



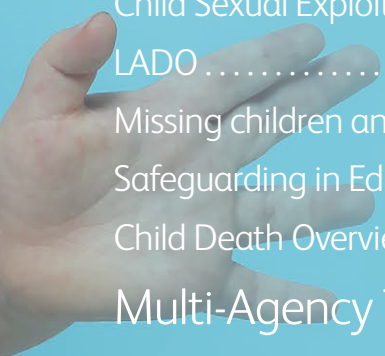
# ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

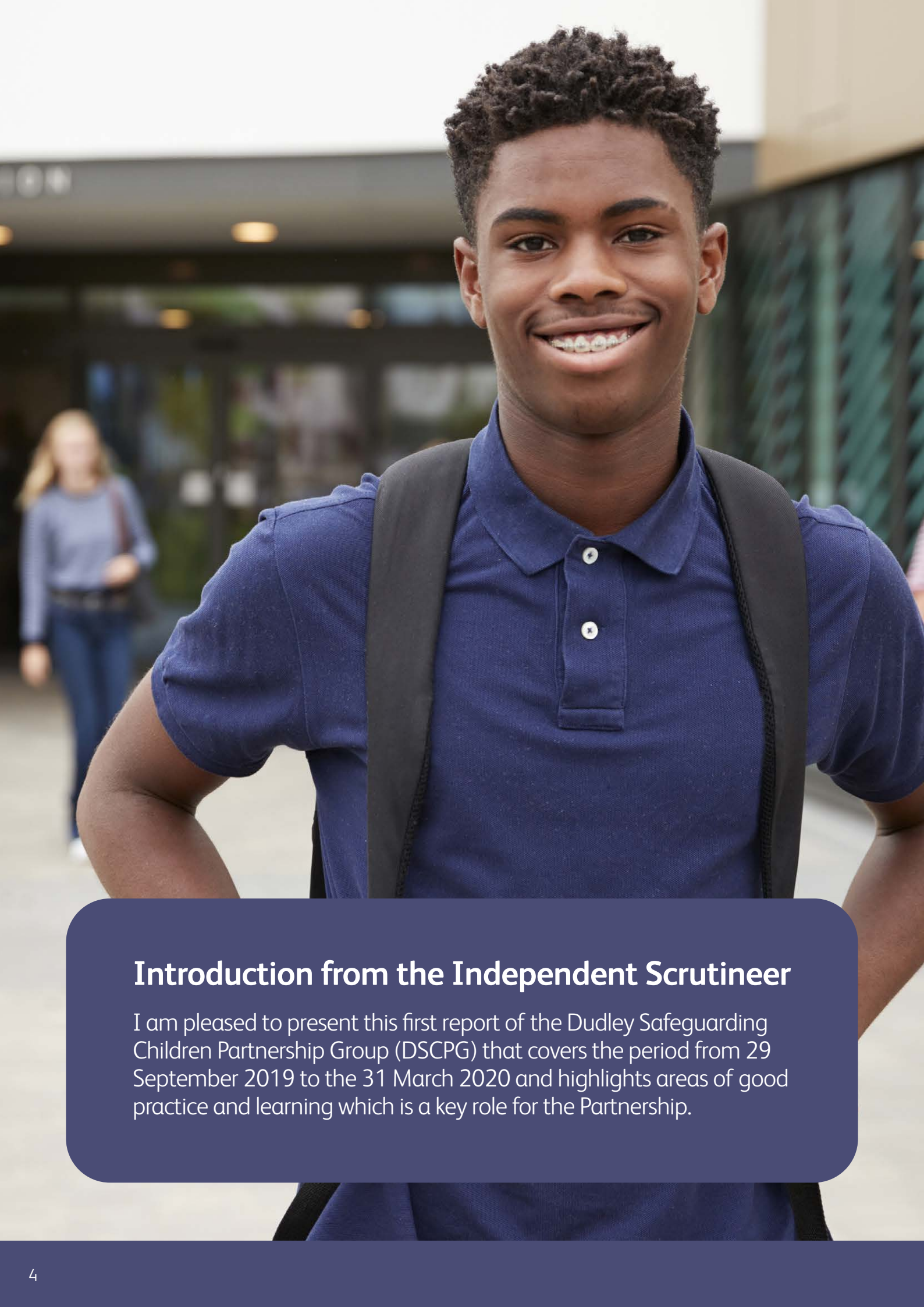
Dudley  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership Group





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## **Introduction from the Independent Scrutineer**

I am pleased to present this first report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group (DSCPG) that covers the period from 29 September 2019 to the 31 March 2020 and highlights areas of good practice and learning which is a key role for the Partnership.

The transition from Local Safeguarding Children Boards to multi agency safeguarding arrangements has provided the opportunity to review and strengthen how we work together to safeguard children and look to make better use of the resources we have across the partnership.

Since becoming Independent Scrutineer for the DSCPG and Independent Chair for the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) for Dudley in September 2019, we have appointed a new Safeguarding Partnership Manager to oversee the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across the life course. Our statutory partners, West Midlands Police, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council work collectively with a range of partners and organisations across the life course to deliver effective safeguarding. It has been particularly challenging this year when, at the end of the reporting period, we were faced with the global pandemic, Covid-19. Details of how safeguarding was managed during the COVID-19 crisis will feature more strongly in the next annual report. We know there will be lessons to be learnt nationally and globally from the crisis.

I would like to thank the dedicated people who work across all of the organisations in Dudley who are working to promote the welfare and safety of children and support children, young people and their families, particularly in these challenging times. I have seen first-hand the amazing and inspiring work carried out daily by our partners, key workers and voluntary organisations to keep people safe in the Borough.

We will continue to ensure that safeguarding children remains a priority and I look forward to updating you in our next annual report about the work we are doing around our new priorities for 2020-22. These are;

1. Preventing Violence Across the Life Course
2. Neglect across the Life Course
3. Exploitation Across the Life Course

Finally, I would like to thank the chairs of the subgroups and to the Safeguarding Business Unit for their hard work and support.

**Dr. Paul Kingston**

**Independent Scrutineer, Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group**





## About Dudley

Dudley is a metropolitan borough formed in 1974. It is located on the edge of the West Midlands. Dudley is at the heart of the Black Country, which also includes the neighbouring boroughs of Sandwell and Walsall and the city of Wolverhampton.

The population has been growing at a modest but sustained rate in recent years, with 16,441 more people in the Borough now compared to the 2001 estimate.

# Deprivation, Child Poverty and Family Income

A total of 76,187 children and young people aged 0 to 19 live in Dudley (Mid-Year population estimates 2019). This is 23.7% of the total population in the area.

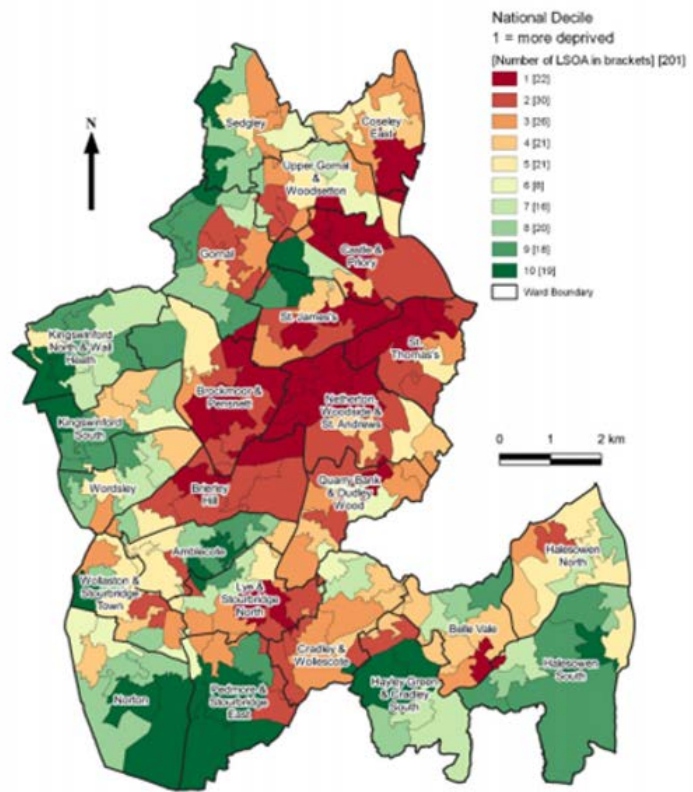
The proportion of children and young people from minority ethnic groups is rising and in January 2020, they represented 20.3% of the school population up from 16.0% in 2012. The number of children for whom English is an additional language is 11.0% in January 2020 up from 10.7% in 2012. (Source: School Place Planning team/ School census)"

The proportion of children and young people from black minority ethnic groups is rising and in 2019, they represented 26.3% of the school population up from 16.0% in 2012. The diversity of ethnic groups has increased particularly in terms of migration from Eastern Europe. There has been a rise in the number of children for whom English is an additional language (10.7% in 2012 to 11.9% in 2019). (Source: School Place Planning team)

Both absolute and relative child poverty has remained an issue in Dudley with rates significantly higher than England. The most recent data available shows that 19.0% of dependent children in Dudley aged under 16 live in absolute low-income families and 23.8% within relative low-income families. For both measures, Dudley continues to have a significantly higher percentage than England however is not statistically significantly different to the West Midlands. (Source: PHE. Public Health Outcomes Framework)

The proportion of people in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance had been declining, but the trend has reversed since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In October 2020, 2,197 people in Dudley Borough were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), equivalent to 1.1% of the working age (16-64) population. This is 602 people more than October 2019. The claimant rate in Dudley remains higher than the West Midlands percentage (0.8%) and England percentage (0.9%). (Source: NOMIS)

The mean annual wage for Dudley residents working full-time was £29,995 in 2020, below the national figure of £32,237. (Source: ONS)



Source: Indices of Deprivation 2019, MHCLG  
Produced by: Intelligence Team, Dudley MBC, 2019  
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# Education, Employment and Training amongst Young People

The number of young people (aged 18-24) claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) had continued to decline up until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October 2020, there were 70 (0.3%) compared with October 2019 where this was 25 (0.1%). Dudley is equal to both the regional (0.3%) and national (0.3%) percentages. 21.4% of claimants aged 18-24 in the Borough had been claiming JSA for longer than 2 years, higher than both regional (21.3%) and national (17.0%) averages. (Source: NOMIS)

## Health Inequalities

The infant mortality rate in Dudley is 5.4 per 1,000 live births for 2015-17. This is a small decrease on the previous year's rate but statistically significantly higher than the national rate. (Source: Primary Care Mortality Data (PCMD), NHS Digital)

Smoking in early pregnancy in 2018/19 was 15.7%, statistically significantly higher than the West Midlands and England average. (Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, Public Health England)

Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks has seen a healthy increase during 2018/19 (1,311 children) over 2017/18 (895). However, issues with data quality mean the data cannot be easily benchmarked alongside regional and national performance. (Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, Public Health England)

Primary course immunisation coverage in the first year of life in 2018/19 within Dudley 94.8% was above the England average of 92.1% and the WHO target of 95%. Whilst the immunisation rate in the West Midlands and England has been declining for over 5 years the percentage in Dudley has generally not followed this pattern. However, Dudley has seen a notable drop from 96.1% in 2017/18. (Source: Health Profiles, Public Health England)

Reception children overweight (including obesity) rates in 2018/19 are greater in Dudley (25.5%) compared to England (22.6%) and the West Midlands (23.9%). The difference between Dudley and England also is of statistical significance and has been for the past 6 years. (Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, Public Health England)

A decline in teenage pregnancy rates in Dudley has resumed in 2018 despite a plateau in previous years. Although the overall pattern has been a decreasing trend since 2000 there have been a few occasions where there has been a small increase from one year to the next. Currently Dudley's under 18 conception rate (19.3 per 1,000) is not statistically different to England (16.7 per 1,000) or the West Midlands (19.1 per 1,000). (Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, Public Health England)

The proportion of 9- and 11-year olds bullied at or near their school has remained above 25% over the last 8 years, results in March 2018 show that 29% of primary school pupils said they had been bullied at or near school in the past 12 months. (Source: Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire)







## **Governance Arrangements**

Role and Functions of Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group (DSCPG)

The Children and Social Work Act (2017) set out provisions to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new flexible working arrangements, to be agreed at a local level by the three key agencies as defined in Working Together 2018, namely, the Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities.

These partners are under a new statutory duty to make arrangements to work together, with other relevant partners, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

Whilst implementing the statutory requirements to develop the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements regarding children and young people, Dudley safeguarding partners agreed on a programme of wider change.

This integrates the safeguarding work streams of both the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards. Our arrangements extend beyond the remit of the requirements as defined in Working Together (2018), and include the functions defined in the Care Act (2014), which requires every local authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (an “SAB”) for its area, with the purpose of helping and protecting adults in the situations defined in the legislation.

