



# Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership

## Annual Report 2019 - 2020



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## Foreword

I write this foreword as we enter the Coronavirus pandemic. For the final month of the reporting period for this Annual Report, agencies have already started to plan their individual and collective Covid-19 response to ensure that children and young people in Sandwell continue to be safeguarded. Whilst recognising this unprecedented situation, the focus of this report must be on the work of the Partnership during 2019/20 and it was my pleasure to chair the Partnership for the last quarter of that period (a role that has continued into 2020/21).

You will see in this Annual Report, the developments that have taken place to strengthen, improve and evidence our joined-up and effective safeguarding practice; you will see the results of the important work carried out by our Independent Scrutineer; and you will also see the priorities for our future work.

This is the first Annual Report that Sandwell has published since the implementation of the new Working Together 2018 arrangements, which placed the leadership of the safeguarding of children with the Clinical Commissioning Group, West Midlands Police, and Sandwell Council (together with Sandwell Children's Trust). As a local area, we agreed that our Partnership would be stronger with the continued representation of our education providers and our voluntary sector, plus the involvement of our Lay Member. I have seen these partners work well to grasp the leadership challenge and make a commitment to working even more closely together for the benefit of Sandwell's children.

Our focus must be to continually ask ourselves and each other whether we are doing everything possible to keep children safe and to look for the evidence to assure ourselves of such. We must also remember that continuous improvement is our ambition – there will always be something to learn, from our own experiences and that of other areas, and our engagement with regional and national colleagues and agencies helps us to be the best that we can.

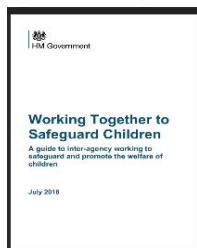
And so back to Covid19: there are significant challenges ahead but by working together with honesty, respect, transparency and a will to learn and improve, we will be well placed to face the future. From my experience of working with the Partnership, I am certain we can provide an effective and innovative safeguarding environment that will keep children at its heart.

Lesley Hagger

Executive Director of Children's Services, Sandwell Council and Chair of the SCSP

## Introduction

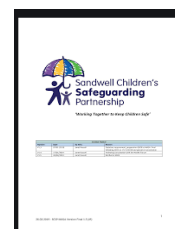
In the year 2019-2020, Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) has been working towards implementing and embedding the new arrangements as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. This statutory guidance was published following the passing of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 which meant changes to former working arrangements in relation to:



- the replacement of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) with local safeguarding partners via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA),
- replacing serious case reviews with local and national reviews,
- the establishment of a new national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- the transfer of responsibility for child death reviews from LSCBs to new Child Death Review Partners.

The full requirements for new arrangements are outlined in Chapter 3 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>



Following consultation, the name of the local statutory partnership for safeguarding children was agreed as 'Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) with the strapline for the vision being 'Working Together to keep Children Safe'.

### **Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership** *'Working Together to keep Children Safe'*

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The overarching purpose of the SCSP is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Sandwell. This is to be achieved by quality assuring the local safeguarding arrangements as defined by the Children Act 2004 and ensuring that relevant statutory guidance is in place and is effective.

The SCSP is duty bound to coordinate and scrutinise the safeguarding work of those organisations represented on the Partnership, ensuring that what they do is effective. This should be achieved by:

- Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is outcome focussed
- Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- Ensuring agencies and individuals are given timely and proportionate response when abuse or neglect has occurred
- Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of the children and young people in Sandwell.

In addition to the name change and strapline the Partnership also agreed the following aim:

**“for all children to be safe at home and in their communities, where they are loved, cared for and have the stability to grow healthily and to achieve their ambition”.**

This is underpinned by the following Core Values:

- a) *We will put children at the heart of what we do*
- b) *Together we will make Sandwell safer for children*
- c) *We will always listen, learn and improve*
- d) *We will have respect for each other and recognise and respond positively to difference*
- e) *We will be positive about the future, and have aspirations for Sandwell’s children, be solution focused, committed and innovative.*
- f) *We are going to make a difference!*

This annual report for 2019/20 provides an overview of Sandwell as a place and then demonstrates the extent to which the SCSP is performing its statutory functions, aims and responsibilities from the perspective of safeguarding children.

Information presented in this annual report are drawn from a wide range of sources, including from across the partnership, which are referenced throughout.

Information has also been taken from the Independent Scrutineer activities commissioned during this period to consider how effectively these new arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the SCSP is providing strong leadership.

## **Sandwell Geographical Area and Boundaries**

The latest population estimate for Sandwell is 327,378 people. Sandwell’s average deprivation score as ranked 12th most deprived local authority in England, out of a total of 317. Previous IMD results for this measure show that Sandwell's position has declined slightly relative to other districts in England

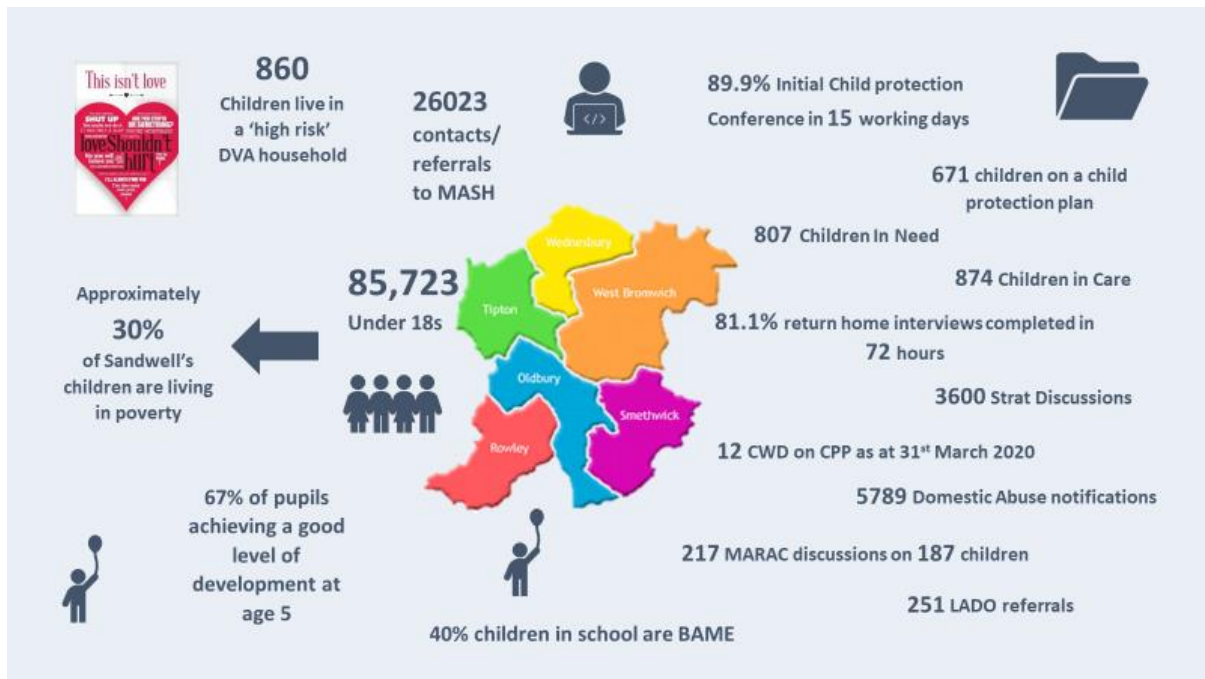
Sandwell is a metropolitan borough with six towns; Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich and is one of seven local authorities that make up the West Midlands conurbation. It is located at the centre of the West Midlands deprived urban area, to the west of Birmingham and shares its borders with Birmingham, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Sandwell is a Borough that faces significant challenges, with high and widespread deprivation and increasing demands for services

Nonetheless Sandwell is up and coming, a vibrant multicultural place with lots of opportunity to move forward and build on its strengths and successes. Partners have worked together to create a Vision for 2030.



## Snapshot of data seen by SCSP during 19/20



## SCSP Leadership and Governance Structure

As set out in the diagram below, the SCSP is led by the 3 named statutory partners (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, West Midlands Police and Sandwell's Clinical Commissioning Group) and Sandwell Children's Trust. Education, primary health and the voluntary/community sector representatives are also members and are linked to sector reference groups. The local authority Lead Member for children's services and a Lay member are Participating Observers.

Professional Advisors also attend the meetings.

1<sup>st</sup> tier (Statutory Partners)



2<sup>nd</sup> tier (Relevant Partners)



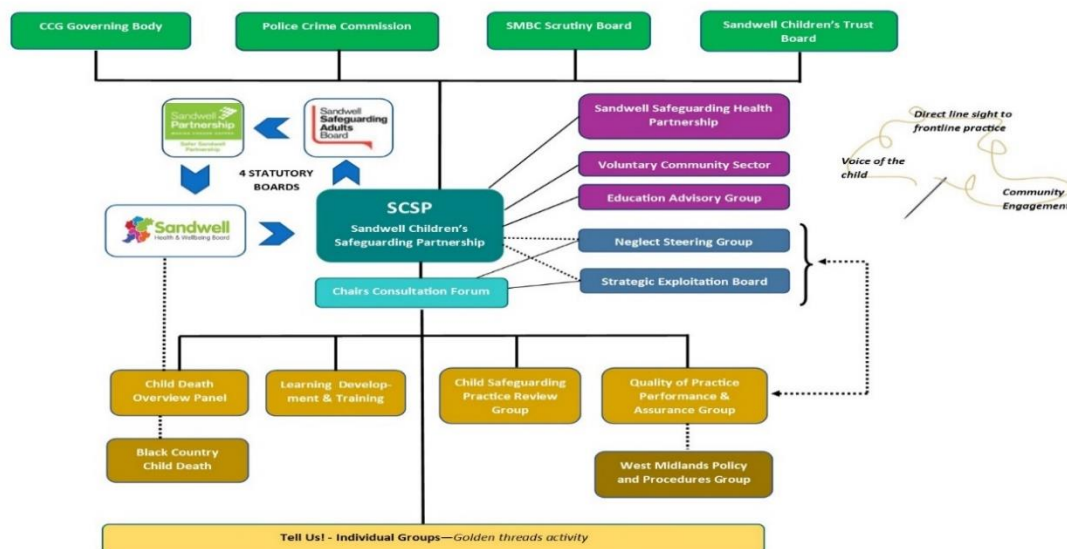
3<sup>rd</sup> tier (Professional Advisors)



4<sup>th</sup> tier (Participating Observer)



During quarter 1 to end of quarter 3 (Dec 31) of this reporting year, the SCSP was supported by the role of an Independent Chair and Scrutineer, with further support for delivering the various functions being carried out via a number of subgroups leading on particular strands of the strategic and business priorities as illustrated below.



SCSP Governance Structure v2.0 (JR)

## Liaison with 4 Statutory Boards

The SCSP is committed to multidisciplinary working in order to deliver effective outcomes and have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people. Strong collaborative relationships are already established with the Safeguarding Adults Board, Sandwell Community Safety Partnership (Safer Sandwell) which incorporates the Youth Justice Board, and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Chairs and Business Managers of these Partnerships have routine meetings to ensure good strategic joint-working on specific themes (e.g. exploitation and trauma).

## Support to the SCSP

It is crucial that the safeguarding partnership has stable and robust support to both instigate and then develop the safeguarding work in the medium and long term. In order to ensure this the safeguarding partners are supported by a small business unit of staff funded through the Partnership budget.

## Finance Arrangements

The SCSP agreed a sufficient level of funding from each partner for the period 2019-2020 to support all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

The amount budgeted for the period was £528,000, this included the combined contributions from the SCSP, income generated from training and an agreed £190,000 carried forward from the former SSCB as reserves and in lieu of finalising outstanding pieces of work, including progressing through to publication and the dissemination of learning from the 5 Serious Case Reviews commissioned but not completed by the former Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board.

Whilst the new MASA arrangement clarifies that the three named partners have equal responsibility, the proportions of funding contributions from partners in 19/20 remained unchanged.

