



Berkshire West Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

OWNER

MASA Programme Board

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Berkshire West Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Vision and Values

Berkshire West partners are strongly committed to the shared responsibility to safeguard and protect children and young people. Berkshire West benefits from excellent inter-agency engagement, and proactive leadership, of this shared safeguarding agenda. We commit to working as partners to ensure all children and young people can live safe, happy and positive lives, achieving their potential and being respectful to others.

Berkshire West partners are fully committed to keeping the child or young person at the heart of all that they do. Partners want to see the voice and lived experience of children making a tangible difference to all aspects of safeguarding, and ensuring that Independent Scrutiny arrangements expect children's experience to be fundamental in quality assurance and development activity of the partners and is the founding principle underpinning local arrangements.

Local learning has encouraged partners to be clear that their understanding of the local safeguarding and protection arrangements must be timely and responsive. Partners are keen to avoid unnecessary delay in responding to safeguarding concerns and risks and being timely is of real local and collective importance. Partners have also learnt that ensuring that commitments they make are followed up, to understand the extent to which change has been embedded and the difference changes have made to local children and young people are all elements of an effective safeguarding system.

Whilst the national arrangements propose leadership from Police, Local Authority and CCG, Berkshire West's experience and good practice demonstrates that a collective partnership ownership of safeguarding including schools, the breadth of the health economy and voluntary, community and faith sector partners, is essential to continually improving local arrangements. The structure of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Arrangement is intentionally designed to maximise partnership leadership.

Local leaders recognise that the way in which we work together matters. Leaders recognise that the three locality areas covered by the Berkshire West arrangement (Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire) are in very different stages of safeguarding development, with different risks and opportunities, working effectively as leaders together are essential to fulfilling the function.



How we will work together

Berkshire West leaders recognise that the crucial work of the partnership often rests on how senior leaders work together to support and challenge each other, to identify risk and mitigate it together, and to problem solve systems issues. Senior leaders in Berkshire West will be trained in, and seek to model, a restorative approach to safeguarding leadership, clearly defining risk and keeping the child at the centre of decision making.

In order to promote the welfare of, and safeguard, Berkshire's West's children and young people effectively, we will:

- Listen with care to our children and young people, and to each other
- Hold each other to account through respectful support and challenge
- Collaborate and co-operate with each other to improve outcomes for children
- Spot problems and difficulties early, problem solving together, recognising we have shared responsibility for our children
- Identify risks in our system and mitigate them together
- Be efficient and timely in our responses to each other and to needs arising from our local communities
- Recognise that each locality area (Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire) are different and Independent Scrutiny needs to operate differently in each area, but also recognise that we have much to learn from each other and ultimately are stronger together.

In the change to national guidance local leaders have noted the changes around the non-participant observer role, but have also recognised the importance of ensuring the Lead Members for Children's Services continue to fulfil their statutory responsibility. Ensuring Lead Members for Children's Services receive information, and assurance, about the sufficiency of local safeguarding arrangements impact on outcomes for children is a priority for partners. There are examples of excellent independent scrutiny and challenge from Lead Members in some parts of Berkshire West and these new arrangements embed this insight and experience in a way that is right for each locality.



Our shared priorities

Quality Assurance, scrutiny and challenge are at different stages of development across Berkshire West. Designing and implementing new Independent Scrutiny arrangements for each Berkshire West Locality, will be the most important and first priority for Berkshire West Safeguarding Arrangement. It is an expectation that these arrangements will seek to understand the lived experience of local children and young people, and the practice learning from frontline staff and volunteers, specifically but not exclusively on the following areas of practice and policy:

- Domestic Abuse
- Children in Need
- Effectiveness of Early Help
- Missing and exploited children and Return Home Interviews (RHIs)
- Understanding contextual safeguarding in the lives of adolescents and in the context of schools

What success looks like

Our foremost priority is that children and young people are safe and protected from harm, living happy fulfilled lives and achieving their potential.

