

# CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report for the year ending  
30th September 2020

For Blackburn with Darwen,  
Blackpool and Lancashire



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## FOREWORD

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This is the first annual report of the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP), covering the period of its inception on the 29th September 2019 to 30th September 2020. This report sets out how we have come together to create our new safeguarding partnership arrangements and highlights the work we have done together on identifying and then responding to the issues that have the biggest impact on children, young people and families across our Partnership. Our first task was to ensure that we use our combined efforts to have an impact on our top three priority areas of risk outside the home to children (contextual safeguarding), neglect and domestic abuse.

No report covering this period could fail to mention that impact of the global Covid 19 pandemic. First and foremost we would want to acknowledge the pain and loss that many in our communities have suffered, but also pay tribute to our frontline practitioners and others who have worked tirelessly through this time.

For CSAP, the pandemic has forced us to adopt new ways of working and it has undoubtedly meant that we have progressed our priorities and quality assurance activity differently to how we originally envisaged. This has not necessarily been to their detriment though and there is much that we can be proud of during the period covered by the annual report.

Looking forward to the forthcoming year in which many in our communities will be placed under considerable strain, we will continue to seek to champion the right of children to be safeguarded from abuse and neglect and to hold the partnership to account for our combined role in this.

### **Jayne Ivory**

Director of Children's Services,  
Blackburn with Darwen Council

### **Diane Booth**

Director of Children's Services  
Blackpool Council

### **Edwina Grant OBE**

Executive Director Education and Children's Services  
Lancashire County Council

### **Joanne Edwards**

Assistant Chief Constable  
Lancashire Constabulary

### **Margaret Williams**

Lancashire and South Cumbria  
Integrated Care System (ICS)  
Safeguarding Health Executive



## OUR MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Everyone in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire shares a commitment to and responsibility for safeguarding children. However, under Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)<sup>1</sup> the three safeguarding partners of the local authority, police and health hold the statutory responsibility to support and enable local organisations to work together to safeguard children.

The three local safeguarding partners jointly leading CSAP are:

- Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Constabulary

The eight Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Chorley and South Ribble, East Lancashire, Fylde and Wyre, Greater Preston, Morecambe Bay and West Lancashire, who are represented through the Safeguarding Health Executive

In response to the changes required by Working Together, the safeguarding partners in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire made an early decision, in spring 2019, to bring together the three former Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB), in order to harmonise multi-agency responses wherever possible and therefore achieve the best outcomes for children. It was created with the following statement of purpose:

“ The safeguarding partners and all relevant agencies that work with children and families are committed to ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are of the highest quality, that they consistently promote the welfare of children and effectively safeguards them whatever their circumstance ”

The work of CSAP is driven by the Executive Board, which has a membership of the safeguarding partners noted above. During the reporting period the Executive Board has agreed the safeguarding priority areas for CSAP (contextual safeguarding, neglect and domestic abuse) and overseen the development of the governance and business structures that will support its work in these areas.

<sup>1</sup>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018  
([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

Supporting the work of the Executive Board are the North, Central and East Tactical Groups on which the safeguarding partners are joined by the designated relevant agencies in order to oversee the delivery of work tackle the safeguarding priority areas and to gather evidence of the effectiveness of local arrangements. Toward the end of the reporting period reporting processes were agreed for the tactical groups, which will collate evidence from the local operational groups for each safeguarding priority area and, in turn, report to the Executive Board. All agencies are able to report any emerging safeguarding themes into tactical groups for consideration and potential escalation to the Executive Board.



## Tactical Groups

- North corresponds to the police west division and covers Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster and Wyre local authority areas
- Central corresponds to the police south division and covers Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire local authority areas
- East corresponds to the police east division and covers Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale local authority areas

CSAP forms part of the wider partnership architecture for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire, which includes Children's Partnership Boards, Local Safeguarding Adults Boards (LSAB) (both of which are supported by the same joint safeguarding business unit as CSAP), Health and Wellbeing Boards and Community Safety Partnerships. There are standing items on Executive Board and Tactical Group agendas for updates from other boards, while there has been close operational linkage established, for example, with Community Safety Partnerships and the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), in our response to domestic abuse.

CSAP is required to provide for independent scrutiny of its arrangements, and has done so by the appointment, in July 2019, of Stephen Ashley as Independent Scrutineer. Stephen acts as chair of the Executive Board in order to provide independent perspective and challenge to these meetings, while also reporting as requested on identified thematic issues to the partners. Finally, Stephen's independent scrutiny of this annual report is included at page 24.

Business management and support is provided to CSAP by the joint safeguarding business unit. This has been created from the business units for the three former LSCBs and also provides support to the three corresponding Local Safeguarding Adults Boards and Children and Family Partnership Boards.

Existing LSCB financial arrangements were rolled over during the reporting period. A working group that reports into CSAP Executive Board has been tasked with reviewing partnership financial contributions and recommending future funding arrangements under the new joint safeguarding business unit arrangements. Work is underway on a financial model that sets out the budgets for key business areas of CSAP for the new financial year 2021/2022.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

### Contextual Safeguarding

#### Why is it a priority?

Contextual safeguarding is the umbrella term for work to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation that children may experience outside their family home. The term itself has only come to the fore in recent years, although a recognition of the threat to children of sexual exploitation (CSE) and criminal exploitation (CCE) is well established and subject to multi-agency action nationally and locally.

Contextual safeguarding was adopted as a priority by CSAP in view of national statutory guidance and reviews (the CSM Panel's *It was hard to escape*<sup>2</sup>), and learning from local reviews in recent years, for example the Blackburn with Darwen Child G serious case review (SCR). Contextual safeguarding is an area that requires a strong multi-agency operational approach that was already provided through well-established multi-agency exploitation teams across the area.

#### Governance arrangements

The Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board was established in March 2020, assuming responsibility on behalf of the CSAP Executive for contextual safeguarding. It was agreed that this remit would include CSE, CCE, Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery, and Missing from Home.

The initial focus of the group has been concerned with establishing clear terms of reference and membership; effective governance arrangements for reporting to CSAP Executive and linking with local operational groups; and the development of a Contextual Safeguarding strategy. The strategy will provide the principles by which the operational teams respond to local needs. A business plan is also in development, setting out how, why and when objectives will be achieved.





Three operational groups have been established in order to address contextual safeguarding issues in light of local needs. The groups operate on a local authority footprint and have oversight of the multi-agency operational teams in their respective areas.

### **Operational response**

The operational response to contextual safeguarding is provided by multi-agency teams situated throughout the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire area. At their core they are made up of police, children's social care and health practitioners, with some local variations depending on identified needs. During the reporting period the teams have continued to expand their focus on CCE, alongside their longer term work to address CSE and MFH. This has been increasingly framed within a contextual safeguarding framework, which allows practitioners to consider the needs of individual children holistically.

Contextual safeguarding principles are applied in specialist assessments completed by social workers within the teams, which will consider the child's needs and strategies to disrupt perpetrators. There has been a move away from social workers within the contextual safeguarding teams being statutory case holders and instead having the time and space to develop a trusted relationship with the child, while a named statutory social worker manages safeguarding processes. This serves to build experience of contextual safeguarding within wider social work teams and allows the contextual safeguarding team social workers to become points of reference for the wider workforce.

