

Children's **Safeguarding Assurance** Partnership

Blackburn with Darwen - Blackpool - Lancashire



CSAP Annual Report 2021 Easy Read Summary





Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements



Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) is the agreed safeguarding partnership arrangement for our area, legally required by *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018).

It is made up of the key safeguarding partners (local authorities, NHS clinical commissioning groups and Lancashire Constabulary), together with relevant agencies all of whom are required to keep our children safe.

Our aim is to make sure that these agencies work together to keep children safe and achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

We do this by identifying priority areas for action which are Neglect, Contextual Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse. We then check and examine the arrangements put in place to safeguard children. Our Independent Scrutineer is someone who provides an external view and challenges what the partners are doing to keep children safe

Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire



A key success for the Safeguarding Partnership during the reporting period has been the agreement and launch of Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire (WWCFL) – this is the threshold document required by *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018).

WWCFL provides shared principles for working with children and families and includes example indicators and expected courses of action at each level of need. Separate sections for each local authority area provide details of local services and processes.

A recording of the virtual launch event, attended by over 700 practitioners is available on the CSAP YouTube channel for practitioners new to the area.

Contextual Safeguarding



Contextual safeguarding is the umbrella term for work to protect children from abuse and exploitation that they may experience outside their family home.

CSAP's Contextual Safeguarding strategy for 2021-24 sets out our approach for forthcoming years, a key element of which is the intention to expand our provision to young adults.

Our operational response continues to be provided by multi-agency teams who assess and provide a all-inclusive service to children who are, or at risk of being, sexually or criminally exploited, going missing or trafficked. This is combined with targeted work to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators. Local operational groups manage action plans for each area, co-ordinating delivery of the strategy and monitoring activity within the teams.

While the picture varies between areas, there has been an overall increase in criminal exploitation concerns. We will continue work to expand our offer to young adults and to agree an update process for our response to missing children.

Neglect



Neglect is the most common form of child abuse in England and the main cause of concern in almost half of child protection plans nationally. Locally, it has been the primary concern in a number of recent reviews.

Whilst each local authority area has its own neglect strategy, the partners have agreed common principles for our response to neglect. Over the coming year, partners will move to using a common assessment tool for neglect throughout our area. We will also continue to provide training to the workforce to support their response to neglect and raise wider community awareness of neglect.

Domestic Abuse



National and local information suggests that a substantial number of children within the CSAP operating area experience Domestic Abuse (DA). We also know that a significant proportion of the Safeguarding Partnership's operational activity consists of responding to and protecting children from DA.

Overall responsibility for DA sits with Community Safety Partnerships, meaning that CSAP's role is to be assured that children are effectively safeguarded from DA. Given the increased concerns in respect of DA during the pandemic, CSAP has supported the #noexcuseforabuse campaign which raised public awareness and provided additional ways to report concerns and seek help.

The safeguarding partners have continued to support two successful DA operations. *Operation Encompass* provides schools with next-day notification of DA incidents attended by the Police to enable them to support vulnerable children and has recently been expanded to include further education providers. *Operation Provide* enables early Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) contact with victims and has been found to increase victim engagement which then enables services to be provided to children in the household.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

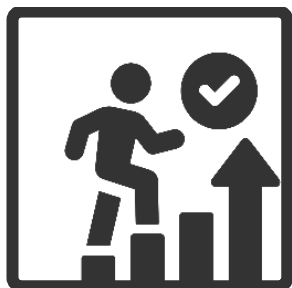


CSAP continues to meet its statutory obligations to undertake rapid reviews of potential serious child safeguarding cases and, where appropriate, to progress these to local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR). During the reporting period we held 13 (thirteen) Rapid Review Meetings and commissioned 5 (five) CSPRs, with neglect, abusive head trauma and safer sleep the most common reasons for notification.