In all its activities, the DSCPG advocate that the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all Dudley’s children and young people is ‘everybody’s responsibility’.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018” as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

In order to fulfil its core duties, the DSCP has developed a range of initiatives, plans, policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by:

- Undertaking reviews of the effectiveness of each agency’s safeguarding arrangements with regards to section 11 duties.
- Focusing on the impact of all forms of child abuse and neglect, including a Neglect Strategy
- Learning, and disseminating learning, from local and national research and case reviews
- Developing effective mechanisms and protocols that support the effective commissioning of local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Consistently identifying indicators of the prevalence of all forms of child abuse and neglect in Dudley and measuring progress in tackling these
- Maintaining an overview of the range of provision, services and interventions delivered to reduce the impact of abuse and neglect
- Supporting and scrutinising steps taken to reduce risk of abuse and neglect
- Monitoring, supporting and scrutinising the improvement of the quality of practice and impact across partner agencies
- Improving and integrating performance monitoring
- Supporting communication and information sharing
- Liaising with frontline practitioners to identify the barriers to translating lessons learned into practice and strategies to overcome these
- Developing the findings of all reviews into specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related actions.
- Establishing robust processes to hold individual members to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of their organisation’s arrangements.
- Developing meaningful relationships with children, young people, families and the wider communities, and consulting with them with regard to service developments
- Understanding the profile and perspectives of Dudley’s children and young people by asking for their views, listening and responding to them.
- Agreeing and overseeing the mechanisms for developing and maintaining safeguarding multi-agency policies and procedures
- Evidencing how individual members of DSCP have challenged one another and held other local boards to account, for example the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Supporting the learning and developmental needs, including the provision of multi-agency training for the children’s workforce.
- Making recommendations to Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership Executive in regard to supporting, commending and challenging safeguarding policy and practice across agencies and the workforce
- Ensuring that the ‘business’ agreed by DSPP is carried out effectively

## Membership of DSCPG

During April to September 2019, the partnership operated under the former governance of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board. The table below shows the current membership of the DSCPG under the new Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership governance structure which came into effect from 29 September 2019.

| Agency  |
|---|
| DSPP Business Manager   |
| DSPP Learning and Development Coordinator                             |
| Dudley CCG  |
| Dudley MBC - Children's Safeguarding, Practice and Quality Assurance  |
| Dudley MBC - Communications   |
| Dudley MBC - Education, SEND, Family Solutions, Early Years and Youth |
| Dudley MBC - Intelligence, Performance & Policy                       |
| Dudley MBC - Lead for Education                                       |
| Dudley MBC - Legal Services   |
| Elected Member  |
| Safeguarding in Education Reference Group                             |
| West Midlands Police  |

## Funding Arrangements

Below is the overall annual income as agreed by partners for 2019 -20 to support the delivery of the DSCP functions and objectives. This includes covering the cost of any reviews, funding a training programme, agreed events; including annual conferences, annual licenses and subscription costs, and any independently commissioned pieces of work, including costs for the Independent Chair. The income revenue from partners also supports the resourcing of a business unit.

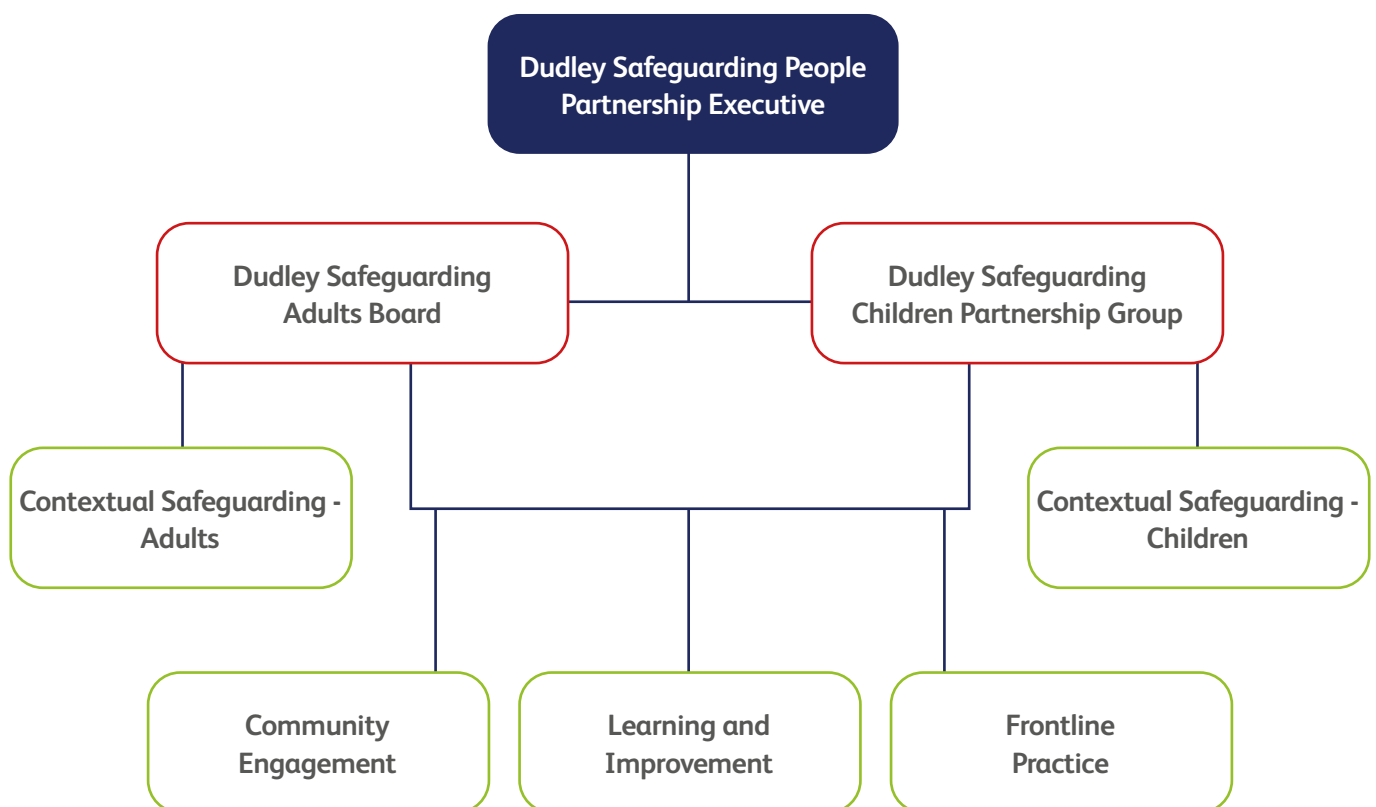
| 2019-20                                | £               |
|--|-----------------|
| Dudley MBC - Core Budget               | £210,300        |
| Dudley CCG                             | £107,100        |
| West Midlands Police                   | £13,300         |
| Dudley Group Hospitals NHS Trust       | £4,000          |
| FE Colleges                            | £3,500          |
| National Probation Service             | £1,500          |
| CAFCASS                                | £550            |
| Community Rehabilitation Company - CRC | £1,500          |
| Income from Internal Schools           | £23,800         |
| Income from Academies                  | £14,600         |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>£380,150</b> |



## Structure and Arrangements

The Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership replaced Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) with effect from 29th September 2019 and established its new governance arrangements to combine the responsibility for safeguarding children and adults under the guidance of Working Together 2018 and the Care Act 2014.

The illustration below provides details of this structure:



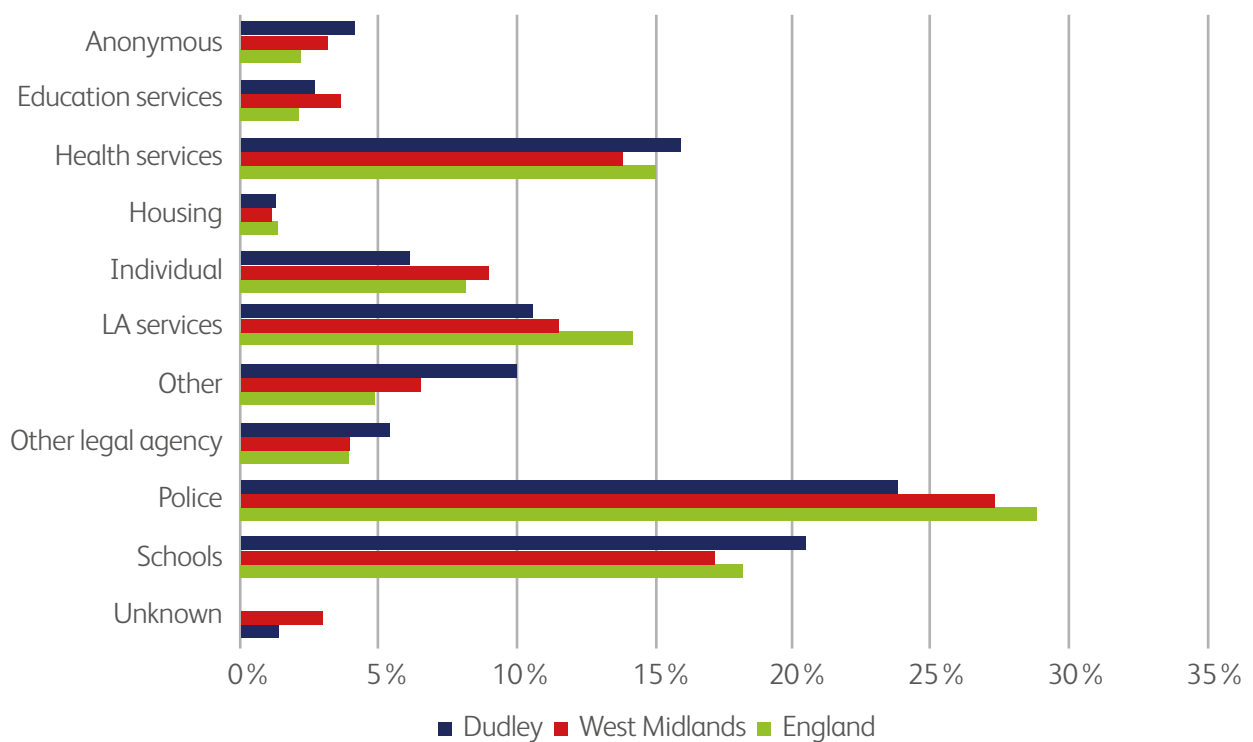
The DSPP sub group structure consists of the overarching Executive Group, the Dudley Safeguarding Adults Board (DSAB) and Dudley Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Group (DSCPG). Both the Adults Board and Children Partnership Group are responsible for ensuring the Executive direction is delivered through a variety of mechanisms and also ensuring the Executive group has a clear line of sight of multi-agency safeguarding within Dudley.

# Performance Data

## Referral by source

| Source             | Dudley | West Midlands | England |
|--------------------|--------|---------------|---------|
| Anonymous          | 4.1%   | u3%           | 2.1%    |
| Education services | 2.7%   | 4%            | 2.1%    |
| Health services    | 15.9%  | 14%           | 15.0%   |
| Housing            | 1.3%   | 1%            | 1.3%    |
| Individual         | 6.1%   | 9%            | 8.1%    |
| LA services        | 10.6%  | 12%           | 14.1%   |
| Other              | 10.0%  | 7%            | 4.9%    |
| Other legal agency | 5.4%   | 4%            | 3.9%    |
| Police             | 23.7%  | 27%           | 28.7%   |
| Schools            | 20.4%  | 17%           | 18.2%   |
| Unknown            | 0.0%   | 3%            | 1.4%    |

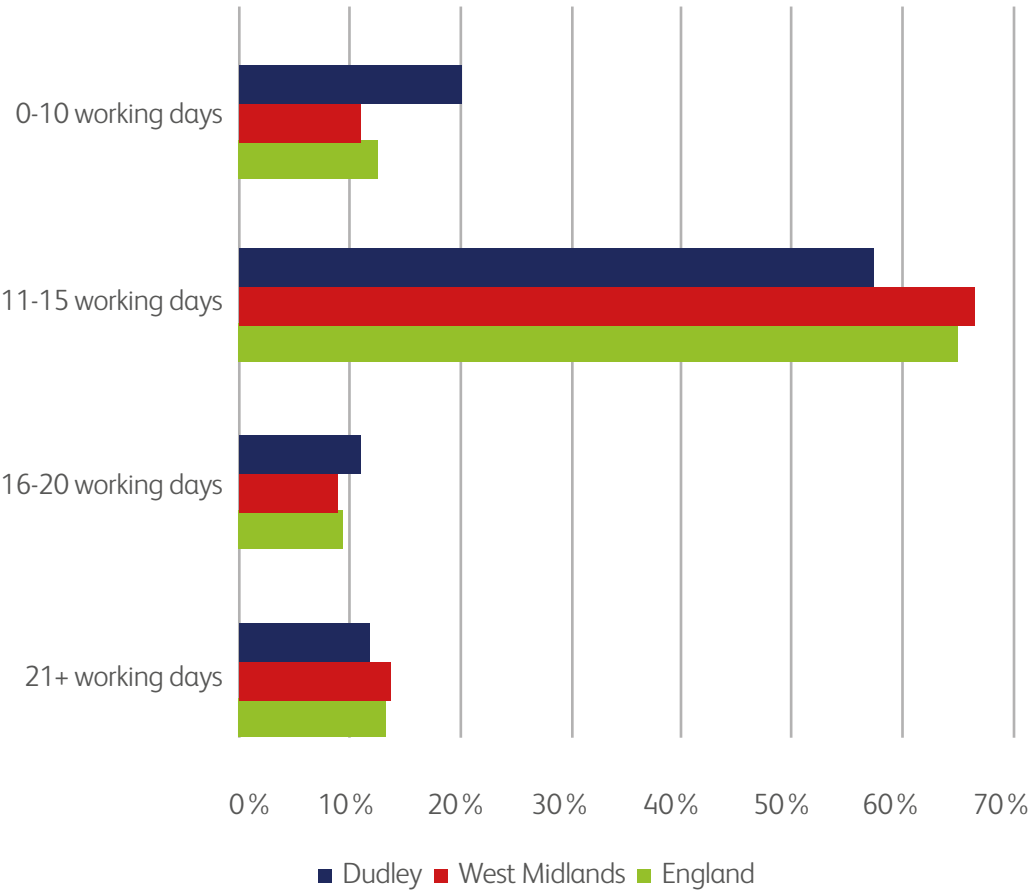
Contacts referred for Assessment by Source 2019-20



**Section 47 to ICPC timeliness**

| Duration between start of Section 47 enquiry and ICPC | Dudley | England | West Midlands |
|---|--------|---------|---------------|
| 0-10 working days                                     | 20%    | 12%     | 11%           |
| 11-15 working days                                    | 57%    | 65%     | 67%           |
| 16-20 working days                                    | 11%    | 9%      | 9%            |
| 21+ working days                                      | 12%    | 13%     | 14%           |