### Serious Case Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

A brief overview of the work undertaken in respect of Serious Case Review (SCR's transferred via SSCB) and those commissioned during this period under the new process of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) are as follows:

<b>CASES TRANSFERRED FROM SSCB</b>				
<b>Case from:</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Review Process</b>	<b>Brief overview</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
January 17		SCR	6-month-old taken to hospital found to have unprescribed drugs in the system.	SCR published on 30/1/20
June 18		SCR	Death of 3 year following extensive internal injuries.	investigations ongoing



September 18	SCR	Non-accidental injury to 8-week-old baby.	Complete– awaiting publication following parallel proceedings.
March 19	SCR	Death of 2-month-old discovered by parents after co-sleeping.	Report complete, for approval
June 18	Multiagency Learning Review	Local learning review - child in care committed an assault on a peer.	Report complete, ready for approval
<b>CASES COMMISSIONED BY SCSP DURING 19/20</b>			
<b>Case opened:</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Brief overview</b>	<b>Status</b>
April 19	CSPR	Young person placed out of area being a victim of a serious attack.	Report in final stages pre-approval
June 19	CSPR	4-month-old taken to hospital with non-accidental injuries.	Review completed, due for approval
August 19	CSPR	Unexpected Sudden death of 4-month-old.	Final draft completed awaiting parents comments

## SCSP Priorities for 2019/2020

The priorities for the period as detailed below recognises the key strategic priorities that form the basis of the partnership work, whilst taking in to account the need to build the foundation and implement the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

SCSP is to ensure it delivers on its core functions and develops and maintains good governance, performance and quality assurance processes and to be assured of the effectiveness of its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This includes

- a. Completion of outstanding serious case reviews and replace new commission of serious child safeguarding incidents through the new arrangements for local child safeguarding practice reviews
- b. Transferring responsibilities for CDOP to child death partners and developing on arrangements through the Black Country CDOP.

2. SCSP to be assured that there is a culture and continuous system of single and multi-agency learning and improvement

3. SCSP to be assured that there is a robust system to respond to serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews and reviews of child deaths.

4. SCSP is to be assured that 'Early Help' services are accessed and delivered effectively, and thresholds are understood and consistently applied.

5. Be assured that children and young people in dangerous settings have faster, easier access to safeguarding support

6. SCSP is to be assured that there is evidence to consistently demonstrate that children and young people are effectively safeguarded from the risks. Particular areas of work to target improvement include:

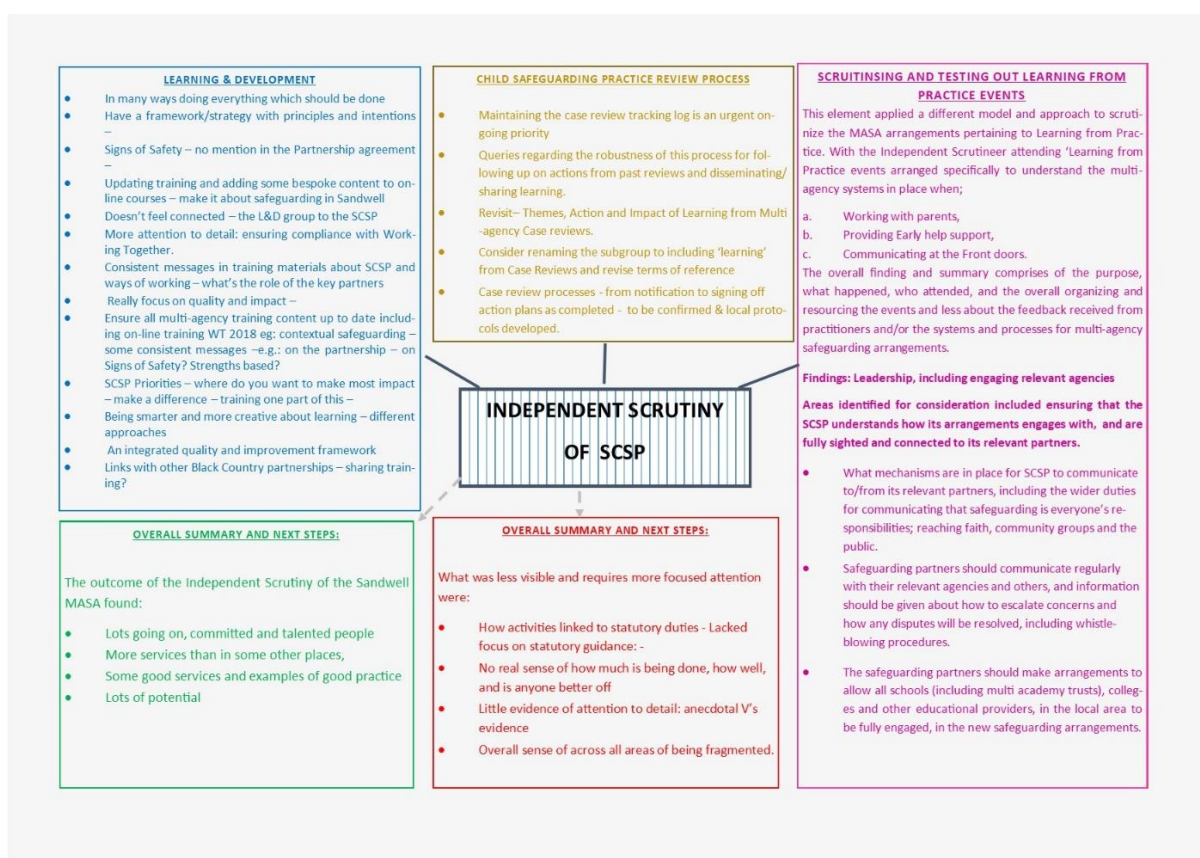
- a. Exploitation (CSE, Missing Children, Modern Slavery, Gangs, Domestic Violence)
- b. Neglect

# Independent Scrutiny of the Effectiveness of the MASA

In parallel to the activities undertaken to deliver against our priorities, the SCSP also commissioned Independent Scrutiny for the partnership. This role provided external challenge to the business of the partnership, its meetings, subgroups and priorities. This activity commenced in June through to December 2019, examining the effectiveness of the prescribed MASA in specific to:

- **Leadership, including engaging relevant agencies**
- **Scrutiny of learning and development**
- **Scrutiny of case review processes**
- **Scrutinizing and testing out Learning from Practice events.**

## Summary of feedback

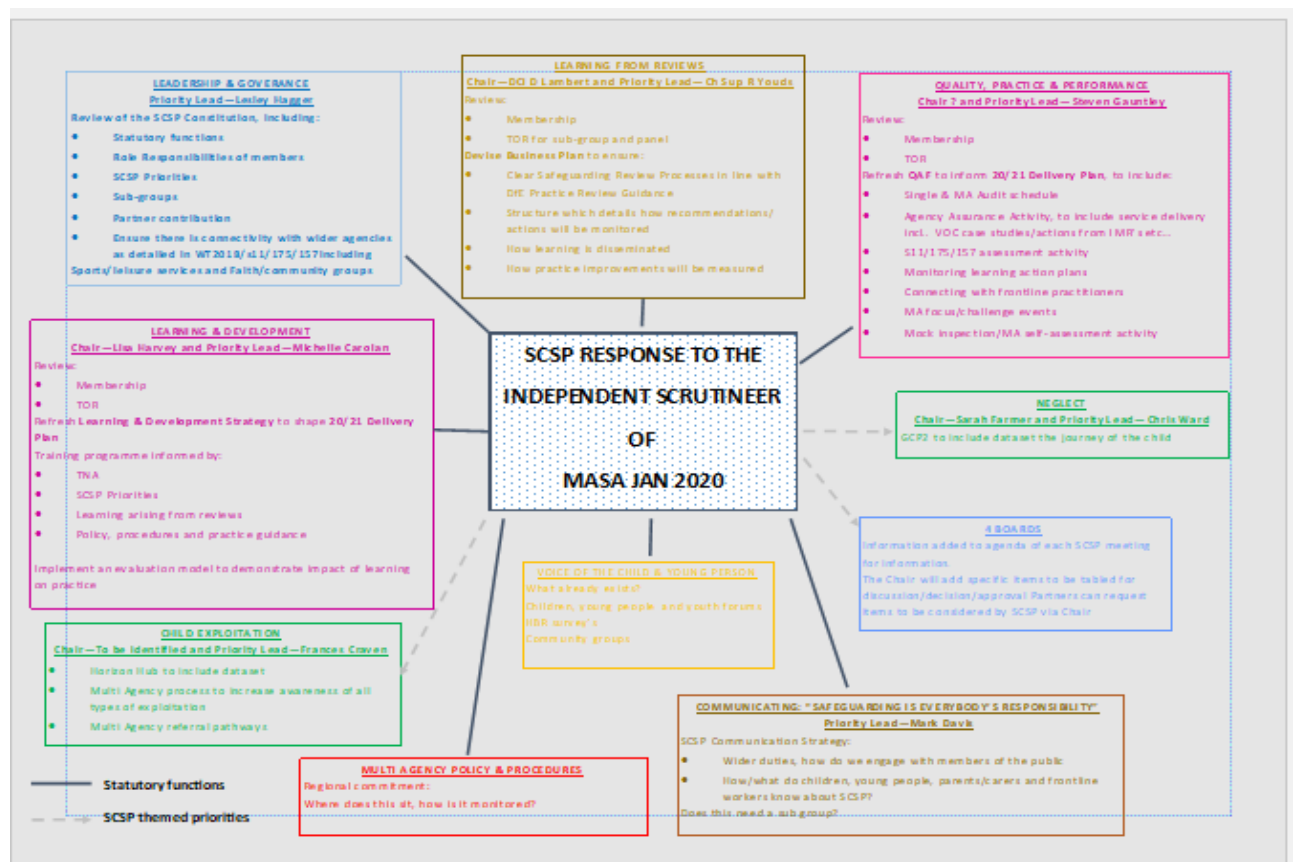


An effective partnership is one where all partner agencies feel able to fully participate and engage in the business. The feedback received whilst recognising that the SCSP is still in the infancy stages of development provided some assurances that the partnership is strong with all sub-groups being well attended with good participation and professional challenge.

Whilst most of the attention for the year has focused on implementing the new arrangements, there was visibility of partner agencies continuing to implement actions from serious case reviews in a timely manner, and an appetite and willingness to engage and improve the safeguarding systems and translate learning into practice. The findings did also reveal some inconsistencies in practice across the partnership and suggested that more could/should be done.

To ensure the members of SCSP are better sighted on current practice, including examples of good work, understanding what needs to happen both in terms of leadership and investment to improve practice, overseeing positive changes, and taking ownership of these arrangements, it was suggested that the SCSP should be chaired by one of the statutory members, with each member taking lead responsibility and accountability for one specific area of safeguarding business. In this way, there will be true oversight and accountability by the partners and connectivity that joins up the work to reflect true multi-agency working from strategic through to frontline practice.

The above was agreed and commenced in January 2020 as follows:



The Business Plan for 2019-2020 has provided the partnership with a shared Vision and Principles for working and focused on strategic priorities that form the basis of the SCSP work, taking into account of the need to implement the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangement. The Business Plan has provided the agendas and work plans for sub-groups, forums and the SCSP Business Team. Areas for development that are identified throughout have enabled the Partnership to set the scene for the strategic Business Plan for 2020-21 and beyond.

This section looks at the work of the subgroups; firstly, an overview of the work completed by the groups this year:

**LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**  
**Chair—SMBC Education Directorate**



**In the last 12 months**

Training development was focussed on partnership priorities; exploitation and neglect.

Sandwell Exploitation Awareness Summit held on 4 April 2019 with over 220 delegates attending the first annual conference of SCSP. The exploitation event was designed to be a one-day interactive learning event, that was dynamic and fun, exploring exploitation across several themes from Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, County lines, Joint Enterprise, Gangs and the impact social media is having around these agendas.

Neglect GCP2 training was launched in October 2019 as a response to learning from local SCR's, the partnership recruited a specific post to drive and lead on the implementation of this toolkit. The Practice Development Coordinator joined the team in January 2020.

Training offer 54 sessions delivered covering ten topics. 1584 places offered. 1478 bookings, 1243 delegates attended.

Learning from Practice (LFP), in addition to the SCSP learning offer we also hosted three events: 1. Working with Parents including Fathers 2. Early Help - What 'good' looks like 3. Front Doors. Attendance was recorded as 124 across all 3 events, of the 124, 17 practitioners had attended two events and 2 had attended all three events.