The teams will draw on the expertise of practitioners in other agencies, for example youth justice and schools, both to develop their understanding of a child's needs and to intervene to keep them safe. During the reporting period these processes have been formalised in Daily Exploited and Missing meetings in Blackpool and in adolescent panels in Blackburn with Darwen. Strong links with licensing colleagues throughout the area support disruption activity, which has resulted in a focus on fast food venues in Lancashire and training for taxi drivers in Blackpool. Meanwhile joint working in Blackburn with Darwen has directly contributed to the success of a significant police operation leading to charges against 18 adult individuals for drug supply, money laundering and trafficking offences, helping to protect vulnerable children.

In order to better understand risks to children, Lancashire Constabulary commissioned Project EMPRA in 2019 to analyse data held across six live exploitation investigations. By linking together information about victims and perpetrators the project contributed to the conviction of five offenders and the safeguarding of their victims, but also provided significant learning about partnership responses to contextual safeguarding. A case study involving responses to missing from home drawn from the project has been used locally to develop responses and delivered to national missing working groups. Lancashire Constabulary have these three principles as a formal Safeguarding, Investigation, Prevention (SIP) model with clear awareness, advice and training to officers to recognise and take personal responsibility for vulnerability. Further training has been developed by the partnership in conjunction with the VRN to create Trauma Informed Approach training resources being delivered to staff across our partner agencies.

## Neglect

### Why is it a priority?

Neglect is the most common form of child abuse in the United Kingdom and the main cause of concern in 47% of all child protection plans in England. While the proportion in each local authority in CSAP is lower, neglect has been a significant feature of a number of recent SCR (Blackpool Child BY and Lancashire Child G) where it has been seen to co-exist with other forms of abuse. Operationally, Lancashire Constabulary continue to record approximately 3 – 8 neglect crimes per week.

### Governance arrangements

In the 18 months prior to the inception of CSAP, each of the three LSCBs agreed its own neglect strategy, which remained in place during the reporting period. While the overarching aims of the three coincide, namely to drive a consistent multi-agency response to neglect that enables practitioners to identify, respond to and ultimately prevent neglect, there are some areas of divergence in practice, for example, the agreed assessment tools. CSAP oversees the delivery of these strategies through three operational groups for neglect, based on local authority areas, which report to the tactical groups. These were either in place or in the process of being established at the year end.

### Operational Responses

The safeguarding partners have an ambitious goal to empower the wider children's workforce to identify neglect at the earliest possible opportunity and provide families with the means to overcome the adversities that they face, without the need for intensive interventions. All three areas have therefore placed an emphasis on training and practitioner awareness raising, which has continued throughout the pandemic. This has included neglect awareness raising training provided by CSAP, together with a large scale strategy launch in Blackpool, awareness raising materials including a Think Neglect booklet in Blackburn with Darwen, and a neglect champions' network. All three areas had already adopted assessments tools, the focus during the reporting period has therefore been embedding the use of the tools, with a screening tool also being developed at the year end.

By successfully delivering on their strategies the safeguarding partners expect to see consistent use of language that enables practitioners to name neglect in a wide range of situations. This has resulted in the clinical commissioning groups developing a 'Was Not Brought' policy for primary care, which prompts practitioners to question why a child has not been brought to an appointment and what the impact of this is. As previously noted, Lancashire Constabulary has supported the delivery of the strategies through a large scale internal Think Neglect campaign. Work to address neglect should also be placed within the context of broader changes to practice, for example the Family Safeguarding model in Lancashire that will provide a more holistic response to the whole family and the Blackpool Families Rock way of working that provides a strengths based, restorative approach that has been co-produced with children and families.

Each area is committed to the ongoing evaluation of the implementation of their strategy, in order to support its effective delivery. This has been undertaken in Lancashire through the multi-agency neglect subgroup and in Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool through local authority case tracking and audit. This will be supported through CSAP multi-agency audits in 2021. In order to promote a consistent response to neglect, the safeguarding partners will work toward agreeing a single CSAP neglect strategy by March 2022. This will build on the findings of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) underway at the year that will provide learning in respect of responses to the neglect of adolescents and children with additional needs, and medical neglect.





## Domestic Abuse

### Why is it a priority?

A significant proportion of the partnership's operational safeguarding activity consists of protecting children from domestic abuse (DA). Lancashire Constabulary responded to 32,825 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes in the year ended March 2019<sup>3</sup>. While there is no corresponding data for the number of children affected by these incidents, we do know that 3,274 children were in households discussed by Marac in the year ended March 2020<sup>4</sup>. Overall, Women's Aid estimate that nationally one in seven children will experience domestic abuse at some point in their childhood<sup>5</sup>. More seriously, domestic abuse was a significant feature of a number of recent national and local SCR, including Blackpool's Child BY and Lancashire's Child LI and LL.

Domestic abuse requires a multi-faceted response that responds to the needs of the victims, perpetrators and children in the household. CSAP identified this as a priority in order to ensure that the children's element of this response was co-ordinated and effective.

### Governance arrangements

Due to the number of domestic abuse groups and forums in operation across the area, CSAP initially sought to ensure that it had an accurate understanding of the governance arrangements in place between the groups and seek assurance that approaches were aligned with existing legislation and the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill. This scoping exercise has mapped existing groups and identified proposed changes to meet the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill. Additionally, the Lancashire Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) accepted a recommendation in September 2020 that it establishes a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board as a sub group of the LCSP in order to provide a strategic level of

<sup>3</sup>[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool)

<sup>4</sup>[safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/latest-marac-data](https://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/latest-marac-data)

<sup>5</sup>[www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/children-and-domestic-abuse](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/children-and-domestic-abuse)

governance and accountability (LCSP incorporates the 12 district councils of Lancashire, who are responsible for Community Safety Partnerships, together with the two unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool). To complement these arrangements and to ensure that the needs of children who are exposed to DA are identified and responded to, CSAP was establishing operational groups, mirroring its arrangements for contextual safeguarding and neglect, at the end of the reporting period. These will link into other local strategic arrangements and provide assurance to the CSAP tactical groups about work to safeguard children from DA.

### Operational responses

#### Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is an initiative which allows the Police to share information in respect of a child with whom they have had contact with a school's trained 'Key Adult' prior to the start of the next school day. This was initially in respect of DA incidents but now covers all vulnerable person notifications. This enables appropriate support to be given to the child, dependent upon their needs and wishes.

Encompass launched in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire in April 2019, and has over 700 schools signed up. It has:

- Shared policies and documentation with all schools, including for distribution to parents;
- Provided training to for schools, providing information on roles and responsibilities; domestic abuse and the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences;
- Developed a database of over 700 school Encompass contacts which was shared with Lancashire Constabulary;



- Developed an Encompass toolkit of materials for schools to use with children about whom they receive notifications;
- Shared an average of over 1,200 notifications with schools per month, achieving steadily increasing rates of compliance as officers become more used to the process.

The initial roll out was confined to children in Years R to 11, in forthcoming months post 16 providers will be included in notifications, while work has started to plan how early years providers could be included.

### **One involved school has reported:**

"Since May we have received 9 notifications about incidents outside of school that have increased the vulnerability of the children in our care.