**S47 to ICPC timeliness 2019-20  
Dudley and Comparators**

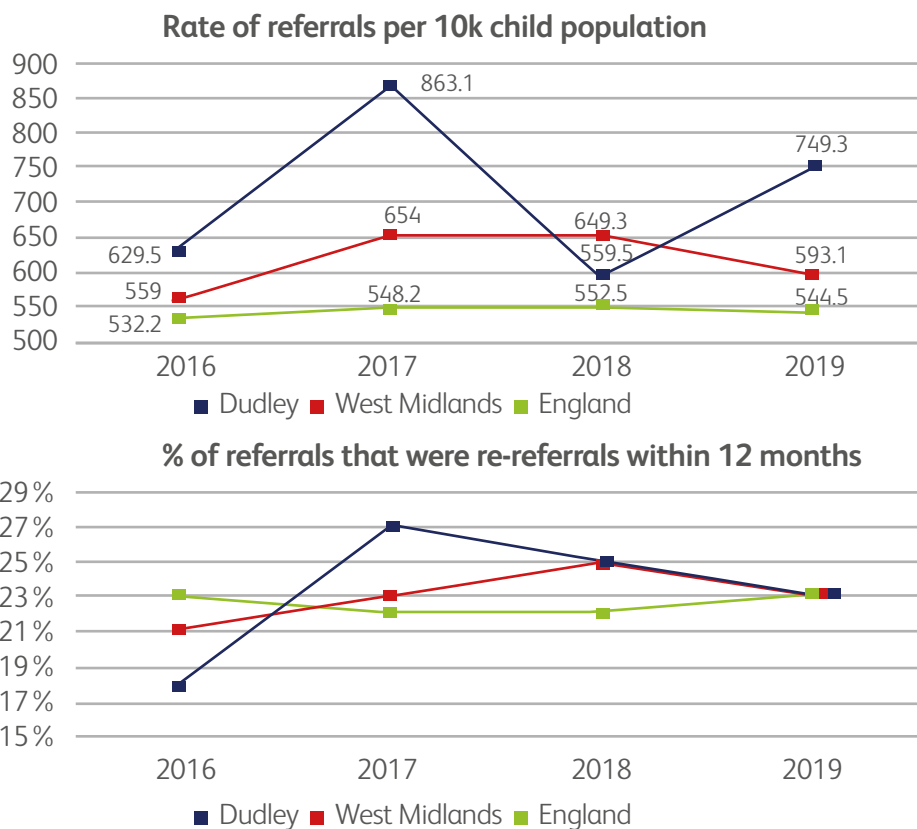


## Rate of referrals and re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral

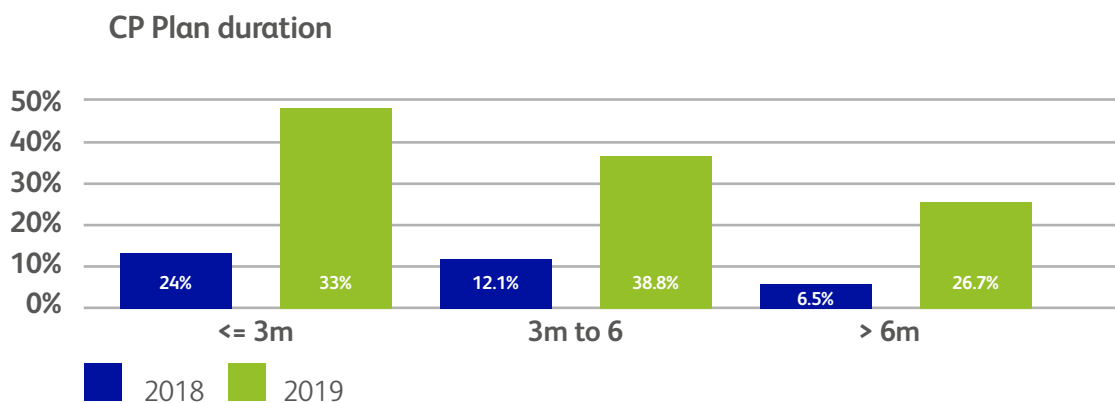
When the local authority receives a referral and information has been gathered during an assessment (which may have been very brief), in the course of which a concern arises that a child maybe suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the local authority is required by Section 47 (S47) of the Children Act 1989 to make enquiries.

In 2019 the number of referrals per 10k child population in Dudley was higher than regional and national figures, there has also been a significant increase in referrals compared to the previous year (595.5 in 2018 to 749.3 in 2019).

The percentage of referrals that led to a re-referral within 12 months has decreased in Dudley over the past 2 years, now aligning with regional figures.

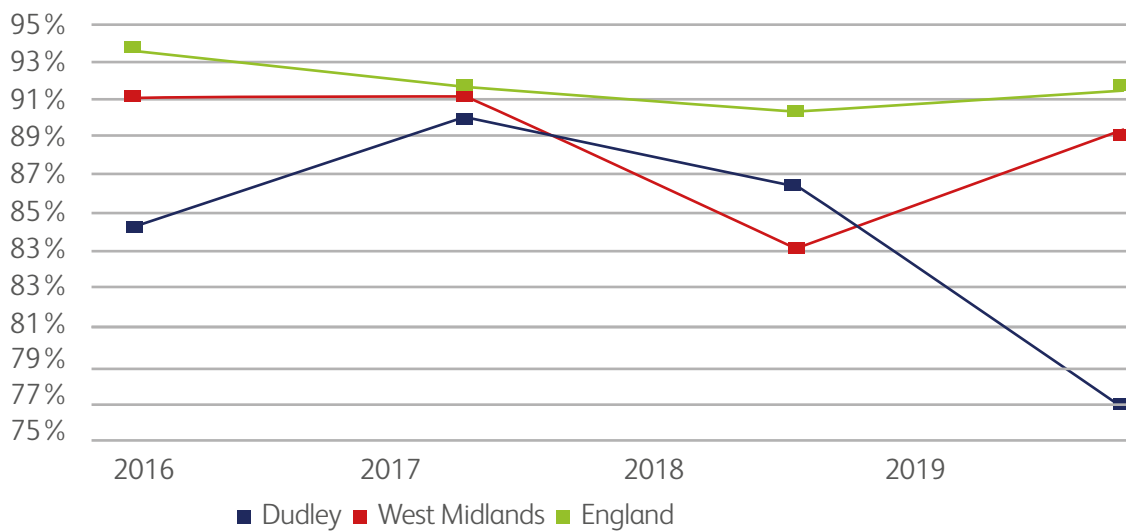


## CP Plan duration and Conference Timeliness





Rate of referrals per 10k child population



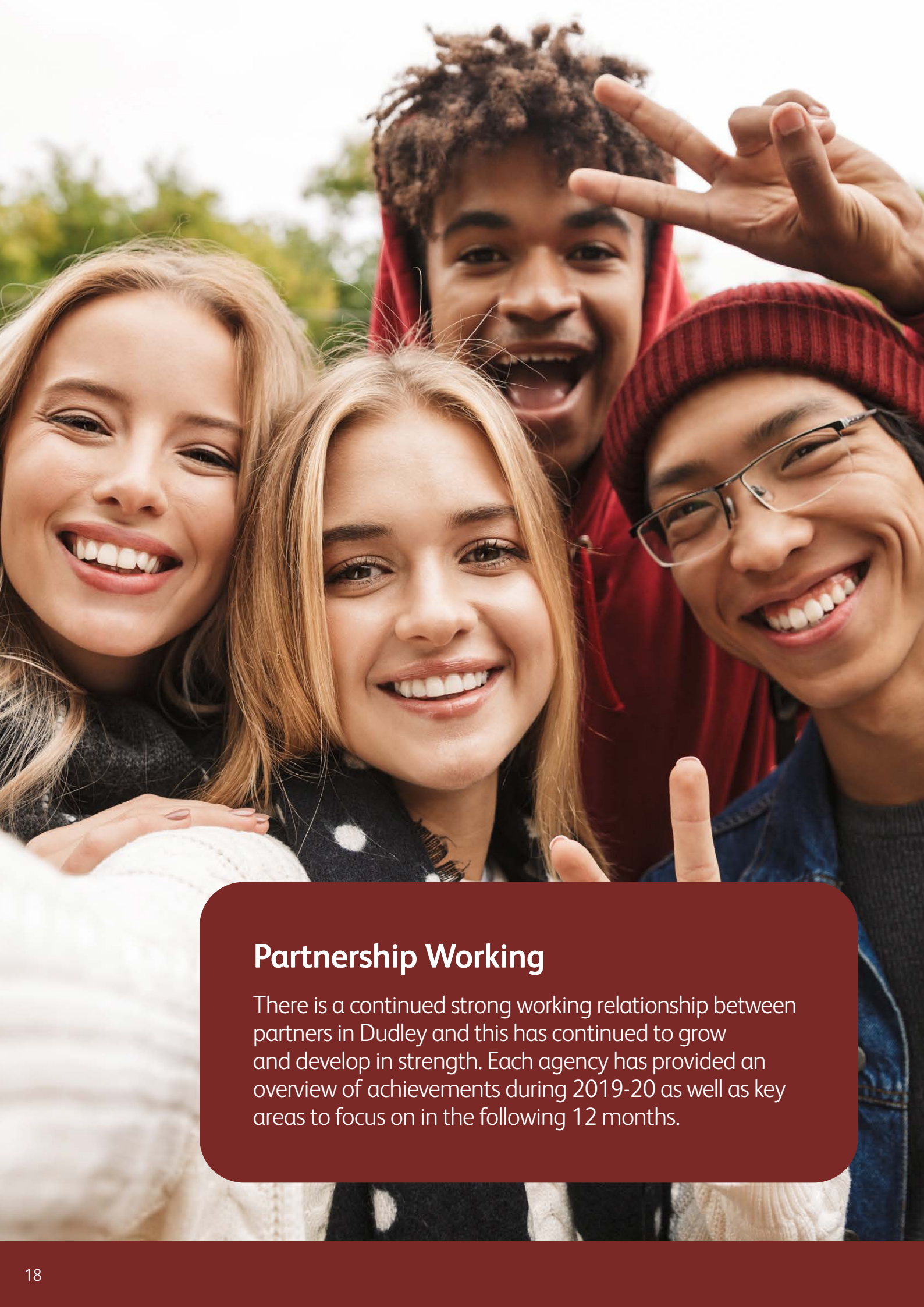
### Early Help

There was a 14% increase in the number of Early Help Assessments (EHAs) completed compared to 2018-19.

- There was an increase in internal EHAs by 12%, and external EHAs by 17%.
- There was a near even split between internal and external completions of EHA. 55% completed internally, 45% externally.
- The number of cases Early Help closed with a positive outcome increased by 35% compared to 2018-19.
- The number of these cases re-referred back into Level 3 services also decreased to 41%, compared to 53% in 2018-20.
- The number of Contacts received into Family Centres in 2019-20 increased by 36% compared to 2018-19, rising to nearly 14,000.
- Family Group Conference was invested in which lead to an expansion of capacity by four FT posts. This resulted in 346 referrals which was an increase 83.06% from previous year and 103 Family Group Conference plans being delivered which was an increase of 66.12% from the previous year.

A strong partnership with Public Health enabled growth in delivery of parenting groups and interventions from 400 parents to over 700 which is a 75% increase

|  | Total 2018/19 | Total 2019/20 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Completed Internal EHA's                                   | 1289          | 1340          |
| Completed External EHA's                                   | 941           | 1133          |
| Total No. of contacts received at Family Centres           | 4072          | 5215          |
| Total No. of footfall at centres                           | -             | 36162         |
| Total No. of requests for advice/support at family centres | -             | 2420          |



## Partnership Working

There is a continued strong working relationship between partners in Dudley and this has continued to grow and develop in strength. Each agency has provided an overview of achievements during 2019-20 as well as key areas to focus on in the following 12 months.

## Dudley MBC

Children's Social Care have continued their improvement journey overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board. The Improvement Board consists of multi-agency partners who work with Children's Services to improve outcomes for children.

Work has been undertaken to stabilise the workforce and improve the rate of permanent social workers in Children's Social Care. This has been successful in reducing the rate of agency staff by over one third in the period.

Children's Services have developed strong and collaborative working relationships with partners across the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership.

### Key Achievements:

The main Children's Social Care office has been expanded to allow for the Children in Care workforce to also work from this building, meaning most Children's Social Care staff work from one building.

The Centre for Professional Practice has been fully recruited to and continues to serve a pivotal role in developing practice and quality assurance across Children's Services.

Children's Services gained some momentum in progressing work around a new electronic system (Liquid Logic). The new system will bring significant improvements to the way that children's case records are recorded and our ability to produce performance data.

A joint 16/17-Year-old Homelessness Protocol between Housing and Children's Services was developed in September 2019, to ensure that homeless 16- and 17-year olds would have a consistent service when experiencing homelessness.

The Quality Assurance Framework was developed, which included case file audits which are carried out alongside practitioners. Quarterly reporting and 7-minute briefings were produced by the Centre for Professional Practice. A new Directorate Performance Scorecard was developed in December 2019, which allowed Children's Services to better evidence performance in all service areas.

## Family Support

"At first I was worried about it and thought that it was social services. I've been through all that before, so at first it took me some time to help me understand the difference. This part is important".

This was the reaction from a lone parent being supported by Dudley MBC's Family Centres which have developed into a crucial early help support mechanism and a source of innovation and ambition.

Routed in Dudley's updated Early Help Strategy 2018-2021, Dudley's Family Centres are the driving force behind ensuring integration and systems leadership across five geographic clusters. Dudley's Family Centres host a range of diverse children's support services who facilitate and engage support for families with the greatest levels of need before there is an escalation of need into statutory services.

There has been an increase in Early Help Assessments and the split of these assessments completed internally and externally shows the strong partnership between partners and the embedded understanding that working together to safeguard the children and young people of Dudley is everyone's responsibility.

Through successful systems leadership, mature multi-agency working arrangements and a steadfast focus on innovative practice Dudley MBC and our wide range of partners ensure that needs are met by the right service at the right time.