**QUALITY, PRACTICE & PERFORMANCE**

**Chair—SCT**

**In the last 12 months**

Completed 4 multi-agency audits on:

1. **Pre Birth assessments:** are pre birth assessments being used effectively to safeguard unborn children and ensure robust multi agency plans are in place prior to their birth? 01/05/2019
2. **Children's mental health:** to assess the lived experience of children living with mental health issues and the effectiveness of multi agency working in relation to children living with mental health issues – 03/07/2019
3. **Exploitation:** an examination of agency's responses to exploitation – 02/10/2019
4. **Neglect:** to examine partnership working in identifying and responding to early signs of neglect and the impact this can have on improving outcomes

**Sub Groups of SCSP**  
**Overview of 2019—2020**

**NEGLECT (GCP2 Implementation Group)**  
**Chair—SMBC Public Health**

**In the last 12 months**

- 16 trained trainers in Sandwell for GCP2
- Training has received excellent feedback from over 150 professionals who have been trained this has created a waiting list of other professionals wanting to be trained
- GCP2 is live on LCS and eCAF and systems
- SCSP is planning to hold the annual conference on neglect (postponed due to COVID)

**LEARNING FROM REVIEWS**

**Chair—West Midlands Police**

**In the last 12 months**

4 significant incident notifications were received, 3 of which met the criteria for a CSCR and 1 which did not however identified a gap in training provision regarding cultural awareness/supporting families who speak English as an additional language.

3 SCRs remain open which predate this period – 1 is due to be published in summer 2020 and the other 2 remain subject to ongoing parallel proceedings. An action plan is in place to finalise these 2 SCRs and a discussion is due to be held as to whether the SCR/learning can be published in full or in part to prevent jeopardising parallel proceedings.

One SCR was published in January 2020 relating to Child JS. An online Learning from SCRs course is planned for all front-line practitioners/managers to access.

**CHILD EXPLOITATION**

**Chair—SCT**

**In the last 12 months**

Horizons Team established and effectively running, offering work with young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation and providing consultation to professionals.

The work plan, data performance monitoring document, Terms of Reference and Exploitation Strategy have been developed. These outline the priority areas and provide the evidence necessary to assure the SCSP that there are arrangements across the Borough of Sandwell to effectively respond to all types of Child Exploitation.

The CEB group had identified other strategic groups with joint statutory responsibilities for exploitation and made reference and connectivity via the CEB work plan (such as POVE, SHOP, Town and Borough Tasking). This will merge cross cutting activities, reduce duplication and promote/strengthen partnership awareness/engagement.

## Impact of the work of the subgroups:

### LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Chair—SMBC Education Directorate

**Impact:** Following training needs analysis and feedback from the exploitation event we have worked in collaboration with the newly launched SCT Horizons Team to develop three training sessions to upskill the workforce around exploitation these are now offered as part of our 'Childhood Regained' exploitation training programme; Exploitation Awareness, Safeguarding in a Digital Age and Tackling Child Exploitation.

With practitioners now being trained to use the GCP2 toolkit the L&D group updated their offer to include a 'next steps' session—*Working with Families Where Neglect has been Identified* to ensure that children and families are supported by a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

LFP events gave the SCSP a different opportunity and approach to engaging with frontline practitioners. At the events there was chance to reflect on what's happening in Sandwell through discussion and analysis. The output was a collaborative self-assessment with some recommendations for action presented to the key Safeguarding Partners who are part of the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP).

### QUALITY, PRACTICE & PERFORMANCE

Chair—SCT

**Impact:** For each of the audits a detailed report was circulated to members of the QPP subgroup to be cascaded within their respective agencies. The reports captured areas of good practice and gave recommendations for areas of improvement.

For each audit a 7-Minute Briefing was disseminated to partner agencies summarising the learning and identifying recommendations for practice improvement and next steps.

### Sub Groups of SCSP

#### Impact of work completed 2019—2020

##### NEGLECT (GCP2 Implementation Group) Chair—SMBC Public Health

**Impact:** Training is in high demand and feedback is positive. Sandwell wants to have a consistent approach and gain a consistent understanding across Sandwell to better Safeguard children who are being neglected.

### LEARNING FROM REVIEWS

Chair—West Midlands Police

**Impact:** Introduction and implementation of GCP2 to recognise and record early signs of neglect (recommendation from JS).

Key learning from SCRs/CSPRs and the CSPR process has also been added to the Core Working Together training.

Unborn Baby Network established to identify vulnerable mothers/unborn children pre-birth, to ensure pre birth assessments are robust and that appropriate support is in place to minimise the risk once the baby is born

Key learning from SCRs have been shared with the QPP subgroup and have informed the multi agency audit cycle by exploring themes such as neglect, children's mental health and pre birth assessments.

Housing have audited their sign up process for new tenants and now complete a 'Sustainability Risk Assessment' to determine the frequency of visits and level of support required.

WMP have introduced a new Performance and Policy Manager to track all learning from reviews – the creation of this post has been a direct result of subgroups such as SLPR.

### CHILD EXPLOITATION

Chair—SCT

**Impact:** Timeliness and quality of return home interviews significantly improved; beginning to reduce the number of missing episodes young people experience. Good partnership attendance and commitment to Multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) meetings, where the core group of professionals meet with the family to discuss safety planning. Specialist exploitation roles introduced in Horizons Team, primarily relationship based service, offering a tailored support to young people with a consistent worker until positive changes are achieved and deemed to be sustainable.



## Next steps for the year ahead:

### LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

#### Chair—SMBC Education Directorate

To ensure SCSP meets the statutory responsibilities devolved to the L&D subgroup in the next 12 months, partners need to be assured that;

Multi-agency training exists—A suitable virtual learning platform that can be accessed across all systems and networks needs to be sourced—Communication is key to update on the variety of the blended learning offer to the multi-agency workforce—SCSP needs to support the L&D group to embed cultural change for blended learning

We will work to the four C's; Communicate, Culture, Check Knowledge, Compliance.

Commissioning of new training topics such as—engagement with fathers, injury in non-ambulatory babies, pre-birth assessment will be a priority.

Single Agencies provide training to all staff to a certain level and SCSP is assured that this learning satisfies our core statutory functions; - Review Single Agency responsibilities of safeguarding training – survey/observations – building on the independent review responses

Evidence of the impact of training translated into practice; - Impact focus groups to be established

Areas for development as identified from local, region, national learning are included in training offer to ensure this learning goes on to be embedded into practice - Development of Practice learning events for CSPR's, DHR's, SAR's - Review of content of established training courses and develop strategy to embed skills - Include scenarios from reviews (national, regional and local) to inform training.

### QUALITY, PRACTICE & PERFORMANCE

#### Chair—SCT

Multi agency audits scheduled for 2020-21 are:

1. Effectiveness of core groups in improving outcomes for children and young people (July 2020)
2. Exploitation – re-audit of agency's responses to exploitation to include factors such as county lines (September 2020)
3. Working with high risk offenders – exploration of multi agency response when working with a child/young person with close links to a high risk offender (December 2020)
4. Children living with mental health issues and SEND – has good practice from the July 2019 audit been sustained (March 2021).

#### Multi-Agency Dataset

The QPP Sub Group is in the process of developing a multi-agency dataset of agreed Performance Indicators. This will be analysed on a quarterly basis to identify trends, areas of concerns, and areas of success.

#### JTAI Framework

A framework will be developed for responding to the potential for upcoming JTAI. This is so that agencies can assure themselves that they are prepared should a JTAI be called.

## Sub Groups of SCSP

### Next Steps 2020—2021

#### NEGLECT (GCP2 Implementation Group)

##### Chair—SMBC Public Health

Neglect at all levels needs to be understood and recognised across the partnership, GCP2 is one element that can support neglect. The partnership needs to ensure there is a consistent strategic multi-agency approach to ensure all staff in all agencies have the right level training and tools to tackle neglect in children.

Neglect strategy to be updated; ensuring the aims, objectives and priorities for Sandwell's approach in tackling neglect and inform the planning and actions needed to do this.

The GCP2 implementation group is only a small part of tackling neglect and need a wider group that would form 'Sandwell's Neglect' subgroup

Re-visit waves of training that were cancelled and develop new training schedule that meets the demand.  
Recruit/identify new GCP2 across the partnership.  
Revise the GCP2 implementation plan accordingly to the current COVID training disruptions

### LEARNING FROM REVIEWS

#### Chair—West Midlands Police

#### Areas for Development

- Ensuring the name of the subgroup reflects the range of reviews managed by the SCSP.
- A clear escalation process is required to prevent drift and delay and ensure reviews are published as soon as possible.
- Strengthening process links to other subgroups (QPP and L&D).
- Strengthening links with counterparts in the Safeguarding Adults Board and Domestic Homicide Reviews to ensure key themes and learning are 'joined up' and shared effectively with all professionals from strategic leads to the frontline.
- Exploration of full/part publication when parallel proceedings are ongoing and how best to disseminate learning whilst active investigations continue.

### CHILD EXPLOITATION

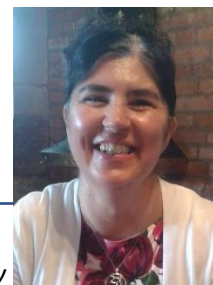
#### Chair—SCT

**Next Steps** Gather information of exploitation services across Sandwell / collate and produce diagram of resources currently established/on offer from all partner agencies across Sandwell. Review of this to take place within CEB meeting to look at any gaps/needs in exploitation.

The child's voice to be contribute to the shaping of services and for organisations to use to share child's voice within the CEB meetings.

## Lay Member Contribution

The SCSP recognises the value of including a Lay Member in its arrangements and so continues to include a Lay Member, even though not formally required and her reflection on the year is below.



*'I'm Sharon Wilson, Lay Member of Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership. My care and family support and I have worked in this field for more than thirty years. My role as a Lay Member is a way of me making a difference for children and families strategically as well as on a day to day practical level. I am also a committed member of the quality sub group (QPPA), contributing to the assurance of practice and performance. In the past year, under the new partnership, I have seen a genuine desire of practitioners to do the best for the community in Sandwell. My ambition for the partnership is to focus on the 'voice of the child', to work closely with children and families, involving them in the whole process, engaging them and empowering them to come up with solutions with practitioners. We need to avoid getting caught up in the processes which facilitate the changes. We have begun to work towards this, holding three successful 'Learning from Practice' events in Autumn 2019; Working With Parents, Early Help and Front Doors. As a partnership we need to build on and strengthen our arrangements using the findings of these events as a starting point to actually make a difference to children and families in Sandwell. As a Lay Member I bring ground level experience to the discussions. Over the past twelve months I have attended full partnership and QPPA meetings. I have also contributed to workshops, sharing front line practitioners' experiences, comments and feelings, as well as those of children and their parents/carers. I do not represent an agency; therefore, I give an independent view away from the constraints and jargon of each agency. There is a fundamental commitment to improving the lives of children in Sandwell within the team and a full agreement within the partnership that the key to all of our actions is 'the impact on children'. There have been positive changes over the past year, this needs to continue and maybe pick up pace. During the coming year, I would very much like to see the Neglect Tool training rolled out swiftly to all practitioners, to embed it's use to improve the lives of children in Sandwell. The QPPA sub group are scrutinising the audit process, to make improvements in order to maximise the learning from audits, reports, etc. Processes must be for the benefit of and reflect the needs of the children and families in Sandwell. The 'voice of the child' has to be our priority in all we do as a partnership, to give children and families in Sandwell the very best outcomes. I feel positive and am looking forward to the coming year with Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership.'*

## Early Help (Universal and Universal Plus)

Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and Voluntary Community Sector leads have led on the Universal and Universal plus aspects of Early Help over the last few years providing and facilitating workshops around how Early Help could become more effective, especially with networking and promoting Universal and Universal plus services.

It was identified that there was a lack of understanding of what universal services there are across Sandwell. Through various forums and networking events it was agreed that better intelligence and partnership working would improve the offer of services and support for children, young people and their families and the Sandwell Family Life website was created to support the knowledge of services available.

The Early Help Partnership has met regularly to see how resilience could be built at a lower level to reduce the need for families needing more targeted support. The Partnership has a co-ordinator role which is funded by the local authority.

### EHP Events

#### **May 2019 – Supporting our most Vulnerable children – let’s work together**

45 attendees in total -This event enabled members to network, make new connections, share successes and discuss how we might overcome current challenges in supporting young people and families, and members were encouraged to share their thoughts on which areas of vulnerability were the greatest concern to them in their work, and where they could share best practice or effective agency working.

