



CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP  
INTERIM REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2020 – MARCH 2021

# 1.INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

Welcome to the children's partnership six-month report which covers the period of September 2020 to March 2021. This is the second report produced by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership. This report will focus on the responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and sets out the key areas of work undertaken during this period.

The safeguarding responsibility is shared between the three statutory partners; Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG). The three partners are committed to a shared and equitable leadership of the safeguarding children arrangements, as set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#).

This report details activity for the period of September 2020 until March 2021 and covers much of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period.

We recognise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and celebrate the work of our partners under extremely challenging conditions. We acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure children in Bristol can thrive and grow from pre-birth to adulthood. We want to ensure that all children stay safe and free from abuse in all forms and will continue our commitment to working across agency boundaries.

In line with statutory requirements and best practice this annual report will be shared with:

- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
- The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care
- The Chief Executive, Bristol City Council
- Director of Children and Safer Communities, Bristol City Council
- Director of Adult Social Services, Bristol City Council
- The Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Keeping Communities Safe Delivery Group
- The Keeping Adults Safe Delivery Group

This report has been authorised by Laura Gajdus, Business and Partnership Manager. The report was approved by the Executive group on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and published on the partnership website in March 2022.

Should you require the report in any other format to support accessibility, please contact business unit on [KBSP@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:KBSP@bristol.gov.uk).

## 2. OUR PRIORITIES

The partnership revised the strategic plan in August 2020 and we believe the delivery of these five priorities over the next three years will improve outcomes for people of Bristol.

				
<p><b>End-to-end excellence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Partnership that is equipped to seamlessly meet the ever-changing needs of our communities</li> <li>• Partnership of peer support and peer scrutiny</li> <li>• Innovative quality improvement partnered with research</li> <li>• Adaptive partnership leadership responsive to the needs of our communities</li> <li>• Ensure the workforce is equip to support adults with disability and mental health appropriately where abuse and neglect is suspected</li> </ul>	<p><b>Citizens of Bristol are our equal partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring individuals and their choices remain the centre of all work</li> <li>• Increase and find different ways to work with citizens of Bristol to improve our policies, systems and processes</li> <li>• Identify and Amplify seldom heard voices in decision-making</li> <li>• Build a culturally competent workforce across the city</li> <li>• Support the communities within Bristol to create their own solutions by providing information, tools and other resources they may need</li> </ul>	<p><b>Domestic Abuse response across the life-course</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission and deliver domestic abuse services which are trauma-informed and recovery-focused</li> <li>• Proactive in our outreach to victims and perpetrators</li> <li>• Reducing demands for services as children live free from domestic abuse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seamless transitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated out of hours and crisis services for children and families</li> <li>• Co-located Adult Safeguarding Front Door</li> <li>• Develop Transitional Safeguarding Approach for 16-25s</li> <li>• Use of new technologies for safeguarding and partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safe in our communities - Safe in our homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Contextual safeguarding pathways to be developed</li> <li>• To prevent and divert people away from street violence and organised crime in order to reduce reoffending</li> <li>• Create conditions for quality domiciliary and residential care provision to flourish in the city</li> <li>• A consistent approach is applied to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination</li> </ul>
<p>Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership is committed to delivering inclusive and accessible services for all citizens of Bristol in a way that respects individual need and does not exclude anyone.</p>				