The feedback below from a mother highlights the impact Early Help Services had on her daughter.

'Good morning .. I would just like to thank you very much for all the help you have given us over the last few months ...you are truly amazing. I really think without you ... would never have gone back to school again. I am very pleased to say ... is now enrolled at .... special school and it is her first day today!'

### Family Support areas for development:

- Achieve target of 200 EHA per month.
- Achieve a 50/50 split of EHA completed internal and externally.
- Improve timeliness of EHA.
- Reduce the number of refusals to engage in Early Help.

## **Integrated Youth Support Connexions**

Connexions were able to regain the Matrix Standard demonstrating delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance. The service has commenced a partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools in delivering a quality careers curriculum and were the first area in the Back Country to begin a pilot focusing on young people with SEND. Connexions became the first local authority partner to the One Million Mentors mentoring programme beginning with an introductory training session to a group of staff volunteers in February 2020. Staff have been able to achieve employment and apprenticeship outcomes for a few Care Leavers who were struggling to get interviews and had become despondent by working closely with local employers.

## **Youth Offending Service**

The Youth Offending Service has adapted its way of working from a traditional “offender management” approach to one that puts the child very much at the forefront of every aspect of service delivery. This has resulted in the service seeing every young people we engage with as a “Child First, Offender Second”. Greater emphasis has been placed upon understanding the real lived experience of children, and the adverse childhood experiences that many of them would have encountered. This has led to practitioners adopting a relationship-based approach with a view to strengthening factors for desistance – in the ultimate hope that this approach will enable children to remain free of engaging in anti-social and criminal activity.

Over the past year closer and stronger ties have been developed with statutory partners such as Children’s Social Care, resulting in a significant proportion of our intervention being carried out with young people in a prevention and diversion capacity, in conjunction with Social Workers from across the borough. Child Criminal Exploitation continues to be addressed, via the newly formed Contextual Safeguarding Hub.

## **Child and Adolescent Response Team (CART)**

### **Edge of Care and Reunification**

- Families have been supported to prevent children entering care
- Children have been supported back into their family home having experienced a period of being in care
- The voices of children, young people and their parents have been captured throughout the CART planning process.
- Monthly reviews of CART work with families have taken place to ensure that actions and targets are being completed and that positive outcomes are achieved.

### **Domestic Abuse**

- The CART IDVA has supported young people who have experienced domestic abuse to reduce their risk from harm.
- Young people have been supported through court proceedings.
- Extra resource has been given to this area of work to ensure that the increase in young people experiencing domestic abuse as a result of Covid-19 can receive support.
- A support group has been developed for young people experiencing domestic abuse
- Support is being provided for parents who are experiencing child to parent violence.
- The Domestic Abuse Service procedures have been reviewed.

### **Missing from Care and Home**

- Return home interviews have been provided for children who have been reported missing to the police.
- The return home interviews capture the voice of the child
- A task and finish group has reviewed the missing procedures to enable more joined up approach across services to meet the needs of young people who go missing
- Regular attendance at the regional missing meeting has enabled the missing service to learn from work being completed in other local authorities.
- Data reports are provided on a monthly basis to monitor the completion of return home interviews

## Elective Home Education

- During the period April 2019 – March 2020 the numbers of children registered as receiving their education via Elective Home Education grew steadily throughout the year from 337 children in April 2019 to 354 children in March 2020.
- Throughout the year the total number of instances where children were registered as EHE was 460 children. This is higher than the monthly count as children will return to a mainstream school during the year.
- Since 2015/16 the number of children registered as EHE has been increasing annually.
- When the authority is notified of a parent electing to home educate, advice and guidance is provided to ensure the parent understands their responsibilities and are prepared to develop and education provision that provide a suitable, full time education for their children.
- Dudley has an Officer for Elective Home Education who is also responsible for supporting the education of children ascribed to a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage. The current increase in EHE cases has placed pressure on this role and requests for increased resources have been made.
- The officer for EHE & GRT maintains an 'Active' case load and children registered as EHE who are on a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, or an Education Health & Care Plan are part of the active case load.
- Children who are looked after by the local authority should not be EHE and should be provided with education via a mainstream school.
- The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for EHE is under review and will be strengthened to ensure we provide sufficient challenge and support especially in the areas of safeguarding and support for those with SEND or an EHCP.

## Children Missing Education (CME)

- Parents have been supported to secure a school place for their child
- Safe and well checks have been completed to safeguard children we are not on a school roll
- The CME Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been reviewed
- A process is now operational to monitor and review children whose whereabouts are unknown with sign off provided by Divisional Leadership Team (DLT).
- More placements are now available for year 11 pupils with the CME officer advocating for them at the Fair Access Panel. The Fair Access Panel is in place to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, who it has not been possible to secure a place through the normal in year admissions process, are offered a place at a school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children to schools that are already full. No school is asked to take a disproportional number of children who have been excluded from other schools or who may have challenging behaviour



## Youth Service

The Youth Service has delivered a combination of individual support, young people and families work, play provision, youth group work and targeted detached activity and a well-established youth voice team.

Despite the range of delivery methods, the team has remained focussed on quality and the improved outcomes for young people whilst staying true to their professional youth work practice.

This is supported by the following feedback examples from a social worker:

“It is evident from the work completed by Andy and from speaking to him how passionate he is about wanting to make a change for the young person and his family.

I can see how hard Andy has worked and the positive relationship built with the young person who feels able to open up which is fantastic.

Andy displays a very good understanding of the families presenting needs and showed the ability to self-reflect upon his own role within the family unit and the need to work WITH the family and to empower them to make their own decisions to move forward.”

### Youth Service key achievements:

- Good partnership working across Family Solutions, Childrens Services and wider partners
- Duke of Edinburgh young people donated 2821 hours to the local community equating to a social value of £12,271
- Over 4500 children and parents/carers attended Play Week 2019 with 100% positive feedback
- Sycamore Adventure wins a national Play Award from Children and Young People Now
- Lloyd French wins the Community Engagement Award reflecting the success of all the youth workers in engaging the young people and families that are referred through for support in order to achieve good outcomes

- Young people on the Children in Care Council deliver a total of 2066 voluntary hours with 10 young people volunteering at least 100 hours each and the overall membership seeing an increase of over 500% since the initial relaunch.
- Dudley Youth Council have volunteered a total of 2780 hours and “[I’ve been involved in] Children’s Scrutiny Committee,
- Planning, providing advice to people in the community, fundraising, social events, meetings

### Areas for development in 2020/21

- Children’s Social Care will continue to stabilise and develop the workforce through the updated Workforce Development Strategy.
- Further work is required in MASH around the processing of contacts, the quality of referrals and consistent threshold. This work will be undertaken on a multi-agency basis through the MASH Operational Group, the MASH Strategic Board and will be included in our Improvement Plan.
- Development of work to identify and support children and young people who are experiencing all forms of exploitation. This is being achieved through the development of the Contextual Safeguarding Hub and the multi-agency work with the DSPP Contextual Safeguarding sub group.
- Children’s Social Care has a priority to develop effective use of the Public Law Outline to ensure that where risk is not reduced by child protection plans, that pre-proceedings work is undertaken more swiftly.
- Work will continue on developing the Performance Information and ensure that managers at all levels have a good understanding of how track and improve performance in their teams.
- Development and improvement in the timeliness of strategy discussions on open cases, remains a challenge. Children’s Social Care, Police and the CCG continue to work on this.

## West Midlands Police

West Midlands Police operates on both a geographical and thematic model. Dudley has a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) with the NPU Commander being the strategic lead for the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership. In addition, there is representation in the DSPP and the sub groups from a senior leader in the Public Protection Unit (PPU), Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), and other NPU leaders. The PPU lead chairs the sub group for Contextual Safeguarding of Children. Between these members there is a communication channel with other force departments and teams who have a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.



## Building an effective workforce

Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) has appointed 3 new criminal exploitation co-ordinators to cover the Black Country area – with one being dedicated to Sandwell and Dudley. Their role is to attend partnership safety planning meetings to share information and help safeguard the young person. They also act as a bridge between the safeguarding of the child and any criminal investigation that may be ongoing. This mirrors the existing support to CSE safeguarding which has been in place from the Public Protection Unit previously, and which continues now.

The Public Protection Unit (PPU) commenced a recruitment campaign in early 2020 in order to aim to fill all vacancies in the department by September 2020. This campaign saw a number of new officers join the department on child abuse, domestic abuse, and sexual offence investigation teams.

Police officers are invested into the MASH to assist with managing demand and to provide early police support to information sharing as a result of referrals. This was also complemented by moving 3 other police officers into the MASH to support multi agency joint visits to children. These officers now form the MAET (multi agency enquiry team).

This co-location of staff ensures a more consistent working relationship, and earlier visits to children who need to be seen by both police and a social worker.

Operation Encompass – where WMP notify Dudley schools when one of their pupils is exposed to a domestic abuse incident – continued in 2019/20 after previously being trialled in Dudley for the WMP region. This process ensures that schools are informed of an incident which may have adversely affected a child in the previous 24 hours so that staff can understand the factors that may be affecting that child in school and provide appropriate support if required. This is in addition to any information sharing as a result of a referral that meets the threshold for MASH.

## Missing Persons (Mispers) - Young People

In 2019 West Midlands Police changed practice in relation to the risk assessment and recording of missing persons, including children. Where previously there had been use of an “absent” category, which did not result in recording on the COMPACT system (for recording missing persons) and no automatic reporting to the local authority this has now changed. “Absent” reporting has been replaced with “no apparent risk” as a category and regardless of risk assessment the missing person will be placed on COMPACT and an automatic referral made to the relevant local authority. This has resulted in a much higher number of children being referred to the local authority and subsequently receiving a return home interview.

### Key Achievements

In 2019/20 recorded Child Abuse incident fell by the first time in a number of years from 2691 child abuse related incidents in 2018/19 to 2378 this year. The development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in Dudley initially lead to a steady increase in recorded incidents as both the public and agencies working with children were able to more easily make safeguarding referrals, including crime, without needing to know exactly which agency to go to. These referrals allow for a more rapid assessment of risk, better information sharing, and ensures that the relevant agencies agree to the next steps at the earliest opportunity. The addition of MAET officers invested into the Dudley MASH by West Midlands Police has assisted in ensuring this increased demand is appropriately dealt with. To see recorded child abuse incidents decrease is in part a result of the MASH working consistently for a number of years and now leading to a reduction in incidents recorded by WMP.

Within these child abuse figures are incidents recorded by WMP with a CSE (child sexual exploitation) marker. These incidents have reduced at a greater rate than the overall child abuse incidents. In 2018/19 there were 132 CSE incidents recorded in Dudley, with only 18% of these leading to a confirmed crime being recorded. In 2019/20 there were 93 CSE incidents but with 29% of these leading to a crime being recorded. As a crime is usually only recorded when either a victims confirms this or when there is other evidence available to do so, this would suggest that despite CSE incidents falling it is now far more likely that police and other agencies are able to find supportive evidence, or to support a victim in making a disclosure of a crime.

### Areas for development in 2020/21

As part of the national increase in police officer numbers by 2023, the Child Abuse department will be expanding from 2021 with 5 new posts added to the Dudley & Sandwell investigation team and 4 new CSE investigators for the Black Country. This will increase the capacity of these teams by around 20%.

The partnership approach to tackling exploitation will develop in 2021 with the expansion of operational meetings to include all forms of exploitation and not just CSE. This will ensure that young people at risk of county lines and criminal exploitation will have the support they need, and that offending can be more effectively disrupted as a partnership.





## Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

Dudley CCG in partnership with Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The welfare of children who come into contact with health services either directly or indirectly is paramount and all staff have a responsibility to ensure that best practice is followed, including compliance with statutory requirements.

The CCG has a Designated Senior Nurse for Children's Safeguarding and Designated Nurse for Looked after Children who liaise closely with the Clinical Lead and the Chief Nurse.

The CCG contracting process reflects the safeguarding requirements of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 to support outcomes-focused practice along with adult colleagues to develop a "Think Family" approach to safeguarding. Statutory Guidance- Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (2015) is also reflected in contracting arrangements for Children in Care.

### Key Achievements:

- Dudley CCG have continued to contribute to multi-agency safeguarding practice and partnership working arrangements. This has included attendance at all Dudley People Partnership meetings and participation in the work of all the sub groups
- The CCG Designated Nurses have chaired the DSPP Learning and Improvement sub group on behalf of the partnership.
- The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children attends Corporate Parenting Board on behalf of Dudley CCG
- The CCG has undertaken further work in 2019/20 in conjunction with the other Black Country CCG's to progress a number of work streams which include
  - The development of a Black Country Safeguarding strategy
  - Children in Care including health assessment QA framework
  - Safeguarding supervision
  - Safeguarding quality assurance and data collection framework, including the development of a safeguarding dashboard which provides a mechanism for highlighting areas of good practice and identifying any areas that need development
  - Safeguarding training standards leading to equitability across the Black Country.

- The CCG lead the Female Genital Mutilation work group. The group are responsible for the development and management of an FGM strategy producing an FGM strategy for Dudley. The strategy is based on the 3 priorities of

- Protection
- Provision
- Prevention

In order to progress the strategy and raise awareness of the implications of FGM within Dudley, a Working Group was established, the governance of which was transferred from the former DSCB to the Safe and Sound Board via the DA Strategic Group. As FGM is specifically a female only issue it was agreed that it should not be brought under the FM and HBA agenda. The FGM working group has a wide membership and meet on a quarterly basis to raise awareness both for practitioners and for the general community.