#### **Oct 2019 and Dec 2019 Completing the Picture in Wednesbury (Oct) and Tipton (Dec)**

31 attendees in total - attendees were able to find out information about what services are available locally, identify gaps and build new partnerships to support them in their roles working with children, young people and families locally.

#### **Jan 2020 – Managing the Essentials: Food and Finance**

##### **78 attendees in total**

We looked at the early signs or indicators we might notice when people are facing issues/concerns with food and finance, how we might start the conversations about finding help or support and what approaches work well. Opportunity to share good practice, network with partners and spotlights from Key Partners and fill in any gaps in service provision through partnership working.



## Impact Feedback from events...



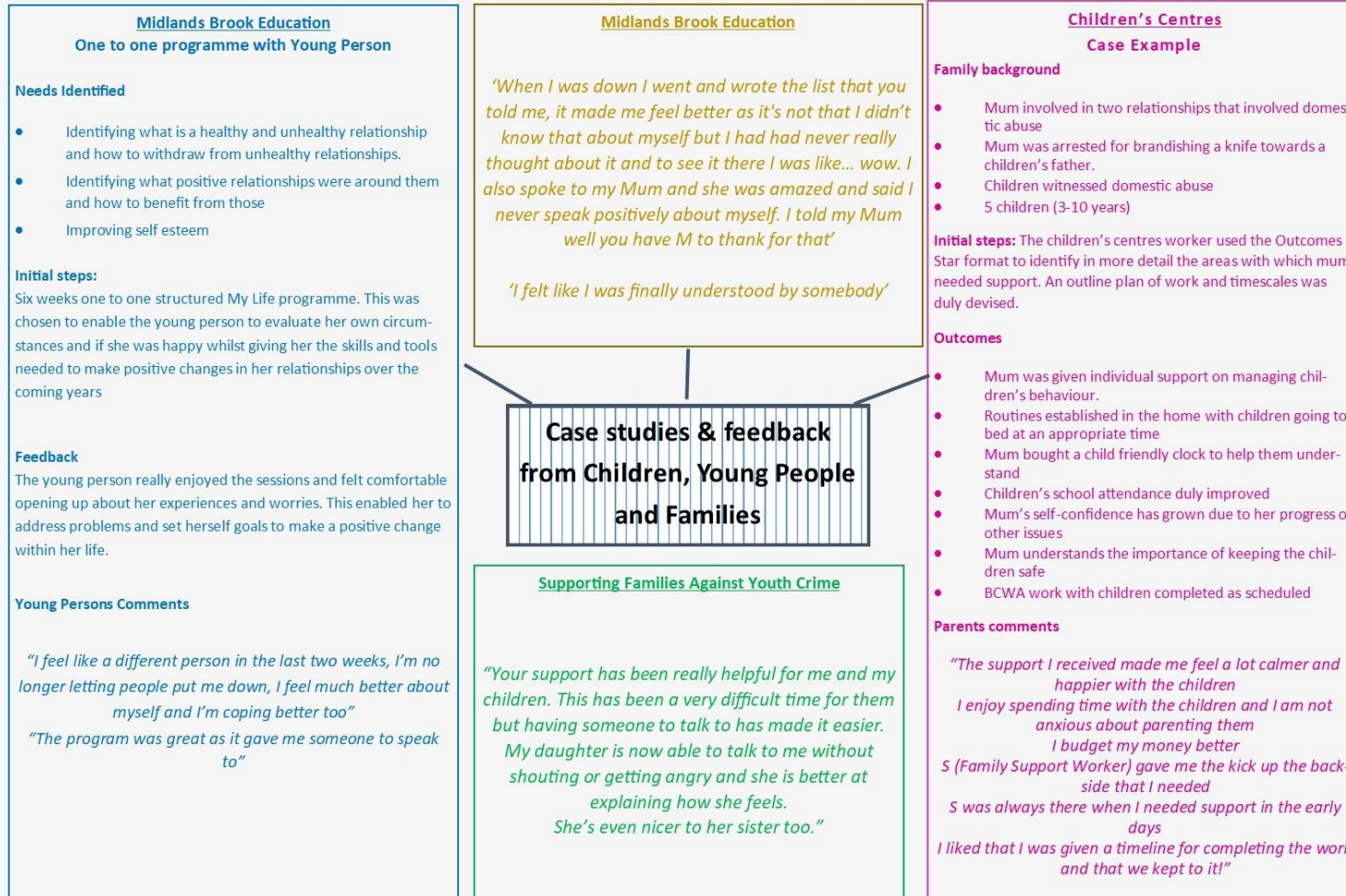
## The Early Help Partnership provided and will continue to provide:

- An opportunity to learn/share best practice
- An opportunity for networking and the development of cohesive joined-up services for children and families
- An increased knowledge of universal services by all local providers
- An increased number of local providers committed to collaborative working and sharing good practice
- An improved partnership practice by EH providers meaning more timely, appropriate and effective support for children & families
- An improved communication of ground level intelligence which would feed into strategic landscape and vice-versa
- Confidence to deliver Early Help in local communities
- An improved visibility of EH available and improved access to such support
- An increasing confidence of providers to provide higher quality & more effective support
- Understanding re. the role of ACEs, how it fits within EH and Targeted services and how the VCS and wider communities can engage with it

Children's Centres are operated by two different agencies namely Action for Children and Murray Hall Community Trust on behalf of Sandwell MBC - Centres have a wide remit for working with families. This update focuses on the Family Support element of the role.

Key activity during the year	Areas that worked well	Challenges	Key focus for 20/21
<p>Delivery of Family Support packages to a range of families within the borough at a range of intervention levels. The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides early prevention support at a single agency level to families referred by schools, nurseries, health professionals as well as families already attending universal sessions at the children's centres</li> <li>Takes on the formal lead professional role for Early Help cases</li> <li>Undertakes specific pieces of work for children &amp; young people who are subject to children in need or child protection plans.</li> </ul> <p>Delivery of parenting programmes to support the work undertaken with individual cases. The service predominantly provides Solihull Approach and Changes programmes with a small number of PPP courses. These are operated at different centres and other locations across the borough.</p>	<p>The service supported an average of 485 children per quarter</p> <p>The service took the Lead Professional role in an average of 149 new Early Help cases per quarter</p> <p>Continue to use Outcomes Star to give evidence of the impact of the intervention. Positive scores were achieved in 85% of completed cases.</p> <p>Very good working relationships with COGs as evidenced in the recent quarterly review meetings.</p> <p>During the year the service ran 26 different parenting groups.</p> <p>218 parents attended. The retention rate over the year was 71% of parents completing the course</p> <p>Predominantly courses take a mixed group approach with parents who have children subject to child protection plans, children in need plans, early help plans, single agency support or self-referral.</p>	<p>Managing demand especially across different towns</p> <p>Delays in filling staff vacancies</p> <p>Covid-19 pandemic which has led to reconsideration of how the service can be provided</p> <p>Demands for places on courses remain high but it is often difficult for parents to commit to completion of courses (especially as some courses are ten sessions long).</p> <p>Moving towards the delivery of courses virtually which has led to staff learning new skills and new approaches</p>	<p>To continue to provide services with the ever-changing backdrop of Covid 19</p> <p>Children's Centres opened safely</p> <p>Managing demand when the schools return in September 2020 (when a referral spike is expected).</p> <p>Working closely with COGs during this period.</p> <p>To build on existing virtual delivery of courses</p> <p>Seek to improve the current retention rates for parents starting courses.</p>

## Feedback from Children, Young People and Families



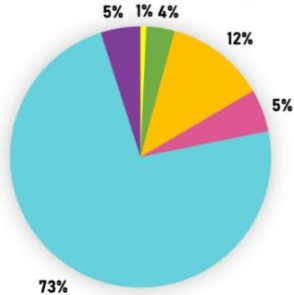
## Supporting Families Against Youth Crime (SFAYC)

Key activity during the year	Area's that worked well	Key focus for 20/21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall aim was to support 85 young people in years 6 and 7 at schools within West Bromwich &amp; Smethwick towns. This was overtaken by January 2020, and we currently stand at 151 young people referred into service.</li> <li>-</li> <li>- To provide universal sessions to 300 young people and family. Again, this has been overtaken and the current total is 1862 young people having undertaken group, classroom, or assembly sessions.</li> <li>- Aim this year is to mirror last year's numbers and continue offering support.</li> <li>- We will be running classroom and group sessions in a COVID19 secure way.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building an Identity</b> – decision to utilise “iTrust” as a more appropriate title than “Supporting Families Against Youth Crime” has helped engagement and is building positive reputation locally.</p> <p><b>Tailoring the Approach</b> –while the original funded delivery plan was adhered to, the ability to have flexibility and tweak the approach to respond to the needs/ abilities of partners was essential when providing a quality service that is taken-up by those who can benefit the most.</p> <p><b>Increasing Referral Pathway</b> – expanding reach from two schools to all those in the area is both increasing the reach of the support and maximising the scale of potential referrals. To supplement this, additional referrals were also accepted from wider agencies.</p> <p><b>Broadening Target Beneficiaries</b> –including children in need and those with Child Protection Orders enabled the support to engage an additional demographic creating wider positive links for the project and those eligible to be supported through mentoring.</p> <p><b>Managing Large Events</b> – Oct 2019 promotional event attended by over 200 young people highlighted the need for better management and co-ordination of the event, including a need for additional capacity to supervise the attendees.</p> <p><b>Delivering Universal Sessions</b> – Nov 2019 classroom session engaged 300 young people and secured strong feedback regarding the impact on those engaged. This approach was developed and continued to run until March 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To deliver mentoring support for 85 young people in year 6 and 7 within the Smethwick and West Bromwich towns.</li> <li>- To run parenting classes and information services (depending on social distancing/COVID19)</li> <li>- Continue to educate young people about the dangers of becoming involved within youth crime.</li> <li>- To develop a pool of community mentors from the voluntary sector.</li> <li>- To continue liaising with schools and parents in order to support young people.</li> <li>- To run group sessions around empowerment, conflict management and anything else schools require. (Dependant on social distancing and COVID19)</li> </ul>



## Early Interventions Youth Fund

Referrals identified by



■ MAD (Multi-Agency Decision) ■ Police ■ Social Worker ■ YOS ■ School ■ Unknown



## Creative Academies Network – Progress Update

### Progress made to date:

All participants have completed their Bronze UK Youth Achievement Award and FutureProof learning and have gained this qualification



### Intended outcomes for those who are supported by this intervention:

- Increase engagement with educational learning
- Increase positive social, emotional and cognitive capabilities
- Increase young people's interpersonal relationships
- Improve dialogue and stronger (positive) relationship with peers, families and agencies



The focus for music development has reinforced their learning of recording techniques and setting up equipment for recording and performance



Young people have shown that they can take the lead in facilitated conversations now and are also able to initiate conversation about more positive activities

Young people have continued to engage with CAN activities outside of this programme



## KRUNCH – Progress Update

### Intended outcomes for those who are supported by this intervention:

#### Education and guidance in the following areas:

- Guide young people away from potentially harmful acquaintances
- Raise mentees self-esteem and levels of confidence – drawing out unique strengths
- Encourage independent thinking – 'I can have a choice'
- Improve self-awareness of own identity and culture – seek positive relatable role models
- Encourage empathy – how do my choices affect others?
- Highlight the danger of violence and gang life – the real facts
- Create short-term actions with the young person to bring about positive change
- Encourage engagement with education and local positive activities

- In total to date:**
- 22 mentee places have completed – some were double placements given to the same child in agreement with the referrer
  - 3 still being currently worked
  - We work closely with the school which the mentee attends, sending them and any other involved professionals, weekly feedback after the sessions



## TSA Projects – Progress Update

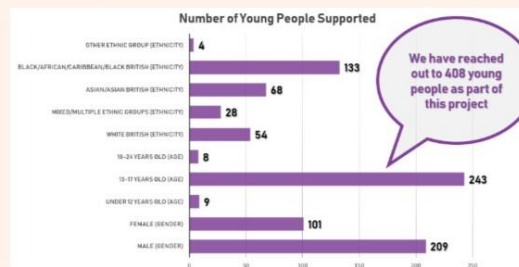
### Intended outcomes for those who are supported by this intervention:

- This program has come to an end due to COVID-19
- There is an additional funding to continue working with some of the young people, but due to social distancing and the quarantine, communication between some of the young people and our mentors has been impacted
- Once we get over the unprecedented period we will have to re-examine with whom we ended the service work with and they will need to be engaged just to reaffirm they are focused and still engaging in education and purposeful activity

There is concern that there may be some young people falling back into deviant behaviour as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown but until the lockdown is lifted the impact and how sustainable the success rate is will not be truly known

Through interventions with some young people **better relations with their parents** have been witnessed along with **improved school attendance** and **improved physical activity via sports** and the **realisation that aspirations and career dreams** can become a reality

Progress made to date:



Trust between mentees has improved as a lot more information is being shared



## Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a significant issue which has a momentous impact on children. There were almost **8000 incidents** of domestic abuse reported to police in Sandwell in 2019-20. There were 703 high risk cases of domestic abuse which were dealt with by MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in the same year. This was a **41% increase** on the previous year. **860 children lived in those families**. In 90% of cases of domestic abuse, children are in the same or the next room when an incident happens. **Children directly witness 75% of abusive incidents**. Even where children do not directly witness violence, living with coercive, controlling behaviour in the home can severely affect them.

