This annual report has been written with contributions from the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) members, who were asked to demonstrate how they have contributed to safeguarding and the work of the BBSCB during 2018 - 2019. Jenny Myers, BBSCB Independent Chair and Sally Stocker, BBSCB Business Manager have written some sections of the report and have edited the final document. This report was signed off by the BBSCB in August 2019 and is available on the BBSCB website at www.bedford.gov.uk/lscb. This gives an opportunity for strategic partners at all levels and the public to assess whether the BBSCB is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities effectively and priorities are according to local issues and demands.

Any comments about this report can be made to the BBSCB on LSCB@bedford.gov.uk

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Welcome to the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) Annual report.

As part of its statutory duties set out in Working Together 2015, the LSCB is required to produce an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. This report describes how agencies have worked together and provided reassurance to the BBSCB that they are effectively safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

Last year our priorities remained the same, but there were some specific areas we wanted to focus more on:

• Understanding more about the quality of the response to children and young people with emotional and mental health issues.
• The partnership response to serious youth violence and ‘gang’ / group risk activity and offending and the links County Lines (drug-dealing), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing.
• A continued improvement to partner agencies response to missing children and young people and the number/quality of return interviews carried out.
• Enabling change and being assured that lessons are being learnt from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), case reviews and audits and that practice and outcomes are improving as a result.
• Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We have also worked on some core issues with our colleagues Pan Bedfordshire, more details of all this work is found on pages 26 - 53.

I am especially pleased to highlight the work that has been done to ensure that children lived experience and voices are better reflected in case work. Bedford Borough Council (BBC) has worked hard on developing their social work model and already there is evidence that a more systemic approach is impacting on better case notes and plans for children. I have continued to be an active member of the Bedford Borough children services improvement board and am regularly cited on improvements. This progress has been validated through Ofsted monitoring visits and the annual conversation.

The impact of an investment in Early Help work is making a big difference. I have noted the reduction in children on child protection and children in need plans, and we have been assured at the Board of the importance of this early help work and the impact it can have on supporting children and families early enough to prevent statutory intervention. See page 17 to 22 for further information.

I believe that the multi-agency partnership has continued to develop and enabled a culture of constructive challenge and transparency. We have demonstrated this year through the thematic spotlight events that we can have an impact on practice. One particular area where there has been significant progress was in work with disabled children (see page 34). BBC Children’s Services (BBCCS) reported that their Children with Disabilities Team (CWD) had significantly changed since the two SCRs and that the team was a lot stronger.

However, the recent SEND report demonstrated that there is still a lot to do across Health and Children’s Services until all children and young people get the support they need.

As we move into the new partnership arrangements, I am hopeful that safeguarding will continue to be a priority for the named partners. The problems that young people face increase in complexity and the pressure on staff from all key agencies at a time of reduced funding is huge. This year we have seen the increase in gang related crime and the danger of knives. The risk of criminal exploitation of young people getting caught up in county lines is becoming more frequent and an area we are going to need to focus on even more over the next year.

Lastly, I would want to thank all those staff who continue to put the safety and well-being of children and young people at the heart of their work.

Jenny Myers
BBSCB Independent Chair
Introduction

What is the BBSCB?
The BBSCB is a multi-agency body whose role is to oversee, coordinate, challenge, and scrutinise the work of all professionals and organisations in Bedford Borough to protect children/young people in the Borough from abuse and neglect, and to help all children/young people to grow up safe, happy, and with the maximum opportunity to realise their potential. It is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. Under the Act, every Local Authority in England is required to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) with two primary purposes:

• To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the Local Authority area; and

• To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Every LSCB is required to publish an annual report to provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. Legislation, regulations, and guidance set out the minimum requirements of LSCBs. However, the BBSCB is ambitious to go beyond minimum requirements, in order to ensure that safeguarding services in Bedford Borough achieve the highest standards and that all children/young people in Bedford Borough have the best possible life chances and opportunities.

Our new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
Following the Children Act 2017, and revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC) 2018 from the end of September 2019 the BBSCB, in its current form, will no longer exist. The responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements will then sit with the three named partners Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) and Bedfordshire Police. Whilst the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs) will include and relate to all agencies with responsibilities and interests in the safeguarding of children/young people, including for example, Education and those in the Third Sector, the three agencies with statutory responsibilities will together share particular duties with respect to seeing the strategic direction for safeguarding, and for the overall governance of the new arrangements.

The new MASAs for Bedford Borough have just been published and the partnership has chosen to retain the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board as the strategic senior group having oversight of safeguarding. The named partners have worked collaboratively across Pan Bedfordshire to ensure that there is consistency in approach, whilst at the same time not losing a focus on individual areas.

Governance and Accountability Arrangements
Appropriate arrangements remained in place to ensure that the BBSCB meets its statutory functions as outlined in Working Together 2015 and 2018, the LSCB Regulations 2006 and the Children Act 2004.

Over the last year the BBSCB has strengthened its governance arrangements and restructured some of the sub groups to ensure better join up with the wider strategic partnership both in Bedford Borough and across the county including Central Bedfordshire and Luton LSCBs. Our structure is on page 8 and shows our current formation and links to other strategic groups across the partnership in Bedford Borough and wider.
Finance and Staffing
2018 – 2019

The work of the BBSCB is funded through contributions from partner agencies in line with a funding formula agreed by agencies in 2010 and adhered to since that time. Partner agencies agreed to maintain their budget contributions in 2018/2019 at the same level of 2017/2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Agreed Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire Police</td>
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<td>CAFCASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>BENCH</td>
<td>£800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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The Independent Chair

Jenny Myers as the BBSCB Independent Chair has a crucial role in ensuring that BBSCB operates independently, and is able to challenge partner agencies whilst scrutinising services to seek continued improvement. The Chair is accountable to and meets regularly with the BBC Chief Executive Director for Children’s Services. The Chair has full access to director level representatives from other partner organisations and the Lead Member.

The Chair is a member of the BBC Children’s Services Improvement Board. The Board continues to change and develop with a greater focus on outcomes and aims to encourage greater discussion and debate to influence and where necessary change or modify multi-agency practice. All this is taking place in an environment of significant change across the multi-agency partnership both nationally and locally, with key agencies reporting an increased pressure on capacity, alongside fewer resources and increasing scrutiny by inspection bodies.

Lay Members

BBSCB has two lay members who provide additional scrutiny and challenge to the Board.

“This year as a lay member I returned to attending the full board meetings as opposed to joining the sub-groups; this proved to be quite valuable. As with anything, when you take a step back and then re-enter, changes are more apparent. The level of scrutiny and challenge has further increased encouraged directly by the chair, and as a result there is greater clarity of direction. For example, when considering the data presented for after, and previously looked after children, the depth of the discussion led to further lines of enquiry which ultimately gleaned richer data. In addition to my direct involvement with the board, I have seen their impact in my educational setting. My school was one of many to host the County Lines production - an excellent raw and challenging depiction of how life can change when you are groomed for transporting and selling drugs. Our students had addressed this though their PSHEE curriculum prior to the performance, yet both staff and students felt the impact of Alter Ego’s drama... not to mention the praise it received from a LA social worker who came to our school to see the performance.

For me, it is these opportunities for agencies and young people to work truly together, on current local issues that have the most impact on promoting safety in the community and educating the next generation of decision makers.”

Susannah King

“For me, it is these opportunities for agencies and young people to work truly together, on current local issues that have the most impact on promoting safety in the community and educating the next generation of decision makers.”

Justyna Kuzio

For more information in regards to the role and function of LSCBs please visit http://www.workingtogetherno.co.uk
Bedford Borough Safeguarding Snapshot
2018/2019

- 39,224 children and young people under the age of 18 live in Bedford Borough
- 23.1% of the total population
- 14.8% of children and young people are living in poverty
- 100 different ethnic groups live in Bedford Borough
- 31% of children in primary schools speak English as an additional language
- 21% of children in secondary schools speak English as an additional language
- 11% of children in primary schools are in receipt of free school meals
- 9% of children in secondary schools are in receipt of free school meals
- 9,880 contacts were made to MASH and 1,454 referrals were made to Bedford Borough Children’s Services
- 884 open Children in Need cases as of March 2018
- 1,270 Early Help Assessments undertaken and 1,687 Single Assessments completed

- 382 child protection investigations were undertaken
- 117 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held
- 58 children and young people were subject to Child Protection Plans as of March 2018
- 232 children & young children people were looked after as of March 2018
- 58 children and young people were subject to Child Protection Plans as of March 2018
- 6 young people were in a Private Fostering arrangements
- 232 children & young children people were looked after as of March 2018
- 232 children & young people were subject to Child Protection Plans as of March 2018
- 21 children & young people were identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or had been sexually exploited
- 543 incidents of 1,833 children & young people going missing
- 2,669 domestic abuse notifications made to the police where children and young people were in the household
- 231 Allegations against staff working with children and young people were made
What does Bedford Borough look like?

Bedford Borough is situated within the geographical county of Bedfordshire and covers an area of 476 sq. km. It lies within the East of England Region, but enjoys close geographical proximity and economic links with the South East, London, and the Midlands. Within Bedford Borough there is a mix of urban and rural areas, with Bedford being the central urban town and largest area of population. 169,912 people live in Bedford Borough (2017) with approximately two-thirds of the population living in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston and one-third living in the surrounding rural areas.

The Borough ranks in the Top 100 of 348 English local authorities in the proportion of its population in 15 of the 17 minority ethnic groupings. Up to 100 different ethnic groups live in Bedford Borough with more than 1 in 3 people in Bedford and Kempston from minority ethnic groups, compared to less than 1 in 8 in rural areas. Bedford Borough has a very ethnically diverse population, with up to 100 different ethnic groups living within its boundaries. The 2011 Census indicates that 28.5% of the population was from minority ethnic groups (BME), compared to 20.2% nationally (only 13.9% when London Boroughs are excluded). The BME population increased by 16,400 between 2001 and 2011, whereas the White British population declined by 6,900. The languages most commonly spoken in the Borough as a main language are Polish, Panjabi, Bengali and Italian.

Nationally, Bedford Borough ranks 148 out of 326 local authorities in England for deprivation. However, this average ranking masks pockets of significant deprivation that fall into within the 30% most deprived areas in the country. All 25 of these Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in Bedford or Kempston Towns, with the greatest deprivation centred on Castle, Cauldwell, Goldington, Kingsbrook and Queens Park wards.

Here is a snapshot of safeguarding data that has been provided to the BBSCB over the last year. This report will provide some context and analysis of that data and demonstrate what challenges have been made and how effective services and support to children/young people and their families have been during 2018/19.

Children and young people living in this area

Approximately 39,224 children/young people under the age of 18 live in Bedford Borough this is 23.1% of the total population. Of those children/young people 5,420 are living in poverty. Bedford Borough is a relatively prosperous and fast-growing borough, but with areas of significant deprivation. Children/young people from minority ethnic groups account for 29% of all children/young people living in the area, compared to 21% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups of children/young people in the area are Asian or Asian British and Mixed.