Berkshire West partners are committed to understanding that the different decisions they make, the way services or support is organised, makes to positively improving outcomes for children. In particular senior leaders anticipate that a measure of success of these shared arrangements for safeguarding will be the extent to which partners problem solve and find solutions together, to improve outcomes for children. This will include effective partnership challenge and support. Where risks are identified they will be closely monitored, together, in partnership.



Background and Context

The Alan Wood review

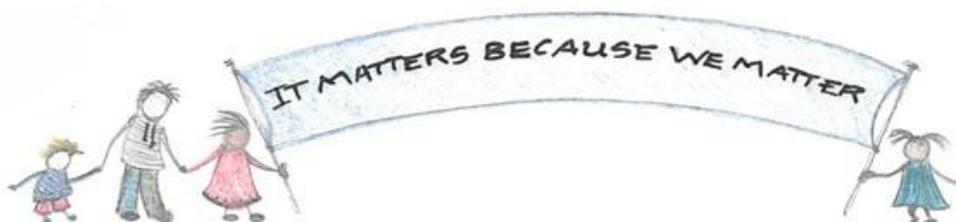
In 2015, in response to national questions about the sufficiency and effectiveness of LSCB arrangements, Alan Wood was commissioned to lead a review of the impact of LSCBs on outcomes for children. This review took place between January and March 2016 and was contributed to by a range of national leaders and in total over 600 areas responded.

The review concluded that with the exception of a few LSCBs, most Safeguarding Children Board arrangements had difficulty demonstrating their effectiveness in improving outcomes for children. In particular LSCB's tendency to receive a range of annual reports on a broad range of safeguarding activities was criticised, as well as a lack of real-time responsiveness and lack of effective partnership decision-making. This led Alan Wood to recommend that a stronger statutory partnership of the Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Local Authorities should be asked to lead local safeguarding arrangements.

Children and Social Work Act 2017

In its May 2016 response, the Government supported Alan Wood's analysis and commented that "current arrangements are inflexible and too often ineffective. Meetings take place involving large numbers of people, but decision-making leading to effective action on the ground can be all too often lacking".

Instead, it proposed a stronger but more flexible statutory framework to enable partnership leaders to become more effective in their duty to protect and safeguard children and young people. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal Assent in April 2017 and the Act removes the requirement for local areas to have LSCBs (Section 30), instead Sections 16 – 23 introduce a duty on the Local Authorities, Police and CCGs to make arrangements with others to protect and safeguard children. These arrangements must identify and respond to the needs of children in the area and also identify the learning arising serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area.



The Berkshire West Approach to Safeguarding Partnership – our arrangements for our children and young people

The number of Berkshire West partner representatives actively involved in the previous three LSCB Boards equates to in excess of one hundred individuals. It is recognised by all partners that sustaining the engagement of all organisations and sectors in proactively supporting Berkshire West safeguarding and protection arrangements is of real benefit to local children and young people. Nonetheless, it is also recognised that partnership arrangements become unwieldy and less effective where there are this many partners represented in Board arrangements.

This recognition has required hard choices and decisions from Berkshire West children's services leaders.

Following careful discussion, over many months, Berkshire West partners have agreed on the following Safeguarding Arrangement for children and young people (please see Appendix 1 for a visual representation of the model):

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership

This group comprises of the following members:

- Directors of Children's Services - Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire
- Berkshire West CCG
- Thames Valley Police
- Independent Scrutiny representative

The group will meet three times a year and the partnership leaders will chair the group on rotation.

The Independent Scrutineer function will join the membership of the Partnership to ensure that the pivotal learning from independent scrutiny directly informs the leadership of the arrangements. The Safeguarding Partnership is the final decision making body overseeing the multi-agency plan to protect children and safeguard their welfare in Berkshire West, but in keeping with Berkshire West ethos and values, the role of the wider Safeguarding partners is pivotal in setting the direction, priorities and overseeing partnership safeguarding activity. In addition, there will be opportunity for Lead Members for Children's Services to join partnership leaders to review the effectiveness of these local arrangements and critically examine the extent to which safeguarding arrangements have improved outcomes for children and young people in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire.