The impact of this early trauma can last a lifetime, and may include:

- Anxiety, fear and confusion which may lead to panic attacks, depression and self-harm;
- Anger and disruptive behaviour towards authority figures;
- Harm to physical, emotional, cognitive and social development leading to behaviour problems, poor academic achievement, illness, and depression;
- Increased risk of being taken into care or of becoming a victim of child abuse

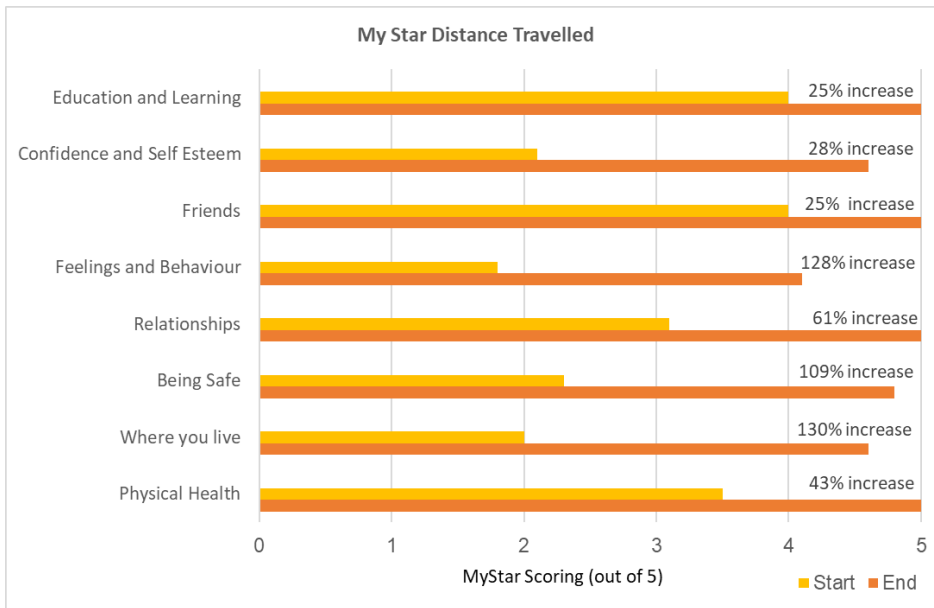
Sandwell MBC worked with Black Country Women's Aid to secure Home Office funding for 'Our Future', this initiative can help primary and secondary schools in Sandwell to build a response to domestic abuse, with support including:

Advice for staff on supporting children  
Group support programmes delivered in teams

Training for staff  
Direct one to one casework for children

BCWA's Our Futures programme has worked with 805 children and young people in Sandwell in 2019-20. More information on [Our Future](#).

## Impact



The Our Future intervention measures impact across a number of domains. The graph is from a sample of 10 clients out of 35 who had their cases closed.

## Areas for Development

The Home Office confirmed in late March 2020 that the Our Future intervention would continue to be funded in 2020-21 and plans will be developed to deliver the intervention with children & young people. This has been complicated by the Covid pandemic and the schools' closures. However, discussions will be undertaken with BCWA and partner organisations to identify how the children and young people identified by Operation Encompass as living in families where there is domestic abuse can be best supported via this intervention. Work on a Children and Domestic Abuse pathway will also be undertaken in 2020-21 to identify how support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse can be enhanced across the wider partnership.



A Children and Young People's Engagement Strategy has been developed to ensure a coordinated vision and approach to children's engagement is adopted by Sandwell Council and partner agencies. The Strategy outlines vision, principles, themes, governance structure and methodology used. Alongside this is an engagement action plan outlining all engagement work taking place in Sandwell with children and young people.

Through SHAPE the following has been completed in the last 12 months:

- The Children and Young People's Engagement Strategy has been completed with partner agencies and is accountable to the Health & Wellbeing Board and Children's Commissioning Partnership
- SHAPE Survey completed, and report produced with recommendations
- Continued engagement with SHAPE Youth Forum and gained more forum members
- Anti-bullying roadshow with 7 primary schools and 3 secondary schools
- SHAPE Our Future Conference with approximately 150 children and young people both, primary and secondary
- National Takeover Challenge of SHAPE Strategic Board and Leaders Meeting
- 2 Members of Youth Parliament elected with 2 Deputy Members of Youth Parliament and visit to House of Commons debate
- Over 3,000 young people took part in Make Your Mark national Ballot in Sandwell
- 2 Police Crime Commissioners
- Attendance at Police Youth Summit with Forum members
- As part of our online safety offer, the Clickwise Campaign, sessions for Clickwise focussed on CSE and SafetyNet Sessions focussed on dangers online for primary school pupils have been rolled out into the community where 10 community organisations accessed the sessions across the Borough.
- Held events to engage young people in positive activities through SHAPE Your Talent (approximately 250 young people took part) and SHAPE Summer Fest (attendance approximately 6000)
- SHAPE Youth Forum members contributed to the Youth Facilities review by Children's Scrutiny Board

**Impact:** The Strategy has meant a more coordinated approach to engagement and awareness of projects already taking place with children and young people it has also;

- Raised awareness of bullying issues to young people
- Raised awareness of online safety to parents in the community
- Increased confidence in young people
- Insight gained through survey consultation with young people will enable stakeholders to understand needs and address changes to be made to their service provision for children and young people

The SHAPE survey results outline the areas of improvement and recommendations have been made particularly around perception of crime, education support and mental health and wellbeing, which relevant stakeholders would need to address moving forward. A communication offer to young people is currently being worked on to establish a suitable web platform and social media offer to continue to engage with young people and inform them of services offered.



This section looks at safeguarding context from our local partners

## Sandwell Council

### Education and Skills

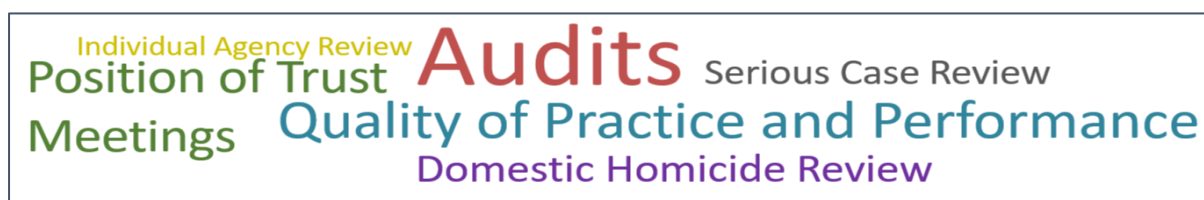
Ambitions and priorities detailed in Children’s Services business plan confirms the Education Skills, and Employment Directorate commitment to the 2030 Sandwell vision with specific contributions to the following ambitions

**\*High aspirations \* Skilled and talented workforce \*High quality education\***

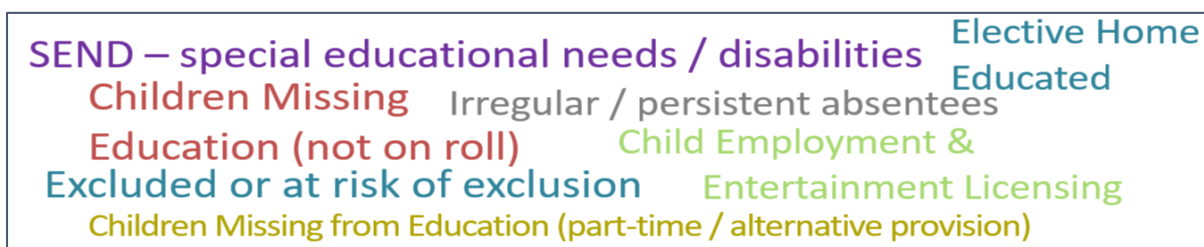
For example, Attendance & Prosecutions Service outcomes can be summarised as “**reducing lost learning, safeguarding and improving life chances for children**”.

#### What have the last 12 months looked like?

The Education & Skills Directorate makes a significant and a wide-ranging contribution to the Sandwell safeguarding agenda in a variety of service delivery areas including:



Specialist officers support early years, school age and post 16 children and young people plus those identified as belonging to certain vulnerable groups, including:



#### Section 175 / 157 audits

- In October 2019, the MASH Education Team acquired, from the Sandwell Childrens Safeguarding Partnership Business unit, the coordination of the annual Section 175/157 audit which is distributed across the education sector in Sandwell between September and July of each academic year.
- The 2019 – 20 Audit was distributed to Education providers at the beginning of December 2019 with a return request of 14 February 2020.
- The objective of the audit activity was to seek assurance that Sandwell’s schools and academies were discharging their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and in accordance with s175/157 of the Education Act 2002.
- To fulfil this obligation the LA Education Directorate utilised an online audit tool hosted by PHEW to elicit responses to a standardised set of safeguarding and wellbeing questions. This report summarises the findings from this activity.
- All schools within Sandwell are currently signed up to the tool.

In previous years the s175 assurance process had been supplemented by Audit Panels which enabled further scrutiny of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. These panels enabled discussion around safeguarding practices and recommendations on how to further enhance what may currently be in place.

- The Local authority have been unable to offer any audit panels but will instead speak directly to those schools where we need further clarification on safeguarding practice.
- Issues (e.g. full compliance with expectations of “operation encompass”) will be addressed via designated safeguarding practitioner forums, newsletters, school action plans, single agency and multi - agency training.
- Future delivery of bespoke “safeguarding practitioner training” for designated safeguarding leads in schools / education settings etc.

### **Additional Safeguarding Support Functions**

The SCSP Learning and Development sub group continues to be chaired by an education representative who is ideally situated to respond to emerging issues and development needs including the following:

- Development and contribution to the blended learning offer of the safeguarding partnership.
- Safeguarding compliance visits for schools to support preparation and completion of s175 audits are provided to Sandwell schools and academies with additional support needs

### **Corporate Parenting**

The Corporate Parenting Board is managed by the local authority and is co-chaired by the Cabinet Lead Member for children’s services and the Chair of the Care Leavers’ Forum. The Board is well supported and well-represented by partners. During 19/20 a new post was created, Corporate Parenting Co-ordinator, to provide additional development capacity and a new Strategy and Action Plan was agreed. Feedback from children and young people has confirmed the value of the Board and the commitment of the partners to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in care and care experienced young people.