Because of this we have been able to make prompt and fully informed plans to care for the children involved and where appropriate offer support to their families. Examples of the difference made by receiving this information are:

- Support given to suicidal Mum who agreed to work with Addaction, this family is beginning to stabilise with a full multi-agency approach in place to support Mum and family, initiated by school as a result of Encompass information.
- School fully informed when invited to attend strategy discussion with CSC, instead of running from behind to try to catch up with fast moving events.
- Several children offered support from Learning Mentors on the day of referral received and subsequently as required, ranging from informal chat over breakfast, to therapeutic input to address trauma and understand how to respond and remain safe.
- Some children have spent the morning in Rainbow Room, a therapeutic environment, snuggled up on sofas, with breakfast, drinks, expert support and cuddles where needed. This has made all the difference, allowing them to go back to their classrooms feeling nurtured and supported.
- Parent arrived in school wanting to talk to us because they knew we would be receiving a notification.

I would really like to thank our colleagues in the Police force who have helped us to offer support that is immediate, appropriate and makes a difference to children and their families at point of need.

Too often in the past we were working blindfolded with children who were in urgent need of support. Now we know who to help and how to help and are confident that we will not let another child who needs our help down because we didn't know what had happened to them."



### **Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Campaign: April 2020**

CSAP Executive Members expressed concerns about a drop in Domestic Abuse reports to supporting agencies during early Covid 19 restrictions in late-March/early-April. It was decided that there was a need to urgently publicise that support remained available for both children and adults experiencing the impact of domestic abuse during lockdown.

Having collated details of support services (many of which were enhanced during the initial lockdown), a series of eight key messages (three with a focus on children) and accompanying graphics were developed and circulated to partners to disseminate through their social media channels. A review of the initial core messages through the @LancsSgarding Twitter account demonstrated significant engagement over the following weekend period, reaching c. 2,000 impressions on the National DA Helpline message alone (c. 5,300 for all of the posts). Engagement was highest on Saturday 4th April and continued to increase from Monday 6th April onwards as colleagues returned to work.

The online campaign was followed up with the development of 5,000 posters and leaflets for distribution to supermarkets, shops, pharmacies and community hubs, funded by CSAP and distributed through neighbourhood policing units.

This campaign demonstrated the ability of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to work together to provide a timely response to an emerging risk. The support of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the VRN was similarly crucial for this work. Further Domestic Abuse activity was subsequently identified as a Lancashire Resilience Forum priority with the #NoExcuseForAbuse campaign commencing in June 2020. This campaign included 230 convenience stores displaying materials, the distribution of 10,000 posters, 342 local radio adverts, 28 towns visited by a branded van and outreach to 1.3 million people via Twitter. This resulted in 2,047 unique visits to the campaign website. The success of the 'one voice' approach to communications has resulted in the CSAP Executive agreeing to adopt this approach for future campaigns, with a partnership contextual safeguarding communications strategy being in development at the year end.

## Marac review

Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (Marac) are the key forum for multi-agency information sharing and co-ordination of actions to safeguard victims and children from domestic abuse. The 3,045 cases discussed in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Maracs in the year ended March 2020 represent a considerable time and resource commitment on the part of agencies, as a consequence of which a review of the effectiveness of the process was underway at the start of the reporting period.

Of particular relevance to CSAP, the findings highlighted that due to this high demand Maracs did not always hear or record the voice of children, that they sometimes pressured families to split up when it was not in the child (or victim's) best interests and that actions were not always completed or completed within timescales. Practitioners working within the system described it being no longer fit for purpose.

The review continued to propose and pilot a new model that is made up of a core team of agencies (children's social care, health, police, independent domestic violence advocates (IDVA) and probation). This core team will share information and formulate a response more rapidly than under the old model which relied on fixed meetings, while remaining able to include other agencies as and when required. The new model will actively seek the views of the victim, children and perpetrator, ask them what their needs are and provide solutions by working with

them and other agencies. By doing so the model aims to get to the root cause of the problem and provide a more holistic approach to all involved parties.

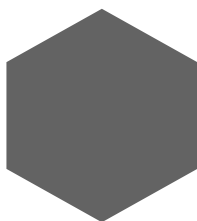
The new model will be rolled out on an area by area basis, during which CSAP will hold partner agencies to account to ensure that children who are exposed to domestic abuse are effectively safeguarded.

## The children of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire is a large and diverse area with a child population of over 315,000. By monitoring broader population trends the safeguarding partners can develop an understanding of current and emerging needs, ensuring that help is provided at the earliest possible opportunity, without the need for more invasive safeguarding interventions.

Within this wider child population a small number of children will require the involvement of statutory services to ensure that they are kept safe from abuse and neglect. The safeguarding partners seek to monitor and understand this cohort, to ensure that interventions are timely and effective throughout the area.

This has been done through the collation of weekly high level local authority data covering contacts, referrals, section 47 enquiries, timeliness of assessments, children in need, child protection and looked



after children. This is set alongside police data in respect of missing children, domestic abuse, online crime, and child sexual abuse and exploitation. By doing so the safeguarding partners were able to respond to emerging trends during the pandemic, for example increasing numbers of children going missing. In the longer term this will form the basis of work to better understand the three priority areas.

This data provides a snapshot of how children progress through the safeguarding system in each of the three local authority areas, allowing monitoring of longer term trends and benchmarking against similar areas. What it does not provide though is any reassurance as to how each child experiences interventions or how well practitioners work with children and families to secure the best outcomes for children. Understanding this will therefore be a focus of future CSAP quality assurance work.

A key factor in the safeguarding partners' decision to bring together the three former LSCB areas was to provide greater consistency in approach and practice, thereby ensuring that children receive a consistent response irrespective of the area that they live in, and reducing complication for practitioners who operate across local authority boundaries.

The foregoing chapter has demonstrated some of the work that has been undertaken to harmonise the approach to the safeguarding priority areas. This will be supported by shared principles and guidance for how all agencies and practitioners work with children, whatever their level of need. These are set out in *Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire*, which is the threshold document that the safeguarding partners are required to publish, and also includes guidance to enable practitioners to assess a child's level of need (at the end of the reporting period it had been implemented in Blackpool, with ongoing preparations for its launch in Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire).

**Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire sets out shared values for practitioners as:**

- Being respectful. Building relationships by working alongside parents, children and young people and seeking their informed consent and agreement;
- Being understanding, kind and empathetic. Recognising and working to families' strengths – especially those of parents and carers and take the time to understand their needs fully.
- Being purposeful. Focusing on preventing problems before they occur and offer flexible responsive, constructive support when and where it is required;
- Being constructive. Helping to build the resilience of parents, children, young people and communities to support each other;
- Being open and transparent with each other as well as with families. Working together across the whole system, engaging well with communities and aligning our resources so we can best support families and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done;
- Being fair. Basing all that we do on evidence and analysis of both what is needed and of what works and being brave enough to stop things that are wrong;
- Being honest. Being clear and consistent about the outcomes we expect, and judging what we do against them.



## Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Facts and Figures

Population

Academic Achievement

Health Inequalities

Blackburn with Darwen	Blackpool	Lancashire
<b>How many people live in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire and what proportion of the estimated populations are children?<sup>6</sup> – Understand the demographic breakdown</b>		
The total population of Blackburn with Darwen (2019) was estimated to be 149,696	The total population of Blackpool (2019) was estimated to be 139,446	The total population of Lancashire (2019) was estimated to be 1,219,799
38,742 (25.9%) are children and young people aged 0-17 years	29,215 (21.0%) are children and young people aged 0-17 years	251,042 (20.6%) are children and young people aged 0-17 years
12.1% of the total child population across the County resides in Blackburn with Darwen	9.2% of the total child population across the County resides in Blackpool	78.7% of the total child population across the County resides in Lancashire
<b>Level of development at the end of Reception<sup>7</sup> – A key measure of early years and childhood development.</b>		
In Blackburn with Darwen, 68.4% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception. Lower than the regional average of 68.9% and the national average of 71.8%.	In Blackpool, 67.9% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception. Lower than the regional average of 68.9% and the national average of 71.8%.	In Lancashire, 69.2% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception. Higher than the regional average of 68.9%, but lower than the national average of 71.8%.
<b>Level of educational attainment at Secondary School<sup>8</sup> – An indicator of learning, educational achievement and development of skills important for a children's wellbeing and future prospects.</b>		
In Blackburn with Darwen, 46.4% of children attained an average GCSE score of 8. Compared to 45.6% regionally and 46.9% nationally.	In Blackpool, 39.2% of children attained an average GCSE score of 8. Compared to 45.6% regionally and 46.9% nationally.	In Lancashire, 46.6% of children attained an average GCSE score of 8. Compared to 45.6% regionally and 46.9% nationally.
<b>16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)<sup>9</sup> – young people whose life chances are being compromised and who may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks.</b>		
In Blackburn with Darwen, 4.5% of 16-17 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET), this is lower than the regional average of 6.3% and the national average of 5.5%	In Blackpool, 6.2% of 16-17 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET), this is comparable with the regional average of 6.3% but higher than the national average of 5.5%	In Lancashire, 10.0% of 16-17 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET), this is higher than the regional average of 6.3% and the national average of 5.5%
<b>Infant mortality<sup>10</sup> – The infant mortality measure is the number of children aged under 1 who die compared to the number of live births. Infant mortality is an indicator of the general health of the population. It reflects the relationship between causes of infant mortality and upstream determinants of population health such as economic, social and environmental conditions. CSAP has worked to reduce infant mortality through the safer sleep campaign and ICON campaigns.</b>		
The rate of infant deaths in Blackburn with Darwen is 5.0 per 1,000 live births, compared to 4.5 regionally and 3.9 nationally.	The rate of infant deaths in Blackpool is 6.4 per 1000 live births, compared to 4.5 regionally and 3.9 nationally.	The rate of infant deaths in Lancashire is 4.2 per 1000 live births, compared to 4.5 regionally and 3.9 nationally.
<b>Population Vaccine Coverage<sup>11</sup> – MMR for one dose (2 years) – The percentage of 2 year olds who have received 1 dose of the MMR vaccination. The MMR combined vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella; 3 highly infectious, common conditions that can have serious health complications.</b>		
In Blackburn with Darwen, 92.4% of 2 year olds have had 1 dose of the MMR vaccine, compared to 90.6% nationally and 91.9% regionally.	In Blackpool, 92.0% of 2 year olds have had 1 dose of the MMR vaccine, compared to 90.6% nationally and 91.9% regionally.	In Lancashire, 91.4% of 2 year old have had 1 dose of the MMR vaccine, compared to 90.6% nationally and 91.9% regionally.

<sup>6</sup>Population information – ONS mid-year 2019 population estimates

<sup>7</sup>School Readiness data – 2018/19. Fingertips Public Health data – Child Health Profiles

<sup>8</sup>Educational attainment – 2018/19. Fingertips Public Health data – Child Health Profiles

<sup>9</sup>NEET data – 2018. Fingertips Public Health data – Child Health Profiles

<sup>10</sup>Infant Mortality – 2017/18 \*new data\* - Fingertips Public Health data – Child Health Profiles

<sup>11</sup>MMR Population vaccine coverage – 2019/20 – Fingertips Public Health data –Early Years Supplementary Information

## Percentage of school pupils identified to have social, emotional and mental health needs<sup>12</sup> - (based only on those pupils with a Special Educational Need).

In Blackburn with Darwen, 2.56% of school pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs, compared to 2.39% nationally and 2.35% regionally.

In Blackpool, 3.08% of school pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs, compared to 2.39% nationally and 2.35% regionally.

In Lancashire, 1.77% of school pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs, compared to 2.39% nationally and 2.35% regionally.

## Percentage of school pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)<sup>13</sup> – based on the number of children identified as having special education needs.

In Blackburn with Darwen, 18.1% of school pupils have Special Educational Needs, compared to 14.4% nationally and 14.6% regionally.

In Blackpool 17.9% of school pupils have Special Educational Needs, compared to 14.4% nationally and 14.6% regionally.

In Lancashire 12.3% of school pupils have Special Educational Needs, compared to 14.4% nationally and 14.6% regionally.

## Rate of hospital admissions for mental health conditions<sup>14</sup> - One in ten children aged 5-16 years has a clinically diagnosable mental health problem and, of adults with long-term mental health problems, half will have experienced their first symptoms before the age of 14. Self-harming and substance abuse are known to be much more common in children and young people with mental health disorders. Failure to treat mental health disorders in children can have a devastating impact.

In Blackburn with Darwen, the inpatient admission rate for mental health disorders is 91.0 per 100,000 of the 0-17 population, compared to a national rate of 88.3 and a regional rate of 104.3.

In Blackpool, the inpatient admission rate for mental health disorders is 138.4 per 100,000 of the 0-17 population, compared to a national rate of 88.3 and a regional rate of 104.3.

In Lancashire, the inpatient admission rate for mental health disorders is 94.1 per 100,000 of the 0-17 population, compared to a national rate of 88.3 and a regional rate of 104.3.

## Percentage of households with dependent children or pregnant women who are homeless<sup>15</sup> –

Every child has a right to an adequate standard of living. Children from homeless households are often the most vulnerable.

In Blackburn with Darwen, 0.6% of households with dependent children or pregnant woman are homeless compared to 1.0% regionally and 1.7% nationally.

In Blackpool, 0.3% of households with dependent children or pregnant woman are homeless compared to 1.0% regionally and 1.7% nationally.

In Lancashire, 0.4% of households with dependent children or pregnant woman are homeless compared to 1.0% regionally and 1.7% nationally.

## Percentage of all school children who have free school meals<sup>16</sup> – The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals. This measure is a proxy measure for the number of children from low income families. Poverty can, but is not always, be associated with neglect.

In Blackburn with Darwen, 14.8% of all school children have free school meals compared to 16.0% regionally and 13.5% nationally

In Blackpool, 25.3% of all school children have free school meals compared to 16.0% regionally and 13.5% nationally

In Lancashire, 13.4% of all school children have free school meals compared to 16.0% regionally and 13.5% nationally

## Percentage of adults claiming benefits<sup>17</sup> – This information indicates the health of the labour market and the demand for support from the Welfare State.

As of 10/09/2020, 8.2% of the working age population were claiming benefits in Blackburn with Darwen compared to 6.6% nationally and 7.1% regionally.

As of 10/09/2020, 11.7% of the working age population were claiming benefits in Blackpool compared to 6.6% nationally and 7.1% regionally.

As of 10/09/2020, 6.0% of the working age population were claiming benefits in Lancashire compared to 6.6% nationally and 7.1% regionally.