- The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children chairs the multi-agency Health of Children in Care (CIC) Strategic group. The aim of which is to monitor the delivery and improve the delivery of health outcomes for Children in Care and to focus on service development for known priority health needs for CIC
- The CCG jointly commission the Young Health Champions (DYHC) project and work closely with the project lead. DYHC provide training for young people to become Young Health Champions in schools, colleges and the community. Young People are given training and signpost other young people to supportive services and receive accurate information to develop resilience and informed decision making. Young people are also offered opportunities to participate in a variety of projects coordinated and supported by the project and its partners
- The CCG have been instigative in developing a process for the involvement of health safeguarding specialists (Named or Designated Nurses and Doctors) in strategy meetings (particularly those involving suspected NAI) to ensure senior specialist health oversight in complex cases.
- Dudley CCG hosted a multi-agency Harmful Practice Conference in November 2019. The conference agenda included FGM, breast ironing, harmful practice based on faith/belief, honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
- Commencement of supervision for Named Doctors across Dudley and Walsall. This is delivered by the Designated Doctor and Nurses and has been well

received. The sessions include the involvement of MASH managers in order to develop collaborative working relationships between CSC and health medical colleagues. Medical staff are also now involved in the quarterly partnership meetings with the same aim.

- Participation at regional and local safeguarding networks to share best practice and Information on key developments in the safeguarding arena, updates and current trends/information are shared via the DCCG newsletter along with e-mails to safeguarding leads providers and practice managers.
- Dudley Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) Safeguarding Quality Review Meeting (SQRM) aims to safeguard Dudley residents through effective high-quality formal communication and partnership working applying the priorities of the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) in order to achieve best local outcomes. Dudley CCG seeks assurance from all commissioned providers regarding safeguarding arrangements. The SQRM is established within the Integrated Assurance Committee structure in accordance with Dudley CCG statutory safeguarding responsibilities and provides assurance regarding the health economy actions to the DSPPB and the Children and Adult's Dudley Safeguarding Partnerships Groups as requested.
- Development of a CCG Safeguarding Team work plan which aims to:
  - Improve collaborative working within the team.
  - Ensure safeguarding is embedded across all provider organisations and within the CCG.
  - Raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the safeguarding team
- The development of safeguarding commissioning standards that will be applied to all procurement and contracts.

## Areas for development in 2020/21

To continue work collaboratively with Black Country colleagues to share best practice and develop equitable safeguarding practices across the Black Country and to ensure safeguarding practice development and support links to the changing commissioning arrangements across the health care economy.

Continuing to work in close partnership with Dudley People Partnership to support and progress future safeguarding arrangements across the borough

To work to improve the dissemination from learning reviews (CSPR/SAR/Local Learning Reviews) and audit to frontline practitioners.

To work with the Chief Nurse from the newly developed Dudley Integrated Health and Care Provider to establish safe and effective safeguarding practices and appropriate service provision for Children in Care in line with their statutory responsibilities.



## Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust recognises that effective, timely and

robust safeguarding is fundamental to protecting children and young people in our care and within the wider community. The focus in 2019/20 reflects the approach of Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership by ensuring an integrated safeguarding adult and children service with an emphasis on ensuring staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise and act on abuse across the life course.

There has been a new appointment to Head of Safeguarding in December 2019 and a renewed focus of increased visibility of the safeguarding team around the Trust, to ensure that our service is proactive in supporting staff and raising awareness of safeguarding issues. The provision of our safeguarding training has been reviewed and updated to increase accessibility and improve the quality and relevance to staff undertaking training.

There has been an improved focus on ensuring actions and learning from Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews are implemented and shared. The provision of safeguarding supervision for staff has been strengthened by additional staff being trained to provide supervision and the emphasis on the benefits and importance of supervision has been supported by a new Safeguarding Supervision Policy. The numbers of staff accessing supervision has increased this year. The role of the paediatric liaison service has been reviewed and updated to provide a more proactive and responsive service whilst maintaining provision of essential communication to our local partners. The Trust safeguarding team continue to work closely with partner agencies through engagement with joint working initiatives and local priority agendas.

## Key Achievements during 2019/20

- Safeguarding supervision
  - Increase in number of trained supervisors
  - Increased availability of safeguarding sessions
  - Increased compliance from community midwives
  - Positive feedback from CCG regarding provision of supervision
- Recruitment:
  - Head of Safeguarding
  - Designated Doctor for Safeguarding and Child Death
  - Designated Doctor for Looked After Children
  - Named Midwife for Safeguarding
- Safeguarding consultant rota increased to 6 doctors on rota
- Safeguarding peer review in place
- Renewed training strategy providing wider variety of learning opportunities and more frequent training requirements
- Comprehensive review and update of Safeguarding Hub pages to provide easier access to information and signposting
- A more efficient and effective system available for the Paediatric Liaison Nurse to review daily attendances of children and young people attending the emergency department
- Provision of SUDIC training to partner agencies
- High quality independent management reviews with excellent critical analysis and identification of learning evidenced in feedback from Case Review authors
- Recognition from CCG regarding overall improvement of the Trust safeguarding service
- Routine Enquiry for domestic abuse screening being sustained at 90-100% compliance following review of process
- Implementation of FGM Information Sharing process to ensure all newborn females at risk of FGM can be identified nationally
- CP Information Sharing process embedded in maternity practice enabling unborn babies on child protection plans to be safeguarded.
- Dudley maternity selected for national pilot for Graded Care Profile 2-Antenatal (GCP2A), a practical tool to support midwives and health visitors with

early decision making to prevent suboptimal parenting, early neglect or abuse can have lasting consequences on children's future emotional and physical health

- Increase in named nurse time out in wards and departments
- Implementation of the Child Death Review Meetings
- Promotion of safeguarding across the organisation by increased visibility of safeguarding team and new safeguarding posters distributed
- Safeguarding Learning Events relaunched in Sept 2019 and opened to partner agencies
- Continued meeting of time sensitive responses to scoping exercises and Internal Management Reviews
- Active representation, involvement and action to improve safeguarding services across the Black Country STP, including commitment to newly established Black Country Child Death Overview Panel and eCDOP.
- Transition clinics for patients with Learning Disabilities

#### **Areas for development in 2020/21**

- Increased assurance of safeguarding children processes across the whole Trust including for 16- and 17-year olds
- Increased staff and public awareness of local and national safeguarding agenda, priorities and learning across the Trust
- Improve staff awareness, confidence and skills in identifying, risk assessing and supporting victims of domestic abuse

- Improved governance and accountability for implementation and embedding of recommendations from external and internal safeguarding reviews
- Improved safeguarding documentation systems and processes
- Improving evidence that children and young people have been listened to and their wishes and feelings taken into account

How:-

- Annual Improvement Plan
- Annual Audit Plan
- Trust Safeguarding Strategy
- Robust policies and procedures
- Restructure of safeguarding team and increased resources
- Development of Trust safeguarding steering group
- Training and supervision
- Benchmarking against national standards
- Partnership working within Trust and with external agencies
- Increase visibility of Trust safeguarding Team
- Promotional and media resources
- Peer reviews
- Engagement of patients
- Patient Stories





## **Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**

The Trust staff and safeguarding teams continued to work hard to support the safeguarding of their most vulnerable children, adults and families. The Teams continue to promote best practice, ensure safeguarding was everyone's business and incorporate the Think Family approach across all areas of practice. New ways of reaching out to Children in Care and their carers was commenced by way of offering more varied clinic times.

### **Key Achievements in 2019/20**

- Safeguarding teams continued to work and support all Trust staff and partners despite continued challenges relating to resource
- Staff volunteered and were trained in the LeDeR review process (a programme helping to improve the quality of health and social care for people with a learning disability) in order to support this process
- New staff were added to the Safeguarding Teams which allowed improved resilience and cover across the teams
- A revised Safeguarding Children Supervision Policy was ratified and rolled out during the last quarter of 2019/20, with both positive feedback and continued implementation of next steps in 2020/21. This has enabled the staff to feel more confident in safeguarding those on their caseload
- The Team supported all aspects of safeguarding reviews for adults and children

An audit on the new Children in Care (CiC) clinic offer was undertaken to get the views of the children attending these. This was to see if the more flexible offer of timings for these children showed increased attendance. The number of respondents, while small, showed that these were more suitable and further suggestions were made. A further audit was done, and while numbers remained low, the children felt that these greater met their needs. The CiC team continue to look at ways of improving the service they run.

### **Areas for development in 2020/21**

The Trust merged with Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust in April 2020 to become Black Country Healthcare NHS Trust. The main change will be to work with all of the Teams to bring safeguarding together to ensure equity of service delivery across the Trust, with harmonising of policy, procedures and related safeguarding practice.

Ensure that safeguarding becomes embedded in the new reporting and incident management systems, as well as patient records.

## Dudley Council for Voluntary Services

In 2019 with the endorsement of the DSPP, Dudley CVS undertook an Early Help and Safeguarding audit of 102 organisations which are known to offer activities or services for children and families with 73 responses received. The responses identified several gaps in skills and training which the team set about resolving through a calendar of specialist training and networking opportunities. DCVS worked closely with staff from Early Help to draft agreed voluntary sector specific guidance which was shared with voluntary, community groups, charities and faith settings across the borough.

In addition, there was a programme of one to one support provided to newly- established organisations which included an action plan and more specialist support to those who most needed it.

### Key Achievements

DCVS worked with Local Authority colleagues to deliver almost 7000 free school meals in just 8 days at the end of March 2020.

The voice of young people continues to feature across the sector, their voice has reflected a need to diversify during lockdown and shift most activity online. Some young people have reflected this model of delivery has not only enabled them to access activities they would normally not have been able to but have also reported a growth in confidence and sense of belonging. There has been an increase in the number of children and young people accessing activities from BAME communities.

### Areas for development in 2020/21

There has been a significant focus on helping Voluntary Community Organisations to operate this year. There have been opportunities for them to come together, network, share diversification ideas and receive government and governing body guidance as to the procedures that they have been required to adopt.

There is still work to be done, to monitor and bring organisations together however it is difficult to plan constructively due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A range of voluntary sector providers are continuing to support the most vulnerable children and young people through door stop and garden visits and working closely with local schools to support the safeguarding and pastoral needs of the families who professionals had the most concerns about.

Organisations are continuing to work with partners to provide hot meals and food for those most in need and are continuing to work with the LA to develop a more strategic approach to reaching families in 2021.

## Healthwatch Dudley

Healthwatch Dudley values the important work and priorities of the new Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership and throughout the last year have continued to raise awareness of key safeguarding messaging, promote training opportunities and encourage people to raise concerns.

Healthwatch Dudley re-joined the Board in July 2020 and has been working with the Safeguarding Partnership Business Manager, to identify opportunities where our experience of community influence in decision making can have the greatest impact, ensuring local people have a loud and clear voice in improving safeguarding systems and practices.

## Public Health

Public health is not a frontline service, but commissions a variety of services for children and young people which involve elements of safeguarding. Public Health Dudley has also led on GCP2 training across the Borough in conjunction with the DSPP.

### Key Achievements

The children's services commission by public health are: health visiting, school nursing, family nurse partnership, young people's sexual health services, substance misuse services and lower level mental health and wellbeing services. During the year, Public Health has ensured these providers adhere to their contract commitment regarding safeguarding, attending all necessary safeguarding meetings and fulfilling audit requirements completing any actions identified. The nursing teams attend Safeguarding Quality Review Meetings, public health have also attended these meetings to ensure all actions are met.

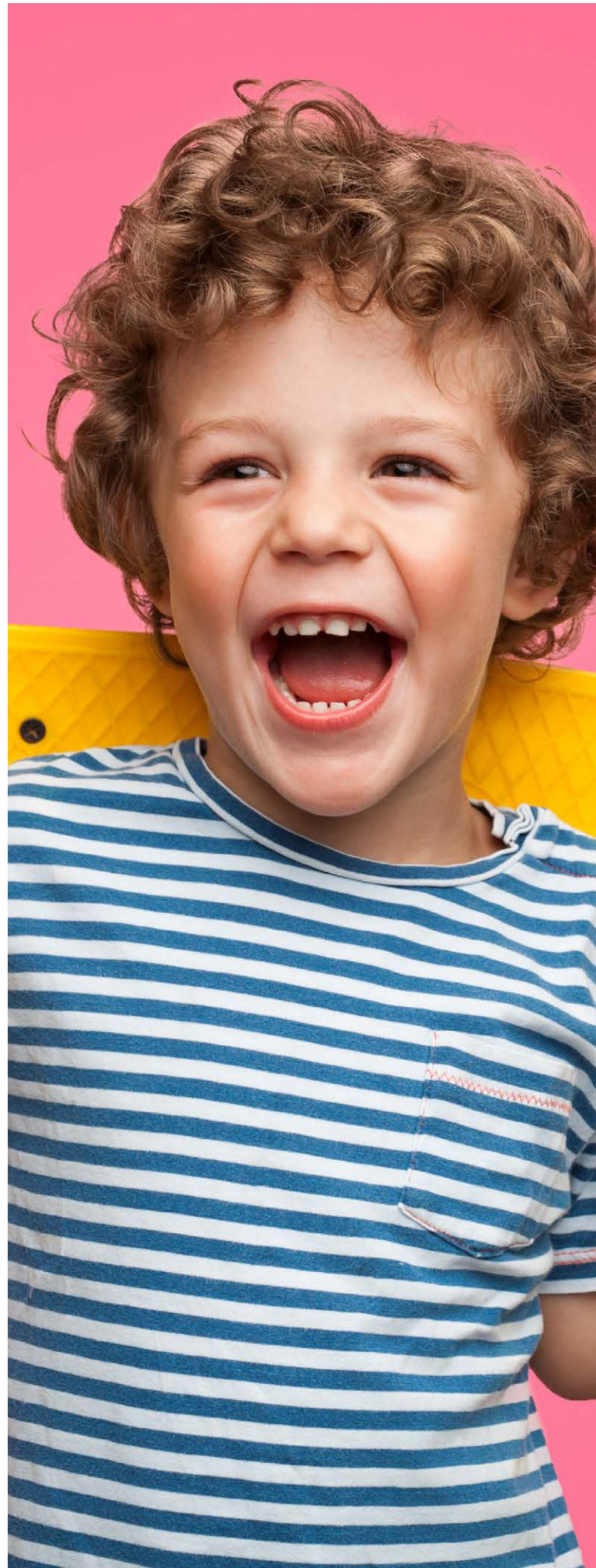
All commissioned services have an element in their contract which asks for the users (children & young people) views to be gathered and used to inform their future offer.