## Elective Home Education (EHE)

Key activity during the year	Area's that worked well	Key focus for 20/21																		
<p>EHE numbers over the last 5 academic years have risen significantly in Sandwell.</p> <p>The table below shows numbers at academic year end:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year end</th> <th>14/15</th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> <th>17/18</th> <th>18/19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Active EHE</td> <td>142</td> <td>200</td> <td>267</td> <td>300</td> <td>334</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Statement / EHCP</td> <td>4</td> <td>7</td> <td>11</td> <td>17</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The number of active EHE cases has more than doubled since the end of the 2014/15 academic year. At present, there are no signs of a reversal in the trend demonstrated above.</p> <p><b>At the academic year end (August 2020) there were 407 EHE students in Sandwell including 25 children with an education health and care plan.</b></p> <p>User led communication with, and engagement of, our EHE community is key to the success of this local authority in meeting the support needs of home educated children and their families. We continue to engage with our EHE families, our partners and our staff to ensure that service delivery is designed and implemented with the EHE community.</p>	Year end	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	Active EHE	142	200	267	300	334	Statement / EHCP	4	7	11	17	23	<p>The EHE community requested a focus on arts and crafts and science activities.</p> <p>Arts and Crafts resource boxes were placed in libraries across the six towns. The choice of libraries used, and the contents of the boxes was also selected by the community. They have 6 representatives who communicate regularly by email or face to face to ensure the boxes are used, kept stocked and make suggestions to how they can be improved.</p> <p>A half-termly newsletter is produced by the Advisory Teacher and includes useful information for EHE families as well as asking for their advice, help and suggestions:</p> <p>Sometimes the EHE families will contribute articles and stories including 1 child who was representing young people's parliament and wanted to get more children involved so an article was created to showcase this, the child and parent helped to create the article. Key members of the community share this newsletter to ensure it reaches people through alternative mediums e.g. social media sites and EHE network groups in the community.</p> <p>The information pack was proof read by EHE families to check for jargon and edits Some EHE families support us by raising issues on social media e.g. Facebook to help raise awareness and consultation on local, regional and national issues. They also reinforce the importance of engagement with the Service helping to break down barriers.</p> <p>Please see below example of ongoing partnership working with stakeholders:</p> <p>1. SEND Team - Termly reviews ensure we have an accurate list of EHCP children being home educated or who may have returned to school. These reviews determine how we can work together to support families: The SEND team put on workshops on a regular basis for parents to access to get advice, support and information about assessments and the EHCP process.</p> <p>Library services - To further support the EHE community, the Library Service purchased specialist books and resources for addressing mental health issues in families and young people. With one library Manager, we are exploring how our services can best work together.</p>	<p>The existing Elective Home Education Advisory Teacher has managed the rising workload by making the support to families and the request for updates on learning more accessible to the EHE community. This is achieved by using community engagement activities at libraries, by being available to families via text, email and phone calls as well as allowing them to send information in via post.</p> <p>There are distinct areas of need within the EHE community such as Special Educational needs, mental and emotional wellbeing and academic outcomes and so consultation with stakeholders is attempting to address these areas. As numbers and complexity of cases grow we continue to work with partners including School Health and SEND case workers to support and sign-post to appropriate services.</p> <p>Connexions- There is an established partnership which signposts year 11 EHE children into positive post 16 transitions – see below:</p> <p>Colleges and training provisions - The EHE Advisory Teacher and Connexions have targeted support of KS3 and KS4 children by seeking to raise aspirations and academic attainment by raising the profile of 14-16 provisions and supporting young people to access settings, sustain engagement and moving on to post 16 Higher Education etc.</p>
Year end	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19															
Active EHE	142	200	267	300	334															
Statement / EHCP	4	7	11	17	23															



## *'Building on Strengths and Ensuring Impact'*

Over the course of the year we are particularly proud of our work in the following areas:

- Workforce, within the challenging context of the national and local market
- Practice Improvement / Practice Framework
- Tackling Exploitation / Gang Activity
- Continued Strengthened Partnership Working
- Embedding children and young people's 'participation' throughout the organisation

### *Practice Improvement*

We have made significant progress regarding the development and implementation of our Practice Framework and Model within the year; highlights of our work in this area is as follows:

- A comprehensive Practice Framework and Practice Model has been developed and launched.
- We have expanded our innovative Beyond Auditing offer
- We have undertaken three 'rounds' of Management Impact Workshops, with focus on social work management principles, and the effective delivery of the Practice Framework.
- We have a Signs of Safety Co-ordinator and have recently relaunched the training and support programme.
- We are working with the University of Birmingham to produce interactive courses on Relationship Based Practice, where we will be creating 360-degree virtual reality films, immersing social workers in good practice.
- With the support of DfE funding, we have created a Learning Hub, which is a dedicated central point within the Trust for all staff to access opportunities for their learning and development, and career progression. We have developed a comprehensive learning and development offer with courses suitable for the whole range of our staff.

### *Tackling Exploitation / Gang Activity*

We have developed and launched a new relationship-based approach to tackling exploitation within the last 12 months. The main focus of our new approach takes the lead from national research around wider exploitation moving away from a focus on only child sexual exploitation and to embed and understand contextual safeguarding. Broadly, our approach has been:

- The creation of the Exploitation Hub, which co-ordinates targeted disruption activity from a wider partnership perspective and robust support plans for individual young people deemed to be at highest risk of exploitation.
- The merging of Gang and Exploitation meetings and Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings, to become Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings, with dedicated co-ordination.

- The creation of the Horizons team, a team of specialists within this field, who are co-allocated and work alongside social workers to directly engage with young people identified at risk of exploitation. This service undertakes return home interviews, direct work with young people and mapping of intelligence through their work with other young people.
- Since the launch of Horizons, the scope has been widened to include 18 + year olds who are Looked After, to enable transitions to be more effectively managed.

Alongside this new team and approach, there are closer links between our youth crime work (as a wider partnership) and our social care teams, highlights of this are:

- The Supporting Families Against Youth Crime project, who work with children in transition from years 6 to 7 in both Smethwick and West Bromwich.
- The Youth Offending Service Arts Council England Silver ArtsMark, for our innovative ways in working with young people, many who have also faced exploitation.

#### *Participation Strategy*

In the last 12 months we have had a significant focus on developing our participation offer through our new strategy “How can ‘I’ help you?”, which was co-designed with young people. Within the strategy there are four sections: ‘Involve’, ‘Inform’, ‘Invest’ and ‘Influence’. These four areas capture all our planned activity around children’s participation. We see young people’s meaningful involvement as crucial in making sure our services are child focussed throughout our organisation and beyond.

Headlines from this important initiative are:

- We have developed the ‘ICONS’ programme, which is an umbrella framework for the work young people do with us to help us improve. The framework recognises some of our young people as consultants who are then equipped to work with us in the following areas:

- Young auditors (Quality Assurance)
- Recruitment (interviews and question setting)
- The training and induction of staff and foster carers
- The co-design of new services

- Young people co-designing and co-chairing Corporate Parenting Board, whereby half the sessions focus on young person’s engagement, and the other half focussing on ‘business’.
- The provision of multiple forums for young people to engage with the organisation, both regular and one-off special events. Examples of this are:

- Children in Care (Voices of Sandwell)
- Care Leavers forum
- Youth justice forum
- Housing summit
- Children and Young People’s practice audit group

## Areas for Development

- Accelerating progress through stable management and a shared vision
- Developing and implementing new working models and begin to demonstrate impact on outcomes for children and families
- Involvement of partners in improvement activities
- Manage risks as changes are made
- Evaluate progress and refine activity
- Ensure that children's needs are being consistently met
- Develop impact measures for each improvement action to measure and demonstrate progress

This continues for part of this year, with our next stage for our improvement is **'Transforming, Embedding and Adapting'**, which is to begin in October 2020:

- Ensure improvements are working and is impacting positively on children
- Taking opportunities for continuous improvement
- Quality assurance and performance is kept under review
- Making changes where impact is not demonstrated, but having the confidence to maintain an approach if it is working
- Managing risk and improvement becomes Business as Usual

The main areas of areas for development are outlined within the previous section. Our aims by the end of next year (relevant to the SCSP) are to continue building on our success this year but also:

- Develop and implement a robust Edge of Care Offer that prevents children from being placed in care should this be in their best interests.
- Continue to improve the quality, delivery and review of plans across all service areas to meet the needs of children and ensure that they are not subject to drift and delay.
- Continue to ensure that multi-agency core groups and child in need meetings are held within timescales and drive plans forward.
- Revise the LADO working model.
- Continue to develop links with adult mental health services to ensure that care leavers health needs continue to be met when they move from children's services.
- Address with partners the issue in relation to threshold application when accessing CAMHS provision resulting delays in accessing therapeutic support.
- Continue to work with partners to improve referral information to ensure that it is clear and sufficiently detailed, and that Thresholds are understood and firmly embedded.
- Ensure that staff working with disabled children are equipped with the skills to effectively communicate with children in innovative ways.

## Youth Offending Service

The YOS, through SCT provides assurance to the SCSP on the effectiveness of service delivery for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and supporting the delivery of our safeguarding duties under the auspices of the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Sandwell YOS was the first in the country to receive a Silver Arts Mark from the Arts Council to mark its journey in trying to deliver good quality arts provision.

Safer Sandwell Partnership has agreed that the YOS self-assessment combined with the following elements, will be the priorities:

- Maintaining our focus on the use of arts with young people and continuing our journey towards being a 'Creative YOS'
- Being a key contributor to the developing strategy around Prevention of Violence and Exploitation (a strategic priority for the 4 boards). Specifically, this will be understanding our role in the partnership response to exploitation and focusing on young people who are either being exploited or at risk of exploitation. This will include utilising the YJB Serious Youth Violence checklist as a driver for activity.
- Understanding patterns and longer themes behind serious offending to influence the broader partnership and prevention activity.

### **Private Fostering**

Oversight of private fostering provision within the Trust highlighted that there has been a lack of training provision across the Trust and with wider partner agencies in the last 2 years. The Trust has a responsibility to promote awareness of private fostering across partner agencies and to ensure that children who are privately fostered have their needs assessed and met. The procedures in relation to private fostering and the statement of purpose require updating.

A new Designated Manager for Private Fostering was appointed into post on March 2020, therefore information on the impact of work from the last 12 months is limited. Areas for development for 2020 – 2021 include:

- Update to statement of private fostering and private fostering procedures is required
- Process map for private fostering to be completed and made available to staff
- Training to be built in relation to private fostering and made available to all SCT staff and partner agencies
- Further promotional material to be produced including posters and social media promotion
- Update to webpages for SCT, Sandwell Council and SCSP

## The role of the LADO and the Allegations Management Process

In order to manage allegations against child care professionals, every Local Authority are required to appoint a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she/he may pose a risk to children. (Working Together 2018)

In this context, the term "professional" includes paid employees, volunteers, casual/agency staff and self-employed workers who will have contact with children as a part of their role. The LADO ensures that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

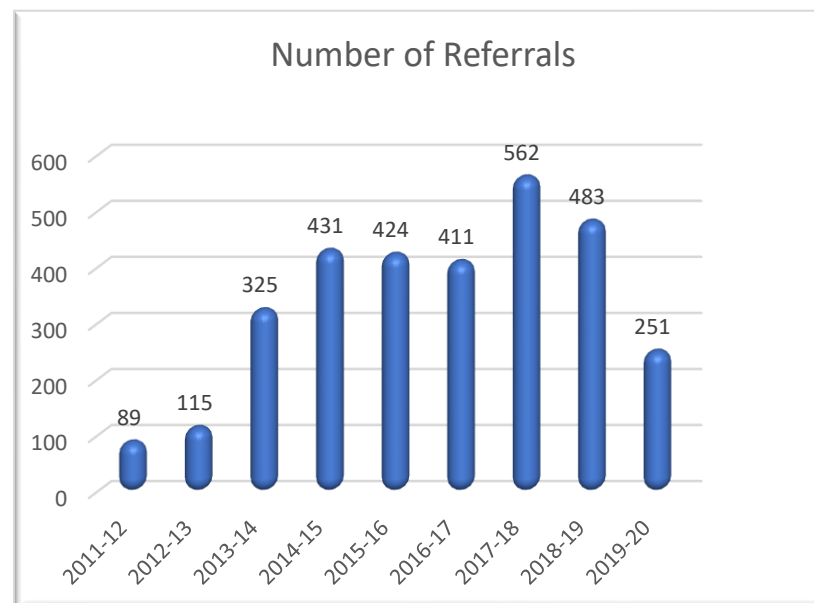
The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) role in Sandwell remains as an independent role and situated within Sandwell Children's Trust Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Unit (QASU).