<sup>12</sup>Social, emotional, mental health needs – 2018 – Fingertips Public Health data – Long Term conditions and complex health

<sup>13</sup>Special Educational Needs – 2018 – Fingertips Public Health data – Long Term conditions and complex health

<sup>14</sup>Hospital Admissions for Mental Health Needs – 2018/19 – Public Health data – Long Terms conditions and complex health

<sup>15</sup>Family homelessness – 2017/18 – Fingertips Public Health data – Child Health Profiles

<sup>16</sup>School meals – 2018 – Fingertips Public Health data – school age children, supplementary indicators

<sup>17</sup>Adults claiming benefits – 10/09/2020 – the data is very recent and may be impacted by COVID19 [www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/datasets/claimantcountbyunitaryandlocalauthorityexperimental](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/datasets/claimantcountbyunitaryandlocalauthorityexperimental)

## Our response to Covid 19

The safeguarding partners, through the CSAP executive, responded quickly to the safeguarding threat raised by the first national lockdown. Throughout the period they received reports on any changes in the volume or type of contacts that they were receiving, with more detailed information being reviewed for emerging areas of concern, for example, a reduction in missing from home episodes being reported and the work of Operation Encompass during lockdown. The CSAP executive agreed to become the children's subgroup of the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) Humanitarian cell, on which the CSAP Independent Scrutineer represented the safeguarding partners. In doing so he was able to ensure that consistent multi-agency safeguarding messages were disseminated and provided a further layer of assurance and scrutiny on practice during Covid-19. Issues that have been raised include concern about growing numbers of domestic abuse referrals and oversight from a community safety partnership perspective, and concern about increase in acuity of children's safeguarding referrals, including malnutrition. The safeguarding partners have responded to these emerging risks through a public domestic abuse campaign, raising practitioner awareness about neglect, especially with Support Workers in Community Hubs, and raising awareness with regard to mental health of children and young people.

At the end of the reporting period the impact of the lockdown for children in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire is yet to be fully understood. Emerging work, for example in respect of the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, is indicative of potential long term negative impacts. The safeguarding partners will continue to monitor data to identify any emerging safeguarding issues arising from lockdown. More positively, the pandemic has also driven changes in operational responses allowing new ways of working with children to be developed and closer working relationships to be developed, for example through weekly partnership operational meetings in Blackpool, the Education Response team in Blackburn with Darwen and the Family Safeguarding model in Lancashire. Operationally, Lancashire Constabulary maintained their front line responses to incidents throughout the pandemic and were therefore able to access family homes to see children. To support this their internal 'Think Child' campaign was reframed as 'How's the child – be their lockdown lifeline'. Health colleagues supported this approach through the provision of a 24/7 mental health helpline and through health IDVAs attending domestic abuse incidents alongside police colleagues as part of Operation Provide in Blackpool and Lancaster.

## LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

### Arrangements for learning from practice

Working Together requires the safeguarding partners to make arrangements to review serious child safeguarding cases, and others where there may be learning, in order to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. Rapid review meetings, held within 15 days of the incident coming to the attention of the safeguarding partners, will gather facts about the case, identify whether any immediate action is required to secure the child's safety, whether there is any immediate learning, and whether a local or national Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) is warranted. Where a decision is taken to commission a local CSPR this will be led by an Independent Reviewer using a systems methodology, and will seek to involve practitioners and family members, including surviving children. Final review reports will be published. Learning extracted from the case at any stage during the process will be acted on and disseminated to agencies and practitioners as soon as is possible.

Serious child safeguarding cases (SCSC) notified to the safeguarding partners during the reporting period by locality:

	SCSC notifications received	Rapid Review Meetings held	Local CSPR commissioned
Blackburn with Darwen	0	0	0
Blackpool	2	2	2
Lancashire	13	11	5

As a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic the national CSPR Panel relaxed the expectation that CSPR would be completed and published within six months of their being commissioned. The 7 local CSPR commissioned during the reporting period were therefore all ongoing at its end.

Learning themes from the 15 notifications received have included non-accidental injury (NAI) and abusive head trauma in infants under one year of age was, alongside the role of fathers and significant other males within a family. This is a theme that has been seen in previously commissioned Serious Case Reviews in Blackpool and Lancashire. As a result of this the I-CON Campaign was launched in May 2019 and continues to be embedded across the multi-disciplinary workforce by the Pan-Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). The campaign supports practitioners to provide information and advice to new parents about how to cope with crying babies. Additionally, CSAP will await the learning and recommendations from the National CSPR into NAI of children under one year of age and the role of fathers and will produce an action plan with multi-agency partners on how to address the issues raised and implement any learning identified.

Suicide was a common theme amongst young people and will feed into the Child Death National Mortality Database national review and the North West CDOP Group suicide thematic report focussing on Adverse Childhood Experiences and Children Looked After.

Three of the commissioned local CSPR relate to neglect and the interim learning from these has been used to influence the work of the operational groups, noted above. Cross border

working between agencies to safeguard children has also been identified as a theme in the current reporting year and the CSAP Business Unit is due to undertake a piece of work to better understand this.

Finally, issues were raised around elective home education and a lack of any mechanism for any reception age children who don't apply for a school place and also young people who drop out of school after a very short period of time. Learning from Rapid Review Meetings is passed to the relevant group either within CSAP or externally, with single agency actions monitored by the business unit.

LSCB were given a grace period of one year to complete and publish outstanding Serious Case Reviews, after which they were required to hand them over to the safeguarding partners. This period ended on the 29th September 2020, at which point Blackpool LSCB handed material relating to 2 SCR to the safeguarding partners and Lancashire LSCB 11. The safeguarding partners will review this material and make a decision as to how best to use it to transparently secure learning that improves outcomes for children. Full details in this respect will be included in the next CSAP annual report.

### Workforce Development

The safeguarding partners are required to consider what multi-agency safeguarding training is required locally and make arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of that which is commissioned.

As would be expected training provision has been significantly disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic. The reporting period has nevertheless been one of considerable progress in the development of the training offer that will enable the delivery of high quality multi-agency training in future years irrespective of circumstances.

This work has been driven by the Learning and Development subgroup, who initially sought to co-ordinate and consolidate the training offer of the three LSCBs (training was and continues to be delivered to the children's and adults' workforces in conjunction with the three LSAB). Over this period face to face training continued to be delivered, albeit with an increasing focus on the three CSAP priority areas of contextual safeguarding, neglect and domestic abuse. This was with the (ongoing) intention to deliver one training programme across the area, through a multi-agency training pool, with some allowance for variations in content and courses to meet local needs.

Face to face training abruptly ended in March 2020, after which there has been a focus on developing both the technological means and content to deliver virtual training. Priority has been given to courses relating to the three CSAP priority areas (and their LSAB equivalents), although other courses, for example, Problematic Gambling have been hosted where this has been easily possible.

A half day 'Domestic Abuse: Impact on Children' course (alongside an adults equivalent) has been written to be delivered by trainers from the safeguarding partners and commissioned DA services, who have been grouped into three locality teams. This will initially be delivered virtually from January 2021 on a monthly basis, but has been written to be able to be converted to face to face delivery once this is resumed. Awareness raising for the wider workforce will be supported through the development of 'Talking Head' videos, which will be made available on the CSAP website. The first two will cover Domestic Violence Protection



Orders and Notices, and Clare's Law. In the meantime two virtual DA courses are being delivered on a monthly basis by an experienced commissioned trainer who specialises in DA and coercive control.

The face to face 'Identifying and Overcoming Childhood Neglect' training that was already in the process of being developed, has been converted into a one day virtual course, delivered by a commissioned trainer on a monthly basis since June. The training covers the multi-agency neglect strategies and aims to increase practitioners' confidence to identify and address neglect. Practitioners are also able to access the 'Self-neglect Awareness and Pathway' courses, which while adult focussed is of relevance to the children's workforce, while Graded Care Profile 2 assessment tool training is provided to Blackpool practitioners.

