

# Brighton & Hove LSCB: Board Briefing

## March 2018



Welcome to [Brighton & Hove Local Children Safeguarding Board](#) Briefing. The Board meeting was held on 15 March 2018.

We welcomed Emma Gilbert, representing Brighton & Hove City Council Housing and Kay Watson from St Luke's Primary School.

We were also pleased to be joined by Paul Voigt, Acting Detective Sargent, Sussex Police, who came to talk to us about Operation Encompass, more on this later. Caroline Parker, Head of Service: Early Years, Youth, & Family Support, and Emma Cockerell, Head of Service: Front Door for Families & Social Work Pods 1-6, were also welcomed to present an item the Whole Family Working Strategy and Threshold Document. Fiona Johnson, Independent Chair Brighton & Hove and East Sussex Child Death Overview Panel provided her annual update on child deaths in Brighton & Hove.

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### Update from Leadership Group

The Leadership Group is chaired by the LSCB Chairperson and attended by the LSCB Business Manager, Lay Members and Chairs of the LSCB subcommittees. We heard how all our subcommittees are making progress with their work plans.

- **Community & Voluntary Sector Safeguarding Forum**

We discussed whether outcomes for children and families could be improved by establishing a Community & Voluntary Sector Forum to discuss safeguarding practice, similar to a forum which exists as part of the Adult Safeguarding Board structure. There is appetite by some CVS services for such a forum. We will discuss more at our Development Day on 30 April 2018.

- **Section 11**

We assess the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements in various ways, including undertaking [Section 11 safeguarding self assessments](#). This is where all our local agencies and organisations who provide services to children, young people and their families are asked to self assess the extent to which they meet the safeguarding requirements and standards as set out in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. We do this every two years and we are next due to start this work in April 2018.

- **Joint Leadership**

The chair described plans to trial a joint Leadership Group with the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adult Board. This group has already been running successfully in the LSCB for a number of years and is attended by all chairs of Board subcommittees. The rationale behind inviting the SAB Chairs to this meeting is to help minimise any duplication for those who sit on both Boards, and it is hoped this arrangement will be conducive to a more joined up approach across the Board's workplans, especially in areas where work streams merge.

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### Agency Safeguarding Updates

New guidance around sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges was published just before Christmas and the Education Safeguarding Officer has been busy this quarter giving local advice and guidance to our schools and colleges. You can read more about this [here](#)

The Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children at Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust committed to sharing this guidance with school nurses working in the city.

## Operation Encompass

This aims to safeguard and support children and young people who are involved in or affected by incidents involving domestic abuse.

Witnessing domestic abuse is really distressing for a young person, who can often see the abuse, hear it from another room, see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards or be physically hurt trying to stop the abuse.

Following such an incident, children will often arrive at school upset and unprepared. Operation Encompass aims to ensure that appropriate school staff are made aware early enough to support children in the best way possible.

The project has been rolled out in West Sussex, following a pilot in Crawley last year, and a local working group will be established to explore the benefits and challenges of roll out across city's schools. The working group will make a recommendation to the LSCB in June 2018 as to how to progress this initiative locally.

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## Whole Family Working Strategy

Our vision for Brighton & Hove is that children should have the best possible start in life, growing up happy, healthy and safe with the opportunity to reach their potential, with no one left behind.

Most children, young people and families in Brighton & Hove have a good quality of life. However there are some who find life more difficult for a variety of reasons including families who face complex, multiple problems needing expensive specialist services.

The purpose of the **Whole Family Working Strategy** is to agree a collective commitment that whole family working and early help is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and families. The aim of the strategy is to transform services to improve outcomes for vulnerable families and reduce the demand for high cost services.

We agreed the principals of this strategy and you can read more about this [here](#)

## Helping Children & Families: Threshold Document

The **threshold Document** is part of our Business Plan. The document and associated guidance is required to be in place by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017.

The threshold document outlines:

- how professionals should in the first instance offer help and encouragement to children and young families to find their own solutions, offering support when needed.
- that professionals should look to themselves and families for solutions and enable children and families to build upon the strengths
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and or for statutory services

We agreed the thresholds were much more accessible, and endorsed the more interactive format of the document, which is also hosted on our website: [Brighton & Hove Helping Children & Families Interactive Threshold Framework](#)



## Strategic response to child exploitation

In recent months we, along with the Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) and the Community Safety Partnership Board (CSP) have been looking closely at the delivery of services for a particularly vulnerable group of people. This is a small but important group who are vulnerable to and involved in a particular criminal activity, called 'county lines'.