This report provides an overview of available data covering the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

### Number of Referrals

The most noticeable feature for period is a decrease in the total number of Referrals to the LADO from 483 last year to 251 this year - a total reduction of 232 (48%). The significant reduction in the rate of referral has been as a result of:

- Improved ACCESS/single point of contact (SPOC) to LADO;
- Since January 2020 a more radical approach to the management of Referrals, including greater opportunity for Advice and Consultation;
- Introducing a new LADO Referral process has resulted in a sharper focus on threshold application;
- The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions/ shut down of key agencies delivering services reflect upon the descending rate of Referral during February/March 2020

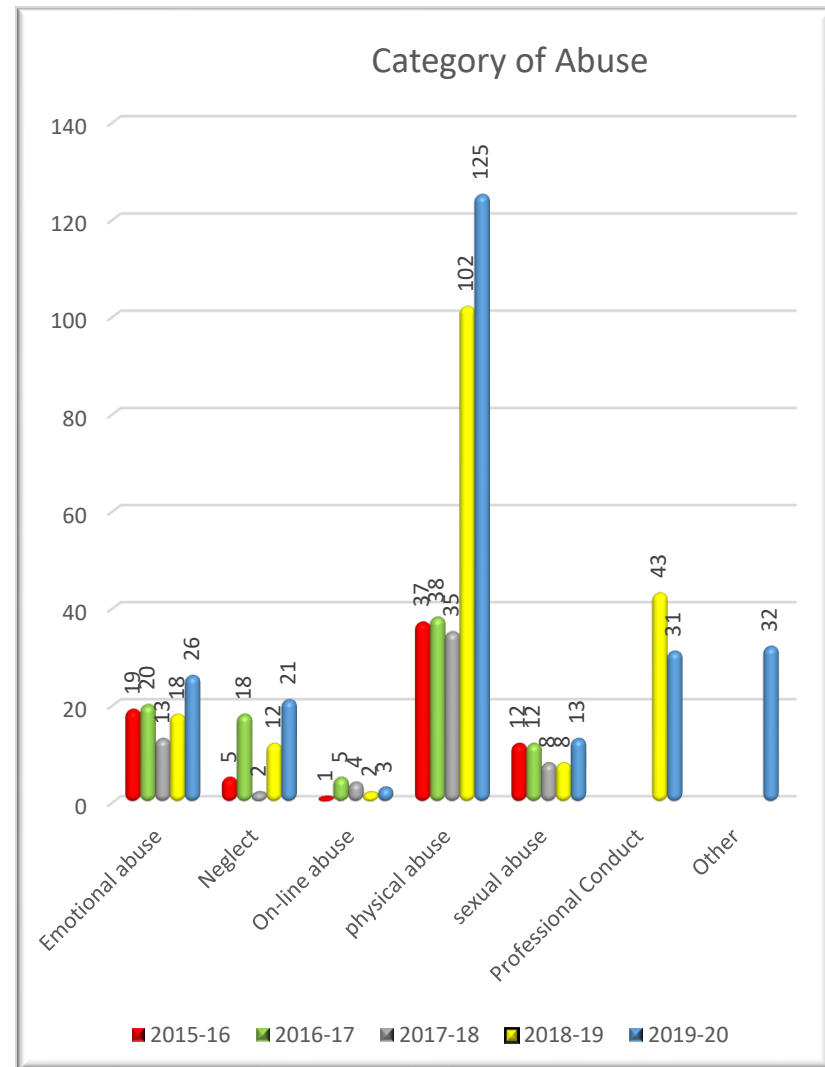




## Classification for Allegations

Behaviours are considered in the context of five categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and on-line. Issues of professional conduct are also reported as a separate category representing an increase of concern as an identifiable form of abuse.

Sandwell maintains an on-line category and the category associated with Professional Conduct, which is in addition to the national LADO Network which supports the four main categories of abuse.



## Outcome of LADO Intervention

Outcome	Conviction	Disciplinary	Dismissed	Managed by Employers Internal Policies	No Further Action	Other (Please Specify)	Performance Management	Re-Instated	Grand Total
False				2					2 (1%)
Malicious				1	1				2 (1%)
No Further Action				20	10		4		34 (19%)
Other (Please Specify)				4	1	2	2		9 (5%)
Substantiated	1	11	2	36	1	3	5	1	60 (33.3%)
Unfounded			1	32	7		2		42 (23.3%)
Unsubstantiated		3		22	4	1	1		31 (17.2%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>180</b>

The 'of intervention' over the scope of the year as noted above may span more than one reporting year.

Out of the 180 concluded cases last year 33.3% were substantiated, 23.3% and 17.2% respectively were unfounded and unsubstantiated, 19% required no further action this would suggest there is a need to provide increased consultation with new referrers to establish whether threshold is met for LADO consultation and be assured the right cases are entering the service.

## Other functions and activity of the LADO

The LADO continues to be involved in leading work with C&FBE groups notably work with Mosques and Masjids, with the LADO being a member of the Iman Group and with key strategic partner agencies (Education, Area Services, Prevent Team, etc) have addressed the need to ensure that safeguarding standards are applied.

The LADO re-established Partnership Working with the Birmingham Diocese Safeguarding Lead in Spring of 2019. It is intended for this work to continue.

The LADO has facilitated a number of training events during this reporting period which includes:

- Session to Fostering Service staff as a mini LADO Workshop;
- LADO Workshop delivered to Day Nursery staff, Residential staff and Foster Carers;
- Workshops delivered to Schools on training/inset days;
- LADO presence at Secondary and Primary Headteachers Forum providing an overview of the LADO Service;
- Attendance at the National Governors Association meeting providing an overview of the Service to Chair of Governors.

The LADO Service has been subject to change over the past four months with the permanent, long serving LADO Manager being replaced by a temporary Manager and then, latterly, a re-deployed Manager – all experienced in the management of Children's Service and LADO work. In this respect there is now an opportunity to both 'Review and Refresh' the Service to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and co-terminus with both national and local requirements.

The matters detailed below represent some of the key issues that have been identified which have been reported in no particular order of priority.

The introduction of a 'lockdown' associated with the national coronavirus pandemic was just beginning to have an impact upon the service delivery capability of the LADO Service at the end of the reporting year. Attention to recovery with potential new ways of working will be an integral part of the 'Review and Refresh' process for the development of the LADO Service.

## Health



*Sandwell and West Birmingham Safeguarding Team, in collaboration with young care leavers and partners, launched the Mobile APP.*

Sandwell and West Birmingham as part of Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Groups (BCWB CCG's) continues to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding children and adults and in respect of all the services they commission.

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights enabling them to be free from harm, abuse and neglect. As a key statutory partner, this principle is implicit in all aspects of our work. As the footprint of BCWB CCG's covers both Sandwell and Birmingham Local Authorities, there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the Birmingham Safeguarding Team within Birmingham and Solihull CCG (BSOL CCG). The MOU secures services from Designated Professionals for safeguarding children and adults, including Looked After Children for all West Birmingham member practices.

In line with Statutory Guidance Sandwell and West Birmingham has in place Designated Professionals who are clinical experts, strategic leaders and a vital source of safeguarding advice and expertise for all relevant organisations and agencies.

Designated Nurses for Safeguarding, Looked After Children and Child Deaths are directly employed whilst the Designated Doctor functions for Safeguarding, Looked After Children and Child Deaths are commissioned from Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust via a service level agreement. Designated Professionals are active members of Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership and relevant Sub-groups.

Safeguarding is firmly embedded within the wider duties of all organisations across the health system but there is a distinction between providers' responsibilities to provide safe high-quality care and support commissioners' responsibilities to assure themselves of the safety and effectiveness of the services they have commissioned.

*The IDVA service and Domestic Abuse team received recognition this year via the SWBT Star Awards after being nominated by the ED Matron for 'Clinical Team of the Year (Children) Award'*



## Health Overview

	The Last 12 Months	Impact	Areas for Development
<p><b>Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs</b></p>	<p>Sandwell and West Birmingham Primary Care Safeguarding Lead had devised a self-assessment assurance tool to include adults at risk. This tool was developed to help practices consolidate and improve practice, and is part of an on-going organisational development and risk assessment. The original assurance Toolkit was presented at both Sandwell and Birmingham Local Medical Committees to secure endorsement throughout Sandwell and West Birmingham member practices. This is now in the process of being updated to reflect the revised Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Child Safeguarding Toolkit (2017) to help ensure that member practices safeguard the children and young people in their care.</p> <p>Sandwell and West Birmingham Safeguarding Team continue to deliver Level 3 safeguarding training to Primary Care and CCG staff as per statutory guidance (Intercollegiate Document 2019). This training is aimed to enhance practitioner's knowledge on contextual safeguarding and lessons learnt from statutory and multi-agency reviews.</p>	<p>Developments within the team have seen the commissioning of a bespoke safeguarding training programme for NHS 111 services and work is underway nationally to evaluate the effectiveness of this programme. In addition, a domestic abuse pilot service offering support and advocacy for practice staff and patients attending the local walk in centre has been commissioned.</p> <p>96% of Sandwell General Practices are now engaged with Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme, which is a primary care domestic abuse training and advocacy programme. Since the introduction of IRIS, referrals into Black Country Women's Aid have increased significantly from approximately 2 referrals in 2014, to 120 for the year 2019/2020.</p> <p>The CCG continues to promote the Dog, Duck and Cat Resources to partner agencies, practitioners and families. All the resources are available free of charge online in the format of flip-books, New resources were made available in 2019-20 including a bereavement story for children. <a href="http://www.dogduckandcat.co.uk">www.dogduckandcat.co.uk</a></p> <p>The Designated Nurse for Child Death continued to deliver training to frontline health practitioners in Sandwell during 2019-20, using anonymised case studies to support learning from our child deaths, to train nurses in other areas in rapid response to sudden death procedures; and to provide clinical supervision to other child death nurses in the region.</p> <p>On the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 following a successful pilot the Sandwell and West Birmingham Safeguarding Team, in collaboration with young care leavers and partners, launched the Mobile APP, which replaces the paper version of the care leavers 'health passport'. The Mobile App is a user-friendly health information store for care leavers to keep important information about health, appointments, health history, immunisations in one secure place, making it easily accessible at the click of a button. Created for young people leaving care the App will give instant access to their health information.</p>	<p>The Covid-19 Pandemic led to an unprecedented demand for health services, with NHS staff being required to work under exceptional circumstances and some staff being redeployed outside of their usual sphere of practice to support the delivery of patient services. To ensure the continuity of business critical arrangements to enable staff to focus on the statutory safeguarding functions agreed as a local priority, a system wide approach was implemented across Black Country and West Birmingham. Virtual meetings were established with our Designated Colleagues, Named Professionals and Multi-Agency Partners to agree action plans to ensure as a system / partnership, vulnerable children and families were safeguarded. Regional and NHSE national leads meetings were accessed to share best practice and NHSE Guidance COVID-19 Prioritisation within Community Health Services was amended as it was updated.</p> <p>The Sandwell Safeguarding Health Partnership which is a reference group to the SCSB has met virtually at 4 weekly intervals to review the health contingency plans, address business critical issues and share restoration and reset plans across the health economy in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>A Management of change programme for the Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs (Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and West Birmingham), will be undertaken over the coming months and safeguarding best practice shared across the system.</p>
<p><b>BCH NHS Trust</b></p>	<p>Engagement and discussion sessions continued to be delivered by the Safeguarding Team (adult and children's practitioner) to promote the "Think Family" Agenda as well as share best practice and lessons learned from various case reviews, not just pertinent to the Sandwell area. Formal safeguarding supervision for supportive and assured safeguarding practices and as required escalation to partner agencies was carried out.</p>	<p>Trust services took part in relevant reviews and safeguarding sessions, which allowed for continued and improved partner working. The importance of safeguarding was recognised by the CCG who supported additional resource in the form of a Safeguarding Practitioner post. This role supports the Think Family model approach to safeguarding as well as adding additional resilience and expertise into MASH and to support the Named Nurse.</p>	<p>As well as accessing mandatory safeguarding training in the Trust staff were encouraged to access multi-agency training sessions that facilitated sharing of experience and knowledge across wider partnerships. All training is set against the Intercollegiate Guidance documents, feedback was reviewed and sessions updated accordingly. Staff have been encouraged to make sure that the voice of the child is asked when possible and appropriate and this is reflected on the Multi Agency Referral Forms that have been submitted.</p>