At 31st March 2019;
• 884 children/young people had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist Children’s Service. This is a significant (23%) decrease from 1,154.
• 58 children/young people were the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) this is a significant (62%) decrease from 153.
• 6 children lived in a privately arranged fostering placement this is a decrease from 5.
• 232 children/young people were being looked after by the Local Authority, this is a decrease from 239.
• Of this number, 108 live outside the Local Authority area.
• 22 children/young people were unaccompanied asylum-seeking.
• 16 live in residential children’s homes, of whom 50% live out of the authority area.

In the previous 12 months:
• 24 children have been adopted.
• 13 children/young people became subject of special guardianship orders.
• 105 children/young people ceased to be looked after, of whom 4 subsequently returned to be looked after.
• 7 children/young people ceased to be looked after and moved on to independent living.
• 14 children/young people ceased to be looked after and are now living in houses of multiple-occupation.
What have children and young people told us?

“I am happy when my voice is heard because it helps people understand me and helps me understand things”

“When my worker listens to me, it makes me feel that people believe me and what I am saying”

“Let me know what is happening in a way I understand, not with big words”

“Let me speak for myself, don’t guess what I might be thinking”

BBSCB recognises the importance of listening to children/young people and taking their views into account. The Pan Bedfordshire Voice of the Child group (VOCG) has continued in 2018/19 to review, create, action and recommend processes for ensuring that the voice of children and lived experience is heard in a timely, effective and appropriate manner. It particularly focused on hearing the voice of disabled children/young people as a result of comments made by children/young people following a workshop in 2017 with children/young people who attend special schools where they highlighted that they were not able to distinguish who they could and could not trust. As a consequence, two further workshops were held with front line staff in November 2017 and June 2018 to raise awareness of safeguarding, processes for escalation and build their confidence in challenging more senior staff and parents and possible areas for improved learning and development. As a result:

• Agencies have communicated links for safeguarding training to staff in commissioned services.
• Raised awareness of the process for reporting any concerns to Children’s Services, the escalation process and function of LSCBs.
• Basic information on safeguarding is included in the leaflets provided to school transport drivers from the School Transport Team.

The VOCG has worked with colleagues from a wide range of partners, private and voluntary sector to identify and plan work. Through multi-agency feedback, review and analysis VOCG has identified areas of strength and areas for improvement. For the majority of partners work is undertaken to capture the voice of the child, however it routinely does not inform policy or process, nor in some examples does it necessarily ask effective and meaningful safeguarding questions for the child/young person.

Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) describe how the voice/lived experience of the child is captured in health/development assessments and used to influence the individual support plan. They acknowledge that there is a need to enhance how the organisation facilities collaborative/co-production of service design/delivery with children/young people and have recently recruited a Participation Officer into their Children’s Services Team. Bedfordshire Police have expectations that in any police investigation, officers and staff engage children/young people not only to obtain their account, but to listen to any concerns they have or any opinions as to how matters may be dealt with. They continue to complete cases audits to ensure that the child/young person’s voice is recorded within investigation files. The school’s engagement team have heard children/young people express concerns about gang and knife crime. They have received additional funding to tackle these, and it is intended that some will be used for active engagement with children/young people and communities.

BBCCS vision is that children/young people are at the heart of everything they do. They have co-produced with children/young people its intent that ‘If it’s about you, we don’t want to do it without you’. Consolidated feedback from children/young people they work with tells them that three themes are the most important to them:

• Relationships Matter – trust and honesty; their wishes and feelings at the heart of what we do.
• Information must be easy to understand - free of jargon; respect children/young people’s views and help them understand their rights.
• Communication is vital – what difference their views made?

Their Quality Assurance (QA) framework assessed quality of practice ‘Is the voice of the child prevalent throughout and reflected in their assessments and plans?’ It outlines that the voice of children/young people is a key element of QA and source of intelligence on strengths and areas for improvement. The voice of the child, their views and experiences are gathered through a variety of ways for example feedback from Collaborative Discussions (audit mechanism), feedback from Conference and Review work and ‘You said; we did/will’ Action plan developed as a way to track direct responses and service change to what children/young people tell them they want and need. BBC Early Help captures the views of children/young people through ongoing planned piece of work. The relevant Outcome star is used to capture their voice about the improvements they have noticed or made. At the end of the any intervention or work children/young people are encouraged to give feedback through Survey Monkey, email or by writing something on the closure form.

The Child Health and Wellbeing partnership group have invited frontline practitioners to deliver “a day in the life of” from a staff and service user perspective, with a different service presenting at each meeting, to date Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Ormiston Families and traveller support have presented to the meeting.
BBC’s Engagement and Development Team’s main focus is on the voice, views, opinions and ideas of children/young people and how these can be used to bring about positive change. The Team continue to support the Celebration Events for Looked After Children (LAC) in 2018 over 100 children/young people attended the events received over 250 pride forms. The Engagement and Development Team work across three key levels;

• Level One: the support and facilitation of projects and forums for children/young people to have their say.
• Level Two: support and guidance to staff, teams and services to improve their practise and how the voice of the child can influence change.
• Level Three: offering strategic guidance and ensuring the implementation of children/young people’s voices

Children in Care Council (CiCC) continues to run with a junior group (8-12) and senior group (12-16). CiCC meet monthly to allow the children/young people a safe space to build a peer support network with each other and who are in the same situation as them. The meetings are themed based on the issues that are important to them. Four members of have delivered training to new foster carers as part of the Skills to Foster training package and a member of the Leaving and After Care Forum co-delivered voice of the child training to Elected Members. Three members of the Junior CiCC participated in an Eastern Region project to create a ‘top-tips’ video for social workers. The young people decided the key tips and each Local Authority with Bedford Borough creating ‘Be happy and smile’. Members of CiCC continue to work alongside National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and support the interviews and recruitment of Independent Visitors and more recently the appointment of Independent Review Officers. Members have also helped in the creation of three new pledges for LAC and Care Leavers. These will be launched later this year and outline BBC’s commitment to keeping children/young people happy, safe, healthy and heard.

Youth Cabinet continues to grow and held a very successful Make your Mark campaign which saw four campaign issues identified; end knife crime, improving Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, anti-bullying and transport. They hosted the annual Pupil Voice conference attended by 13 schools (over 50 children/young people). A brand new committee have been elected which also consists of four elected portfolio holders (one for each of the campaigns).

Mind Of My Own is a digital platform designed to make it easier for children/young people to keep in touch with their workers and share information that is important to them. Since it launched in April 2017 85 children/young people have signed up for an account and 151 workers have attended the training and registered for an account. 554 statements have been received, 25% were to prepare for a meeting or conference, 22% were to prepare for a worker visit and 15% were to share good news. 12% were to report a problem and these have been dealt with via the corporate complaints system (where appropriate) and themes from the complaints have been discussed at the QA Board.

The Engagement and Development Team works with children/young people on a CP or Child In Need (CiN) plan and support a monthly group for them. Meetings are themed and aim to provide children/young people with a safe space to meet their peers to learn new skills and share their views on the support from BBC.

Conclusion
This year we have undertaken work with our partners to determine how they evidence the voice and lived experience of children/young people. All our training is child focussed ensuring the voice of the child/young person and their welfare remains paramount. This will continue to be a priority for 2019 – 2020 and this will be a focus for the next Section 11 self-assessments.
Multi Agency Joint Working

Bedford Borough is one of three unitary authorities and LSCBs in Bedfordshire and the BBSCB works collaboratively with our neighbours to ensure a more joined up approach to safeguarding. This is particularly important where agencies deliver services across, and are represented on, a number of LSCB areas. In agreeing a common approach and response to specific safeguarding and child protection issues such as CSE, neglect and harmful practices for example Pan Bedfordshire groups are operating across the whole of the county. The three LSCB Chairs and Business Managers meet regularly to share and discuss specific issues, developments etc and twice a year the Safeguarding Adult Board Chairs and Board Managers join the group to discuss cross cutting children’s and adults’ priorities and work.

BBSCB works closely with other partnership boards including the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and Community Safety Partnership (CSP). BBSCB assisted in the development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Bedford Borough Children, Young People and their Families Plan to ensure they address safeguarding issues for children/young people. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board held one of their meetings to consider the theme of Transitions (learning from the Patrick SCR). Pathways and safeguards are in place across both adult and children services to demonstrate that they are well planned, safe, effective and responsive to support young people with care and support needs transitioning from children to adult services.

More details about the BBSCB can be found on our website https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/children-young-people/safeguarding-children-board/

Multi- Agency Achievements in 2018 - 2019

Raising awareness;

Funding secured from the Schools Forum supported the commissioning of the following plays:

• In the Net – a play to raise awareness of internet safety was delivered to 2,265 children Year 4 and 5 pupils for 3 weeks in September 2018
• Chelsea’s Choice – a play raising awareness about CSE was delivered to Years 7 and 8 – 2,047 children in November 2018.
• Click - a new play aimed at Year 6 children raising awareness around digital literacy and online resilience was delivered to 1,329 children in November 2018.

Funding was secured from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to commission a play about County Lines that outlines the risks when children/young people are criminally exploited. This was and delivered to 2,826 pupils over 3 weeks during March – May 2019.

Safeguarding Children:

The numbers of children/young people on CP and CIN plans have reduced and analysis suggests this is a safe decrease and positive that less families require statutory intervention to support them. This is alongside the continuing integration and development of the work of Early Help, and an increase in Early Help Assessments (EHA).

Learning and Improvement;

• Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency Graded Care Profile 2 assessment audit completed and learning shared.
• Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency emotional wellbeing and mental health audit completed and learning shared.
• Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency missing children and young people audit completed and learning shared.
• Pan Bedfordshire multi-agency child sexual abuse in a family environment audit completed and learning shared.
• Pan Bedfordshire vulnerabilities of mental health when safeguarding children conference held on the 18.06.18.
• Two SCRs published and learning shared.
• In September 2018 a CSE Conference for Faith Communities was held and led by Councillor Nawaz and BBC Children’s Services.

CSE and Missing;

• Pan Bedfordshire CSE Coordinator’s role now includes Missing children/young people.
• Development and implementation of the Pan Bedfordshire Disruption Toolkit and Pan Bedfordshire CSE Practitioners Toolkit.
• Pan Bedfordshire CSE & Missing Action Plan actioned and monitored.
• Multiagency CSE Training delivered by Bedfordshire University.
• Pan Bedfordshire CSE/Missing Intelligence & Performance Group created to develop a Pan Bedfordshire Performance & analytical Framework and a Pan Bedfordshire Missing Problem Profile completed. There was an increase in Multi-agency Intelligence submissions and in Disruption activity across Bedford Borough.
• The ‘Make Safe’ campaign was commenced within Bedford Borough Hotels & Fast Food Outlets. CSE related visits to 27 Hotels, 7 Fast Food Outlets and 15 licensed premises received CSE awareness raising in Bedford Borough.
• CSE Training was provided to 661 Taxi Drivers and to Local Pharmacists in Bedford Borough.
• The second Bedfordshire Against CSE Conference was held in November 2018 and the theme was Sexual Trauma.

