

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Peer Review Report</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Children's Services June 2017
<b>WARD</b>	None-specific
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	Judith Ramsden, Strategic Director of People's Services

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Wokingham Children's Services, Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Health care Foundation Trust and West Berkshire CCG invited the Local Government Association Peer Review process to review the agencies joint practice and function on the themes of neglect and domestic abuse.

An LGA Peer Review is a proactive level of audit and scrutiny undertaken by Local Authorities and Partners, as part of a learning culture designed to highlight areas of strength and areas for improvement.

The LGA peer review was undertaken by a multiagency group of professionals experienced in statutory work and the functioning of Local authorities/ Partner Agencies who deliver services to children and families within the Wokingham Borough. The Peer Review took place in the first week of March 2017.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The report/ presentation is provided for information and for Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the recommendation and outcome of the Peer Review

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Peer Review team provided comprehensive feedback to the partnership on the thematic areas of domestic abuse and neglect.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Strengths:

- Commitment to tackling DA through the commissioning model and the LSCB
- BWA are highly respected and valued
- Use of group supervision to support workers with complex DA cases
- SoS ensures a safety plan for all DA referrals that meet thresholds
- Named nurse for DA and dedicated midwives for vulnerable families (Poppy)
- Police vulnerability assessment model (ABCDE)
- DARIM arrangements provide an innovative response to victims who do not meet

#### MARAC thresholds

- Emergency Department consider DA as a routine enquiry for all presentations liaising with CSC where appropriate

#### Areas for further consideration:

- In refreshing the DA strategy encourage shared ownership
- Is Early Help fully utilised in addressing risk sooner?
- Fully implement Operation Encompass as soon as possible
- How to get other agencies to refer DA cases?
- How to make better use of MARAC and all police powers as part of overall safety plans?
- Review probation contribution at MARAC
- Risk reduction should include an increased offer of services for perpetrators
- How engaged are GPs in identifying and responding to DA?
- What is the impact of the police DA risk assessor vacancy in MASH?

#### **Neglect:**

#### Strengths:

- Social workers know their families well and are committed to maintaining a high level of contact
- Partnership working through Early Help offer in Children Centres is excellent
- Children Centre awareness of the diversity of the population is good and services targeted accordingly
- Children Centre tracking of Early Years foundation stage
- LSCB is active in seeking better understanding of neglect
- Across both primary and secondary care there are good systems in Health to identify and respond to neglect

#### Areas for further consideration:

- Despite significant investment, waiting times to access CAMHS remain high
- Should the LSCB consider whether developing a neglect strategy could add value?
- Is the extent of inequality understood and acted upon?
- The application of a Neglect assessment tool would assist all frontline staff to understand the threshold for neglect
- Stay curious to ensure there is focus on the needs of the child when considering pastoral support

#### **Background**

The Peer Review took place in the first week of March 2017. The team were on site in Wokingham Borough Council and Partner agency sites with a remit to review practice, organisation and systems leadership across the partnership on the themes of Domestic Abuse (DA) and Neglect.

The Peer Review process is a learning opportunity to test the system and invite in a 'critical friend' to look at objective strengths and areas for improvement.

The conclusion of the Peer Review was generally positive and provided some key areas for recommendation:

- Promote group supervision as a multi-agency process for considering complex cases
- In line with the One Public Estate ethos maximise opportunities to share facilities in places that make sense for harder to reach families
- Partnerships should raise awareness in order to identify and seek support for families where Domestic Violence and Abuse is identified
- Raise awareness of and access to the JSNA
- Develop shared understanding of the manifestation of neglect and domestic abuse that recognises the needs of different communities and age groups
- “Development Days” could be opened to the wider partnership to explore common language, shared processes and improved understanding of thresholds
- Develop a communication strategy across partnerships
- Develop a means to articulate and encourage ownership of Early Help as part of the social care continuum

As part of a response to Peer Review actions, Wokingham Children’s Services have addressed the areas for recommended.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Not applicable		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Not applicable		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not applicable		

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
n/a

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

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