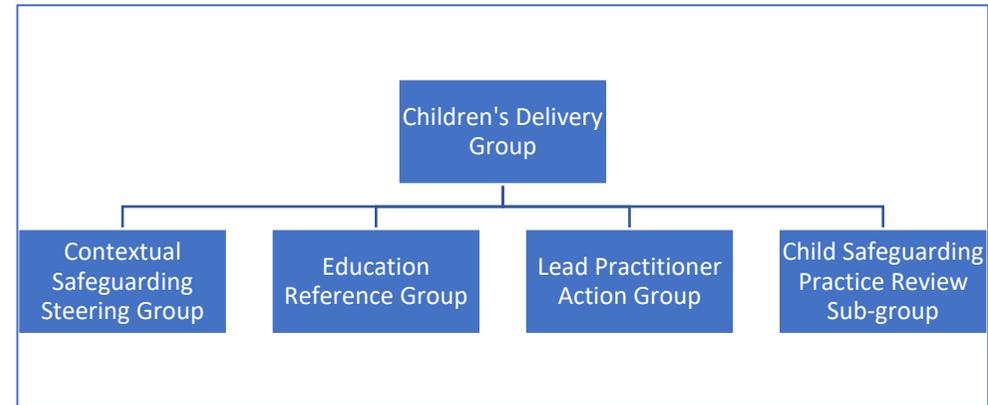
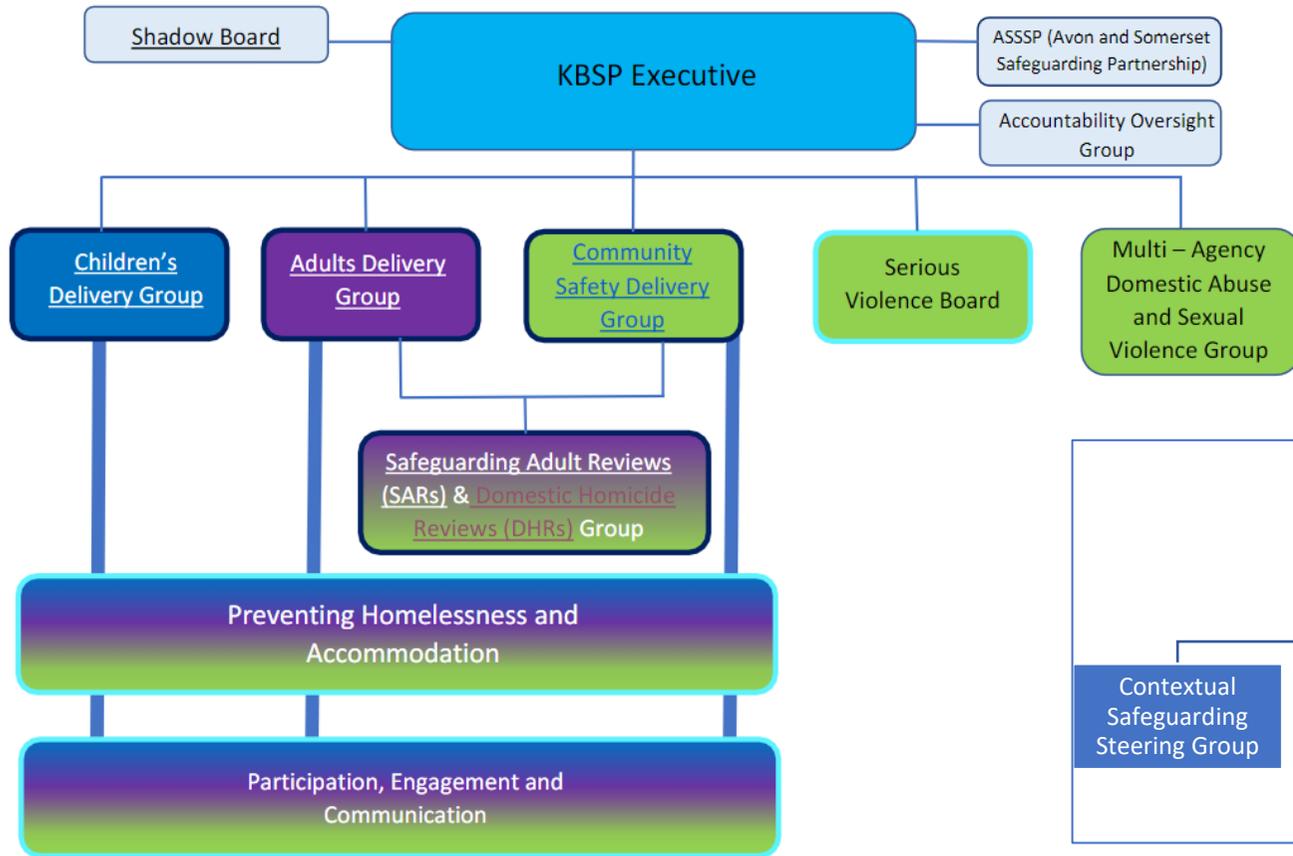
### 3.KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In the 6-month period the children partnership has:

