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Warrington 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 aims to work beyond organisational boundaries to deliver 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).

The locally relevant agencies list is likely to change over time, due to the nature of commissioned services. WSP promotes that if a service is identified as a relevant agency, it must support the WSP approach. Those maintaining virtual links remain accountable for meeting their statutory safeguarding responsibilities and engaging with the arrangements as requested. A list of partner agencies involved in the WSP during 2020-21 are included as Appendix A.



How the Partnership Works

The partnership arrangements are set out in the Arrangements Document.

Diagram 1: Structure of the WSP

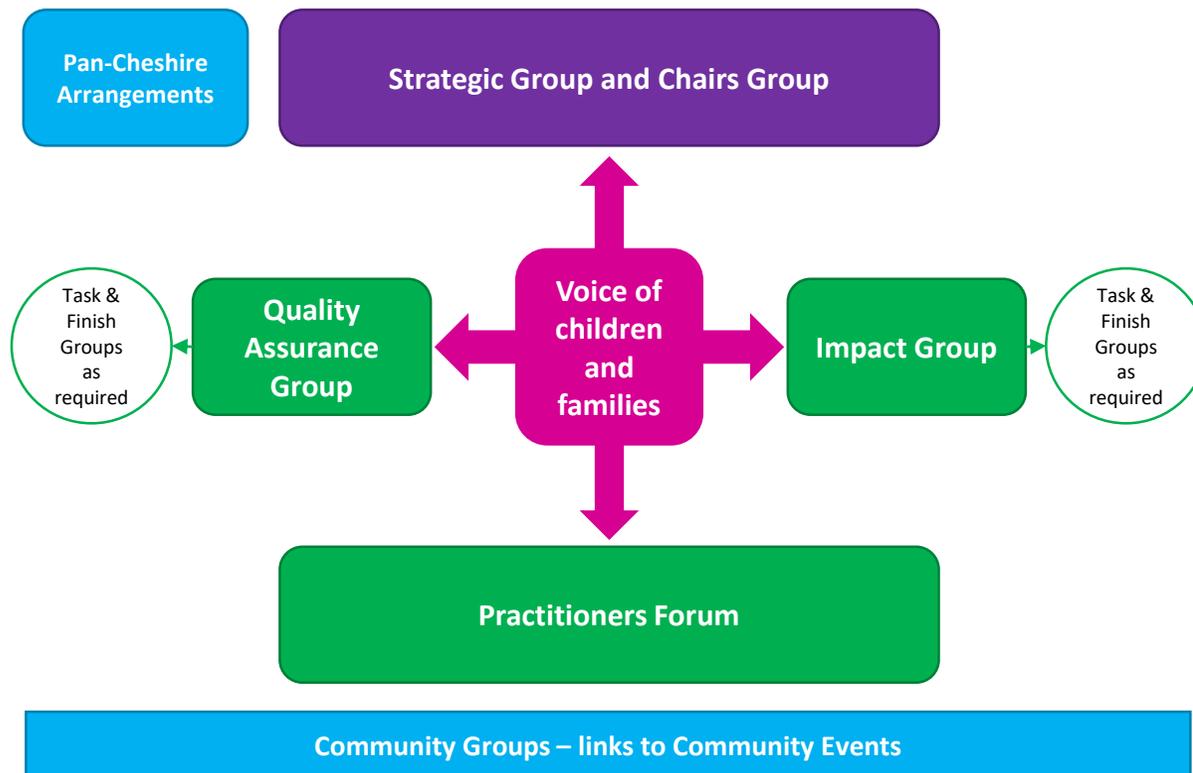


Table 1: Groups of the WSP

Strategic Group	Strategic leaders from each of the core partners, along with the Independent Scrutiny Lead, Lay Member, representative from the third sector and the Cabinet Lead Member for Children’s Services. This group is responsible for ensuring all agencies work together to meet the needs of families and children.
Chairs Group	Provides an ongoing means by which the chairs of different WSP sub-groups can collaborate, discuss and address issues.
Quality Assurance Group	Includes senior managers from partner agencies to share intelligence and monitor safeguarding activity and practices, leads on audit work and makes recommendations for improvement when needed.
Impact Group	A forum to lead on practice issues, sharing good practice and learning across the multi-agency partnership. This group leads on the development of multi-agency procedures and training.
Practitioners Forum	This group is made up of frontline staff; sharing their experiences and offering feedback on changes and proposals. This group provides challenge and support the partnership to implement change.