In particular, the Safeguarding Partnership will review progress and assess strengths and areas for development in the local safeguarding system. This analysis will be directly informed by Independent Scrutiny findings, the learning from Education Safeguarding leaders and Health Safeguarding committee. It will underpin the priorities for the wider partnership and will inform the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children annual report, which will be published.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Leaders (Forum)

The Forum Leaders will comprise of the wider safeguarding leaders across the partner organisations who will meet three times a year.

Forum members will critically examine and review local safeguarding priorities, problem solve together and agree roles and responsibilities for proactively responding to safeguarding learning, including responding to areas of risk and sharing good practice. This model ensures that the previous partnership engagement in safeguarding and protection of children is sustained. This will be managed as a conference style event. A wide selection of partnership leaders representing the breadth of sectors will be invited to attend this Forum. There is no expectation that all partners will attend every meeting, but this infrastructure enables the shared responsibility for safeguarding to be effectively deployed in Berkshire West.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Health Safeguarding Committee

Berkshire West has particular good practice in effective, active health economy leadership of the safeguarding agenda. Berkshire West CCG will continue to sustain this quarterly meeting of health economy leaders across Berkshire West, who specifically considers the safeguarding and protection learning, risks analysis and mitigation, and ongoing practice development specifically related to the health economy.

Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire Education Safeguarding Groups

Berkshire West has benefitted from exceptional education leadership and engagement in safeguarding and protection. In order to sustain and further develop this leadership role, Headteachers of all stages and phases are working collaboratively with further education, early years and PRU/Special school leaders to ensure safeguarding leadership in education is maintained and maximised to improve outcomes for children. This includes leading S175 safeguarding self-assessment review processes in education provision and identifying development areas for the sector, leading education Peer Review of settings safeguarding practice, designing and leading safeguarding training for Governors and Trustees, to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding functions effectively.

Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire Independent Scrutiny Groups

The three locality areas (Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire) serve different demographics, have different strengths and development areas and need to oversee and mitigate different risks.

The 'back bone' of effective safeguarding arrangements is the Independent Scrutiny groups. These groups will meet bi-monthly and are designed to sustain the best practice from the previous Quality & Performance groups, including routine review of data and performance information, undertaking of joint multi-agency audits, ensuring that children and young

people's local experience and the insight and experience of frontline staff and volunteers routinely informs multi-agency learning. The learning from these groups will proactively drive the work of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership and in turn, the Safeguarding Forum.

It is an expectation that Independent Scrutiny Groups will have a direct relationship with Elected Member led Overview and Scrutiny (or ACE Committee) arrangements in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. Each localities Overview and Scrutiny arrangements are organised slightly differently and the specific inter-relationship for Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham will be agreed locally between the Chairs of the respective groups. In turn, it is an expectation of all Berkshire West senior leaders that the learning and priorities emerging from Independent Scrutiny groups will, where appropriate, inform strategic planning of Health & Well-Being Boards, Children's Partnership arrangement and Community Safety Partnerships. There are particular opportunities for partnership working with Berkshire West Safeguarding Adult Board and the proposed joint focus on transition is one example of this.

Berkshire West Case Review Group

Berkshire West Case Review group is comprised of leaders from CCG, health economy, Police and Local Authorities. It meets every two months, due to the number of opportunities for local learning. Its primary role and function is to consider how national learning informs local practice in Berkshire West and review local children and young people's circumstances in which our expectations for inter-agency safeguarding and protection of a child have not been met and multi-agency learning is identified.

This has included developing an innovative lower level review of cases that do not meet criteria for a statutory review, but would inform ongoing partnership development. These reviews are an opportunity for partnership led peer review and challenge; it enhances the partnership scrutiny and challenge function. Partnership leaders and middle managers have really welcomed the learning this model has yielded, and because it does not rely on independently resourced critical evaluation, but enhances the sufficiency of partnership ensuring effectiveness function, it is a sustainable model. The approach to case review analysis and learning is intended to ensure that the voice and experience of the child/young person is held at the centre of multi-agency review. Regular review of the progress and implementation of findings from the reviews is a key component to effective systems change.