Single Agency Highlights

• Bedford Hospital has continued to enhance the safeguarding of children/young people accessing services, they have:
  • Ensured that early help services remain a priority and delivered training via the BBC Early Help Team. There has been an increase in the number of internal enquiries regarding the early help process with the pathway seen very much as a positive intervention for children and families.
  • Developed better working relationships to improve for positive outcomes in relation to decision making about children and families. This professional relationship across agencies allows for professional challenge and when appropriate escalation with the child as the focus of all discussions.
• Ensured that the hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) remains a key working partnership within acute health services with an increase in the number of contacts to this service from staff and service users.
• Commenced work on joint pre-birth meetings between the local authority and health to track cases and identify if there is any drift and/or cases that may need management oversight. In particular allows for dialogue around cases that may have been referred at late gestation.
• During the first quarter of 2019 CCS became the provider organisation for Bedfordshire Community Health Children’s Services. This transition was well managed to ensure a safe and effective service delivery with staff begin support through a period of change. Although this has presented a number of challenges, these challenges have also provided opportunities; restructure of the old provider safeguarding team and opportunities for collaborative work with statutory partners and wider community third sector provisions.

BBSCB Priority Areas:
BBSCB has worked hard at trying to evidence improvement and impact over the last year. The Board agreed to continue with the following priority areas (please see the following pages) due to either their prevalence in the cases agencies see or because the BBSCB believed them to be unseen or hidden forms of abuse which the BBSCB needs to work together to tackle. BBSCB also identified that the earlier children are helped the better the outcome. BBSCB continued to address the following objectives to direct its work for 2017 – 2019: Neglect, Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health and Digital Safeguarding. The following is a summary of assurance received, achievements and challenges.
Objective 1: Assure ourselves that families, children and young people are supported earlier

“Our shared vision is to give all children and young people firm foundations in life, through a strong network of family, friends and communities, with the earliest and best support that can be offered to build capacity and resilience.” (BBC)

Early Help is an approach rather than a discrete service. It involves all partners sharing responsibility for intervening as early as possible to help children, young people and families at risk of poor outcomes. Effective early help relies upon partners working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- provide services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child and family.

The BBC Early Help Strategy 2018 – 2021 was launched in this year and brings together the priorities for children, young people and families to ensure they get the Right Support and the Right Action at the Right Time. It looks back and highlights some excellent work and sets out their aspirations for the next three years. Bedford Borough with support from schools and the voluntary sector has built up an Early Intervention system which is held nationally in high regard with the Early Intervention Foundation naming them as a “named Early Intervention” authority. They will build on this progress with the new Strategy and have developed analytics, insight and performance, a score card against their outcome’s framework. Bedford Borough is an Early Intervention Foundation named Early Intervention Place and has an early help offer, based upon the principle that practitioners who know children/young people well are best placed to identify and support them and their families, when additional needs are first identified.

Early Help Assessments (EHA) continue to be used across all partners with 1,270 children being the subject of an EHA in April 2018 - March 2019. Last year this was counted as families and 480 had been received through the front door. The number of EHAs received by BBC Early Help is one of the highest in the Eastern Region. The majority of the completed EHAs come from schools and the main reason for an EHA is where behaviour of the child/young person is of concern. In March - September 2018 4% of EHAs were referred for a statutory assessment; Oct 2018 - March 2019 this was 2% and 2017 - 2018 the figure was 5%. These figures suggest that early help is effectively addressing risk early.

Early Help Professionals provide support and challenge to multi-agency Lead Professionals and also facilitate sharing of learning and good practice. The numbers of children and families supported through Team Around the Family (TAF) processes have continued to increase at a steady rate meaning more children and families are receiving coordinated, multi-agency early help, which is meeting their needs when issues first arise.

Achievements in 2018 – 2019:

- 164 families were jointly worked between Early Help and Children’s Services.
- The Intensive Family Support Service worked over 530 children/young people, a 50% increase on the previous year.
- 98 families were stepped down to Early Help from CIN. This means that there is a reduction in risk and need but children and families still have a response that is both proportionate and meets their needs. It enables families to see their progress and to not have families open to Children’s Services where their support needs can be met elsewhere.
- Two Early Help practitioners have secured the post graduate qualification in Enhanced Evidenced Based Practice which means an in house offer of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is available for young people experiencing low mood or anxiety.

Two Early Help Professionals are qualified to offer all students in secondary schools Solution Focused Intervention. This service has been expanded and has managed to track 44 Solution Focused cases so far using the nationally recognised ‘Outcomes Star’ evaluation tool. Of the 44 cases tracked, 37 (or 84%) have shown an improvement in their Outcomes Star scores. From this data we can safely assume that Solution Focused has been helpful to some degree in at least 70% of cases. They ask participants what they had learnt about themselves from the sessions that they would take forward with them to help face future challenges here is selection of some of their responses:

“I can be confident and should not let anyone tell me otherwise. I also can participate in activities I wouldn’t normally do.”

“I know that I can change my mind-set so that I can feel happier.”

“I have learnt that believing in myself makes a difference and by doing so I have identified traits such as being forth going that will help me thrive to achieve my hopes and goals for the future.”

“I have learnt that I am quite determined to succeed and do what I want in the future.”

In 2018/19 37 Enhanced Evidence Based Practice cases have been tracked using the Revised Children’s Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) and a Parent Version. These questionnaires measure the reported frequency of various symptoms of anxiety and low mood. Of the 37 cases tracked, 29 (or 78%) have shown an improvement in their RCAD symptom tracker, with 2 (5%) showing no change and 6 (16%) a decline. Of the 6 that showed a decline all were either stepped up to CAMHS or to a Senior CAMHS Early Help Practitioner for further support.
The designated Early Help Professional has supported 36 parents who are teenagers through effective multi-agency working which supported bespoke ante-natal care and post birth interventions for all the parents. 103 parents attended 12 groups in 2018 – 2019 with 97% of parents reporting an improvement in their relationships within the family, levels of stress/anxiety and emotional health and wellbeing. Comments from parents about the group they attended:

“It was especially useful to be able to speak out loud without being judged. Also being with people in same/similar situations and realising you are not alone”

“I am now more assertive and try not to argue back but stay in control of a situation without aggression on both sides”

“It showed me how to get my family life back “

“I’ve learnt a lot about a lot of things how I used to deal with situations in the past and how I could deal with things differently and how I am different to then”.

46 parents and 58 young people accessed five Strengthening Families Parenting Group between Sept 2018 - March 2019 and their feedback included:

“It’s made me think about our disagreements and what can be done to resolve them, using the new tools I’ve also thought more about how my child feels.”

“The course has made a difference – there are lots more conversations rather than arguments and we are able to work together to work out solutions to problems using the new strategies. The staff were all so nice and welcoming each week. They didn’t judge and listened to everyone’s point of view”

BBC Children’s Services (BBCCS) track all Unborn Baby’s (UBB) through a permanency panel and there is an emphasis on a robust and often innovative approach to supporting and working with parents. The CCS Healthy Child Programme professionals actively work with professionals from partner agencies, to support resilient children/young people and families and intervene early to support child/young people experiencing adverse life experiences.

Bedfordshire Police are the only Force in the Eastern Region that has a dedicated School Liaison Team, engaging with 367 schools and other educational establishments. This enables two-way information sharing in relation to vulnerable children/young people. For example, the School Liaison Team receives a daily briefing by an intelligence analyst, identifying any serious youth violence or knife crime incidents involving under 18s. This allows resources to be deployed to appropriate geographical areas. Every month, schools and other educational establishments are issued a serious youth violence vulnerability list to help them provide support to any of their pupils which are listed, and to work in partnership with Bedfordshire Police. The Schools Liaison Team sends out regular updates around knife crime and provides awareness training for professionals and parents who support children and young people.

The Schools Liaison Team supports schools and other educational establishments with low level incidents within a learning environment. They meet monthly with school leaders with year seven students and above can attend. In early 2018, the Team launched a ‘Schools Toolkit’, which focussed on Knife Crime for educational establishments with information/resources around the topic. The Team hold an annual student challenge where schools/educational establishments are actively encouraged to take part and produce resources to educate other young people around

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For further information on Early Help please access information here https://earlyhelp.bedford.gov.uk/
Objective 2:
Protect the most vulnerable children and young people

BBCC’s received 9,880 contacts this year (a decrease on last year of 10,285). These do not include direct Early Help Referrals through an EHA. This number of contacts amounted to 1,454 referrals (up from 1,226 last year). This amounts to a 14.7% conversion rate (up from 13% last year; it was 13.9% in 16/17). Children in Need (CIN) have decreased over the past 12 months and on 31st March 2019 there were 884. As at 31st March 2018, 1133 children were open to as CIN, as compared with 938 as of 31st March 2017. The numbers of CIN suggest that the emphasis and work in Early Help is having a direct impact on the need for referral and any ‘step up’ work. QA work has evidenced development in work with children and their families under CIN. There has been evidence of the impact of Systemic social work approach in many cases showing the benefit of co-ordinated workforce training across the service. There are also benefits from a more stable and permanent workforce and in May 2018 the agency social worker figure was 45.7% and in April 2019 it was 22.9%.

Through a systematic process of senior managers reviewing all children subject to child protection for more than 2 years and more recently, by evaluating every request for an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) against the threshold of significant harm, BBCCs has made significant progress in safely reducing the number of children/young people subject to a child protection plan (CPP). In April 2017, there were 205 children/young people subject to a CPP and as of April 2018, this has reduced to 154. In April 2019 this was 58. This is a rate of 14.8 per 10,000 population which is below the national average. Over the same period, there has been a focus on CPP’s that have lasted for more than 2 years and as a consequence there are currently no plans that fall into this category, this is the same picture as last year 0% in 2018 and 2019. The rate of children/young people starting a CPP for a second or subsequent time is higher than in 2017/18. The percentage of children/young people who became the subject of CP for a second or subsequent time (in the previous 2 years) is 17.3% (17 children). We need to continue to evaluate this and ensure QA activity that allows us to understand any learning or development needed. 100% of children/young people subject to a CPP were seen in March 2019 within 10 working days. The average across 2018 – 2019 was 99.1%

2018 – 2019 performance data 83.8% of ICPC’s were held within 15 days of the S47 enquiry. 93.6% of CPP’s were reviewed in statutory timescales. The Strengthening Families Model of CP conferencing has been in place from May 2018 and empowers families to ensure changes are made to keep their children safe. Detailed feedback and evaluation from every ICPC and

stepdown Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) from parents/carers and professionals tell us that the experience of the conference process: pre –conference visit; the new conference room and layout and the chairing of the conference using the Strengthening Families Model has been overwhelmingly positive. This feedback is provided in detail in each monthly QA report and presented to the QA Board on a monthly basis.