## Health Overview

	The Last 12 Months	Impact	Areas for Development
<p><b>Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust</b></p>	<p>We have worked closely with Unity developers (electronic patient record) introduced in September 2019 to ensure that the Child Protection Information Sharing (CP-IS) Project is embedded within the system for our Emergency Departments (ED) and maternity services. Regular audit has demonstrated compliance with checking the Summary Care Record (SCR) for information to determine whether a child has a child protection plan in place, is a looked after child or a pregnant mother has an unborn child protection plan in place.</p> <p>Sandwell continues to have the highest number of looked after children across the Black Country at approximately 866 and the looked after children health team have successfully facilitated and completed 88% of statutory review health assessments. This has been as a result of sound partnership working with Sandwell Children's Trust and robust monitoring of completed BAAF forms to ensure this is timely. Due to good partnership working we have seen a marked improvement in the timely transfer of completed BAAF forms from social care which had enabled a positive outcome and compliance with the statutory health requirements for this vulnerable group. The team continue to exceed the national average of 85% year on year and demonstrates their commitment to the health needs of this group.</p> <p>We deliver a rolling programme of audit which includes for example a review of the child exploitation flag the team administrator adds to the child's record to ensure practitioners are intervening to support young people and having appropriate conversation and follow up with social workers; in the main audit has demonstrated appropriate onward referral is made; where this has not happened the safeguarding children team will speak to the practitioner. Other audits include review of completed MARF's for quality and reason; and domestic abuse routine enquiry in maternity services as a result of recent DHR recommendations.</p>	<p>Our ED Domestic Abuse Advocacy Partnership Project with Black Country Women's Aid continues to be a positive venture and has demonstrated by having the ED IDVA service increases accessibility for victims to access specialist domestic violence and abuse support. NHS England are about to release a four year plan for Domestic Abuse which supports the roll out of IDVA's across all NHS services which highlights how innovative and trailblazing SWBT were in supporting the introduction of the project in 2015. We continue to receive part funding from Safer Sandwell Partnership with our Chief Executive and Chief Nurse supporting SWBT funding for the remaining cost of the project. The longer term plan is to make the IDVA service substantive within SWBT during the coming year.</p> <p>Data during 2019/20 has demonstrated that the service is reaching larger numbers of the Pakistani and Eastern European communities than community services do. During Quarter 4 48% of victims were unknown to Black Country Women's Aid service. Evaluation of the project over the year has demonstrated positive outcomes for victims referred to the service with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% saying they now knew where to go for support</li> <li>• 94% felt less scared</li> <li>• 78% felt better about their overall situation</li> </ul> <p>Our domestic abuse nurse team continue to review cases where there has been a domestic abuse incident within Sandwell Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure both victims and children are safe. The team has worked with a number of key departments (e.g. sexual health, paediatric wards and occupational health) to raise awareness of domestic abuse, routine enquiry and to promote the hospital as Domestic Abuse Aware. To celebrate October Domestic Abuse Awareness Month the team arranged a conference to share key findings and learning; this was well attended with a positive evaluation.</p>	<p>Priorities for 2020/21 will continue to focus on CP-IS integration with our electronic patient record with a view to move towards an automatic integration of CP-IS information which will negate staff having to access a separate system for this information.</p> <p>We will work closely with maternity to ensure FGM-IS compliance and deliver a range of bespoke training in light of DHR recommendations and domestic abuse.</p> <p>We will continue to evaluate the IDVA project and work towards making the IDVA service substantive within SWBT.</p> <p>In light of COVID-19 and move towards virtual working we will continue to evaluate our current training package and develop this further to facilitate other training packages which staff can access via this platform; we will continue to monitor impact and compliance with training.</p>
<p><b>West Midlands Ambulance Service</b></p>	<p>We as a trust were approached by several authorities who wanted to look a streamlining our referral process. This led to a number of deep dive sample audits into both our adult and child referral process. Several deep dive audits have been completed around the region and the learning shared. It was good to focus and share the positive results that have come out of these audits.</p>	<p>All audits came out with over 70% accuracy and the learning has been shared throughout the trust. We recognise there is still work to be done but welcome working collaboratively with all areas we cover to deliver a consistent approach to pre hospital safeguarding.</p>	<p>As a trust we provide yearly mandatory updates and as part of the training planned for 2019/2020 all Paramedics will be trained in level 3 safeguarding. We look to have this completed by 2021 and will include our safeguarding staff in both our Emergency Operations Centre and Integrated Urgent Care Centre.</p> <p>It is also important to recognise that we have seen a large rise in both referrals and reviews associated with children. We will look at ways of working more smartly and collaboratively with all agencies that we work with to deal with the increasing demand. We are also working on moving our referral process to an electronic system that can be completed and sent from scene by the clinician.</p>

## Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

CDOP is a statutory requirement under Working Together 2018. The purpose of CDOP is to review the interventions leading up to and surrounding all child deaths and ensure that any potential learning from those deaths is implemented effectively by partners. The multi-agency panel members are senior representatives, all experts within their own fields, and have the ability to influence changes within their respective organisations. They have responsibility to ensure that the work of CDOP is disseminated throughout their agencies and information is shared with frontline staff.

Within the Black Country these reviews will be undertaken by both the North (Wolverhampton and Walsall) and the South (Sandwell and Dudley) panels, and report to the BCCDOP Strategic Group, which will identify actions and recommendations for strategic partners.

### IMPACT

84 deaths were reviewed in total across the Black Country. 33% of these deaths were identified as having modifiable factors.

*Modifiable factors are those factors which may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally or nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths.*

These were identified as:

Smoking during pregnancy or smoking in the household; high BMI of expectant mums; consanguinity; alcohol misuse; late booking of pregnancy; sharing of information; safe sleeping practices; poor housing conditions.

Local interventions:

Newsletters are disseminated following every panel outlining learning

Hospitals across the Black Country are all hoping to be 'smoke free' by the end of 2020 and support strategies for expectant mums who are smokers are being implemented through Local Maternity Systems.

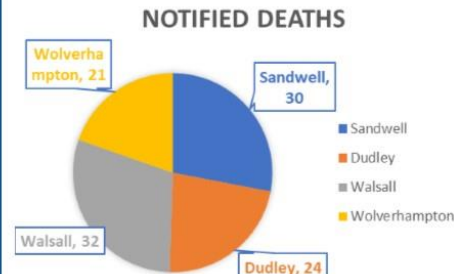
Information sharing meetings are asked to ensure the right people are sitting around the table.



There have been 14 CDOP meetings held between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020. The last meeting held was a Black Country Operational CDOP where child deaths from across the Black Country were reviewed.

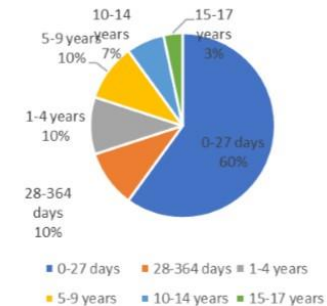
In total, 84 deaths were reviewed from across all four areas, 28 of these were Sandwell resident child deaths.

There were 107 child deaths reported in the last child deaths in the Black Country, 30 of these were Sandwell residents.



As can be seen, 60% of the deaths in Sandwell occurred in the 0-27 day age group which is higher than the national average for this age group which is 42%.

7 deaths notified in this timescale in Sandwell were unexpected and a Joint Agency Response was carried out.



### Next Steps

The Black Country Strategic Child Death Partnership will be auditing processes across the Black Country to assure Child Death Review partners that agencies and hospitals are compliant with legislation.

The Key worker element of the process will be developed and strengthened

Additional support and training will be offered to professionals working within the child death arena

Dissemination of learning will be explored further

There will be one Black Country CDOP reviewing deaths at either a Neonatal panel or Paediatric panel.



## West Midlands Police

In 2019 the Public Protection Unit, which includes the Child Abuse Investigation Team, underwent a structural change. These changes were driven in part by the increase in demand on WMP in relation to recorded child abuse offences which had steadily increased year on year with the advent of MASH. This change resulted in the formation of a MAET (multi agency enquiry team) aligned to the MASH in order to conduct joint visits with social workers and other partners and ensure a quicker and more joined up response to many of the MASH referrals which met this threshold. This has resulted in closer partnership working and a more efficient response to safeguarding concerns where there may also be a crime.

This same restructure resulted in a Complex Child Abuse investigation team being formed to investigate complex CSE matters, multiple victim/offender abuse and neglect matters, and any suspicious child deaths or serious injury to children which may result in a CSPR. This decision was taken in order to further professionalise these specific criminal investigations and allow for pooling of resources where required. The Sandwell CSE co-ordinator also now works directly for this team to ensure there is join up between the exploitation hub and any significant CSE investigations of note.

WMP run a Police Cadets programme which launched in 2017. This involves police cadet leader volunteers – from within the police and the wider community – provide a cadet service to young people aged 13-17 which is based in schools. This is a youth services designed to provide young people with valuable life skills and an appreciation for public services. In 2019/20 in Sandwell launched their local cadet programme in 2 schools, and is supported by both volunteers and now Police Community Support Officers from the local policing teams in Sandwell. There are plans to expand into a third school.

### Impact

There has been a notable change in the profile for recorded exploitation offences in Sandwell. CSE referrals, pathways, and processes have been well established for some years but 2019/20 saw a commitment by all partners to improve the way in which we identify other forms of exploitation and safeguard children who are at risk of these crimes, such as County Lines related offences.

Most recorded child abuse related crimes increased in 2019/20, partly due to greater identification of such offences and the referrals through the MASH, however CSE related offences and victims actually reduced. In 2018/19 there were 34 CSE related crimes recorded by WMP and 94 non-crime incidents – usually as a result of a young person being identified as at risk of CSE as opposed to a victim of CSE. In 2019/20 the recorded crime reduced to 19 and the non-crime incidents reduced to 67.

WMP introduced a new special interest marker for county lines related offences in 2019, so there is no similar data to compare against in the previous year. In 2019/20 there were 19 crimes recorded in Sandwell linked to Country Lines offending, and 32 non-crime incidents where potential victims were identified and safeguarded by partners. The number of NRM (national referral mechanism) referrals increased in Sandwell in 2019/20. These referrals are as a result of front-line agencies recognises a young person is at risk of trafficking and making a notification which is also recorded by WMP as a trafficking crime. In 2018/19 there were 7 crimes recorded linked to NRM referrals, whereas in 2019/20 there were 32. This shows a huge increase in the uptake of this safeguarding mechanism and recognition of these young people as victims even when they may initially have come to police attention as suspects.

The Youth Justice Partnership board is chaired by WMP and attended by a number of senior partners from across a variety of agencies. This process was inspected by HMICFRPS in 2019/20 and given a rating of Good.

## Summary for the Period

In line with Working Together 2018 for safeguarding partnerships, this report has demonstrated that the SCSP is undertaking the required statutory functions, with lots going on in many areas. However, there is also visible evidence of those areas for both further improvements and/or development.

This report demonstrates that together the members of SCSP takes seriously their responsibilities for Sandwell's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including the required commitment to strengthen the visibility of the partnership. This we have started to pave the way for via the agreement from each SCSP member to take forward and lead on a themed strand of work as recommended from the feedback of the independent scrutineer.

Through our monitoring processes via the subgroups and partner's individual contributions included in this report, we can see that in most cases, partners have implemented actions arising from reviews and audits in a timely manner, and there has been a continued willingness to engage, learn and embed recommendations into practice, and ultimately improve outcomes for the children of Sandwell.

Through our ambition to continue to consistently monitor the multi-agency safeguarding systems, frontline practice, and the impact and outcomes for children and young people, as outline in working together, the audit programme introduced will be maintained and act as a fundamental process to elevate those areas requiring independent scrutiny, including strengthening the processes for undertaking child safeguarding practice reviews. These will lead much of the work in the coming year.

Finally, from our own lens, we are aware that more needs to be done in terms of raising our profile and improving our connectivity with, practitioners, children, young people, families and the wider and diverse community, in an attempt of making safeguarding everybody's business, this will be progressed in the coming year.

## SCSP Priorities 2020-2021

- Undertakes the biennial Section 11 & 175 audits,
- Monitor effectiveness of local services through the performance framework
- Seek the views and feedback from children/young people as a means of assuring ourselves about key issues in the safeguarding system.
- Neglect - Identify and Reduce the Impact of Neglect on Children and Young People, including further embedding the standardised NSPCC Grade Care Profile (GCP2) approaches for all partners across the partnership to utilise better identify and respond to child neglect
- Exploitation - Tackling Child Exploitation and understanding emerging themes of abuse to better protect children, young people at risk from being exploited and ensure that victims are well supported.
- Strengthen the CSPR Processes, including celebrating areas of good practice and ensuring that areas of concern receives swift responses, and learning is disseminated to front line practitioners, and tested for impact.
- Further embed the safeguarding arrangements – creating opportunities to communicate and engage with those that use and work in our services to ensure that safeguarding systems are robust and effective
- The SCSP continue to monitor and scrutinise progress against these priorities through its subgroups and a programme of scrutineering activity by and independent scrutineer, whose role and function will be to provide external challenge to the business of the partnership, its meetings, subgroups and priorities.