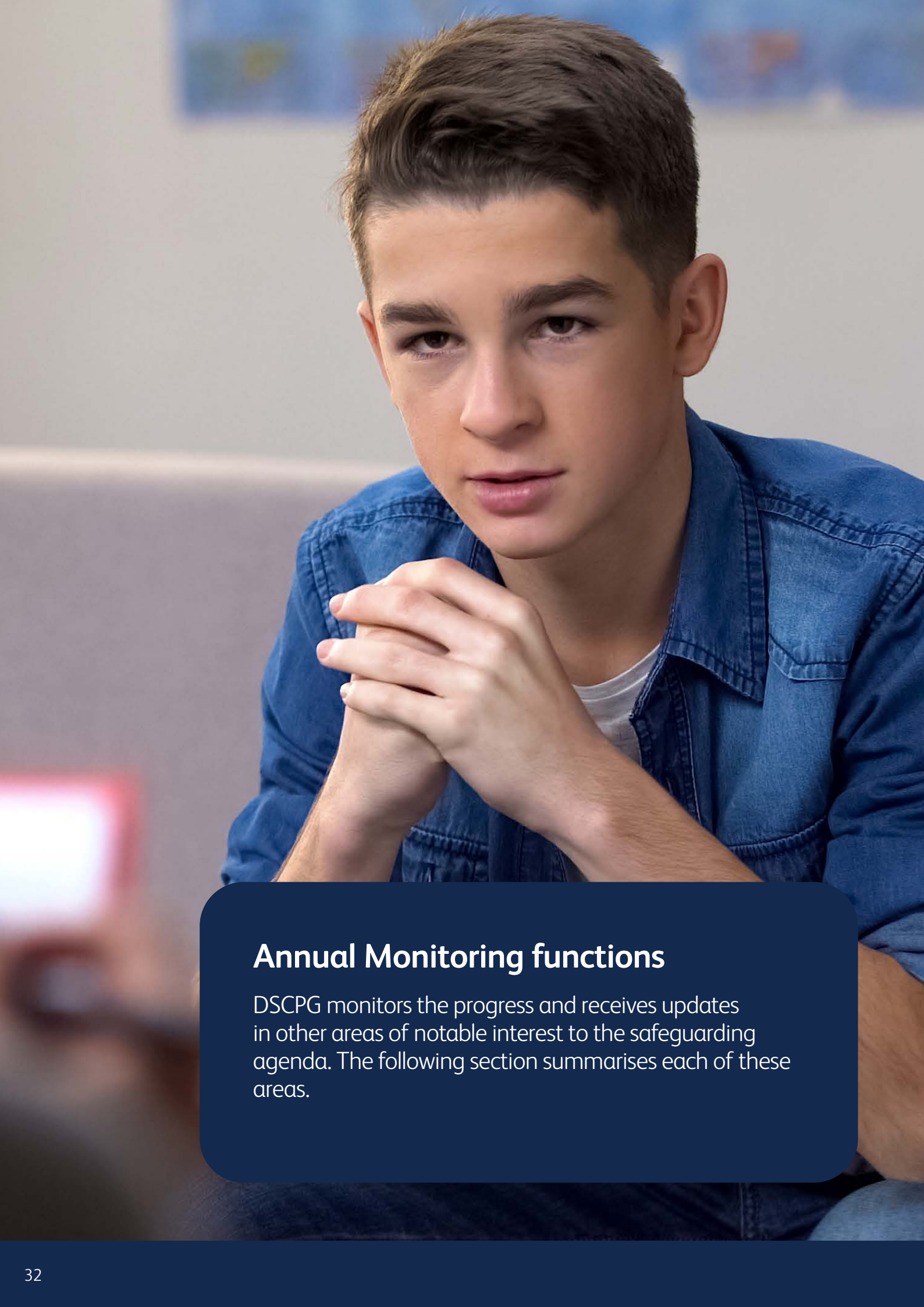
During the year services have adapted their offer and support based on feedback and engagement with the users on how they would want to continue to access provision. Young people are still able to access support when needed and how they prefer to access.

### Areas for development in 2020/21

The Public Health 0-19 services will transfer to the Dudley Integrated Health and Care (DIHC) provider from April 2021, an organisation integrating primary care across Dudley with community physical and mental health services. Public Health are working closely with these providers and the DIHC to ensure whilst these services adapt and reform into a more integrated service, the voice of the child and safeguarding are paramount in the planning. The integration should provide greater sharing of information and remove any duplication or gaps in provision, offering a better service and outcomes.

- Safeguarding teams continued to work and support all Trust staff and partners despite continued challenges relating to resource
- Staff volunteered and were trained in the LeDeR review process in order to support this process
- New staff were added to the Safeguarding Teams which allowed improved resilience and cover across the teams





## **Annual Monitoring functions**

DSCPG monitors the progress and receives updates in other areas of notable interest to the safeguarding agenda. The following section summarises each of these areas.



## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The profile of CSE continues to grow in Dudley, there are clear processes in place for agencies when raising concerns around young people that may be at risk of CSE. Referrals are steady in to the CSE Team which are screened by the local authority CSE Coordinator and the Police CSE Coordinator, these are screened on a regular basis and MASE meetings organised robustly.

MASE meetings are scheduled on a regular basis, discussing those at Medium/High Risk of CSE. There is clear recognition to have a Contextual Safeguarding approach to those at risk of exploitation not just CSE.

### Key Achievements

- NRM Champions been trained to deliver training across Children's services to support the wider Modern Slavery agenda
- Number of NRM's being completed for children has increased, both CSE and CCE young people are being identified as those being at risk
- MASE meetings are well attended, key agencies all contributing
- Support for young people not only around CSE but also CCE. This mirrors the support that is currently offered for CSE (Barnardo's and Phase Trust)
- Good relationship with partners, especially our voluntary services
- CSE and Missing operational group has been amalgamated, these are now discussed in one meeting rather than two. A new agenda was developed to incorporate both meetings
- Training is ongoing, an Advanced CSE Training has been developed and delivered, this is specifically designed for social workers and those working directly with young people at risk of CSE
- Police have contributed and supported a number of operations with Trading Standards to help identify young people that may be being exploited in one of our areas of concern.
- Young people in Dudley continue to be safeguarded against sexual exploitation, agencies work closely together in order to safeguard children and young people.

- Completed a MACFA which showed that partners worked closely together in order to safeguard children. Some good findings came out of the audit which has moulded our practice
- CSE Coordinator is still an active agency within the MASH
- Various two hours briefing sessions have been delivered across schools
- MASE meetings adapted quickly to virtual meetings/ conference calls when going into lockdown, which ensured young people could still be discussed and there was no drift for cases or support being received.
- Updated dataset which records MASE meeting attendance and risk levels

### Areas for development in 2020/21

- Further development of the Contextual Safeguarding Hub to address exploitation
- One meeting that oversees Exploitation (CSE/CCE) and Missing
- Training to be developed which incorporates basic Contextual Safeguarding and not just CSE or CCE. There is still a need to have a more advanced training for each one, but there should be a basic level which covers both.
- New screening tool/risk assessment developed and embedded to look at all exploitation
- Updated data set to incorporate the whole of exploitation
- MASE meetings to continue to run effectively throughout Covid-19
- Contextual Safeguarding to be embedded into the new Liquid Logic system
- MACE to be developed to address CCE, this could mirror the current MASE process

## LADO

The procedures, Allegations of Abuse against Persons who Work with Children (including Allegations Against Carers and Volunteers), are based on the framework for managing allegations made against an adult who works with children as detailed in Working Together 2018 and Keeping Children Safe In Education 2020.

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The revised version of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 has an additional point to above, a person in a Position of Trust has:

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

### The role of LADO

Working together guidance requires each local authority to identify a 'Designated Officer' (LADO) with responsibility for the management and oversight of individual cases where there is concern in relation to a person who works in a position of trust with children. Their role is to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, to liaise with other agencies and monitor the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent within a thorough and fair process. The LADO also chairs Position of Trust Meetings (multi-agency safeguarding meeting) this meeting involves relevant professionals (and the police if it appears an offence has been committed) to consider the information/risk and how best to proceed.

The LADO in Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council works with representatives across agencies in Dudley and also regularly works with LADO's in other local authorities where individuals undertake activities with children across different local authority boundaries. Furthermore, the LADO will liaise with agencies outside of Dudley where allegations relate to those working in Dudley but whose employers may not be local (for example independent fostering agencies or education employment agencies based out of the Borough).

## Key Achievements

- The LADO has updated and delivered briefings on the Management of Allegations process on behalf of DSPP multi-agency. These have been well received and completed with the Safeguarding Lead for Education to enhance and raise individual and employer's awareness of safer working practices.
- Delivered bespoke briefings, when requested by the agency and/or when it has been identified that they would benefit from a tailored session. Agencies included, Health, Social Care, Residential CH, Transport, Religious organisations
- Produced an information leaflet for carers/parents of the child(ren) explaining the management of allegations process.

### Areas for development in 2020/21

- Continue to raise awareness about LADO service/process to partner agencies by delivering multi-agency briefings on behalf of DSPP and single agency briefings as requested
- Updated key documents/policies for the DSPP in line with changes in recent guidelines including KCSI 2020.
- Contribute to the preparations and facilitation of a seminar for religious organisations to raise awareness of the role of the LADO, reporting mechanisms and the Management of Allegations process
- LADO to continue to work with data improvement team to ensure more sophisticated and smarter capturing of information
- Attend training and be involved in the implementation of a state-of-the-art electronic confidential recording system on Liquid Logic for the Management of Allegations process
- Report on the timeliness of POT meetings being within 5-7 working days if threshold is met
- Continue to attend West Midlands Regional LADO Network Meetings 4 x yearly and National LADO Conference annually
- To maintain and build links with LADO's locally/nationally

## Missing children and young people

The Missing Service works with children and young people who are reported missing from their home address or care. A missing and found referral known as a compact is received from West Midlands Police.

At the weekly meeting patterns, trends and vulnerabilities are considered and mitigating action is taken as required. Referrals to partner agencies and sharing of information with relevant parties are made i.e. Dudley Integrated Violence and Exploitation Reduction Team (DIVERT). Cases that need to be escalated are referred to Children's Missing Operation Group (CMOG) which is chaired by the Police.

### Key achievements

Quarterly data has continued to be collated by the management information team. The data isolates the missing episodes which receive a West Midlands Police compact so better reflects the performance of Dudley's Missing Service. However further work by the management information team is required to capture data in relation to Dudley children who go missing whilst living out of borough.

From the 1st April 2019 until 31st March 2020 there were 602 missing episodes by 220 children. 84 % of these children were offered a return home interview.

Of those offered an interview 63 % were completed. The main reason why an interview was not completed was because the child had gone missing again, the parent/child declined the interview or children were from other local authorities and the home authority chose to complete their own return home interview. Of those that were completed 71 % were completed within 72 hours as per the national requirement. The Missing Service offers three appointments before recording the non-completion as declined.

## Areas for development in 2020/21

The main development for 20/21 will be to ensure that the revised Missing from Care and Home procedures are agreed and circulated. Training will need to be provided for staff. The training will also include the implementation of safety planning for children in care who are at risk of going missing with the aim of preventing initial and repeat missing episodes.

During 20/21 further work will be required with placement providers to ensure that Dudley children placed out of borough receive a return home interview. A mechanism for recording that the return home has been completed on Liquid Logic will need to be agreed. Similarly return home interviews completed by the home authority for a child they have living in Dudley need to be recorded on Dudley's case management system. This will enable a more accurate data set to be available to senior managers and will also ensure that intelligence including emerging themes from return home interviews are shared and responded to.



## Safeguarding in Education

### Key achievements

- Safeguarding in Education Reference Group (SERG)

Continuation of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) attending bi-monthly meetings to ensure that schools have a voice in respect of safeguarding matters, training offer and safeguarding support. Members of SERG act as a conduit between schools and the local authority. Schools within Dudley share effective safeguarding practice and members are accountable for the development of policies and procedures

- DSL Forum
- Speakers from partner agencies share knowledge and update DSLs from all Dudley schools on current safeguarding themes.

- Training Programme

Training materials Safeguarding Trainer developed and sent to DSLs to deliver to whole school staff throughout 2019/20 include:

- CSE/CCE/County Lines
- Early Help strategy
- Neglect strategy
- Threshold training
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Briefing sessions delivered by Safeguarding Trainer to thirty schools in 2019/20 include:

1. Fabricated and Induced Illness
2. Children and Families in prison
3. Homelessness

- Annual whole school Safeguarding Training package

A full safeguarding training programme developed and sent to all schools for DSLs to deliver to all their staff at the start of each academic year.