- Coordinated £500,000 See Hear Respond Investment in early help services for children during the pandemic
- Rolled out the ICON program across universal health services for protection of under 1s
- Commissioned an out of hours resource for children affected by serious violence and CCE
- Developed a data scorecard report with the Keeping Children Safe Delivery Group
- Continued to develop and implement a contextual safeguarding system as part of the Contextual Safeguarding Scale-up Project
- The Keeping Children Safe Delivery Group contributed to the Drugs and Alcohol Strategy which is due for publication later in 2022
- The Shadow Board welcomed new members from Young Carers, Freedom LGBTQ+, Youth Council and Youth Parliament. The Shadow Board attended an Executive meeting to update members about the work they are doing.
- The Shadow Board were involved with recruitment in the partnership, a secret shopping and re-branding of First Response, the Are You OK campaign.
- Preventing Youth Homelessness – work was undertaken on looking at housing pathways for young people’s homelessness and prevention through the dedicated group of partners

# 4. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The structure for Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership is shown below on the left. The diagram on the right shows the additional sub-groups which report directly to the Children’s Delivery Group.



## 5. LEARNING FROM STATUTORY REVIEWS

The children's partnership submitted three rapid reviews to the National Child Practice Review Panel between September 2020 – March 2021. Two of the rapid reviews did not progress to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR). The third rapid review was incorporated into the Cross-Border Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Child Criminal Exploitation Thematic CSPR that was ongoing during this period across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset. This CSPR was commissioned following a series of rapid reviews undertaken between 2018 and 2021, in respect of eight young people, six of whom were from Bristol, impacted by peer-on-peer abuse and knife crime.

All agencies have shown a significant commitment to rapid reviews which has allowed the partnership to complete all reviews in this period within the 15-day timescale. This allowed the partnership to identify learning swiftly following serious safeguarding incidents. The reviews have identified key areas for consideration, learning and action for the local safeguarding system as set out below.

### **Rapid Review 1 – February 2021**

This review involved the non-accidental injury of an infant. There were concerns about domestic abuse in the parent's relationship and perinatal mental health, both parents were care-experienced.

A number of findings were identified such as:

- There was a lack of clarity about mental health services available in Bristol during the peri-natal period
- When working with parents with borderline personality disorder who are presenting as well during the perinatal period, it is important to talk to them and other professionals about personal indicators that their mental health may be worsening which can be built into safety plans.
- Information about triage decisions were not shared across the peri-mental health services which limited oversight of decision-making and any future consultation that was sought by other professionals.
- There was good work by social worker and personal advisor around domestic abuse and safety planning
- Pre-birth parenting assessments were not completed within timescales and were superficial. They missed information from the police, the GP and the mother's home local authority.
- Information about the child in need plan was not recorded in the GP records.

In response to this rapid review, the partnership took the following actions:



Promoted peri-natal mental health guidance to social workers and provided details of the different perinatal mental health team in the city



The training team worked with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Trust to deliver a webinar on their peri-natal mental health service



An audit of pre-birth assessments was carried out in respect of timeliness and coordination of multi-agency meetings and plans with action plan to respond if these issues are replicated



A new specialist offer for care leavers in preparation for parenthood has been developed in partnership with children's centres



A review was completed to check that GPs are alerted to new Child In Need and Child Protection plans on Connecting Care (patient record system)



Bristol City Council continued to develop safety planning in respect of different forms of harm including sexual harm from a parent



North Bristol Trust and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Trust are developing a recording system that are used by both AWP and midwifery which documents the triage process, the referral information, the discussion had, the outcome of the decision with a clear rationale analysis and plan

## **Rapid Review 2 – February 2021**

This review included a mother who sadly died because of a pulmonary embolism which resulted in the loss of her baby. This was an unplanned pregnancy, and no services were aware of her or her health needs. The reason why the mother was not able to speak to services about her pregnancy will never be fully understood or known.

In the first month of 2021, there were four births of babies in the Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire area where services had not been aware of the pregnancy. This is a significant increase and correlates to pregnancies begun during covid-19 restrictions.

The review therefore considered wider trends and patterns and information around information for pregnant women and new parents during the Covid19 pandemic.