Independent Scrutiny

The role of Independent Scrutiny has been reviewed and developed throughout the year. The Independent Scrutiny Lead (ISL) and Lay Member for the partnership have both remained fully informed and engaged throughout the year and have been well supported by the partnership team in adapting to video meeting technology.

The ISL has been a member of the WSP Chairs Group ensuring visibility at strategic level of risks, issues and importantly the service responses to the pandemic related issues. This has ensured that senior officers from all services have maintained a partnership wide view of safeguarding and that progress has been continually reviewed.

The ISL has worked with the partnership support team to develop the Practitioners Forum and has shared the role of facilitating the group. The Practitioners Forum is now becoming an active and well supported group with a wide range of frontline practitioners providing valuable feedback and ideas to develop safeguarding practice.

WSP has continued to conduct thematic multi-agency audits. The audits have been conducted using video meeting technology; a development that required a great deal of planning and preparation by the partnership support team. The ISL observed all stages of a sample of case audits in the thematic multi-agency audit. The ISL provided feedback reports focusing on the effectiveness of the audit process and making recommendations for improvement. The ISL found that all the multi-agency audits were robust and searching processes. The audit process, despite some logistic challenges, had particular strengths in promoting a family focused approach and supporting a more informed level of professional curiosity.

The role of independent scrutiny in Practice Learning Review processes has continued to develop with the ISL sitting on panel review meetings to provide assurance and supportive challenge. WSP has continued to progress these important reviews and to progress the learning from them. The ISL continues to monitor the conduct of review processes and service responses to the learning outcomes, such as the development of improved learning briefing and communication tools. Some aspects of these review processes have been less easy to manage without the opportunity to hold any 'in the same room' meetings. It is hoped that as the pandemic measures ease, that partners will be able to access the most appropriate meeting environment for progressing what can be very sensitive and challenging interactions.



COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying movement restrictions that became necessary have had an unprecedented and extraordinary impact on all aspects of day-to-day life and behaviours. In 2020-21, whilst this picture emerged and the local response developed, there were ongoing concerns about how children and young people may experience different or more abuse or neglect due to changes caused by this impact. It is important for safeguarding partners to understand what happened, and continues to happen, to respond to changing safeguarding needs, learn lessons for future Covid-19 or other outbreaks and consider the longer-term impact of the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, there were concerns that safeguarding issues were not being identified or reported, particularly due to reduced 'face-to-face' contact between children, young people, families and professionals. There continues to be increased concern regarding the ongoing impact of social isolation and the changing risks of abuse. Throughout the national response to the pandemic, professionals working in partnership in Warrington remained vigilant with respect to changes in safeguarding demand and activity when lockdown restrictions were eased or increased and face-to-face social and professional contact fluctuated.