There were 232 children/young people who were LAC as of 31st March 2019 and this is a 3% decrease against the figure of 239 in March 2018. There have been 331 children LAC overall in the period April 2018 – March 2019. Of the 232 LAC, 101 were female and 131 male (compared to 101 female and 139 male in March 2018). The ethnic profile of LAC 2017/2018 compared with 2018/2019 shows a reduction in the number of Asian children becoming looked after from 13 to 4; an increase in the category of ‘other’ ethnicity from 8 to 13. In terms of age there has been a reduction in the number of 5-11 from 71 to 60; a reduction in under 1 from 21 to 14; a reduction in 16 plus from 56 to 49 but an increase in 12-15 year olds from 71 to 86.

In the year 2018 - 2019 55 children became looked after which is a decrease in the previous two years – 2017/2018: 105 - 2016/2017: 135. 54.3% of LAC are placed within Bedford Borough with majority of the others placed in directly neighbouring authorities. 72.2% of LAC live in long-term stable placements and for our statistical neighbours that figure is 63% of LAC.

100% of LAC under 5 had health assessments in time and 81.3 % (up from 71% in 2017/2018) of new LAC had their initial LAC medical within timescales. The regional average for initial health medical in time is 45%. 95.5% (up from 94% in 2017/2018) LAC over 5’s had their annual health assessment in time.

100% of LAC reviews were held to timescale in 2018/2019 and this was also 100% in 2017/2018. 98.4 % of LAC participated in their review. The majority of children aged over 4 did attend their review. If they did not attend their views were represented usually by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). 93% of LAC attend Good or Outstandng Schools. 87% of care leavers aged 17- 21 were assessed as living in suitable accommodation which remains above our statistical neighbour (73%) and national performance. 58% of care leavers aged 17 - 21 were in education, employment or training which is above our statistical neighbour and national performance.

Increasing aspirations and opportunities for care leavers continues to be a focus for practice:

• A Mentoring scheme has been launched across BBC to recruit mentors for LAC and Care Leavers. Applications currently being received and interviews will follow in August. Successful mentors will receive training in the autumn and will be matched with their LAC and Care Leaver soon after. The scheme will be rolled out from November 2019.

• In parallel it is intended to offer mentoring training for older LAC and Care Leavers so that they can become mentors to our younger LAC. A training provider has been identified and will be actioned in 2019/2020.

• Apprenticeships in the BBC’s Engagement and Development Team have been ring fenced for a Care Leaver. Other Care leavers receive a guaranteed interview for any apprenticeship within BBC that they apply for as long as meet the job specification. There have not been a high number of Care Leavers apply for apprenticeships at present so further discussions will look at how jobs within BBC can be more accessible to Care Leavers. One of the aims of the Mentoring scheme is to have a positive impact in this area.

• Work Experience opportunities are being explored further in 2019/2020.

During the year 2018 - 2019, the number of crimes investigated by Bedfordshire Police child abuse teams increased by 42%. Significant increases are continuing in child related offences...
...and rape. Child rape cases in Bedfordshire have risen from 83 cases in 2017-2018 to 239 reports in 2018 – 2019. The board will be asking for more information from the Police about this and will seek reassurance and understand more about the significant rise in numbers.

Cases of child neglect have also increased this year, from 31 cases to 45. National campaigns, professional alertness and media coverage (Rotherham, soap operas and documentaries) have encouraged more reporting. This increase in demand, which is replicated in other areas, is indicative of an improved wantonness and confidence to report offences of abuse. 52% of child abuse cases investigated were committed 12 months or more before the report was made.

An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that Bedfordshire Police has made improvements to their child protection capabilities, with some areas for development remaining. These include enhanced training on child protection issues for officers and staff and updated information sharing practices and data, despite this, HMCFCS raised several issues, including delays in sending referrals to the relevant Local Authority and lack of police supervision in multi-agency safeguarding hubs.

In respect of gang crime, plans are now well underway for allocating £1.38 million of funding that the Police were awarded to tackle serious youth violence. This year, operational processes have been further improved and certain incidents (including DA, missing persons, concern for safety) receive a structured vulnerability assessment which give automatic supervisor notifications to maintain and improve awareness, for example in DA incidents not attended, or attempts to close incidents without sufficient rationale. Within the Police, Child Protection Gold, Domestic Abuse Gold, Rape Gold and Vulnerability Boards provide governance of CP investigations, DA, stalking and harassment, serious sexual offences and rape. These are cross-departmental meetings to understand performance relating to the crime type and the processes which are in place to manage the crimes. The meetings provide an opportunity to consider good practice and where improvements can be made. Learning and recommendations from SCRs are considered at these meetings and then, where appropriate, included in tactical improvement plans to improve our practice.

BBC Public Health is helping schools to identify their current provision for PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education alongside their Health Education in preparation for statutory implementation in September 2020. Public Health has had a particular focus upon strengthening the understanding and work regarding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Trauma. A draft paper regarding this is ready to be shared with the BBSCB and this work will continue into the next year with a greater collaboration with Bedfordshire Police to drive this work even further forward.

Neglect
From April 2018 – March 2019, Neglect was a feature in 6.9% (increase from 3.6% in 2017/2018) of all contacts to the MASH and a feature in 12.6% (compared to 13.3% in 2017/2018) of all assessments completed. As of March 2019, of the 58 children subject of a CP Plan 37.8% (45.5% 2017/2018) were under the category of Neglect. In 2018 – 2019 Neglect was the highest category of abuse identified at ICPCs at 55.6% (compared to 40.8% in 2017/2018).

Neglect and our work/responses as a multi-agency group remain a critical issue. Significant investment has been made over the past two years in ensuring the training of practitioners in the use of the Graded Care profile 2 (GCP2) tool and its use across BBCSs working with partner agencies. The aim of the revised Pan Bedfordshire Neglect strategy is to set out the strategic aims and objectives of a Pan Bedfordshire approach to preventing and reducing neglect across the county. This includes working within a Think Family Work Family approach to ensure that issues are addressed restoratively and in a family context, and to pull together all of the work happening across children's services to reflect coherent and consistent ways of working to tackle the issue of neglect. This will help us to improve outcomes for children/young people and families. This strategy has been developed in conjunction with multi-agency partners working across Bedfordshire. It has been identified that Oral Health Data will help to identify areas within in Bedford Borough where there are hotspots around extraction of teeth in children/young people so that we can raise awareness of neglect with Dentists as a possible cause of decaying teeth. Work with Public Health has been shared around the Pan Bedfordshire Affectd Others Work Plan and this will now include the harms to children/young people from parent/carer within family drug and alcohol misuse in 2019/2020. Discussions are underway to consider if routine notifications by the Drug and Alcohol service, of parents in treatment who are living with a child/young person are appropriate to Health Visitor and School Nurse Services.

A performance dataset is being developed in relation to the neglect strategy and the proposed outcomes of the new strategy. GCP2 is monitored by BBC Early Help and Intervention Service and they have trained over 250 staff across statutory, schools and voluntary organisations since Sept 2017, and there is ongoing half termly training.

A Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Campaign with the NSPCC ran from October 2018 until April 2019 and a full evaluation report is pending from the NSPCC. The campaigns aim and objectives were:

• To deliver a campaign in Bedfordshire which raises awareness of the signs, symptoms and impact of neglect on children and young people, with a focus on reaching adolescents with information and sources of support around neglect.
• Increase professional and public awareness of the nature of neglect and its impact on children and young people, challenging perceptions about neglect and acceptable standards of care for young people.
• Ensure children/young people, families, professionals and the wider community are aware of sources of support and advice - challenging the misconception that because adolescents are older they have the capacity to cope.
• Maximise the capacity of universal services to effectively and safely support children/young people who are vulnerable to neglect.

...
Some Outputs of the campaign

- Neglect Awareness Sessions delivered to 52 local professionals working across education and health sectors. All attendees to the sessions said that they ‘very strongly’ or ‘strongly’ agreed that the session had given them an increased awareness of the signs and symptoms of neglect and a confidence about what to do if they have concerns about a child/young person. For some, the sessions provided a refresh about neglect and the importance of taking action; for others, new sources of information and support provided an increased sense of confidence to safeguard children/young people against this type of abuse.

- SNAPCHAT 10 Second advert aimed at 13-17 year olds we wanted to aim it 11 year olds but you need to be at least 13 to have a snapchat account – however we know that some young people would have used a false date of birth so it’s highly likely that children younger than 13 would have seen the advert). The first Advert ran from 29th March 2019 – 5th April 2019 - total impressions were 380,089 (how many times the advert was seen), Snapchat estimated we would only reach 84,000 impressions. The total swipe-ups was 3,073, estimated we would only have 137 – 255 swipe-ups a day and we beat this by almost double per day – this shows that young people were interested and were swiping up to get more details, the advert directed them to the ChildLine neglect web page. The total video views was 18,554 – they would have used a false date of birth so it’s highly likely that children younger than 13 would have seen the advert). The first Advert ran from 29th March 2019 – 5th April 2019 - total impressions were 380,089 (how many times the advert was seen), Snapchat estimated we would only reach 84,000 impressions. The total swipe-ups was 3,073, estimated we would only have 137 – 255 swipe-ups a day and we beat this by almost double per day – this shows that young people were interested and were swiping up to get more details, the advert directed them to the ChildLine neglect web page. The total video views was 18,554 – they would have watched the video for at least 3 seconds for it to be recorded as a video view, so again, this demonstrates the level of interest in this topic. The second advert ran from 8th – 22nd April 2019 and the total impressions were 451,003. Total swipe-ups were 3,805. Total video views were 20,378.

The campaign worked well to create/revise resources that will support the on-going approach to neglect locally. Revising the ‘Feeling Invisible’ guide for young people and utilising social media ensured an on-going dissemination of information to key audiences.

‘Good session that was informative & thought provoking with good useful links to further research’
(Teaching Assistant).

“Really useful session to refresh myself of neglect, thank you.”
(Education worker).