A number of findings were identified such as:

- There was a significant reduction in young people accessing sexual health services during the lockdowns.
- There were increased barriers to people seeking confidential pregnancy advice due to the lockdown restrictions and the level of family and community awareness of their movements.
- There were less opportunities for informal discussions about health and pregnancy with people outside of their household i.e., friends and community sources of support.
- Sexual health services continued to run but mainly from central clinics which required most people to travel. Given the limited reasons for being out in the community, there may have been concerns about being identified by others whilst accessing the services.
- Health settings may have been seen as an area of increased risk in relation to COVID-19 which may reduce their confidence in accessing services.
- Young people were less able to access services offered within education as the majority were not attending physical school settings.

In response to this rapid review, the partnership took the following actions:



Development of a KBSP communication plan under the “Are you OK?” campaign to promote that pregnancy advisory services, GPs, Brook and Unity Sexual Health were open and available to access during the national lockdown



Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group developed a communications strategy to reassure women that sexual health and pregnancy advisory services were open and safe to visit during the pandemic



A briefing was made to the “We are Bristol” Helpline to ensure that consistent messaging was given to the public about access to confidential pregnancy and sexual health services



PHSE/RHSE task and finish group looked at what was offered by schools and what young people are saying they want and need in the curriculum. Public Health raised the profile of Brook Services within schools and school nursing services

### **Rapid Review 3 – March 2021**

This rapid review followed a serious assault on a young person, this incident was related to the ongoing retaliation, child criminal exploitation and serious youth violence involving young people and young adults in the city.

A number of findings were identified such as:

- Safety planning conversations were collaborative and repeated and there was good practice in the quality of the conversations about the young person's experiences of violence in the community.
- There was evidence of taking a contextual approach to the young person's new peer group in their pilot of a neighbourhood assessment and contextual safeguarding plan around his friends' high support accommodation.
- Assumptions were made about family relationships which showed gaps of understanding across the partnership about the role of parents in a child's life when they are a child in care, particularly when they are in care on s20.
- The Weapon in Schools pathway could have been triggered more quickly when the young person was found to be carrying a knife in an education setting.
- The specialist Child Criminal Exploitation service was not provided with a copy of the EHCP in the referral, this may have aided them in their attempts to engage the young person.
- The importance of early speech and language provision as a preventative approach for children who have experienced adversity and trauma and are at increased risk of criminality, and the delays to accessing this service that some children in Bristol are experiencing.

In response to this rapid review, the partnership took the following actions:



Safeguarding training for police officers and GPs about the rights and roles of families when a child is in care under section 20 of the Children Act (1989)



Education Inclusion Managers have undertaken awareness raising of the Weapons in Schools protocol so that incidents are referred quickly and fixed term exclusions are avoided/reduced



Barnardo's and other exploitation providers now request copies of EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plan) as part of their involvement and support planning



Safer Options (the co-ordinated whole system response to prevent serious youth violence and exploitation in Bristol) have explored how the Connected Communities initiative could be broadened or complemented to enable broader educational engagement with the partnership work on exploitation and serious violence



Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group have reviewed their current speech and language service model and whether it reaches the young people at highest risk of being involved or harmed in serious youth violence and criminal exploitation before/when they do not have an active youth justice order

## 6. SECTION 11 AUDIT

The section 11 audit was sent to organisations working with children across five local authority areas. There was a total of 71 responses, 20 of which relate to organisations working in Bristol. This was an increase on the previous year, in which 14 partners submitted responses. Although there was an increase in responses, there were still a number of key partners who did not submit an audit. This will be addressed in the partnership action plan.

Recommendations drawn from the responses are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** The Partnership should explore the continuation of virtual online partnership meetings to maximise partner attendance and reduce the need for travel across the city.

**Recommendation 2:** The Partnership should investigate the accessibility of children social care staff by police to understand and limit the waiting time that children and young people spend in police protection.

**Recommendation 3:** The Partnership should review and streamline the Partnership structure and meetings ensuring the 3 responsible authorities have equitable leadership and attendance at these. The Partnership should also review its engagement with, and the representation of, Faith and Voluntary and Community sectors to ensure the voice of these are fairly represented at the Partnership level and in meetings.

**Recommendation 4:** The Partnership will continue to adopt and implement a contextual safeguarding approach in the identification and risk management of young people at risk or involved in child criminal exploitation and serious violence. This should include more use of technology and intelligence sharing to map individuals, peer groups, locations, and opportunities to further develop the use of social network modelling.