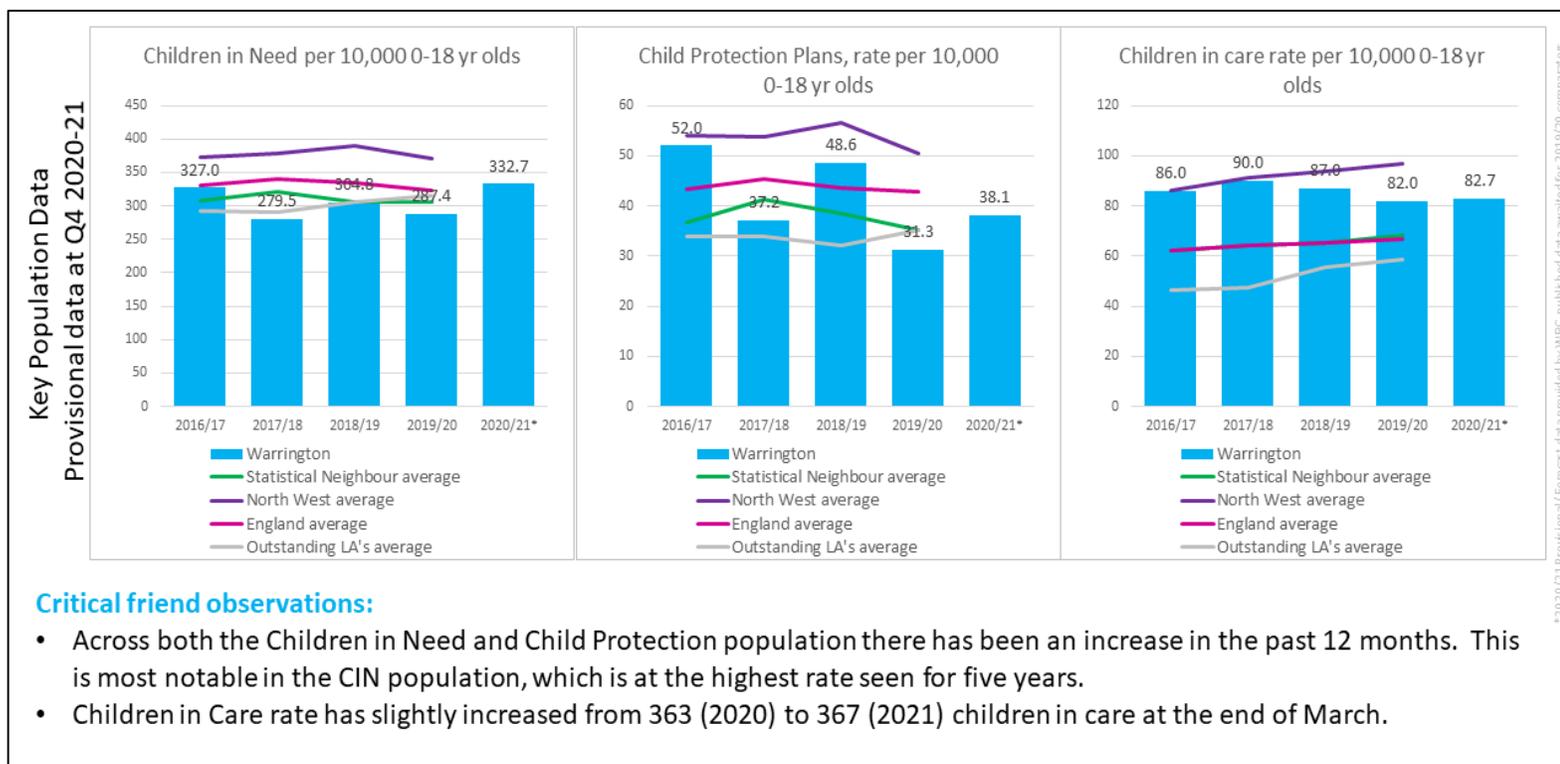
In terms of partnership goals, Covid-19 measures affected all of our priority activity. For priority 1, the restrictions had a significant impact on the progress, as most community forums and engagement groups were unable to meet. In February 2021 the WSP felt able to recommence this work through virtual means. Research was undertaken to look at models used by other areas to engage children, young people and community groups and lessons learnt by other areas were shared. Priority 2 saw some of our efforts to support practitioners to work together hampered, and we go into this in more detail later in the report. The rollout of GCP2 training was temporarily put on hold.

But safeguarding partners responded quickly to the challenges of Covid-19, stepping up strategic multi-agency meetings to a weekly cycle, linking in carefully with adult services, working with schools, colleges and academies to increase vision of those children most at risk. Regular domestic abuse surgeries, virtual drop-ins via social media, and tactical meetings helped to manage surges in caseloads across agencies. Use of ICT, and development and rapid take-up of video-conferencing, meant there was only a short hiatus of multi-agency safeguarding groups meeting, and the intensity of the measures put in place during Covid-19 caused our partnerships to review its arrangements and institute a new business management-focussed executive sub-group sponsored by the chair.