- Neglect Matters posters displayed in BBC buildings, sent to 77 schools, GP’s and Pharmacists, Libraries and Leisure services across Bedford Borough.
- New neglect booklet for young people produced, called ‘Feeling Invisible’. This was given to 2,826 Year 8 pupils who watched County Lines performances, as well as the 97 professionals, parents and young people who attended the evening performances.
- Nine pieces of local media coverage secured, covering several important aspects of neglect.
- SNAPCHAT 10 Second advert aimed at 13-17 year olds we wanted to aim it 11 year olds but you need to be at least 13 to have a snapchat account – however we know that some young people would have used a false date of birth so it’s highly likely that children younger than 13 would have seen the advert). The first Advert ran from 29th March 2019 – 5th April 2019 - total impressions were 380,089 (how many times the advert was seen), Snapchat estimated we would only reach 84,000 impressions. The total swipe-ups was 3,073, estimated we would only have 137 – 255 swipe-ups a day and we beat this by almost double per day – this shows that young people were interested and were swiping up to get more details, the advert directed them to the ChildLine neglect web page. The total video views was 18,554 – they would have watched the video for at least 3 seconds for it to be recorded as a video view, so again, this demonstrates the level of interest in this topic. The second advert ran from 8th – 22nd April 2019 and the total impressions were 451,003. Total swipe-ups were 3,805. Total video views were 20,378.

For professionals, the evaluation from the workshops showed that they successfully supported professionals to increase their awareness of neglect, the resources to support them and how to take action where there are concerns. It’s disappointing that, despite significant attempts to encourage sign ups, more workshops weren’t held, and the Steering Group have reflected on this for future opportunities.

Want to know more about neglect then please watch a file from the NSPCC “GCP2: How We Spot Neglect?” at this link and visit our procedures and website

Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health

The emotional needs of children and young people are met at an early stage, via CAMHS practitioners who are based in every secondary school, meaning that children/young people can access appropriate services when their needs first arise, and prevent escalation to higher level services. The strong partnership working between Early Help and the East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) has meant that innovative practice has developed in the area. The CAMHS practitioners in each secondary school, as part of the Bedford Borough Early Help Offer, are proving to be a strong source of early help and support, both to students in building resilience, and to school staff who have benefitted from the uplift in skills and knowledge. The work between Early Help and ELFT continues to develop and there is further embedding of mental health support in a cluster of schools planned.

Ear Help and Intervention Service have also recruited two new 0-5 mental health trainees. They have developed a Mental Health and Resilience Toolkit to support schools with a whole-school approach to emotional health and wellbeing. All schools have identified a member of its senior leadership team to be a mental health and wellbeing lead. Every secondary school in Bedford Borough can access two terms of Solution Focus Brief Therapy Drop In Sessions delivered by the Solution focused trained and accredited staff in Early Help. An active partnership with the ELFT has facilitated a specialist CAMHs worker to be based within the Early Help and Intervention Service. They have worked in partnership with CHUMS to help deliver a series of trauma workshops for Syrian Refugee children.

The Mental Capacity Lead and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards for Adult Services has provided bespoke training and advice to child care practitioners working with young person of 16 and above in relation to mental capacity and deprivation of liberty issues, to enable practitioners supporting young people to make their own decision whenever possible or to make decisions in their best interests or using other safeguards powers contained in the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) including referring cases to the courts for decisions to be made.

Public Health has developed a policy for schools and colleges to help provide support and guidance regarding responding to and preventing suicide. This is also part of a Pan Beds agreed pathway of response and support when there is a suspected suicide of a young person.
**Digital Safeguarding**

Through the Bedford Borough schools forum funding a project to support schools around online safety has commenced with an external Consultant to work with schools to help them to map out where they are in their e-safety journey and signpost them to sources of advice, training and support to ensure best practice and to keep children safer online. The results of a survey have been analysed and schools would be signposted and supported to ensure that they are meeting best practice in relation to keeping children safe online.

What we have found so far...

- Most schools have sets of policies in place especially Acceptable Users Policy.
- Most students not involved and therefore most schools do not audit students.
- Some schools have procedures in place for managing incidents.
- Most schools have some training though some don’t have any and there has not been any specific training on emerging risks.
- Most schools have an online safety lead but there is a mix of who this person is/their role in school and they have not had any additional training.
- Lots of assemblies and external visitors.
- Hardly any peer support schemes but lots of support for parents (mainly on the websites).
- Filtering and monitoring in place.
- Most schools feel confident in their approach.

Keeping Children Safe in Education was published in September 2018 and all staff should undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online. There is a new section (part 5) child on child sexual harassment and sexual violence which can occur online and it is specifically referenced that Online Safeguarding in part of the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who should have up to date training for which including increased risk for SEN students.

**Ofsted and Online Safety**

- Managers and leaders should have strategic oversight regarding the use of technology within the setting.
- Settings should have clear policies and procedures for responding to, reporting and recording online safety concerns.
- Policies should explicitly cover: peer on peer abuse issues, such as sexual harassment/violence, online bullying and sexting, use of mobile phones and personal devices, use of social media and staff communication.
- Online safety is recognised as a safeguarding issue as such the DSL has overall responsibility and should be appropriately supported to enable them to identify and respond to online safety concerns.
- All members of staff should be provided with appropriate online safety training which should include safeguarding learners as well as ensuring that staff understand and manage their online reputation.
- Settings should ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring is in place to reduce the risks of learners accessing unsuitable online content.
- There should be proactive, robust and ability appropriate embedded curriculum which enables learners to identify, understand and respond to online safety risks.
- Leaders and managers should be mindful of the settings online and their reputation and the impact this could have on their inspections.

**Children with Disabilities**

In January 2019 BBSCB revisited Children with Disabilities (CWD) following the SCR in regards to Patrick and the Thematic Review regarding the quality of practice for CWD. BBCCS reported that the CWD team had significantly changed since the two SCRs and that the team was a lot stronger. The “Preparing for Adulthood Protocol” was now in place, and that quarterly transition tracking meetings were being held and tracking was also being started at an earlier age/stage of a child/young person’s life. SEND cases accounted for approximately 20% of children/young people who were considered to be vulnerable due to their complexity of needs and were placed in mainstream schools. Tracking meetings were particularly helpful in terms of planning and transitioning into Adult Services.

Bedford College have had some 16 -18 year olds who could possibly be picked up earlier, however they could be masked by other issues, for example, mental health. The identification of educational needs at an early stage was very important and additional vulnerable needs of...
young people, advice, support and family networks were also key to moving forward. There was some challenge to waiting lists for CWD were too long or often delayed and this was possibly due to some assessments sometimes taking longer to complete to ensure that children/young people received the most suitable help and services available to them. BBCCS was in the process of reviewing its’ Behaviour Strategy as it was particularly related to SEND. BBCCS have focused their work regarding SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) children/young people placed out of borough; the quality of social care advice and input into EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans). A SEND improvement Board is monitoring the work through the written statement of action. Following an Ofsted focused visit in December 2018 there was a recognition since the previous inspection 2017 that actions had been taken and are resulting in improving outcomes for children in need and children in need of protection.” “The senior leadership team has recently developed, in partnership with staff, an ambitious vision of child centred, outcome focused practice” “Rigorous performance management has resulted in sustained improvements in areas of core social work activity”  

In terms of awareness across the workforce in general, BCCG advised that some work regarding additional needs in General Practices and Hospitals using the Patrick SCR had been undertaken. CCS nurse led clinics and a mapping of workforce needed to ensure that links continued, awareness had improved, however it needed to be progressed. There had been the development of Health Passports which was an informative document which incorporated the voice of the child.  

In January 2019 it was bought to the Boards attention that speech and language development or difficulties was being addressed.  

In 2018/2019 there were 543 missing notifications to the BBCCS comprising of 183 children/young people. Historically there have been significant challenges in ensuring children/young people had a return home interview (RHI) in appropriate timescales and that this fed through to effective intervention.  

At point of contact with MASH for 2018/2019 2.4% (240) of contacts (2017/2018 - 1.9% (198)) of contacts were identified as at risk of CSE. This increases to 4.7% 2018/2019 as a feature in assessment (compared with 5.6% in 2017/2018). As at the end of March 2019 21 children/young people have been identified as currently at risk of CSE (compared with 28 in March 2018) and all are known to BBCCS.  

BBCCS Single Point of Contact for CSE/ Missing is based within MASH and Early Help has a CSE lead who works with schools and education settings in order to support with early identification and signposting to support services. BBCCS works closely with Link to Change a charity specialising in working directly with young people at risk of or experiencing CSE.  

There is a weekly Single Point of Contact Meeting between BBCCS, Bedfordshire Youth Offending Services (BYOS) and Police where the top high risk young people at risk of CSE/Missing are discussed, themes are highlighted, intelligence is shared with the Pan Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Group (CSEM) via a monthly highlight report. These discussions have expanded to involve discussion on risk of other exploitation such as criminal exploitation as this is an additional vulnerability that the majority of the high risk cases have.  

There is a monthly missing GOLD group led by the Police which includes senior managers from Children’s Services across Bedfordshire and both Youth Offending Services, which provides strategic oversight of intelligence, highest risk persistently missing children, themes, issues and joint working. One of the prevalent issues relates to missing children from children’s homes and 16 plus providers who are placed in Bedford Borough from other Local Authorities (LAs) and the need to ensure joined up responses involving the home.  

In 2018/2019 there were 543 missing notifications to the BBCCS comprising of 183 children/young people. Historically there have been significant challenges in ensuring children/young people had a return home interview (RHI) in appropriate timescales and that this fed through to effective intervention. There has been significant and ongoing work with Police to ensure BBCCS is aware of all missing children/young people at the point they go missing to enable an effective response and return home interview. BBCCS commissions Barnardo’s to undertake independent RHI’s. As at March 2019 75% of children/young people who went missing had a RHI in appropriate timescales (an increase from 73.3% as at March 2018, which was a significant increase in comparison to 36.6% in 2016/2017). There continues to be a focus on the consistent use of the policy regarding missing children/young people and appropriate liaison and joint working with other Council’s as many of the children/young people with the highest number of missing episodes come from other areas.  

The Police work closely with children’s homes to establish more effective ways of working together to safeguard missing children/young people. They are working with members of Parliament to improve the regulation of accommodation provision for young people aged over...
In November 2018 a Bedfordshire against CSE conference focusing on Sexual Trauma was held with guest speakers Zoe Ladrick, Phil Mitchell, Sara Rowbotham and CYP First and 225 practitioners attended. CSE campaigns this year across Bedfordshire included:

- CSE Event –MAKE SAFE for Hoteliers in Bedfordshire.
- Disrespect No Body Campaign.
- ‘it happens to boys’ too seminar.
- It’s not ok campaign.

The Pan Bedfordshire CSE/Missing Strategy sets out the commitment of all agencies and our intention to pursue and prosecute offenders and to protect those who are at risk and have been victims and survivors. There is a commitment to protect and listen to children/young people and the community, placing the voice of the child at the heart of what is done.

The new NWG (National Working Group) CSE assessment has been piloted across Bedfordshire; the assessment promotes the engagement of Children & their families in a holistic approach. We are awaiting the evaluation report.

The CSE Intelligence Performance Group (CSEIPG) was set up in April 2018 to agree a common language for use in describing CSE and deliver improvements in products and processes used to support existing CSE governance structures. This meeting uses the Intel to tackle issues on an operational basis in regard to Victim, Perpetrator or Location.