In the new arrangement cases that potentially require statutory and independent review, will be considered by the Independent Scrutiny function and will be discussed with the Chair of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Arrangement, where the final decision on the nature of the review will be made.

Learning from national and local reviews, including particular thematic improvements is shared with relevant sub-groups and in turn informs the learning and development of the partnership. Bite-sized lunchtime workshops for multi-agency staff have been particularly

successful in this regard. Effective communication to the breadth of the partnership remains an ongoing iterative dialogue.

Berkshire West Learning & Development Group

This group oversees the inter-agency safeguarding learning and development pathway for the children's workforce (both staff and volunteers). This group:

- Undertakes training needs assessment;
- Reviews the sufficiency of training provision;
- Commissions and designs learning and development resources;
- Incorporates local, national and Serious Case Review (SCR) learning into the learning and development offer;
- Undertakes quality assurance;
- Evaluates the impact of learning on practice and outcomes for children.

In the new arrangements ensuring that Independent Scrutiny learning directly informs the partnership learning and development offer will be essential.

Pan-Berkshire co-operation

The existing pan-Berkshire subgroups that serve Berkshire West, Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Slough, will continue unchanged. These groups are the Child Death Overview Panel processes (CDOP), Policies and Procedures, Child Exploitation and Section 11 self-assessment.

The business functioning and administration of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership will be supported by Business Management and administrative resourcing.

After each Partnership meeting, leaders will be responsible for passing on updates to their own organisations and for ensuring timely progression of agreed actions.



Timelines for the transition to new arrangements

These are the national expectations for publication:

- Police, CCG and Local Authorities must agree the new safeguarding arrangements by the end of June 2019.
- These arrangements must be published within three months of a notification to the Secretary of State.
- The arrangements must be implemented within three months of notification/publication at which stage Reading LSCB, Wokingham LSCB and West Berkshire LSCB cease to exist.
- There is a 12-month period for LSCBs after new arrangements are in place to complete and publish any outstanding Serious Case Reviews.
- There will be a 4-month grace period for CDOPs (under the LSCB) to complete child death reviews.
- The child death review partners (the local authority and the CCG) will have 12 months from the end of June 2018 to agree the arrangements for child death reviews and 3 months to implement them (by the end of September 2019).

Berkshire West partners will adhere to the transition guidance details the arrangements which should be followed during the transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partners and child death review partners (including timelines for managing existing child death reviews) and during the transition from the current system of Serious Case Reviews to new national and local review arrangements.

As an early adopter, Berkshire West Safeguarding Partners agreed to publish their arrangements on the 31st March 19. The arrangements will be implemented by 30th June 2019 and all ongoing Serious Case Reviews will be published within 12 months from publication. Berkshire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) will finalise the additional changes to CDOP arrangements by 30th June 19 and these will be fully implemented by September 19.

The partners are committed to continuing to develop as a learning community together. In practice this means that the new arrangements will be subject to review and in particular partners are keen to test the effectiveness of these new arrangements in improving outcomes for children and young people, enabling effective partnership problem solving and risk mitigation.



The first twelve months of implementation of these new arrangements will be a period of particular partnership learning and review.

The pivotal role of Independent Scrutiny and effective quality assurance

Berkshire West partners have historically valued the voice of independent scrutiny and challenge of safeguarding arrangements. In the new Berkshire West Safeguarding Arrangements the role of the LSCB Independent Chair will be superseded by Independent Scrutineer functions.

Effective Independent Scrutiny relies on:

- Effective analysis of performance information
- Multi-professional audit or reflective learning discussions
- Understanding the lived experience of local children and young people
- Understanding the frontline experience, strengths and challenges of frontline staff and volunteers.

Berkshire West partners are keen to ensure that all safeguarding partners are actively engaged in Independent Scrutiny. There is a partnership emphasis on ensuring that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement. In particular, the Independent Scrutiny arrangements consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported. It is an expectation that the learning from Independent Scrutiny is published in an annual report.