**Recommendation 5:** The Partnership should explore the current barriers and opportunities to improve information sharing amongst the responsible authorities, (Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group) in respect of exploitation with a view to improving risk and co-ordinated safeguarding responses for these children.

**Recommendation 6:** The Partnership should ensure the promotion of the threshold document across organisations and refresher training for those who have been identified is provided. Organisations should undertake a monitoring exercise of staff needing to attend this training and ensure they access it within the next 12 months.

**Recommendation 7:** The Partnership will undertake an audit to establish the effectiveness of supervision and training in relation to safeguarding across the city and use the findings to inform the partnership training plan and share effective practice on supervision models.

## IMPACT IDENTIFIED

The creation of Covid cell meetings improved the sharing of live partnership data to challenge systems and focus on hotspots

During 12 months of pandemic, the partnership has continued to function well

Rapid reviews working well with all being completed within the required

The roll out of online training and webinars were deemed beneficial enabling practitioners from across the Partnership to access useful practice information and resources

## 7. LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO)



There was a significant decrease in referrals regarding education staff on the previous year. This was expected as schools were only open to all pupils for four months in the reporting year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

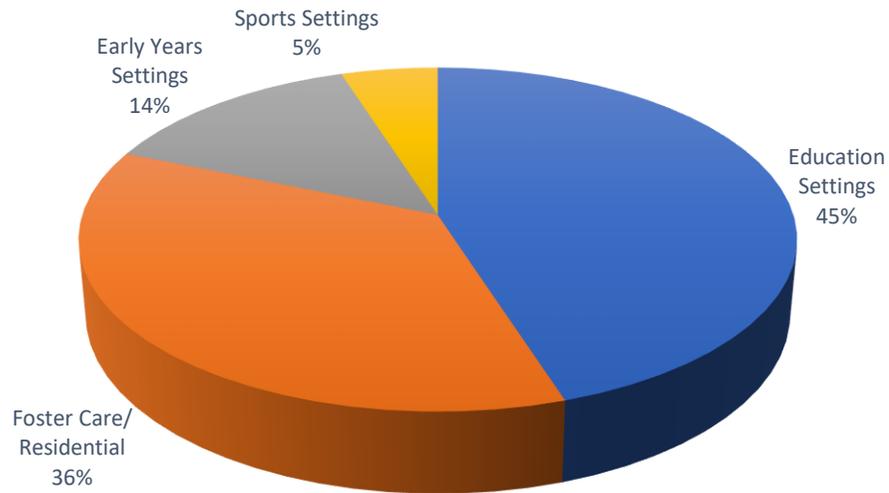
In the reporting period there were no referrals regarding the police. In the previous two years referrals to the LADO regarding police staff have been very low. This reflects the pattern in the southwest region and nationally. Concerns regarding police are dealt with internally through Police Professional Standards rather than being referred to the LADO, this is likely to be the reason for low referral numbers.

This concern has been highlighted by the LADO in previous annual reports. The LADO along with colleagues who work in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary footprint plan to meet with the head of Police Professional Standards to escalate this issue again and request data on Police Professional Standards investigations related to children or suitability to work with children.