Some of the challenges remain, and at time of writing this report, the intensity of activity responding to measures where Covid-19 is a causative factor is still high, but across all agencies Warrington can reflect proudly on a coordinated, well-managed strategic safeguarding response to the local impact of this unprecedented pandemic.

Safeguarding in Warrington – Population Data

WSP produces an annual safeguarding profile 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 2021 alongside annual data from 2020-21.



There was a significant increase in the number of referrals during 2020-21 which has led to the highest rate of referrals to Children’s Social Care in the past five years (422.8 per 10,000 0-18 year olds).

There has been a corresponding increase in the number of children in need, with 1477 recorded as children in need at the end of March 2021 and the number of children subject to a child protection plan; 169 at the end of March 2021.

The number of children in care has not seen the same increases. The rate has increased slightly from 82.0 to 82.7 and there were 367 children in care at the end of March 2021.

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.

	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21	Total 2020/21*	DOT from 2019/20
Early Help Assessments completed	103	110	103	131	447	↗
Referrals to Children’s Social Care	399	489	411	578	1877	↗
Re-referrals	24%	19%	14%	20%	19%	↘
Child Protection Plans started	33	73	38	33	177	↗
2 nd or subsequent CPP	15%	22%	21%	30%	22%	↗
Children starting in care	22	33	25	25	105	↘

* These numbers are based on provisional data and may be subject to change when the finalised data is published

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 for the partnership. Partners share their information, through the use of storyboards and performance reporting, in order for all agencies to have oversight of performance and any issues that are arising. Partners work together to address areas of concern and to promote achievements and successes across the partnership.



Progress on Our Priorities

The WSP developed a new Business plan for the period 2020-22 and the priorities changed to reflect the needs presenting for the partnership.

The vision for the partnership is

Children and young people in Warrington are safe, healthy and have the opportunity to reach their potential.

The priorities identified are:

The work of the partnership is driven by the voice of children and families

The partnership will support all agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children

The partnership will drive continual learning to improve practice in Warrington

The partnership will develop services and responses in needs identified

A copy of the full plan, including how we plan to achieve these priorities and the expected outcomes can be found on the WSP website [\(link to Business Plan\)](#)



Priority 1: The work of the partnership is driven by the voice of children and families

Our Plan

- Children and Young People to influence the WSP functions through the creation of a Young People's Advisory Forum
- Opportunity is given for children to co-design their page of the WSP website
- Partner agencies to share service user feedback to shape the strategic direction of the WSP
- Develop links with community forums to consult on safeguarding issues, use feedback to assist WSP to respond to the safeguarding priorities
- Develop links with community forums to promote the work of the WSP
- Feedback from children and families to be part of the quality assurance framework including contribution to the learning from case reviews and audits

What We Achieved

After the Contextual Safeguarding themed multi-agency audit, further discussions were held about receiving feedback from the children, young people and carers involved. It was decided that each theme and case for audit should be looked at individually to look for the best way to gather feedback. We were unable to integrate this into that audit, however that is planned for the future audits.

During the year, the WSP revised the guidance for how they carry out Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which included within the process contact with parents, carers and children. Documentation to support contact with parents and carers was produced, to support that engagement, and used with Case AK which is currently subject to a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (see Learning from Practice Section).

Ongoing Work for 2021-22

A task and finish group has been arranged for April 2021 with representatives from a number of children, young people and parent/ carer groups to co-produce how we will deliver this priority



Priority 2: The partnership will support all agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children

Our Plan

- Promote and improve understanding of professional challenge and escalation
- Development of a Practitioners Forum that allows multi-agency discussion and challenge which shapes strategic action
- Raise awareness of Safeguarding Children and the role of the partnership to the children's and adults workforce
- Promote the importance of timely information sharing. Data Protection Legislation and fears it must not be a barrier to sharing information
- Improve multi-agency working across children's and adults services, through promotion of a "Think Family, Think Relationships, Think Safeguarding" all age approach

What We Achieved

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership reviewed and revised the escalation policy, in consultation with the Practitioners Forum to create a new [Professional Challenge and Escalation Policy](#) that has since been agreed across Cheshire. Existing training was updated to include more focus on professional challenge. Audits and case reviews continue to test out practitioners understanding and use of professional challenge and escalation, and as a result this will remain work that the partnership need to continue.