One review was published during the year and is available on our website with an associated practitioner briefing. 11 (eleven) reviews were ongoing at the year-end and, with delays caused by police investigations having been largely resolved, it is anticipated that the majority will be published in their coming months.

Learning from reviews has influenced the development of the Safer Sleep campaign and our response to neglect. This has resulted in revised processes for safeguarding children in particular circumstances including Fabricated and Induced Illness and Concealed and Denied Pregnancy.

Workforce Development



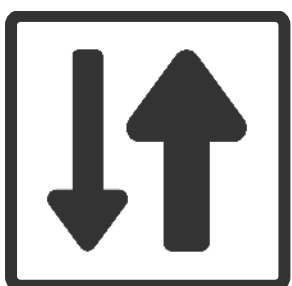
The safeguarding partners are required to consider what multi-agency safeguarding training is required locally and to make arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of what is commissioned. Like most safeguarding partnerships, CSAP discharges this duty through the delivery of its own learning and development (L&D) programme.

Training is based on the three CSAP priority areas and has continued to be delivered virtually as a consequence of the Covid pandemic. During 2020-21, 1,108 practitioners attended our training courses. Our training is supported by a wide ranging e-learning offer, along with our successful range of 7-Minute Briefings that have recently included Child-to-Parent violence, Contextual Safeguarding and Restrictive Practice.

CSAP has continued to employ a specialist Online Safeguarding Advisor to identify and disseminate good practice and to support the children's workforce in a rapidly changing area of safeguarding. A particular area of focus in the last year has been the implications of remote learning, with a *Safer Remote Learning* resource developed and published on the CSAP website.

As referred to above, CSAP now has its own website which has brought together content included on the three former Local Safeguarding Children Board websites. We also have a single Twitter presence which we use to promote our work to safeguard children and adults. Followers have increased substantially to 1,250+ and was viewed over 110,000 times during the reporting period.

Priorities for 2021/22



During the forthcoming year, CSAP will maintain its current safeguarding priority areas of Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect and Domestic Abuse. Our focus on delivering against strategies and action plans will continue, while also enabling our children and services to recover from the Covid pandemic.

There will be an increased focus on the quality assurance functions of CSAP with plans already underway to undertake single-agency Section 11 self-evaluation audits and Section 157/ 175 audits of schools. As remaining CSPRs are completed, there will be an increased emphasis on the delivery of actions plans and identifying if they have had the intended impact. As our quality assurance activity increases, we will seek to better understand the effectiveness of our work through the most important lens of all – its impact on our children.

Independent Scrutiny



As the Independent Scrutineer, my job is to look at what the 3 (three) partners (Police, Local Authorities and Health) are doing to keep children safe in their area. I can say that the work they have reported in the annual report is true and shows how much work has been undertaken by social workers, family support officers, nurses, doctors, police officers, teachers and many others to help keep children safe.

These professionals have had to do this work at the time of the Covid pandemic which has made their work even more difficult. More importantly, this time has continued to be difficult for everyone and we are all concerned about the long-term effect Covid will have on children and families.

In order to do my job, I meet with senior people across all agencies and attend the key meetings which they hold. I am satisfied that the partners have the structures and processes in place that are required by law and they are working effectively in their safeguarding work.

The partners have developed four main areas of work which they are prioritising:

- *Neglect*
- *Domestic Abuse*
- *Contextual Safeguarding*
- *Covid recovery*

These are the areas that the partners focus on and there is a lot of work being done to make sure the arrangements in this area are working well. Whilst in all of these areas there is further room for development, the partners have developed action plans which will see further improvement.

Conclusion

It has continued to be a difficult time for everyone and this includes the Safeguarding Partnership but I can report that real progress has been made and the partnership has been able to identify those areas where they need to make improvements.

I am grateful for the incredible work being undertaken on the front line and would like to thank members of the Executive Board for their openness and transparency over this year, which has enabled further progress to be made.



Stephen Ashley
Independent Scrutineer
Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire CSAP