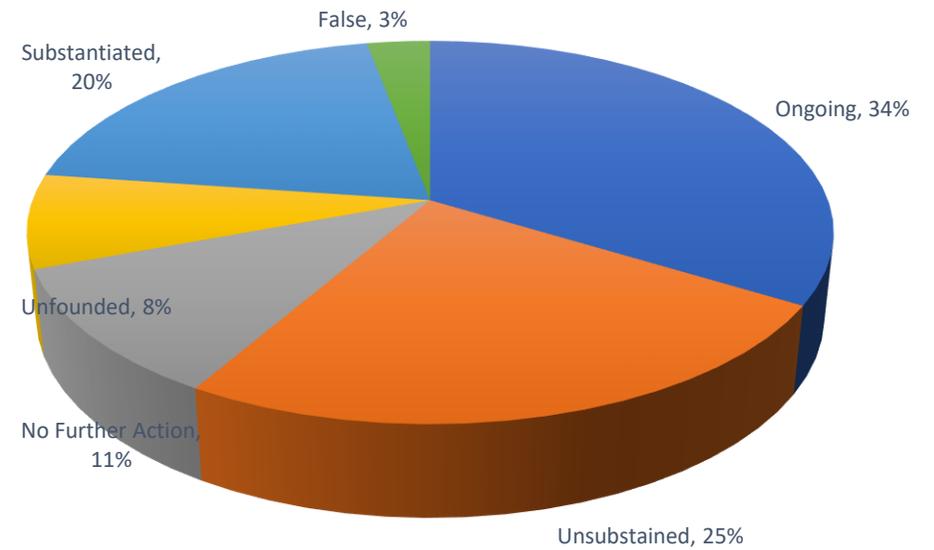
## STAFF GROUP FOR ALLEGATIONS

As with the previous two reporting years the highest number of referrals to the LADO were regarding education staff.

### Staff Group for Allegations



### Outcomes 2020 - 2021



## 8. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The full-time Training and Development Officer left the business unit in December 2020. The partnership was unable to recruit to this post until July 2021, therefore there was significant disruption to training courses during this period. A skeleton training programme was delivered by an external trainer.

During September 2020 – March 2021 the partnership delivered 15 courses covering the topics of:

- Working Together: Our Shared Responsibility
- Advanced Child Protection Training for Safeguarding Leads and Specialist Practitioners,
- Child Protection for Managers

The courses were attended by 194 people. All courses were held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The partnership provided a range of free resources and webinars covering a range of topics for both the adults and children's workforce. These webinars were recorded and can be accessed on the partnership website.

Webinar topics included:

100 days of Solitude – the Impact on adult mental health of the covid-19 crisis

The role of the LADO

The child death review process: your role in the joint agency response

Child Criminal Exploitation “It was hard to escape” – a briefing on the findings of the national review into safeguarding children at risk of criminal exploitation.

ACE – Trauma Informed Practice in Criminal Justice

It’s never too late; a spotlight on older women who have experienced sexual violence – delivered by Service Development Project Officer, Avon and Somerset Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS)

Responding to Harmful sexual behaviour Bristol’s Multi agency protocol

Supporting Women and girls with learning disabilities and Autism who experience sexual violence

Bristol’s Safer Options Approach to Extra Familial harm and violence reduction

# IMPACT IDENTIFIED

Really engaging training  
– have requested my  
organisation send more  
of my colleagues on the  
course later this year

I find in person far more  
engaging, but online it  
was easier to have space  
to be emotional

As we were all  
experienced  
practitioners it would  
have been beneficial to  
perhaps have more  
discussions around more  
complex topics in smaller  
groups - this could have  
been achieved by  
organising break-out  
sessions on Zoom.

It was a very informative,  
supportive, and useful two-day  
course. Being new in my role, I  
found it very useful to speak to  
people from a range of  
professional backgrounds, all  
working with young people.

I found the training  
informative and  
interesting. I was  
left with a lot of  
research to do to  
further my own

## 9.CHILD DEATH OVERVIEW PANEL (CDOP)



The Partnership is a member of the West of England Child Death Overview Panel. In the year 2020 – 2021 87 child deaths were considered by the panel and 21 of these children were from Bristol. The Annual Report for CDOP is available [here](#).

## 10.PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY WORK



### **Are you OK? workshop**

In February 2021, the Shadow Board facilitated a workshop to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children and young people’s mental health. This workshop was part of the Are You OK? campaign. The event was attended by young people and people who work with young people in Bristol. The audience were split into breakout rooms to discuss topics put forward by participation groups in the city. During the breakout room discussions, children and young people expressed that they would like to see improvements to RHSE (relationship, sex, and health education) and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) curriculums. Their view was that the curriculum should be more in-depth and cover a broader range of topics. As a result of this, work is underway to launch participation guidance to

education provisions, along with participation training and a new Bristol Ideal for the Healthy Schools Award.

### **Secret Shopping- First Response**

The Shadow Board were asked to undertake a project to see whether children and young people could refer themselves or their friends to First Response, the front door to Children and Families Social Services in Bristol. Two young people carried out several calls to the service and made

recommendations based on their experiences. Following this project, First Response have changed their automated options on their phone line to become more welcoming and more inclusive for children and young people.