Feedback Sample:

“Rather than focusing on the gender of the behaviour committed focus on the behaviour.”

“I am shocked to say that in five years as a Youth Worker I have never received a C.S.E referral for a male. This course really opened up my eyes. Especially the fact that in my practice CSE is biased towards young female in assessing exploitation.

“Sometimes boys do get overlooked and the message I took home was I have to think ‘if this was a girl what would I do’. It was a very good message for me and has made me change the way I think and I have passed it onto my colleagues too.”

The trend over the last year in Bedford Borough trend shows a drop in missing reports (see above) Most of the children/young people are LAC and most are at medium risk; the repeat missing persons are high. On average there were 9 reports filed every day during this period with 93% classed as medium risk; across Bedfordshire. Approx. 48% of the reports relating to children were for LAC compared to 56.8% last year.

A CSE Communication Plan is in place and throughout 2019 raised awareness of CSE and Missing amongst children/young people, adults, parents, carers, professionals, the community and potential perpetrators to prevent exploitation and reduce tolerance of sexually exploitative behaviours. This year there has been a specific focus to raise awareness that boys can be subject to CSE too. Many boys/young men experience CSE in the context of gangs and/or offending behaviour. Often it is the offending that is noticed and responded to by professionals and this could explain why so many CSE referrals come through the criminal justice settings. Whilst all of the research evidence to date shows that girls and young women are the majority of victims, boys and young men are also exploited

A campaign focused on male victims of CSE/CSA (Child Sexual Abuse) was launched on 17th September 2018. The #ItHappensToBoysToo social media campaign has been recognised by the Home Office and was a joint initiative with BBC, LBC, CBC BCCG and the Police. Over the eight weeks, photos were shared on social media channels of authority figures, such as police officers, fire fighters and paramedics, as well as local sports personalities, including Olympians Kriss Akabusi and Etienne Stott. Click here to see the Tweet from the Home Office and the video of our campaign:

In November 2018 a Bedfordshire against CSE Conference focusing on Sexual Trauma was held with guest speakers Zoe Ladrick, Phil Mitchell, Sara Rowbotham and CYP First and 225 practitioners attended. CSE campaigns this year across Bedfordshire included:

- CSE Event –MAKE SAFE for Hoteliers in Bedfordshire.
- Disrespect No Body Campaign.
- ‘it happens to boys’ too seminar.
- It’s not ok campaign.
Governance of the Bedfordshire CSE & Missing strategy sits with the Bedfordshire Chief Executive’s Forum, its CSE sub group and the Pan Bedfordshire CSE & Missing Strategic Board. In addition the BBC Director of Children’s Services reports to the BBSCB on this strategy and its implementation. BBSCB holds partners to account for their role in delivering this strategy and associated action plan. In October 2018 a SWOT Analysis was undertaken to look at where we would like Bedfordshire to be in 3 years’ time with regards to the CSE response:

- Bedfordshire to add Missing to the CSE Coordinators Role (to coordinate Bedfordshire’s response to CSE & Missing)
- To look at opportunities with other Vulnerabilities.
- Performance Framework to be agreed (Bedfordshire CSE & Missing Framework).
- To Increase Disruption (Outcomes) & Perpetrator Analysis; to link in with online CSE.
- To Develop and implement improved awareness for Parents & Community.

Link to Change is an independent charity offering support for children/young people aged 12 to 26 who have been sexually exploited providing a safe environment in which they can access support and explore the possibilities for change. The majority of their referrals are from BBCCS however they are developing referral pathways with other professionals, especially school staff. This is helped by having a presence at the MASH and allocated office space within the BBCCS. In addition they provide awareness training to schools and other professionals.

**Case Study- Lucy**

Lucy 13 year old was referred to Link to Change following concerns of risky internet behaviour. Lucy was on a CP plan, however following the referral, Link to Change were able to identify the needs of Lucy and proactively meet them as part of a multiagency team working with Lucy and providing support to the family as a whole. Lucy had additional needs which were identified through an independent psychology assessment, upon being recommended through the Child Protection Conference, due to this, school were able to facilitate additional help for Lucy and this enabled her to concentrate in her lessons better. The team of professionals who were involved with the care of Lucy met regularly and shared information via email instead of waiting for the core group meeting every six weeks this enabled the professionals to provide a more effective way to support Lucy and her family. Lucy disclosed that she was speaking to an older male over social media, this information played a part in a multiagency team working with Lucy as the perpetrator had targeted multiple girls in the area. Following disclosures and accessing help with multiple professionals, the risks had decreased and the case was stepped down to CIN and eventually to Team Around the Family (TAF) towards the end of our programme which demonstrated that multi agency work was very effective.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse (DA) is the single highest risk factor identified at point of contact and is a common feature in cases where there are other identified risk factors. DA is an identified issue in 33.4% of MASH referrals and a feature in 41.4% of assessments (2018-19 data).

The DA strategy 2017 - 2020 lays out the local action plan. Perpetrator services have been commissioned jointly with Central Bedfordshire Council. The Perpetrator Outreach worker started in August 2018 and as of December 2018 19 cases had been assessed and 46 staff consultations had taken place. There have been examples where children/young people have been stepped down from CP to CIN and also conversely where risks have been identified and further protection put in because of engagement with the Outreach worker. The impact of the Outreach Perpetrator worker has been significant in both reducing and understanding risks for individual children/young people.

In February 2019 MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) was reviewed and going forward there will be a safety plan for each high-risk victim that includes the support required for any children/young people involved/connected. There have been additional services set up in conjunction with the Voluntary sector such as the Resettlement Project; further development of a training package for staff. In development is the work in relation to violence by child/young person on their parent and teenage relationship abuse. This has been identified by all partners as an area that needs enhancing in understanding and response.

In the 21 months since the implementation of the Strategy to Tackle the Causes and Effects of DA a considerable amount of work has been achieved, particularly under the Strategic Aims of Partnership, Provision and Prevention. The difference the Strategy & Action Plan has made to outcomes for children/young people and families are:

Want to know more about CSE and Missing please visit our website or the Bedfordshire against CSE website. [http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com](http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com)

Find out more about Missing then please watch this film. Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures. [https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com](https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com)
• There is an identifiable Single Point of Contact within BBC for all staff and partners to make contact with for consultation and queries who is in a position to offer advice and signpost to the most appropriate source of support. This also ensures that Partners are now working more closely together rather than in silos and bringing together elements of their strategies where there is crossover to ensure there are no duplicating pathways into services and jointly identifying areas of need for support to children/young people.
• More services to support families have been set up in conjunction with the voluntary sector to support children and families for example, the Resettlement Project which supports women and children who are fleeing DA to secure suitable accommodation and The Change Project for perpetrators of DA.
• Schools DSLs are aware of DA and its impact on child development and learning.
• Domestic Abuse Notification Scheme (DANS) for schools is in place to ensure children/young people are appropriately supported where needed. The DANS has been considered best practice across the Bedfordshire Authorities.
• Appropriate training package is in place to support staff and increase their knowledge/skills in working with adults/children impacted by DA.
• Governance structure for DA is now in place within BBC.
• Increase in communication and joined up working between 3 Council’s and with other partners.
• Pan Bedfordshire Communication Strategy in place.
• Key DA partners and staff now attending Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Forum.
• Improvement in MARAC processes and all chairs and reps trained.
• Improved training for staff.

There are areas within the Action Plan that are yet to be considered these are work around prevalence of Child on Parent or Adolescent on Parent Violence and whether further support and interventions are required also teenage relationship abuse and a Data Dashboard. Work will now focus on sustaining and developing the Partnership work already achieved, improving communication and raising awareness within the Community, particularly in hard to reach sectors such as Male Victims and Elder Abuse and considering future provision for victim and perpetrators of DA.

Bedford Borough Safeguarding Board  Annual Report 2018 - 2019

Harmful Practices

Harmful Practices are forms of violence which have been committed primarily against women and girls in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered, or presented by perpetrators, as part of accepted cultural practice. Harmful Practices are based on tradition, culture, custom and practice, religion and/or superstition. They have often been embedded in communities for a long time and are born out of community pressure. They are committed and actively condoned by the child’s parents or significant adults within the child’s/young person’s community. They include rituals, traditions or other practices that have a detrimental effect on the physical, mental and emotional health of the victim. Many involve physical abuse and pain leading, in some cases intentionally, to death or serious injury. Others involve mental abuse. The most common are;

• Forced marriage.
• Honour based abuse.
• Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM).

Case Study

“As the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), it is important for me to reflect on the families who attend our setting and identify potential issues within the community. As a new DSL, I recognised the FGM was a gap for myself, and our school. I am now far more knowledgeable on FGM - I have made a point to find out where the children who I think may be vulnerable are going on their holidays and have asked teachers to be vigilant. For example; one young girl talked about a long holiday in Egypt. I encouraged a teaching assistant, who had a good relationship with the child and family, to chat with her about what she was going to do on holiday and who she might see. The TA also chatted with Mum at home time; again, this was conversational not an ‘accusation’. The course highlighted how getting to know the parents and carers, and building trust, would open up communication between us. In staff meetings, we focus on the importance of building relationships with families. The course led me to reflect on our policies and procedures. I identified that, despite having a multi-cultural school community, our policies don’t talk about cultural practices and safeguarding. We are currently working on an addition which explains how we value cultural diversity but identifies harmful practices and the action we will take.”

Go to the Bedfordshire DA Partnership (BDAP) website https://bedsdy.org.uk

Nationally the incidence of FGM indicates that there is still under reporting and a fear of coming forward. This is of concern to agencies in Bedford as the number of cases being identified in the area continues to be low and has been raised as an area of concern by the Bedford Borough Council Executive. The LSCB have asked for reassurance that all is being done and have been assured by Bedford Hospital NHS Trust that it undertakes risk assessments when it is considered that FGM is either being undertaken or is a possible risk for women and the possible impact for their children. Pan Bedfordshire FGM Training continues to be delivered by the Pan Bedfordshire Training Unit and below is some feedback from a delegate;

Multi Agency procedures for all 3 of the issues are in place and embedded and have or will be reviewed in 2019. Pan Bedfordshire FGM Training continues to be delivered by the Pan Bedfordshire Harmful Practices Group has a new chair since January 2019, Caroline Cook, Chief Executive Officer, Luton All Women’s Centre. There has been a concerted effort to engage work of Adult safeguarding services and this is still a challenge for the next year as the majority of cases identified are primarily involving vulnerable adults rather than children/young people. The strategy has been renamed, revised and agreed and a new action plan is being developed. The group have revised and agreed the Groups Terms of Reference and membership which now includes Adult Services Learning Disabilities Teams and Education representatives. Local case studies are discussed at each meeting and the meetings are themed to allow the group the time to focus on each of the harmful practices.

Data is currently not collected by any agency other than the Police around Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse.