Practitioners' Forum continued to be developed through 2019-20. Movement restrictions due to Covid-19 meant that we moved the forum online, which helped participation. We found that practitioners responded well to proposals to have a more regular and shorter forum session, moving from twelve weekly to six weekly and sessions lasting one hour instead of two hours. The session were based around lunchtimes, as practitioners had told us this meant it would be easier to attend. Initially sessions of this type became more didactic, whereas the partnership's goals for practitioners forum was not that this should be an extension of training, but an opportunity for practitioners to share good practice, concerns and provide challenge against WSP plans and recommendations. Several plans were put in place for further amendments to the management of the forum for 2020-21, and we will update on progress against this in next year's report.

Case review work in 2021-22 provided evidence that more work was required across children's and adults services to improve multi-agency working, identification of risks and consideration of the lived experience of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. This will be a priority for 2021-22.

Improving practitioners understanding and confidence about Information Sharing has been tackled in a number of ways. Working Together to Safeguard Children training was revised to include a section on Information Sharing.

Ongoing Work for 2021-22

The WSP & WSAB newsletter will include a 'Spotlight on' professional challenge and escalation in June 2021. It will also be a topic of discussion at the Practitioners Forum to understand the barriers that practitioners have in accessing or using the policy, which will inform future training and awareness raising work.

Further work planned in relation to Information Sharing, includes the provision of a 7 minute brief for all practitioners, and promotion of the principles of information sharing within the WSP and WSAB Newsletter.

There is also some planned work to promote the WSP across the whole workforce. This will include information sharing, escalation and key messages that the WSP feel practitioners need to be aware of, alongside the message of the purpose and role of the WSP. Planned work for the next 12 months includes working with the Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board around the **Think Family, Think Relationships, Think Safeguarding** approach.



Priority 3: The partnership will drive continual learning to improve practice in Warrington

Our Plan

- Website development to include resources and guidance for practitioners including promotion of policy and procedures.
- Safeguarding partners should take account of the findings from their own local reviews and from all national reviews, with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally.
- Develop and manage a training programme that meets required standards and locally identified needs.
- Through the Quality Assurance Framework scrutinise and challenge performance; identify, disseminate and embed lessons and evaluate the impact on outcomes.
- A Training Quality Assurance process to be developed to address the relevance, currency and accuracy of course material and the quality of training.
- Write and implement a multi-agency agreed Training Strategy.

What We Achieved

The WSP Website - Several improvements have been made to the existing website, namely specific pages for children and young people to access with advice and support on various topics including sexual exploitation, bullying and knife crime and gangs. Improvements have also been made for professionals, with pages on the Practitioners Forum, Prevent, Voice of the Child and Quality Assurance. That said, it is acknowledged that there are further improvements to be made in terms of branding and additional information. This will be achieved in the next year through sourcing an independent website provider. Co-design work will take place so that the website development is informed by the views of children and young people.

Learning from Local and National Reviews - A cascade learning assurance tool has been developed this year to assure the partnership that learning from local reviews and audits and National reviews is embedded.

Training Programme - Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions, a large proportion of face to face training had to be cancelled during the earlier part of the year. Once familiarity with virtual technology had been established the partnership were able to host a range of virtual training events that were well attended. Over the course of the year, new training topics were added to the training plan specifically, domestic abuse and its impact on victims and children, MARAC and safety planning, ICON and understanding and responding to Modern Slavery and Trafficking. The WSP also delivered a train the trainer event on Voice of the Child.

Working Together to Safeguard Children Training continues to be responsive to reflect local and National Learning, in particular the inclusion of the use of escalation policy, importance of information sharing and use of GCP2 tool in Warrington.



Priority 3: continued

What We Achieved cont.