A one day Contextual Safeguarding course has been developed building on material from previous child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, modern day slavery and missing from home courses. It is currently being delivered as two half day virtual courses, with the longer term intention of it becoming a full day face to face course. Due to having three multi-agency contextual safeguarding teams operating in the area the course will be based on locality. This was in place for Blackpool based practitioners by the end of the reporting period, with content and a training pool being established for wider delivery in 2021.

In total 347 practitioners attended virtual training between 1st June 2020 and the end of the reporting period (this does include some courses with an adult safeguarding focus), which is a considerable achievement given the need to develop content and technological means. During the forthcoming year work will be required to develop more rigorous means of evaluating training, including the impact on practice. In the meantime participants at virtual training are asked for an on the day evaluation:

"Child Exploitation section was really informative and well delivered. Lots of useful information and scenarios discussed"

"Virtual training is definitely the new way it was very effective and worked well, it means we will be able to link with more professionals further afield and learn more"

"The up to date content and the actual real life examples bring this course alive"

"The fact that the course included Blackburn as an area, as opposed to being the usual generalised statistics and information"

CSAP's formal training is supported by a wide ranging e-learning offer. Following a review of the three LSCBs' previous e-learning offers a decision was taken to consolidate this onto the Blackburn with Darwen platform, which was made available to practitioners in Blackpool and Lancashire. This includes Level 1 and 2 Safeguarding Children training, courses in respect of each CSAP priority area and other specific areas of safeguarding practice.

CSAP has continued to promote good practice through the publication of 7 Minute Briefings<sup>19</sup>, which may be prompted by changes to guidance and legislation, learning from reviews, or emerging safeguarding themes. Briefings published in the reporting have included Concealed and Denied Pregnancy, and the Mental Capacity Act and 16 and 17 year olds. In response to specific areas of concern during the initial Covid 19 lockdown, 7 minute briefings were produced covering Covid 19 and Professional Curiosity, and Covid 19 and Safeguarding for Volunteers, together with a poster for professionals and the public to promote the reporting of concerns about neglect.

<sup>19</sup> 7 Minute Briefings - Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board



### Online Safeguarding

The safeguarding partners employ a specialist online safety advisor in order to ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated, in what is a rapidly changing area of practice. Online safeguarding has seen a range of activity over the reporting period and challenges for children continue to develop at a pace, both in terms of scope and complexity. The quality of advice and guidance for schools, and the wider workforce, continues to be a challenge, as the number and range of opportunist providers broadens. However, the period has also seen a significant increase in practitioner engagement with the CSAP provision, which demonstrates a continuing need for balanced and informed expertise in an increasingly complex and high-profile safeguarding area.

The well-established Online Safety Live sessions, delivered by colleagues from the UK Safer Internet Centre, were delivered in January 2020. Over 400 delegates from across the children's workforce attended five sessions across the geographical area and feedback was once again been hugely positive, both in terms of the content delivered by UK Safer Internet Centre partners and the continued hosting by CSAP. The sessions were again used as an opportunity to formally survey delegates in terms of the issues experienced and support required which are used as an invaluable evidential dataset to support and inform future approaches.

The advent of Covid-19 restrictions has seen a considerable increase in engagement with CSAP's online provision, specifically through the CSAP Twitter presence (a 500%+ increase). In response to significant local and national concerns regarding heightened online risks during



lockdown restrictions, a 2-week Online Safety campaign was conducted during April and May which saw in excess of 16,000 engagements across North West England, the wider UK and EU. The highly-popular CSAP publication - Making Sense of...Keeping Children Safe in Education was updated in August 2020 to reflect the latest developments in the Department for Education's statutory guidance, along with the release of the CSAP Governor Online Safety Self Review Tool<sup>20</sup>. Both publications, now in their fourth editions, continue to attract significant attention both within and outside of the CSAP area.

Online Safeguarding, by its nature, continues to develop and evolve with an ever-increasing profile. It is anticipated that this will continue to increase as the UK Government's Online Harms White Paper progresses and further focus is seen on Social Media platforms and potential regulations to help keep children safe online.

## CHANGES TO PUBLISHED ARRANGEMENTS

As would be expected in the development of any complex partnership structure, there has been a degree of finessing of the arrangements for CSAP during its first year of operation, as a result of which there have been a number of changes to the original published arrangements<sup>21</sup>. Working Together (2018) requires that these changes are set out within the annual report, together with timescales for implementation.

The published arrangements included a somewhat different subgroup structure than that which has been adopted. Instead of the original envisaged Policy and Planning, Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring, and Communications and Engagement subgroups, CSAP has agreed a subgroup structure primarily based on the three safeguarding priorities of contextual safeguarding, neglect and domestic abuse (groups are on local authority boundaries, resulting in a total of nine operational groups). These groups will be responsible for the policy and planning, communications and quality assurance work in respect of their priority. This structure will be in place by the end of 2020. The Learning and Development subgroup has not met during the Covid period, but will be reinstated when circumstances allow. Finally, the Business Management Group has not been established due to there being no identified need for additional co-ordination of work. See appendix A for the revised governance structure.

The safeguarding partners agreed from the outset of CSAP arrangements to reduce the membership of the Executive Board to solely the Safeguarding Partners, with the focus of relevant agencies' involvement being in tactical and operational groups. It was also agreed that there would be no representation of Elected Members on the Executive Board. As the focus of CSAP developed a number of the initially named relevant agencies have ceased to be involved in the formal arrangements, although this is not to say that their operational responsibilities to safeguard children alongside multi-agency partners is in any way diminished. These are local universities, Cafcass, British Transport Police and Border Authorities, and Local Authority Adult Social Care.

In order to maintain the independence of the role, the safeguarding partners have agreed that the Independent Scrutineer will no longer chair the tactical groups from January 2021. The groups will be chaired by a representative of the safeguarding partners, in the first instance

<sup>20</sup>Schools & the Children's Workforce - Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board

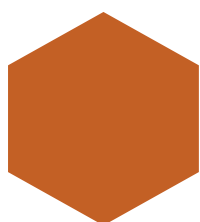
<sup>21</sup> BwD-BP-Lancs-Safeguarding\_CDR-Arrangements-FINAL-screen-June-2019.pdf ([lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk](http://lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk))

this will be the Directors of Children's Services for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire at East, North and Central tactical groups, respectively. Co-ordination of the tactical groups will be provided by the Executive Board to which the Directors of Children's Services will report.

Finally, the published arrangements make reference to a range of quality assurance activity, including seeking single agency self-evaluations, multi-agency auditing and engagement with multi-agency practitioners. As a consequence of the focus on establishing arrangements to address the safeguarding priority areas and to respond to the Covid 19 pandemic, this quality assurance activity has been delayed but will be set in motion in forthcoming months.

### PRIORITIES FOR 2020/21

During the forthcoming year CSAP will maintain its current safeguarding priority areas of contextual safeguarding, neglect and domestic abuse; working to fully establish its governance structures in this respect and to deliver the associated action plans. This is not to say that these priorities are set in stone and all partner agencies are actively encouraged to report emerging safeguarding issues into tactical groups, where consideration can be given to the need for a CSAP response. Indeed, following the year end the safeguarding partners agreed to add a fourth priority area of understanding and mitigating the risks to children that have emerged as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic. There will be an increasing focus on the quality assurance functions of CSAP including single agency self-evaluations, multi-agency audits and performance framework monitoring. As this becomes more established we will seek to better understand the effectiveness of our work through the most important lens of its impact on our children.



## INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

As the independent scrutineer I am able to confirm that this annual report provides an accurate reflection of the work carried out by the Safeguarding Partners from the beginning of October 2019 to the end of September 2020.

Since March 2020 the work of the partners has, of course, taken place under the shadow of the Covid 19 pandemic. Large parts of the county of Lancashire have been under the strictest of restrictions for most of the year. This has clearly had a major impact on safeguarding and the way in which protection is provided to our vulnerable children and families. I make further comment on the arrangements and how they have been adapted later in this section.

The pandemic has also impacted upon the scrutiny process. I have had to ensure that undertaking effective scrutiny was balanced and proportionate given the huge demands being made upon partners. It is to the credit of all partners and other relevant agencies that there has remained a real focus on scrutiny and a real willingness to ensure that this process has been maintained throughout.

In fulfilling my role, I have regular meetings with the three local authority lead members, chief executives and council leaders; senior police officers, including the Chief Constable; and with Directors of CCGs and senior safeguarding officers from health

commissioners and providers. In addition, I have one to one meetings with each member of the Executive Board. I have had one to one meetings with two district council chief executives and, as a member of the community recovery cell of the Local Resilience Forum, have direct contact with all of the district councils. I have attended a number of other partnership meetings including the Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Local Resilience Forum and Council Scrutiny Panels. I have not had the opportunity to meet with as many children and young people as I would like, and this is an area for my personal development this year, although a degree of care will be needed to ensure that this is meaningful and groups are representative of a diverse cohort of children.

## Key themes

### Structure

It should not be underestimated what has been achieved by the Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies. Partners across three upper tier local authority areas, eight CCGs and one police force have combined the work of three LSCBs to create a new structure. This was an ambitious decision and has taken considerable work to embed. The structure in place has developed into a robust one in which partners are able to agree and action child safeguarding arrangements. The structure of the partnership consists of three key groups



as described below. These three groups are at different stages of development. The structure of the Safeguarding Partnership is fit for purpose and represents a model that fits with the legal requirements of section 16 and 17 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (as amended). The structure also provides a robust structure in which safeguarding strategies and positive outcomes can be achieved. There are areas for further development and despite competing pressures partners are holding a development day in January 2021 to review progress of the scrutiny process.

## **Executive Board**

The Executive Board consists of senior member of each Safeguarding Partner. Those members have been able to make decisions on behalf of their agency. The Board membership is restricted to the three statutory partners. Meetings have taken place on a flexible basis with short one hour meetings taking place weekly during key periods, and reverting to monthly meetings at other times. This flexibility is a strength that has proved to be of value to partners. This approach has been particularly beneficial during this period and it is intended that this approach will be maintained through the next year.

There has been considerable work undertaken to develop clear scrutiny processes. This work is complete, but both myself and partners are aware that levels of scrutiny need to be increased.

Membership of the board has not been considered since inception and it is now being reviewed, to consider whether current membership is optimum for delivering positive outcomes on the key priorities.

## **Tactical Groups**

There are three local tactical groups in place and meetings are well attended. During this period much of the focus has been on Covid-19 related issues. There have been important areas of work discussed. One example being child suicide; where partners resolved issues relating to governance that has seen a more streamlined response to suicide prevention. The partnership priorities have remained an agenda item at each meeting.

Membership of the tactical groups has largely been based on the membership of the previous LSCB. As a result, there have been high levels of attendance at meetings and a very broad range of both safeguarding partners and relevant agencies attend these meetings. Membership is currently being reviewed.

I have been responsible for chairing these meetings over this set up period but it has been agreed that a senior partner will now chair these meetings.

## **Operational and Other Groups**

Each tactical group area has an operational group for each priority area. A chair is in place for each of these groups and initial meetings have taken place.

It was agreed that partners would build on operational groups already in existence in each of the tactical group areas. This was a pragmatic approach taken by partners. Groups already existed and it was seen as sensible to build on these. Good examples are the work around domestic abuse in Blackburn with Darwen and the Awaken (contextual safeguarding) team in Blackpool. This picture is repeated across all of the operational groups. It was a pragmatic approach to get these groups working and to ensure that the tactical groups were able to move forward.



In addition to the operational groups, there is also a contextual safeguarding strategic board. This board provides a real emphasis on this issue and has developed an action plan for the operational groups.

There is currently a review underway across all three local authority areas as to the structures for the governance of domestic abuse issues. This is, in part, driven by the likely requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill when it is enacted. There needs to be more clarity in this area which I hope the review will provide.

Each Director of Children's Services currently chairs a Children and Family Partnership Board or equivalent. These are multiagency groups and much of their work focusses on issues that fall outside of the remit of the CSAP. Whilst there is considerable crossover I have been invited on to these Boards as an observer and it is clear that they are now dovetailing with the work of CSAP.

### Priorities

The three priorities were determined following detailed discussions between safeguarding partners. There is little doubt in my mind that these three priorities are entirely justified.

There is evidence across all three areas that considerable work is being undertaken to improve outcomes in the priority areas. However, more needs to be done to understand this work and whether there are any gaps in service provision.

The CSAP should be regarded by partners as an opportunity to highlight the strong safeguarding work they are undertaking. This will enable partners to learn from each other. It would be useful to use CSAP as a depository for good practice. This will be especially useful in understanding how practice is improving.

### Neglect

Each area has a neglect operational group feeding into the tactical groups. There is a neglect strategy in each area, but these are based on local authority boundaries. Whilst these strategies are appropriate it would be useful for partners if they could be combined into a single strategy. This would particularly help those agencies whose frontline staff work across borders. There needs to be a better understanding of the overall picture of neglect in the CSAP area. This will be critical once society returns to a more normal state.

Whilst the local authorities have taken the lead around this issue other partners are playing a significant role and are able to identify improvements in the way front line staff are able to identify neglect and make referrals for the appropriate support.

Partners have recently agreed to undertake a neglect multi-agency audit which will be undertaken in the second quarter of 2021.



## Domestic Abuse

There is evidence of considerable work being put in place around domestic abuse. Examples of this work include:

- Operation Encompass
- Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Campaign
- MARAC review
- Targeted work by the VRN in prisons and in custody office interventions

Due to the number of domestic abuse groups and forums in operation across the three local authority areas, CSAP initially sought to further understand the governance arrangements in place between such groups and seek assurance that approaches were aligned with legislation and the Domestic Abuse Bill. A scoping exercise was completed, setting out the various groups, their terms of reference, membership and reporting mechanisms. Responses to this exercise demonstrated that further work was required and this is now in progress to review and refresh approaches across the county.

## Contextual Safeguarding

The Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board has been established and deals with all issues relating to contextual safeguarding. The Board has terms of reference and takes the strategic lead on behalf of CSAP in this area. An action plan has been developed with clear expectations around outcomes. This Board ensures that local operational groups are able to work together to achieve the required outcomes.

It has been identified that whilst there have been a number of high profile and successful prosecutions in this area there remains concern that the full picture around child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, modern day slavery and missing from home was not complete. As a result, partners have agreed to fund an analyst for an initial period of two years to produce a problem profile. This should ensure that gaps in knowledge and understanding are filled and partners are able to match their response to the needs of children at risk in this area.