Modern Day Slavery and Human (Child) Trafficking

Modern Day Slavery (MDS) does exist in Bedford Borough and in many forms including forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and street crime however these crimes are more relevant for vulnerable adults than children and young people at this time. Multi-agency work within Bedfordshire to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking is led by Bedfordshire Police but the BBSCB maintains close contact with the MDS Group. The BBSCB Business Manager along with other BBSCB members are members of the MDS Group established by the Police to make recommendations to the wider partnership on improving the partnership response to these issues. The Group have revised their terms of reference and at each meeting local cases are discussed, relevant learning shared, reflection and partnership working to safeguard vulnerable people.

We have little data that can give a good oversight of the prevalence of child trafficking in Bedford Borough. Work with partners to improve understanding of the perpetrator problem profile to support the identification and prosecution of those who perpetrate or facilitate the trafficking of children/young people for the purpose of sexual exploitation requires further work. The Police continue to investigate MDS and child trafficking in Bedford Borough and developing covert and overt proactive operations in partnership with agencies as appropriate.

Under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Council’s and the Police have a duty to identify and refer to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking. Home Office guidance clearly states that ‘child trafficking’ is child abuse and that it is not possible for a child/young person to give informed consent. NRM has been identified as an area that requires further raising awareness with the partnership.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The number of cases where meetings have been held has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. Contacts at Tier 2 monitoring only stage has increased in line with the overall figures this year. This would indicate local partners are referring in appropriate cases to LADO.

Contacts at Threshold Not Met has always been the highest as evidenced by the referrals over the last 5 years. It would be fair to suggest that LADO has developed positive relationships with the local community and therefore partners often contact for advice and support on cases and how to progress forward. LADO is often the first point of contact for schools particularly if they have external HR support. Further to evidence this, LADO has completed a number of ‘LADO awareness sessions’ within the community; following this there has been an increase in referrals from these sectors. As indicated in this first table, there has been a rise in referrals to the LADO service since the previous year.

74% of referrals were concluded within the one month timescale; which is just under the guidelines of 80% in Working Together. However, 93% of referrals were concluded within 3 months which has met the Working Together target of 90%. The case conclusions are largely dependent on the complexities of each individual case, which often take longer if police action is required. In contrast with last year’s figures based on the referral rate, the allegation outcomes have remaining relatively consistent. However as with previous years, the large majority of cases remain at not meeting the LADO threshold. The employment sector with the most referrals has remained relatively consistent with education sector being the highest which is in line with regional and national figures.

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### Private Fostering

Between April 2018 and March 2019 there were 6 new notifications regarding privately fostered children. Referrals relate to a wide range of situations including local teenage children, children/young people whose parents are overseas and asylum seekers/refugees who travel with other adults and are those not unaccompanied children but then reside with other adults when here.

6 new private fostering arrangements began in 18/19. The total number of children under private fostering arrangements this year was 8. 7 of the 8 are aged 10-15 or 16 and over. The focus on raising awareness about private fostering is essential and takes place within local faith and community groups, with other professionals, schools and with the general public. BBCCS has a lead for private fostering.

Want to know more about Private Fostering please visit our website and procedures and watch this video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAgI2qrdyxE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAgI2qrdyxE)

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### Conclusion

We have consistently delivered well in relation to this priority. There is evidence of significant changes to ways of working that have improved outcomes for children/young people. Services are focused on supporting victims as well as acting to find and stop perpetrators. The BBSCB has influenced both strategic and operational responses to abuse and neglect and they are informed by voices/lived experiences of children/young people. However, there is still work to do. Whilst there is evidence that the response to missing children/young people is improving more work is needed to understand the patterns and learn how to reduce repeat episodes in a child focused way. The Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group has made some impact but more work is needed to address how outcomes for children/young people can be improved.
**Objective 3:** The multi-agency workforce is supported, informed & effective with a focus on learning & improvement

**Multi Agency Training**
The Pan Bedfordshire LSCB Training Unit takes a robust approach to evaluating the training programme, collecting evidence of the following:

- The quality of the learning/training; (has it met participants learning needs and course objectives?)
- The immediate impact of the learning/training; (has the learning had an impact on the participants knowledge and confidence levels?)
- The medium-term impact; (Has the learning had an impact on delegates own practice? How has it been shared?)
- The longer term and wider impact of the training; (What are improvements to delegates service? What are the outcomes for children, young people and families?)

The Pan Bedfordshire LSCB Training Officer undertakes quality observations of training courses. Observations focus on new trainers’ or learning events, and on courses that have been updated or refreshed. Observations will be carried out where feedback suggests lower satisfaction or impact ratings. Trainers receive a copy of observations and feedback along with a summary of participant’s comments.

Working together face to face course ran 34 times during 2018/19. It was attended by 642 practitioners from a range of agencies. Satisfaction levels remain high with delegates highlighting the benefits of a multi-agency learning environment to increase knowledge of, and confidence to, share information with other agencies, escalate concerns and improve partnerships in order to safeguard children and young people.

Main positive findings from end of day evaluations (immediate impact):
- It is great that you invite all professionals involved with safeguarding as it gives great discussions to know the pressures/conflicts etc that we all experience.
- It was useful going through the routes of safeguarding, from early help upwards, where we learnt who was involved at every stage, and the thresholds. The breaking of communication barriers and getting us to understand the roles of other professionals was also invaluable.
- Medium-term impact (survey monkey).
- This is my first year as a manager at this setting. When I started the setting recorded children’s safeguarding incidents but not in a standard from. I have established recording system such as ‘A record of Concern form’ and kept the form where every member of staff knows where to get them.
- We updated some key issues during staff meeting. We have reviewed our safeguarding policy such as - Staff are not allowed to wear ‘smart devices’ while working with children.

The 3 month impact resulted in 54 responses (29%) received via survey monkey evaluations. Delegates reflected positively on the benefits to their confidence and practice; several school based practitioners had planned to share learning during inset days. 91% of respondents have shared learning, citing team or professionals meetings, supervision and case discussions and with families on home visits. Colleagues within the team (93%), parents and carers (14%), children and young people (23%) and professionals from other agencies (21%) all received information. Reasons for not sharing information, or not feeling moderate or significant impact were identified as time to share, lack of front line work or conference serving as a refresher and update. 86% of delegates stated the conference had a moderate or significant impact on their own practice.

Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business Workshops free half day events attended by 70 professionals from organisations across Bedfordshire and its aim was to raise awareness of safeguarding across the volunteer workforce, youth workers, residential workers, early years and schools support staff. Delegates chose to attend for the full day or for individual workshops.

- "Introduction to Contextual Safeguarding" - An introduction to understanding/responding to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families.
- "Teenage Brain" - How changes in the adolescent brain can affect emotions, relationships, behaviours and attitudes to risk.
- "Child Sexual Exploitation" - Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation; how to recognise and respond to concerns.
- "Seeing, Not Hearing" - The basics of identifying vulnerabilities in children/ young people and what to do when you are concerned.
52 evaluations (74%) were returned. Feedback was positive with delegates noting the quality and knowledge of trainers and confirming that the format was a good use of time away from the workplace. 94% of delegates rated their knowledge of the subject between 8 and 10 after attending the course; compared to just 52% who gave a rating of 8 and above before the course.

A sample of feedback is shared below.

“I found all aspects of the training really useful and have brought it back to share with my colleagues. I felt the workshops were delivered well and the day was very well organised. I had never heard of Contextual Safeguarding prior to this course so found this really interesting.”

“Training methods were creative and interactive which made it an enjoyable experience throughout the day. A lot of information in a short space of time easily explained.”

Based on the delegate evaluations, the training will consider for future events using the workshop-based model to deliver future awareness raising or themed events. 90 minutes worked well for ‘light touch’ events but 2 hours would allow additional time for questions and reflection at a deeper level. Provide a list of attendees as part of the delegate pack; this will enhance networking opportunities at large scale events.

A Spotlight on Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment was held at the end of March 2019 and focussed on;

- How to identify the challenges that Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) presents in its identification and assessment.
- How well do the current CSA processes and pathways assist you in identifying and assessing CSA?
- What services are available to support children and young people who experience (or are suspected of experiencing) sexual abuse?

A report on the event will be presented to the BBSCB in 2019 Quarter 1 training report.

E - Learning Courses
BBSCB provides access to a full range of e-learning courses through the Virtual College. This allows partners the ability to offer up-to-date safeguarding training to all staff through the unlimited licences available for each course. Courses include Safeguarding Children and Young People from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation, Safeguarding Children Refresher and Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect. The most popular e-learning courses accessed by practitioners working in Bedford Borough are;

1. Refresher - Understanding Pathways to Extremism and the Prevent Programme.
2. Safeguarding Children in Education.
3. eSafety - Guidance for Practitioners and Parents.
4. Understanding Pathways to Extremism and the Prevent Programme.

Serious Case Reviews
BBSCB is required to consider whether to initiate an SCR when a child/young person dies (including death by suspected suicide) or is seriously injured, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor. The main purpose of an SCR is to learn lessons to improve the way in which agencies and professionals work both individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

There has been significant amount of work through our SCR activity this year with one new SCR and Thematic Review being commissioned. Three SCRs were signed off this year and learning from the SCRs has been shared with partner agencies.

Serious Case Review by Telford and Weokin LSCB published an SCR report on the 1st June 2018. The family had moved from Bedford Borough in June/July 2016 to the Telford area and on the 9th December 2016 all 5 children were removed into care due to chronic neglect, physical abuse and suspected sexual abuse of one of the children. Some Bedford Borough agencies have been involved with this Review.

The Rosie SCR report was published on the 4th December 2019. The case had a history of chronic neglect with Rosie presenting as malnourished, unable to stand/bear weight on her legs, significant developmental delay and a history of missed medical appointments.

The SCR report in respect of Adam was published in June 2019 after a significant delay due to ongoing criminal proceedings. Adam was initially signed off by the Board in 2016 however despite the delay in publication learning from the Review has been shared with partner agencies.

SCR Learning briefings are shared with all partner agencies to share with their staff. Work is ongoing to ensure that all learning is embedded and that the BBSCB is reassured that this is impacting on practice and making a difference to children/young people. The Learning and actions from the SCRs are monitored via the Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

Multi Agency Audits
A schedule of multi-agency practice audits continued this year with the following themes;

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health – some examples of key learning and good practice:
• Young people being picked up at the point of crisis for the majority of cases it would appear that there was no identification of early intervention (i.e. 6 months before).
• If CAMHS had accepted the referral, there appeared to be a good response for the young person and their family.
• Once the young person was being worked with by CAMHS there was good evidence that the child’s lived experience was known, and their voice was being heard.
• Prior to the audit 270 practitioners responded to an online survey to say they felt quite confident in how they would identify and support children/young people with a mental health issue. However, the audit did identify that for some professionals supporting a young person with mental health concerns is a challenge.
• In some cases, the concerns in relation to the young person’s mental health were seen in isolation and weren’t being joined up or linked with other issues occurring in the family, i.e. Forced Marriage, Domestic Abuse and Parental Mental Health.