During the course of the year a Learning Needs Analysis was conducted that highlighted four priorities:

1. Assessment and Risk of Adults who sexually harm
2. Bonding and Attachment
3. Reducing parental conflict
4. Safeguarding children at risk of Fabricated and Induced Illness

Next year's training plan will see the development of these courses to be delivered virtually, in addition to others; Female Genital Mutilation and harmful practices, Think Family, Trauma Informed Practice and Introduction to Warrington Safeguarding Partnership.

Training Quality Assurance Framework and Process - Coinciding with the move to Virtual training and training evaluation being done on line, the evaluation form was amended to capture key aspects of learning encouraging the learner to become more reflective about anticipated changes in practice. This year has seen the production of the first WSP Training Evaluation report (Q4) detailing a comprehensive evaluation of each training course by quarter, including understanding the longer term impact of training on practice and how we will seek to monitor change in practice. The start of next year will see the production of a quality assurance strategy for training provision.

Training Strategy - The WSP training strategy has been rewritten and agreed by multi-agency partners. It has reinstated the use of training levels 1-5 which are mapped against the intercollegiate document for health.

Ongoing Work for 2021-22

- Procurement and development of a new joint WSP and Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board website, which is co-designed to inform content and accessibility
- Further development of the WSP Training plan, incorporating a hybrid model of delivery. This will include a comprehensive roll out of Trauma informed practice training across the children's and adult's workforce and think family
- Development of a quality assurance process for Level 1 training across the partnership to ascertain that basic safeguarding training content is accurate, up to date and relevant
- Development of the assurance process for the embedding of learning from audits, local and national reviews



Priority 4: The partnership will develop services and responses to needs identified

NEGLECT

Our Plan

- Review and evaluate the success of the current Neglect Strategy
- Continue with the WSP offer of Neglect / GCP2 training for all staff

What We Achieved

Planned GCP2 training was put on hold in line with the restrictions. There were regular meetings of the Training Pool to look at alternative methods of delivery, but not all trainers had access to Microsoft Teams to deliver the training virtually. Some agencies were able to provide internal training via video conferencing and as a result some agencies were able to increase their cohort of licensed practitioners. By the end of March 2021 Warrington had trained 335 practitioners in using the licensed GCP2 profile to assess neglect.

Evidenced use of the profile increased during 2020-21, with 167 profiles reported being used during the whole year. The WSP monitor this on a quarterly basis and the type of neglect where there are the most concerns. Of the profiles completed in 2020-21 41% had concerns about Physical neglect, 36% safety concerns and 25% developmental concerns.

Whilst the licensed GCP2 multi-agency training was paused, there were a number of Neglect lunchtime workshops held virtually during November, December and February. These well attended workshops supported practitioners to understand the current strategy and how they might respond to a case of neglect.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Our Plan

- Contribute to the review and evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and develop the future multi-agency response for Domestic Abuse

What We Achieved

This year a new Domestic Abuse Arrangements Manager joined the Safeguarding Partnerships team. By March 2021, several internal processes had been created including a daily domestic abuse meeting, a review of commissioning activity, a redesign of governance arrangements and the creation of new groups within the Domestic Abuse partnership; a providers' forum and a survivors group.



Priority 4: The partnership will develop services and responses to needs identified

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Our Plan

- Develop a clear understanding of the range and extent of child exploitation in Warrington
- Embed clear lines of accountability for reporting with regards to child exploitation

What We Achieved

Working together with the Warrington Community Safety Partnership, adult's social care and other local authority areas in Cheshire, an all-age exploitation strategy is under development. This will set out the scope and deliverables within this key area of work and will result in a joint working protocol across community safety, children's social care and adult's social care, enhancing our response to exploitation across Warrington. This work remains ongoing and a further description of progress will be included in next year's annual report.

Ongoing Work for 2021-22

In July 2021, the WSP will start delivering the multi-agency training programme for GCP2 again. This will support the aim of increasing the use of the profiles by all agencies involved with families, supporting improved recognition of neglect at an earlier point.

A Task and Finish group has been set up to review the Neglect Strategy and to write a new strategy for 2022-24. This group will report on progress via the Quality Assurance group of the WSP and the new strategy is expected to be delivered before the end of 2021.