## The Journey of the Child

This area of work concerns the child protection process and examines the effectiveness of statutory processes for children who are subject to child protection. Each of the three local authority areas currently have in place a Getting to Good or Improvement Boards. For example, Blackpool have in place a Getting to Good Board. This Board is required as the local authority is currently graded as 'inadequate' by Ofsted and is on an improvement journey monitored by the Department for Education. There is an independent chair of this Board and I have been invited to it. This board looks at multi-agency processes as well as the work of Children's Services. The depth of analysis of performance data and the standard of that analysis is exceptional. I have experience of a number of authorities who have been in this position and the effectiveness of the Getting to Good Board is the best I have experienced. This has resulted in sustained and rapid improvement in Children's Services and a step change in the engagement of partners in the child protection system.

There are similar arrangements in place in both Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen local authority areas albeit the emphasis is slightly different given that neither of these authorities is in any form of intervention. I am confident that these three Boards are able to provide the correct level of assurance in the child protection system and areas for improvement are identified and dealt with.

## **Voice of the child**

The partnership and this includes the independent scrutineer need to consider how they are to better include the 'voice of the child' in their work. All partners engage with children, young people and families but both the CSAP and independent scrutineer need to formalise this process.

## **Scrutiny**

### **Process**

The scrutiny process is in place and has been agreed. This year has been one of development, and whilst it has been important to get building blocks in place there now needs to be an acceleration in this process. Developing the systems and processes has been important and challenging, especially at the time of a pandemic, but that development is complete, and I intend as the independent scrutineer to increase the level of scrutiny this year.

### **Independent scrutineer**

I have been provided with an open invitation to multi-agency partnership meetings and have found all agencies to be open and transparent in their provision of information and documentation. I am able to undertake my role in the way that statutory provision allows.

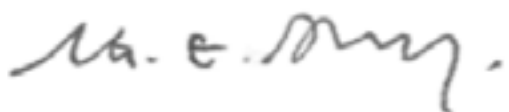
### **Working under Covid-19 restrictions**

In March partners immediately adapted their responses to prioritise vulnerable children and families. Each of the three Children's Services maintained face to face work with vulnerable families and put in place robust staffing structures to deal with staff shortages and a projected increase in demand. The work of our health services is well documented but in addition to the demands of the pandemic, ante-natal and post-natal work has continued. The police service identified high risk areas, in particular domestic violence and criminal and sexual abuse.

Partners worked closely with the Local Resilience Forum.

## **Conclusion**

There is a huge amount of very positive work being undertaken by partners in an environment that none of us has ever experienced. The development of new safeguarding arrangements has progressed well, despite the circumstances, and the processes that have been developed should provide a good foundation for more focussed scrutiny next year.

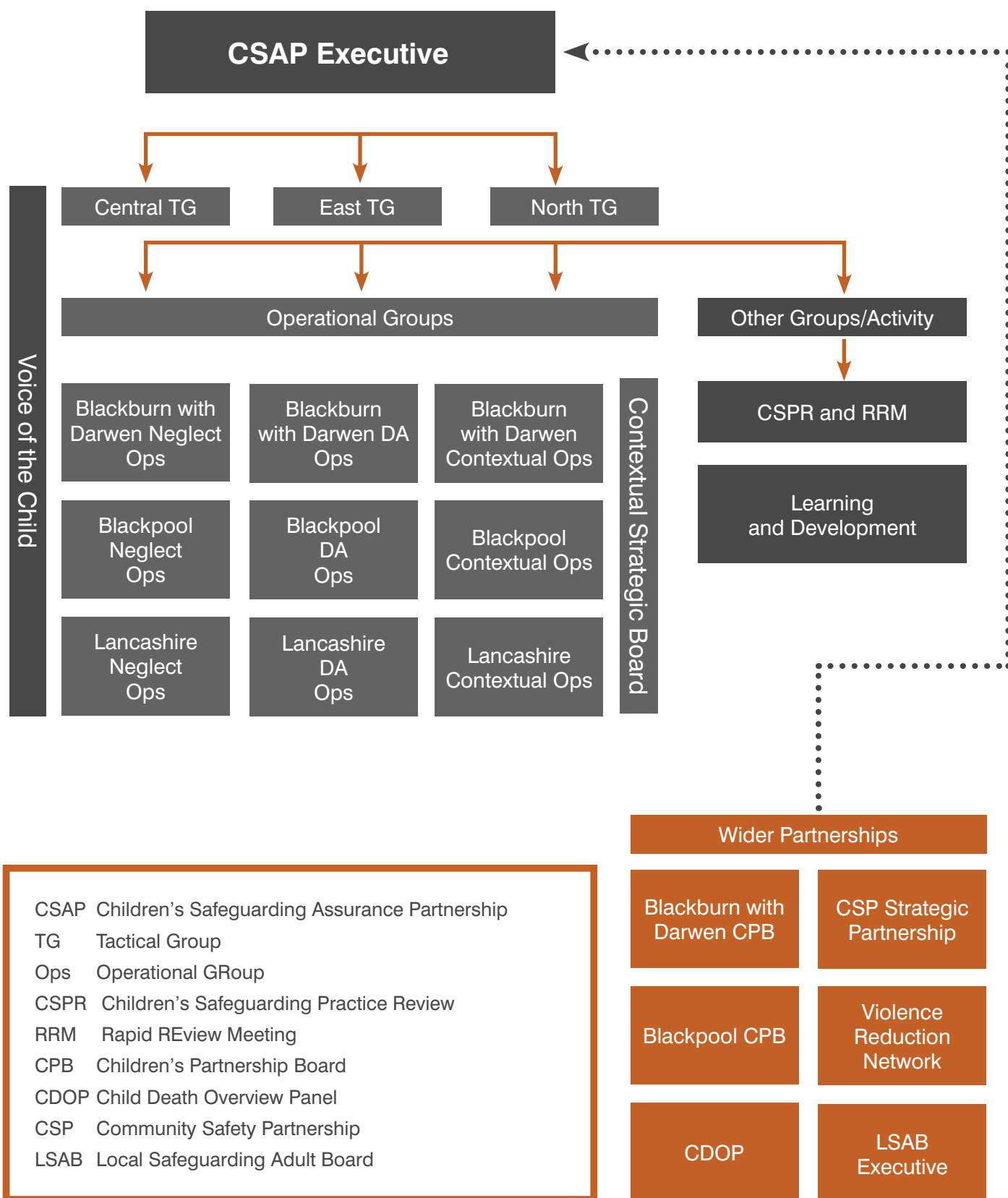


Steve Ashley

Independent Scrutineer

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire CSAP

## APPENDIX - GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## GLOSSARY

CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CSAP	Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSPR	Child Safeguarding Practice Review
DA	Domestic Abuse
DEM	Daily Exploited and Missing (meeting)
LCSP	Lancashire Community Safety Partnership
LRF	Lancashire Resilience Forum
LSAB	Local Safeguarding Adults Board
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
Marac	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NAI	Non Accidental Injury
SCR	Serious Case Review
SCSC	Serious Child Safeguarding Case
VRN	Violence Reduction Network
YJS	Youth Justice Service

## NOTES

# CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report for the year ending  
30th September 2020

For Blackburn with Darwen,  
Blackpool and Lancashire