Missing Children and Young People – some examples of key learning and good practice:
• Good evidence of multi-agency working on some quite complex cases, evidence of lots of interventions being put in place and evidence of listening to the child.
• Practitioners had a good understanding of the step up and step-down process and they appeared to work well.
• Good examples of information sharing – although it was not always clear what agencies did with the information received.
• Overall it was clear that return home interviews are being completed however there was little evidence within the audit around the quality and outcomes of the interviews taking place.
• Evidence of creative interventions which focused on the voice of the child, for example interventions put in place for a child who was mute.

Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) - summary examples of key learning and good practice:
• In most cases the GCP2 was completed by an individual worker rather than in conjunction with another professional.
• Some of the GCP2’s reviewed where the child was already on a CP Plan seemed rushed and completed as a tick box exercise. However, there were others that showed the GCP2 was integrated well into the CP and other processes such as TAF and informed assessments and care plans.
• There were some good examples of interventions and impact.
• In most cases the GCP2 did help to identify the issues occurring within the families and be clear if they were neglect related (in one case it became clear the causal factor was housing). Plus the scoring element of the GCP2 helped both practitioners and families to reflect on what was happening.

Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment – some examples of key learning and good practice:
• When concerns were initially raised about a child/young person’s sexualised behaviour they were not assessed fully.
• Practitioners focused on other forms of abuse and did not necessarily consider CSA.
• The disclosures were made to trusted adults but these adults were not then involved in the interview process.
• If the young person does not recount the same allegations to another practitioner it was questioned whether the incident actually happened.
• In the majority of the cases schools were doing things in a timely manner. The Teachers and Health Visitors involved in the cases provided consistency for the children/young people as they had been in post a while and so made a positive difference.

Policy and Procedures
The Pan Bedfordshire Policy and Procedures group (PPG) leads this work which ensures that a set of consistent procedures are maintained. This is particularly important for partners who work across the County and for working with vulnerable children/young people who move from area to area. Revision of policies locally has been undertaken to ensure that they are up to date, fit for purpose and reflective of the Pan Bedfordshire approaches to working with children/young people in order to ensure safe and appropriate responses to concerns. The need to review either comes around as part of the ongoing review cycle, or from an identified issue or learning from a SCR or audit. The PPG has continued to review and amend current procedures and guidance to ensure that they are fit for purpose, reflect the key principles for working with children/young people and are responsive to local and national drivers.


All the Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures can be found here [https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/](https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/)
**Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

There were 22 child deaths during the period 2018/2019 and one met the threshold for a SCR which is currently ongoing. A second case was considered for an SCR but did not meet the threshold and a multi-agency decision was taken to progress to a thematic review. A detailed Annual CDOP Report will be shared with the BBSCB in due course and identified learning will inform the Public health agenda, including Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

With the implementation of the new national statutory guidelines for the child death process from September 2019, liaison with key agencies has commenced ahead of its launch. Learning events will be scheduled once the format has been finalised. The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), include changes to child death review arrangements and responsibilities. It identifies that the responsibility for reviewing child deaths now lies with CCGs and Local Authorities who are have through new legislation the child death review partners. They will agree locally how the child death review process will be both set up and funded in our area. The geographical and population ‘footprint’ of child death review partners have been locally agreed, and extend across Bedfordshire and Luton CCGs and include Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Local Authorities.

This footprint has taken into account networks of NHS care, and agency and organisational boundaries in order to reflect the integrated care and social networks of the local area. This model covers a child population that typically reviews at least 60 child deaths per year. Child death review partners have come together to develop clear plans outlining the administrative and logistical processes for these new review arrangements and these will primarily be modelled on the current Child Death Overview Panel framework. Wider learning will be achieved by expanding the current footprint through learning on an Integrated Care System (ICS) basis for shared learning events.

Child death review partners currently have two designated doctors for child deaths (one for Bedfordshire and one for Luton), who will be members of the multi-agency panel to review the child deaths. The designated doctors for child deaths are senior paediatricians who will take a lead role in the review process. A process already exists whereby the designated doctor for child deaths is notified of each child death and is sent relevant information via a dedicated Child Death Manager who is closely linked to the CCGs safeguarding teams. The Multi-agency panel will continue be chaired by a Director of Public Health and CDOP Partners will publish regular reports on how effective the arrangements for child deaths have been in practice. A review of Governance has been considered. Annual reports will continue to be shared at the local LSCB meetings. Consideration has been given to ensure close collaboration with the work of the Local Maternity Transformation Board (LMS).

Pan Bedfordshire CDOP produces an annual report which is disseminated widely across the partnership and can be accessed on the BBSCB website.

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**Section 11 Audits**

Section 11 (s11) of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging its functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/young people and that the services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need. Improving the way key people and bodies safeguard and promote the welfare of children is crucial to improving outcomes for children/young people. BBSCB challenge partners both in terms of their response and any action plan that is developed through their self-assessment. It is clear that partners fully acknowledge the importance of ensuring compliance with Section 11 and have clearly demonstrated a journey of improvements since their previous Section 11 assessment. Commissioned and non-statutory organisations that work with children/young people is a growing area nationally and one that is being replicated in Bedford Borough.

The Section 11 self-assessment tool has been developed to enable agencies to evidence compliance with the identified standards. The self-assessment tools received provided the Board with good assurance regarding the quality of safeguarding practice across the BBSCB partnership. Where agencies assessed that standards were not met there were, in most cases, action plans, with clear timescales and named persons to address this. National or regional services (such as, SAFECAS and Probation) submitted more ‘global’ self-assessments to ensure that there is an addendum which gives assurance for BBSCB.

There then followed a day of Peer Challenge Meetings and their purpose were as follows: 1. To ensure agency compliance and provide an additional level of scrutiny of the evidence presented by each agency. 2. To challenge each agency as ‘critical friend’. The process is designed to be helpful and developmental for each agency.

**Conclusion**

Our quality assurance activities have helped us understand how effective safeguarding services are in the Borough. Summaries of findings from SCRs/audits have been shared with agencies and a monitoring system is in place to oversee progress on all actions arising from them. However, there is still much to do, especially in ensuring that all agencies are listening to the voices of children/young people and their families, and are achieving a positive impact on children/young people’s lives as a result of their own quality assurance processes. We have continued our commitment to sharing learning from LSCB activity to see how this can influence the practice of staff across the partnership.

Where possible we have sought assurances that feedback from those who access and deliver safeguarding and child protection services in Bedford Borough are taken into consideration in the formation of service delivery. The safeguarding partners should continue efforts.
Looking ahead and our challenges for 2019 – 2020

As we move into the new multi-agency partnership arrangements from the end of September 2019 I am hopeful that the safeguarding of children and young people will continue to remain a priority, whether it be in ensuring we listen and learn from the lived experiences of children, by working together to reduce the risk of criminal exploitation and knife crime, or in supporting children and their families to be safe in our ever growing digital world.

Whilst we have made progress to ensure that all partners are listening to the voices and understanding the lived experiences of children/young people and their families, this focus needs to remain a priority. To this end one of the standards for the 2019 – 2020 Section 11 will focus on the voice of children/young people.

The analysis of management information from key safeguarding agencies still needs to be embedded and with a new Pan Bedfordshire Coordination Group (post September 2019) under the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements this will be a priority to develop robust performance information.

The significant work undertaken in the last 3 plus years around CSE and missing and now the emergence of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and ‘County Lines’ are complex issues. So BBSCB welcomes the approach to look at all these issues under one umbrella moving forward into a CCE model. We are concerned about how children/young people can be criminally exploited and the lengths some groups will go to, to hook children/young people into criminal activity for their own financial gain. We need to improve practitioners understanding of the broader area of child exploitation including criminal exploitation and contextual safeguarding. This is an emerging issue concerning children/young people who may be targeted outside the family by, for example gangs supplying drugs outside the local area. Nationally there is a growing understanding of the potential risks to vulnerable young people posed by such gangs. In Bedfordshire all key partners are committed to prioritising this area. Good collaboration is required to meet the challenge of this issue.

Quality Assurance and audit work this year has looked at a sufficient number of cases and although we need to demonstrate shared learning and how the learning has made an impact on practice and what difference has the learning made to children/young people’s lived experiences.

We need to continue to assure ourselves that the Integrated Front Door is robust and consistent with evidential threshold decisions and that we have assurances that the work around SEND is collaborative with all partners.

Bedford Borough is in a very strong position and there are lots to celebrate. However, there is always more to do inevitably with squeezed or reduced resources. This report highlights a number of areas that require strengthening and most of this work is undertaken Pan Bedfordshire LSCB Group level with strong support from all partners.

Thank you for taking time to read our report.

Appendix A - Glossary

ACE - Adverse Childhood Experiences
BBC - Bedford Borough Council
BBCCS - Bedford Borough Council Children's Services
BBSCB - Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board
BCCG - Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
BDAP – Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership
BME – Black Minority Ethnic
BYOS- Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service
CAFCASS - Children/Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHs - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CBC – Central Bedfordshire Council
CBT - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CCS – Cambridgeshire Community Services
CDOP - Child Death Overview Process
CiCC – Children in Care Council
CIN - Child in Need
CP - Child Protection
CPP – Child Protection Plan
CSE - Child Sexual Exploitation
CSEIPG - CSE Intelligence Performance Group
CSEM - Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing
CSP - Community Safety Partnership
CWD - Children with disabilities
DA - Domestic Abuse
DANS – Domestic Abuse Notification Scheme
DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead
EEBP - Enhanced Evidenced Based Practice
EHA - Early Help Assessment
EHCP - Education Health Care Plan
ELFT - East London Foundation Trust
FGM – Female Genital Mutilation
GCP2 - Graded Care Profile 2
HWB – Health & Wellbeing Board
HMICFRS - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
IDVA - Independent Domestic Violence Advisors
JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LAC - Looked After Child
LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer
LSCB - Local Safeguarding Children Board
LBC - Luton Borough Council
MASA – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
MASH - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MARAC - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NSPCC - National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NWG – National Working Group
NYAS - National Youth Advocacy Service
OFSTED - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OPCC – Office Police Crime Commissioner
PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education
PTSD - Post-traumatic stress disorder
QA - Quality Assurance
RCAD - Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale
RCPC – Review Child protection Conference
RHI – Return Home Interview
S47 – Child Protection Enquiries
SAR - Safeguarding Adults Reviews
SARC - Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SCR - Serious Case Review
SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability
TAF – Team Around Family
VOCG – Voice of the Child Group
Finding out more

This report is available online on the BBSCB website at

www.bedford.gov.uk/LSCB

Copies can also be requested by emailing the BBSCB Business Support team at

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