- Bespoke Training

Safeguarding Lead attends any identified schools with LADO to deliver Managing Allegations and Safer Working Practice briefing sessions

- Safeguarding support in schools

Safeguarding Lead visits any specific schools identified with a view to offering advice and support with their safeguarding arrangements or supports the school with specific safeguarding issues/concern

- s175 Audit Compliance checks

The purpose of the above is to provide assurance to DSCPG that schools' safeguarding systems are in operation in accordance with s175/s157 Schools Self-assessment Audit, undertaken in January 2018/19. In order to reassure the DSCPG of schools' continuous effective safeguarding arrangements, a combination of a s175 Audit Challenge workshop and visits to several LA and non-LA Schools, to check their audits, was undertaken between January 2020 – March 2020

Areas for development in 2020/21

Safeguarding Trainer to:

- Continue to develop DSL training using evaluations from training delegates to improve content and delivery
- Devise an online e-learning DSL Refresher training course, to ensure training is readily accessible so DSLs can renew their status without leaving their setting and the school is compliant with statutory safeguarding arrangements.
- Develop podcasts and short briefing sessions which DSLs can download and access in their own time

Safeguarding Lead to:

- Support the Safeguarding Trainer to devise an online e-learning DSL Refresher training course, to ensure training is readily accessible for existing DSLs
- Participate in a Task & Finish group to develop a Transgender Policy for Education Settings
- Support MASH Service Manager to re-define the role of Education Officer in MASH, to include attendance at Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) meetings, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and act as the representative for Operation Encompass.
- Implement a DSL training traded service offer to all schools in Dudley and educational settings within neighbouring boroughs
- Strengthen school/LA link in respect of Children missing/persistent absences in education
- DSL forum planning 2020/21 to include speakers and safeguarding themes

## Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The death of a child is a devastating loss that profoundly affects all those involved. The process of systematically reviewing the deaths of children is grounded in respect for the rights of children and their families, with the intention of learning what happened and why, and preventing future child deaths.

Every family has the right to have their child's death sensitively reviewed in order, where possible, to identify the cause of death and to learn lessons that may prevent future deaths.

The purpose of a review and/or analysis is to identify any matters relating to the death, or deaths, that are relevant to the welfare of children in the area or to public health and safety, and to consider whether action should be taken in relation to any matters identified. Where it is identified that action should be taken by a person or organisation, they will be informed.

The governance and responsibility for ensuring child death reviews are carried out is no longer held by Local Safeguarding Children Boards and is now held by 'child death review partners', who, in relation to a local authority area in England, are defined as the local authority for that area and any clinical commissioning groups operating in the local authority area as set out in the Children Act 2004 (the Act), as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In the Black Country the 'child death review partners' are the Black Country Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups:

- Wolverhampton Council; Sandwell Council; Walsall Council; Dudley Council
- Wolverhampton CCG; Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG; Walsall CCG; Dudley CCG.

The partners have made arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, where it is considered appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area.

The processes to be followed when a child dies are currently outlined within "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018: Chapter 5 Child Death Review Processes and Child Death Review: Statutory and Operational Guidance 2018"

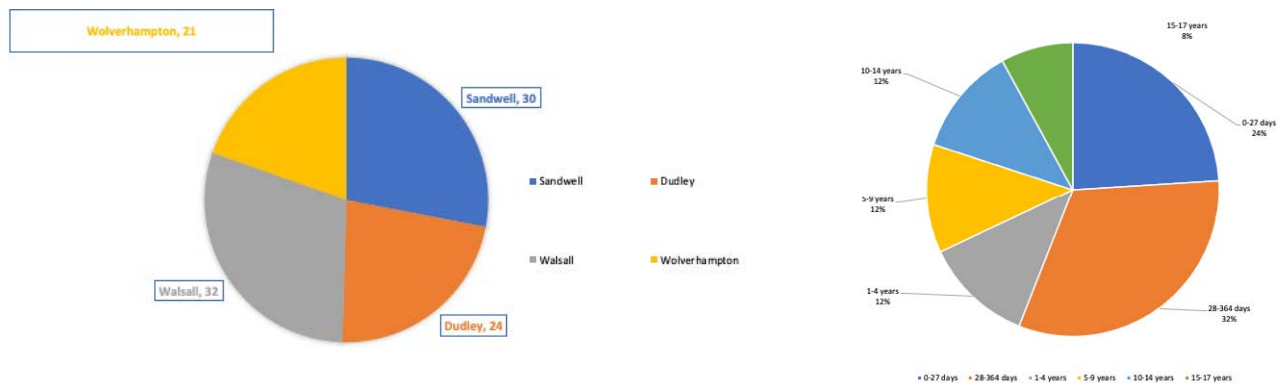
The Black Country Child Death Governance Structure has allowed for the development and monitoring of consistent Child Death Review practices across the Black Country. Progress over the past year includes:

- o An Independent Chair has been recruited to Chair both the Strategic Partnership and the Operational Panels

- o An administrator has been recruited to support with the Child Death processes
- o A budget for CDOP reviews and strategic/business functions has been secured on a partnership basis
- o Two operational panels now review deaths on a Black Country footprint; neonatal and non-neonatal. An independent neonatologist attends the neonatal panel to offer an impartial view. This is reciprocated and a neonatologist from Wolverhampton attends Staffordshire's neonatal panel.
- o A lay member has been recruited to the operational panels to offer a parental perspective.
- o The operational panels are attended by professionals on a rota basis and feedback any learning and opportunities through professional networks. Members are expected to represent their geographical area and professional role.
- o Panels are reviewing up to 15 deaths at each meeting.
- o All four hospitals in the area are carrying out Child Death Review Meetings
- o Peer audits have been scheduled to ensure legislation is being adhered to.
- o The four CCGs are combining into one Black Country CCG, and so will be incorporating the child death review processes.
- o The electronic notification and data collection system, eCDOP, has been embedded into practice. Data from eCDOP flows into the National Child Mortality Database and so contributes to a reliable national picture of child deaths.
- o A combined Annual Report has been drafted and is awaiting ratification from the Strategic Child Death Partnership and will be available from 14 December 2020
- o A Business Plan has been developed and progress is monitored by Strategic Partners
- o Through the National Child Mortality Database, the Black Country has fed into real time data supporting the national understanding of the impact of the current pandemic

## Summary of data 2019/20

### Black Country Deaths



### Infant Mortality

Infant Mortality continues to be an area of concern across the Black Country.

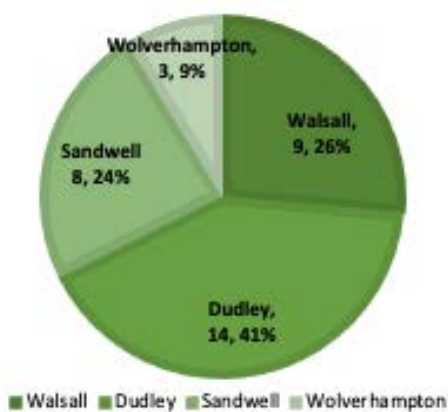
In response to this, the Child Death Overview Panel will be combining action plans from across all four areas to support existing workstreams and progress issues. Alongside safer sleeping (see figure 5), there will be a focus on the following areas:

- Maternal smoking during pregnancy
- Smoking in the household
- Consanguinity
- Late booking and consequently this delay of support services
- Maternal obesity

### Unexpected Deaths

Out of the 107 deaths that happened in 2019-2020, 33 were unexpected deaths and there was a Joint Agency Response initiated for each of them.

### Unexpected deaths



Further analysis of these deaths showed that in 10 of the 33 unexpected deaths, unsafe sleeping practices were identified as below:

- 60% were co-sleeping
- 50% Mum taking medication for depression
- 60% Dirty/poor home conditions
- 90% Maternal smoking/smoking in the home
- 30% Sofa sleeping
- 10% Alcohol abuse
- 30% Substance misuse
- 20% Low birth weight
- 20% Overcrowding
- 60% Child snuffly/ill previously
- 20% Bumpers/pillows in cot
- 10% Unsafe feeding practices

As a result of this analysis, a region wide focus group has been formed to address this through strategies and campaigns.

### Next Steps and Objectives

- Embed the role of the Independent Chair into the Strategic Partnership and Operational Panels
- Develop the Key Worker Role to ensure the voice of the child/parent is reflected
- Identify bereavement support for professionals working within the child death arena
- Explore the use of different methods of disseminating learning from child deaths (e.g. social media etc)
- Support the consolidation of the new Black Country CCG
- Develop and contribute to strategies being developed and rolled out (Safe Sleeping/ICON)
- Escalate issues of administrative support within local hospital/CCG
- Submission and ratification of the CDOP annual report
- Development, ratification and implementation of the Black Country SUDC protocol. In 2020 – 2021 there are plans to develop a Black Country wide on call health response for unexpected deaths.

# Multi-Agency Training



**220 hours of training** accessed for Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Courses which meant that over 4,700 hours of training was taken by individuals within the Dudley borough.



**45 courses** were delivered during the financial year



**1445 places** were offered via DSAB for training courses, 595 bookings were made on the combined DSAB/DSCB Event Management system.



**227 delegates** failed to attend which lead to 1400hours wasted of valuable CPD and networking time.



Delegates representing **38 different services** or organisations have been able to network and build relationships on multiagency training.



**862 delegates** have successfully completed approved training.

During September 2019 the processes that the DSCB operated under changed as Dudley created a Safeguarding partnership.

Training around Adverse Childhood experiences (ACEs), Core Working Together, Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2), Management of Allegations, Neglect, Safeguarding Children online, Thresholds were some of the 14 courses that took place during 19/20.

Some courses have been run jointly with the Dudley Safeguarding Adult Board of which we have provided a breakdown as follows.

Joint DSAB/DSCB courses and data.

- 56 hours of training accessed for joint courses which meant that over 1,700 hours of training was taken by individuals.
- 12 courses were run during the financial year
- 379 bookings made on the DSAB/DSCB Learning system.
- 124 delegates failed to attend which lead to over 600 hours lost valuable CPD and networking time
- Delegates representing 41 organisations have been able to network and build relationships on multiagency training.
- 172 have successfully completed training





## Feedback from DSCB/DSPP Introduction to Domestic Abuse training.

This course was run in Partnership with the National Centre for Domestic Violence

90% of attendees felt that the course met its training aims.

100% said they felt more competent in the area of Domestic Abuse post training.

...trainer was exceptional and was extremely knowledgeable and her pace was set just right, I could fully understand the presentation that Karen delivered. Thank you.

I have only selected the 'too short' option for length of time because I could have listened to Karen all day. She was very real with situations and this was not text book delivered. Personally, I was a victim myself and if I had support from these agencies I may never have suffered as long. I now have more understanding so I can help others professionally. Thank you Karen and I hope your sessions carry on for a very long time.

Brilliant informative course and speaker

This course was fantastic. It was well worth attending - just a shame that so few schools have attended the first two sessions.

Great to hear about the work of NCDV and how we can refer to them and how they can help people we come into contact with - I wish I had been on this course a year ago, because it could have really helped me to better support a victim of DA I have been involved with since September.

## Feedback from DSCB/DSPP Introduction to Child Criminal Exploitation

This course was run in Partnership with NAVIGATE

90% of attendees felt that the course met its training aims.

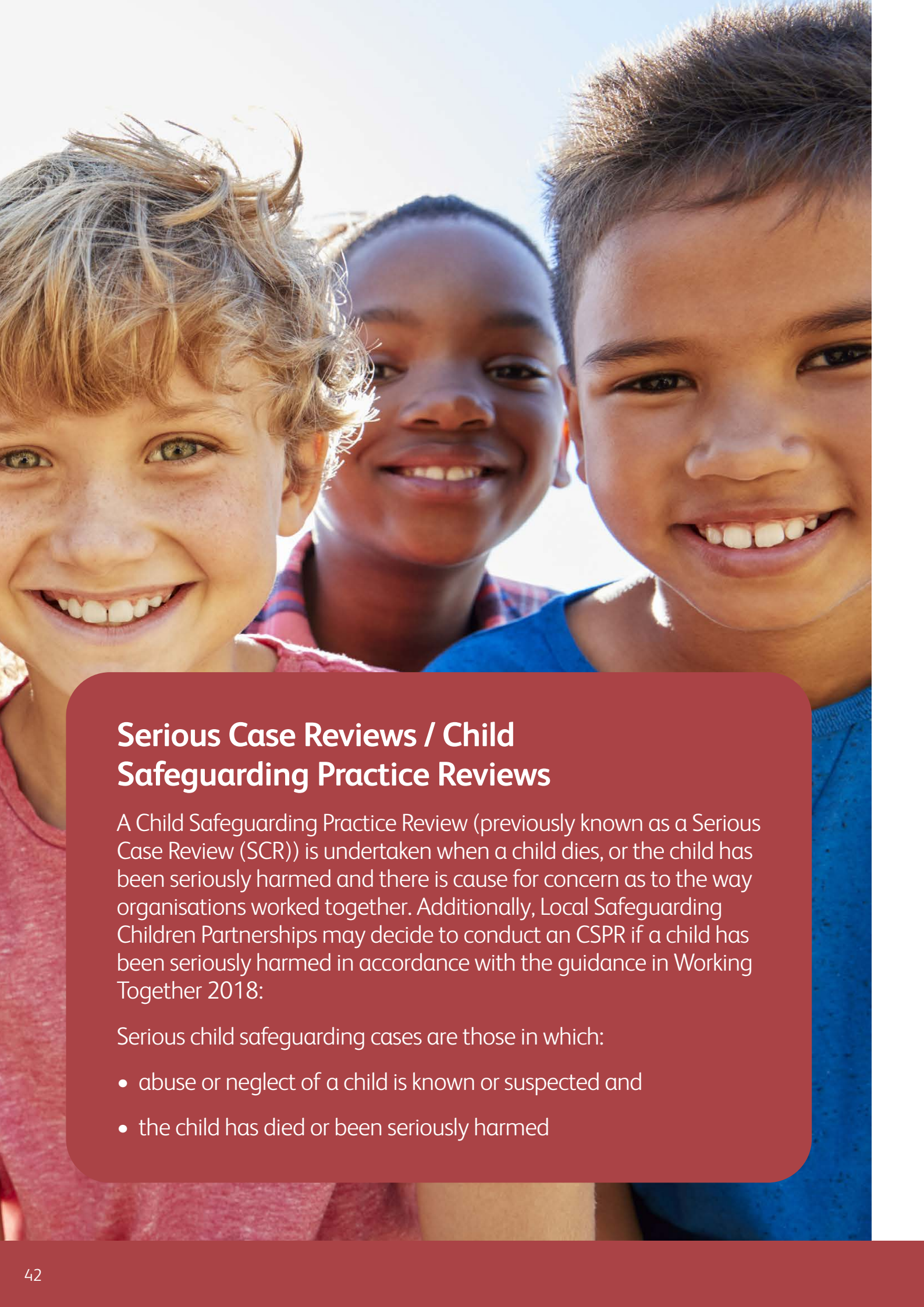
100% said they felt more competent in the area of Child Criminal Exploitation post training.