Plans are in place to embed the duties arising under a new Domestic Abuse Act that will come into force during 2021, and we will be able to include information about these developments in the next annual report.

Development and implementation of the all-age exploitation strategy.



Learning From Practice – Case Reviews

The partnership has a legal duty to undertake Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) 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 2020-21, the partnership received eight referrals for case review work. Of these, two met the criteria and had a Rapid Review. Of the Rapid Reviews undertaken one met the criteria for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) (Case AK). The work on this review is ongoing at the point of writing this report. The other Rapid Review which did not lead to CSPR led to an action plan (Case AJ), which is being progressed with the aim of completing the actions in 2021.

In addition, three cases were reviewed outside of the criteria for Rapid Review (Case AE, Case AF and Case AI). A number of other cases were delayed as a result of capacity during Covid-19 restrictions, as the work was not identified as urgent. Work is planned to take place during the reporting year 2021-22 in relation to those cases to maximise learning from those cases.

Key themes arising from case reviews have included use of professional challenge and escalation, information sharing, record keeping and practitioners consideration of the lived experience of all within a household. Work has been undertaken during the year in relation to professional challenge and escalation with a review and the agreement of the pan-Cheshire Professional Challenge and Escalation Policy. Practitioners have been contributing their views on how to improve information sharing, which will support future work planned to support improvements in practice. Recently, guidance has been provided in relation to record keeping for all practitioners to use alongside their single agency guidance. Planned work for the next 12 months includes working with the Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board around the **Think Family, Think Relationships, Think Safeguarding** approach. Training, resources and guidance will be developed to support practitioners across both the adults and children’s workforce to consider all networks for an individual they are working with, and look at the impact that those networks might have on safeguarding.



Learning From Practice – Case Reviews cont.

CASE AB SUMMARY

This was the first child safeguarding practice review (CSPR) undertaken by the partnership according to the new ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ arrangements.

The review formally concluded in October 2020, and related to the handling of a case involving allegations brought by three children describing intra-familial sexual abuse among five families that were all part of one extended family. As a result of the allegations, care proceedings commenced in relation to the children of the alleged perpetrators, and an extensive police investigation began. The CPS found that the criminal threshold had not been met after the investigation concluded. Although a fact-finding hearing concluded that the three siblings had been abused, no findings were made against any other party, and none of the other children were found to have been abused.

The CSPR sought to examine the multi-agency handling of the case in order to identify the lessons that needed to be learned to improve practice. The full findings and recommendations from the review can be found here ([CSPR Case AB, Executive Summary March 2021 \(warrington.gov.uk\)](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/cspr-case-ab-executive-summary-march-2021))

The conclusion of the report and the implementation of recommendations led to a number of actions for agencies working in Warrington, including actions for NSPCC to develop more robust processes for transmitting concerns and allegations to children social care, changes to training modules to reinforce for staff how and when information can be shared, assurance activity to understand that all partner agencies are conversant in online multi-agency procedures, and the Quality Assurance sub-group of WSP developed a briefing for staff about ABE interviews.



Learning From Practice – Multi-Agency Audits

During the period one multi-agency audit was held, with the theme of Contextual Safeguarding. 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. This was the first time a virtual audit had been undertaken in Warrington, which presented some challenges, as well as opportunities.

Key findings and actions taken:

- Risks around contextual safeguarding were understood and identified for most of the cases audited. Schools were identifying risks and completing screening tools.
- Some practitioners had been persistent and consistent in their approach to engage young people.
- Good multi-agency work was evidenced in the majority of cases, with professionals having a good understanding of the young person and the plan.
- The lived experience of the child was considered by the majority of the practitioners, although the audit tools had failed to evidence this.
- The role of the Contextual Safeguarding Operational Group (CSOG) was not well understood and there were gaps in communication to and from the group. The audit failed to see evidence of the impact of CSOG.
- Closure of cases due to disengagement remains a concern, which was seen in a previous WSP audit. Professional challenge and escalation was not evident.
- There was a lack of resources required to deliver time intensive interventions with young people in relation to contextual safeguarding.
- Consistency of workforce, such as changes in school health or social worker, led to challenges in building a relationship or following up on issues for the young person.
- Practitioners' lack of understanding of the full professional network led to missed opportunities to understand the full picture for the child and their family.
- Plans don't always address the underlying reasons for the behaviours.
- Assessment of risks need to improve, with the use of tools to evidence concerns.