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the selling of drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, often coordinated by mobile phone ('deal lines'.) It almost exclusively involves violence, intimidation and the offer of money or drugs.

Areas/towns also have local groups, to whom young people or vulnerable adults both respect and at time fear, these groups will also use vulnerable adults and young people to both run drugs across their area and sell.

Vulnerable people, including children as young as 12, are exploited by organised criminal networks to transport and sell drugs, primarily heroin and crack cocaine.

Vulnerability, Violence and Exploitation (VVE) describes the vulnerability of some children, young people and adults with care and support needs to be exploited, through violence and coercion, into carrying and selling drugs or allowing their home to be used by the drug dealers.

VVE is an umbrella term, it is only one part of criminal exploitation, and should be considered alongside other elements such as radicalisation and sexual exploitation. We discussed the governance arrangements and lines of accountability.

## Peer on Peer Abuse

Nationally and locally there has been a rise in the number of incidents of child on child sexual abuse. The new government guidance, mentioned earlier in this briefing, was devised following this increase. We are not sure if locally the increase is representative of higher incidences, or if it suggests an improved understanding and reporting of this type of abuse. We will look closely at local data to inform what action we take.

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## LSCB Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

A draft Child Sexual Abuse Strategy was presented to the Board for comment. Sexual harm and violence towards children is a priority area of concern for us and so we wanted to ensure we have a clear and robust strategy in place which outlines our response to sexual abuse. We want to identify the extent of sexual harm and violence towards children and to tackle it across all agencies to protect children.

Some of the key principals include:

- We will maintain a clear focus on the child whether they are a victim or an offender.
- We will have whole system leadership in raising awareness and tackling CSA with all partner agencies taking responsibility for professional standards within their organisations.
- We will have clear lines of accountability and roles and responsibility in cases of where CSA is suspected.
- We will have a shared, multi-agency approach to identification of and interventions for CSA

Partners agreed in principal to the strategy but requested a few further points of clarification before final sign off.

## Sussex Partnership Safeguarding Team

The Deputy Director of Nursing Standards and Safety at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust updated on a number of safeguarding improvements underway at the Trust. These include plans to standardise the mental health offer for children who move around in the area they cover, to make sure that moving a few miles does not affect the mental health support child and young people are able to access.

## Child Death Overview Panel

The Independent Chairperson the Child Death Overview Panel presented their [annual report](#) from 2016-17. We learnt that Between April 2016 and March 2017, the CDOP was notified of 11 child deaths of children who were resident Brighton & Hove. No recommendations have been made to the Board to progress for the year 2016-17. New legislation about the management of Child Death Overview Panels is expected in May 2018.

## Police Attendance at LSCB Training

The LSCB Learning & Development Officer has requested that new intakes of officers working in the Safeguarding Investigations Unit at Sussex Police attend LSCB core [safeguarding training](#). Their presence at the multi-agency sessions not only improves their own understanding of safeguarding and the wider safeguarding partnership but also adds richness for all participants. We were advised that Sussex Police new starters are signing up for training, but the low levels are a reflection on the small recent intake rather than non-attendance.

## Xanax

The Head of Service: Adolescents advised that there are growing concerns that the use of the drug Alprazolam, called Xanax after one of the most common brand names, by young people in Brighton & Hove is increasing. It is an anti-anxiety medicine in the benzodiazepine family (benzos) and is similar to diazepam (Valium) but it's about 20 times stronger and can quickly make users feel very sleepy, clumsy and confused. If it's mixed with alcohol there's a real risk of overdose which can lead to death. Benzodiazepines are also the most potentially addictive type of anti-anxiety medicine.

We heard that a multi-agency meeting has been set up to look at the health response and how we can work together as a city. All partners were urged to be very concerned if they hear of a young person using Xanax and make a referral to ruok? The council have published a [press release](#) which can be read here.

The minutes from all Board meetings are published on the [LSCB Website](#) If you have any further questions about this meeting please contact us at [LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk) or on 01273 292379