The young people have also stated they would like an advice line where they can phone, text, or video call to get advice and support about how to access services in Bristol. This has been requested by members outside of the Shadow Board, including children and young people who access Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation service, and children known to adults who attend the domestic abuse and sexual violence forum. There are ongoing conversations around this with regards to the recommissioning of targeted youth services.

### **Communication Strategy**

The Shadow Board composed a communication strategy that has been signed off by the Keeping Children Safe Delivery Group and is now used across children's services as protocol for ensuring children and young people's voice is heard within safeguarding.

### **Parent Participation Officers**

In February 2021 two Parent Participation Officers were recruited as members of the Child Protection Conference Development Board. The parents were recruited as they have experience of child protection conferences.

As a result of their input, conferences no longer have the confidential slot from the police as it was felt that this was unfair to families and professionals should know this information before attending the meeting. The two parents have co-produced leaflets for families who have been visited by a social worker to explain what to expect and what the next steps will be. Photographs of conference spaces have been put into guides so that parents, carers, and families know how to enter the building and what to expect when they arrive.

Workshops involving the two parents have taken place to develop the layout and content of conference reports. As a result, new forms are being created. The parents have also supported work around engaging fathers within social care.

### **Advocacy Qualification**

In 2020, a survey was carried out to understand how child protection conferences could be more inclusive for parents and carers. One of the themes from the survey results was a need for advocacy to help parents and carers attending conferences to feel heard and understood better. As a result of this survey, a Level 2 City and Guilds Award in Independent Advocacy is now being run a minimum of four times a year. It is the equivalent to one GCSE and helps people who have experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences to get their foot in the door of peer advocacy and supporting within safeguarding services across Bristol.

# 11.SCRUTINY

KBSP actively engages with the regional Avon and Somerset Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (ASSSP) which considers child protection and well-being on the regional police force footprint and incorporates five places (local authority areas). This was a pre-existing arrangement (Pre-Working Together 2018) and was felt to be of benefit to maintain with a view to seeking regional approaches to matters and focus. In the specific case of Independent Scrutiny, the ASSSP agreed to develop a regional approach on behalf of the five 'places'. The intention was to enhance local delivery of scrutiny and through a coordinated approach would introduce efficiency, identify opportunities for shared learning, and reduce duplication across the five 'places'. An Independent Scrutiny Coordinator has not able to be appointed and therefore has not been able to provide the support and facilitation of assurance activity to all place-based areas within the Avon & Somerset geographical footprint.

The Executive Board and Independent Chair activities and performance with regards to action plan outcomes and held to account by the Accountability Oversight Group, who are the lead Councillors for Adults, Children and Community Safety from Bristol City Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and representative of the Executive Board from NHS BNSSG Clinical Commissioning Group. This group meets three times a year to review and oversee the work of Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership.

Bristol City Council Executive Director of People also, on behalf of the Executive Board, reports to the relevant scrutiny commissions of Bristol City Council, namely People and Communities, on an annual basis to enable the commissions to review the work of the Executive Board and delivery against the Executive Board's strategic priorities. In addition, KBSP has a scrutiny and assurance framework which seeks to ensure that quality assurance and performance drives the work of the partnership.

The Executive group has a challenge log maintained by the supporting business unit which records the actions which emerge from challenge conversations either from the Independent Chair or between partner agencies.

Within the timescales of this report the KBSP Executive group agreed a need for an Independent Chair to fulfil the wider assurance functions across the three arrangements. In doing so the KBSP explicitly stated that the Independent Chair does not hold the Independent Scrutiny function referencing the arrangements outlines above. Experience has shown however, that certain elements of the role description, and the way the Independent Chair discharges his responsibilities, by their nature are in effect independent scrutiny functions, examples follow.

The following identifies several areas of scrutiny activity already undertaken by the Independent Chair in discharging responsibilities of the KBSP during the current fiscal year:



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD

Anyone who works with children has a role in safeguarding and child protection.

You should make a referral;

- to the police on 999 if you are currently witnessing a child being harmed or in a situation of immediate risk
- to First Response straight away on 0117 903 6444 if your concern relates to a disclosure of abuse requiring a same day response.
- using our form for all other reports to First Response.

Visit the Councils [website](#) for more information and referral form