Learning From Practice – Multi-Agency Audits cont.

An action plan was developed in response to these findings and most of the actions related to Contextual Safeguarding specifically were integrated into the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and the planned All-Age Exploitation work being undertaken in 2021-22. Additionally a 7 minute brief was produced to support practitioners understanding of CSOG and contextual safeguarding.

Additional work, such as addressing the lack of professional challenge was tackled through the review and agreement of the pan-Cheshire Professional Challenge and Escalation policy. Further work is planned to raise awareness of this policy, alongside other policy

Planned Work for 2021-22

A multi-agency audit focused on Domestic Abuse is planned for May 2021, which is across both the WSP and the WSAB. This audit feeding into the quality assurance framework for both safeguarding partnerships, will also support the understanding of practice around Domestic Abuse and will feed into the review of the Domestic Abuse strategy for Warrington.



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 2020-21, 470 delegates across adults and children services attended multi-agency training hosted by Warrington Safeguarding Partnership. An additional 68 people were trained in the use of the GCP2 tool. Numbers are lower than anticipated due to the cancellation of months of training during periods of lockdown. Transference of GCP2 training to a virtual format proved difficult and as such there was a delay in the roll out of this training.

21 multi-agency training safeguarding courses were offered during the year, this including 11 different course topics. Courses included:

- DA Legal Interventions
- Domestic Abuse Impact on Victims and Children
- Early Help: an Introduction
- ICON
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Managing Allegations
- MARAC and Safety Planning Webinar
- Neglect Lunchtime Workshop
- Sexual Violence Workshop
- Understanding and Responding to Modern Slavery and Trafficking
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Voice of the Child (Train the Trainer session)

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.

During the year WSP specifically embarked upon a piece of work to improve practitioner's ability to ascertain the voice of the child. This involved the delivery of two train the trainer sessions and a suite of resource's tools and guidance placed on its own specific webpage. As this piece of work started in Q4, the evaluation of its impact will inform future work in Q1 & Q2 in 2021-22. Impact and assurance will be measure through website hits, roll out of in house training and practice evidenced through our audit processes.

2021-22 will see the development of additional training packages such as Female Genital mutilation and harmful practices, Think Family, and Trauma Informed Practice which will be join initiatives across children's and adults services and lunchtime supervision sessions on Introduction to Warrington Safeguarding Partnership which will highlight the work of the partnership, practitioners ability to contribute to strategic direction and improved knowledge of resources, policies and procedures.

Challenges remaining are the continuation and resourcing of an in house training pool.

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 2020-21.

Domestic Abuse - Throughout 2020-21, WSP focused on increasing awareness of Domestic Abuse across Warrington for both partners and the general public. The awareness raising took place solely online and included a lot of work with our partners and agencies in sharing resources, helplines and virtual chat sessions.

Private Fostering Month – During October, the WSP held Private Fostering Month. WSP promoted this campaign to raise awareness and the profile and to educate residents.

Spotlight on Safeguarding – The WSP promoted Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust campaign on ‘Spotlight on Safeguarding’ sharing their virtual sessions and resources.

Online Safety – With the majority of people having to stay at home due to lockdown rules and restrictions during 2020-21, and more children and young people being online, WSP raised the awareness of online safety. This included sharing information about concerning social media sites and apps with practitioners and the public. WSP provided information for practitioners to share with young people and families, online resources and how to report guidance.

ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope – WSP has continued to support the promotion of ICON with provision of materials and key social media messages shared.

The WSP continues to promote key messages and support relevant national awareness raising campaigns including Mental Health Awareness Week and Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week.

Plans for 2021-22 include supporting Safeguarding Week in June 2021 in collaboration with the Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board.