"A well-presented and informative course, it was in a relaxed atmosphere where contributions felt valued"

"Fabulous course would fully recommend maybe promote in university's for trainee nursing associates nursing student etc I only found out on external placement with school nursing team or to NHS staff"

They also said that the training would improve future practice by:

- One thing that's really stood out was to remember regardless of criminal activity that children or young people are involved in they are still victims themselves we can easily forget this and see them only in a bad light or jobs or criminals but to really see them also as victims brings a whole new understanding and perspective and therefore engagement with all children and young people will be with a whole new insight and support thank you this training was amazing and I fully recommend it Andrea
- Have an up to date knowledge of indicators to look out for Better awareness of the resources and agencies around that can support.
- Understanding the different agencies that I can refer young people to support from. Understanding of the different ways that children and young people can be exploited.



## **Serious Case Reviews / Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

A Child Safeguarding Practice Review (previously known as a Serious Case Review (SCR)) is undertaken when a child dies, or the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way organisations worked together. Additionally, Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships may decide to conduct a CSPR if a child has been seriously harmed in accordance with the guidance in Working Together 2018:

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and
- the child has died or been seriously harmed

Some cases may not meet the definition of a 'serious child safeguarding case', but nevertheless raise issues of importance to the local area. That might, for example, include where there has been good practice, poor practice or where there have been 'near miss' events. Safeguarding partners may choose to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review in these or other circumstances.

The primary purpose of a CSPR is for agencies and individuals to learn lessons to improve the way in which they work, both individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Progress has been made over the last 12 months to ensure that all local and Serious Case Reviews are completed as per WT 2015 guidance. Going forward, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) will replace SCRs using system methodologies in an attempt to identify and embed learning within shorter timescales.

The DSPP (formally DSCB) have also completed 3 local multi-agency reviews and learning from these has also been shared as written briefings and will be available on the DSPP website.

### Key Achievements

- Meetings of the former SCR sub group of the DSCB were held 5 times during the reporting period. The last being November 2019, when the DSCB was superseded by the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) and the SCR sub group merged with the SAR sub group of the former Safeguarding Adults Board to form the Learning and Improvement sub group which manages both adult and child reviews.

- Two cases using the former Serious Case Review Process were undertaken during the reporting period.
- One Local Learning Review was undertaken during the reporting period.
- The SCR sub group work plan for 2020/21 was reviewed and updated
- Terms of reference for the L&I sub group were developed and agreed
- Action plans from all reviews were monitored and updated throughout the year.
- A SCR risk register was developed and reviewed
- There is a dedicated business unit support officer to support the L&I sub group and associated reviews.

### Areas for development in 2020/21

- Review of CSPR process to ensure adherence to statutory timelines. Chairs of L&I sub group to work with the DSPP Business Unit to streamline review process
- Agree process for review sign off across adult and children sectors.
- To align Rapid Response processes for both adult and children reviews.
- Development of a pool of review authors from all organisations (adult and children). DSPP Executive Chair to deliver review writing session.
- To review the terms of reference of the L&I sub group after 6 months to ensure appropriate membership and governance processes.

## Case Study

The families of all children subject to an SCR/CSPR are contacted to inform them of the process and request their involvement in the review. The two children involved in the SCR's during the reporting period unfortunately did not respond to the author at any point in the process.

A Local Learning Review undertaken during the reporting period involved a young person at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation. It was clear from the scoping exercise that the young person had reported that they "prefer" the company of older people and did not feel that they are a victim or at risk of exploitation.

The young person failed to recognise their own risky behaviours and the potential danger they are in. The young person has stated quite clearly to professionals that:

**"If you take me home, I'll just go missing again"**

There was evidence of longstanding neglect and abuse which has resulted in deteriorating behaviour, anger issues, regular absconding and mental health issues. Despite the young person and family being discussed in a number of multi-agency meetings, outcomes for the young person did not improve and parents appeared not have parental control. Mother struggled to appropriate boundaries in order to keep the child safe.

The young person is now in an out of borough placement, has a dedicated support worker and has started to engage with professionals.

## Voice of the Child

When working with children or young people it is essential to gain a clear picture of their wishes, thoughts and feelings. It is good practice to ask the child or young person which practitioner they would like to gather this information from them.

- the right of a child or young person to be heard is included in the UN Convention of Rights
- the Children's Act 2004 emphasises the importance of speaking to the child or young person as part of any assessment
- the importance of speaking to a child or young person and gathering their views has been consistently highlighted in lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews.

In too many cases local and national reviews have found:

- a child was not seen frequently enough by the professionals involved, nor was asked about their views or feelings
- agencies did not listen to adults who tried to speak on behalf of the child and who had important information to contribute
- parents and carers prevented practitioners from seeing and listening to the child
- practitioners focused too much on the needs of the parents or adults, especially vulnerable adults and overlooked the implications for the child
- agencies did not interpret their findings well enough to protect the child.

### What do we mean by 'the child's voice'?

This not only refers to what children say directly, but to many other aspects of their presentation. It means seeing their experiences from their point of view.

### Why is the child's voice important?

It means that children feel listened to, plans are more successful when they are involved, and prompt decisions are made about safeguarding when necessary.

Case studies evidencing the voice / contribution of children have been received from partners, a selection of which can be found at appendix 1.





## Summary

2019/20 was a transitional year for safeguarding children in Dudley, with the newly formed Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership.

During 2020/21 the Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group will continue to embed agreed strategic priorities and the work of the subgroups, whilst engaging with and listening to the voice of children and young people to reflect their priorities for keeping them safe from harm. The DSPP priorities for 2020/22 are:

1. Preventing violence across the life course
2. Neglect across the life course
3. Exploitation across the life course

Learning from Practice Reviews (both locally and nationally) will be shared widely to improve practice and procedures where required. We will examine the quality of safeguarding work across the Partnership through our audits and information gathering and work together to address issues and to identify gaps in service provision for children. We will develop our work to support the most vulnerable children and, those with complex needs and disabilities to achieve a good transition into adulthood and work with partners to provide the right help and support where it is needed.

Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group will remain vigilant with regard to emerging safeguarding issues as they affect children and young people, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and will respond to ensure that all agencies come together, are supported and provide assurance regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.



Appendices

# Appendix 1:

## Voice of the Child case studies

### Case Study 1

Young person has been supported through her exploitation, she has made disclosures to professionals that have been supporting her and made a statement to the Police which has led to an ongoing Police investigation.

Professionals curiosity and gut instincts contributed to this young person disclosing this information. Her case was closely monitored, and the family were supported well. Mom initially had no understanding of CSE and felt her daughter was making the choice to 'have sex' with all these males however through a lot of work with the family she began to understand exactly how her daughter was exploited and started treating her as a victim instead of blaming her for what happened. She could then start truly supporting her daughter the way she needed it. It was a struggle and there were many ups and downs along the way, however professionals were able to support this child and family to stop her exploitation. There are still issues within the family home which they will continue to receive support with.

She received a lot of support which has recently ended at her request, she now wants to move on with her life and forget about what happened to her. She is a bright young person who has a positive future ahead. At times she found all the professionals being involved quite overwhelming, we addressed this through MASE/ CPP to make sure she was fully involved in her plan. It was really important to make sure she felt that she had choices and that this support wasn't anyone telling her what to do but supporting her through the abuse she suffered.

She felt strong enough to move on with the next chapter of her life and attend college, she requested for her one to one work/support with Barnardo's to stop which it did.

### Case Study 2

The return home interview includes an opportunity for the child to be spoken to alone so that their views can be captured. The child's voice is listened to and appropriate course of action taken following the one to one conversation.

For example, child X was contacted to complete a return home interview. She went missing following an argument with her carer and ended up with her boyfriend child Y. During the Missing Officer's conversation with child X, it appeared that she was in company with child Y and was very concerned about him as his mother did not want him back home, so he had nowhere to go for the night. Child X advised that her boyfriend wasn't allowed at her house and she was refusing to return home without knowing that he had somewhere to stay. If accommodation was not resolved both children would have been reported missing and would have been on the streets for the night.

The missing officer spoke to both children and listened to the situation they were experiencing. Child Y had previously presented himself homeless at Dudley Council Plus, but due to his age he had been referred to Children Services. Child Y explained to the Missing Officer that his relationship with his mother had broken down. The missing officer liaised with the allocated social worker who confirmed that papers had been submitted for a placement search. The Missing Officer advocated on behalf of child Y and overnight emergency accommodation was secured for him by his social worker.

The missing officer listened to child X and worked through the circumstances surrounding the argument that had resulted in her going missing. She was encouraged to return to her carer for the night. As a result of listening to both children a further missing episode was prevented, and both children had somewhere safe to sleep.

### Case Study 3

A 14-year-old female was brought into the Emergency Department by ambulance presenting with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts. She was accompanied by her sister who was 18 years old. The history taken from the ambulance crew stated that she had run away from home and had been missing for 2 days. On return, she had love bites on her neck and told her parents that she had been with her 16-year-old boyfriend which caused an argument.

This young person was now living with her father following a period of time spent in foster care due to maternal mental health issues which meant her mother could not provide adequate care. The Emergency Department contacted social care who advised that the young person was known to them and that the parents had stated they did not want her to return home.

Further concerns emerged during the medical assessment which prompted the nurse to complete a Child Sexual Exploitation screening tool. These concerns included evidence of bruising to her neck and breast, she admitted to giving the wrong details to her parents in relation to her boyfriend's age and address, missing school and social media use. These concerns were also documented on a Multi-Agency Referral Form and the police were contacted directly.

The young person was admitted to the paediatric ward for a mental health assessment and safeguarding. The concerns regarding potential exploitation were new concerns and the nurse was able to recognise the indicators which prompted completion of the risk assessment tool to evidence the concerns and initiate a strategy discussion. There was evidence of good multi-agency communication from the Emergency Department and paediatric ward with social care and the police. By identifying the concerns early this would hopefully improve outcomes for the young person.





## Appendix 2 - Dudley MBC Participation and Engagement

Children's Services have begun work on elevating and joining up work on participation and engagement, which is referred to as 'Voice and Influence'.

The aim is to meaningfully seek feedback on services, from all children, young people, families and partners and to strengthen the influence of shaping of services

The work around 'Voice and Influence' links to the Quality Assurance and Learning Framework. Feedback from families is an integral part of 'knowing ourselves' and understanding the impact interventions are having upon children and families.

Some of the existing participation and engagement work was already taking place across Children's Services is as follows:

- **Early Help**

- In Early Help parents are supported to complete questionnaires, following intervention.
- The voices of children, young people and their parents/carers are included in assessments.
- Early Help staff attend community events to raise awareness of the services that they offer.
- Coffee mornings have taken place to engage with families in the community.

- **Children in Care Council/Care Leavers Forum and Dudley Youth Council**

- Young people have been part of senior manager recruitment panels.
- Children and young people have provided comments on Dudley's Local Offer.
- Dudley has a dedicated Participation Offer who works with the CIC/CL Council and Dudley Youth Council (DYC).
- Work has been undertaken with young people to find out their preferred method of communication with their key worker.
- Young people have commented upon the 16/17 Homeless Protocol.

- **Safeguarding and Review**

- In December 2019, the IRO Service asked children in care about their experience of the IRO Service. Children were asked a number of questions around their experiences of the IRO Service and their IRO. For example, children were asked if they knew who their IRO was, 69% said yes. The outcomes of the survey have helped shape the IRO Service Plan. The IRO survey will be an annual event.
- An event took place with children in care, in February 2020. All children were aged 12-17 and feedback was sought in relation to their views on their IRO, what they thought about their Reviews and their views on co-chairing their meetings.
- Parental engagement work in Children's Social Care is also being developed. A questionnaire for parents whose children are subject to child protection plans was undertaken during the Covid-19 lockdown, when Child Protection Conferences were being undertaken virtually. The findings were helpful in understanding parents' views about virtual meetings. Some parents enjoyed the virtual meetings and found them less intimidating. This feedback is being used to develop a hybrid way of working through the pandemic and into the recovery phase.

- **Centre for Professional Practice (CPP)**

- CPP seek the views of children and their parents/carers as part of audits.
- Particular tools have been developed by the CPP to use with children and families.
- The Principal Social Worker (PSW) and CPP are involved in the Parent Participation Project with Camden and Bexley.
- The Principal Social Worker and CPP are members of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership (WMTP) sub-group on Participation. There are plans for a WMTP Annual Event around Participation.
- Dudley are involved in the West Midlands Teaching Partnership developing of a regional participation strategy.
- CPP are in the process of creating a role for a care experienced young person.

- **Residential Services**

- Consultation with children and young people on changes within the Home
- Weekly/Monthly House Meetings

- **SEND**

- The SEND Team has introduced a Co-Production Meeting as part of the 20-week process for parents, school staff, other professionals involved and young people, at which the draft ECHP is co-produced.
- There is multi-agency communication and culture group that is developing the communication strategy and this group is co-chaired with parents.
- The SEND Team have a dedicated Local Officer and Participation Officer who works with Parent Carer Groups to co-produce the Local Offer.
- The Participation Officer is also setting up participation activities with a number of groups of young people to co-produce the Local Offer

- **Education Strategy Summary**

- The Education Strategy for Dudley 2020-21 was launched with all internal stakeholders, elected members, schools, academies and Chairs of Governors during the first half of the Autumn term. It was well received, as intended, in providing the essential framework to all of the borough's education and inclusion work, and a coherent context for all of the other workstreams and initiatives.

### **Next steps**

The Participation Strategy will be developed alongside work being undertaken in the Participation and Engagement Sub-Groups. The development of the Participation and Engagement Strategy will include the views of children, young people and their parents/carers.





Dudley Safeguarding  
People Partnership