The thinking behind Independent Scrutiny

It's sometimes really difficult for us to see the 'wood for the trees' when we are helping to lead services. The national expectation is that having an independent person or person(s) to review what difference local services are making to outcomes for children and young people, what we're doing well (together) and what we need to improve (together) is important. Senior leaders think it's not the best use of resource to have this independent resource chairing a Board, instead, this investment in independent scrutiny will work alongside local leaders in Independent Scrutiny groups.

What are our roles and strategic functions in the Independent Scrutiny Groups?

The most important thing for us to do in these groups is understand how our services impact on outcomes for children and young people; we need to know what's working and what isn't.

There are seven key things (strategic functions) we need to fulfil in the Independent Scrutiny groups, these build on our current arrangements:

- Analyse performance information to spot patterns and trends (reporting exceptions, good and bad to the partnership)

- Multi-professional audit of specific themes, where we need to understand what's happening better, or we think we've got development work/improvement to do
- We are assuming that enabling frontline staff to reflect together on what they have learnt working with children and families (with the needs/circumstances we'll be auditing) is really important. They will tell us things we can't see in audit.
- We need to talk to children and young people, to understand their experience, what they think is good and what they'd like to see changed. If we're looking at our effectiveness around a theme (e.g. Domestic Abuse, Children in Need, Neglect, etc.) we need to talk to our local community.
- We will ensure that learning from significant national issues is reflected in local arrangements.
- Whatever we find/learn needs to be communicated in a way that's practical and tangible for our frontline and volunteers e.g. what can we do that's effective, what do we need to change in our practice, what does that look like? The more people we reach the better.
- Where we learn that we need to re-think the design or function of services, where we find risk we must proactively mitigate, this must be communicated clearly to senior leaders – we expect this to inform Safeguarding Partnership risk management, priorities and Forum workshops.
- Where we agree we need to make changes, it's essential that we follow up the effectiveness and impact of that implementation in 6 or 12 months' time.

Who needs to be in the room?

If we're going to do this well, we need members of the group who are skilled in:

- Partnership Auditing
- Analysing data and audit findings – to be clear what the causal factors are that we need to address to affect change might be
- Can have difficult conversations, calmly and with respect, to work together as a partnership to find solutions
- Facilitating reflective practice conversations with frontline staff and volunteers
- Facilitating conversations with children, young people and families

We will also need members who are senior leaders who can take decisions on behalf of statutory partners. As a minimum we think that needs to include:

- Thames Valley Police (LPA Deputy Commander),
- Children's Social Care ADs/HoS,
- Education and school Safeguarding leads
- Health economy Designate professionals and senior leaders from RBHFT, BHFT, CCG who will manage membership of the three groups between them.
- National Probation Service and local Community Rehabilitation Company leaders

- Key local voluntary, community and faith sector partners
- Independent Scrutiny resourcing

In West Berkshire the Independent Scrutiny Group will also have attendance from the Lead Member for Children’s Services, to provide political support and challenge.

West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham Independent Scrutiny Groups will have slightly different memberships representing the needs and compositions of their local areas. Irrespective of slightly different membership arrangements, the role and function of the groups will be the same.

Based on the learning from the Serious Case Reviews conducted in Berkshire West, senior leaders think that there are themes we all need to look at across Berkshire West, they are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Children in Need
- Effectiveness of Early help
- Missing and exploited children and RHIs

In addition, the following themes have been highlighted as important for review, following local audit and analysis:

- Contextual safeguarding for universal settings, with a specific focus on schools
- Adolescents requiring safeguarding interventions, particularly those where contextual safeguarding risks have been identified
- Transition to adulthood, which we propose could be a joint area of thematic focus with the Safeguarding Adult Board (Berkshire West)
- Care Leavers support and impact on outcomes



Transitioning to the new arrangements

In order to bring long-serving Quality and Performance members with skill and experience in these roles and functions together with new additional Independent Scrutiny partners, a co-designed workshop will enable all members to reflect and share their system learning together. This workshop focuses on the following discussion items:

- What strategic role and function the Independent Scrutiny Groups will fulfil
- How the Independent Scrutiny function will be fulfilled
- Building a mature system – listening to the lived experience of our children and young people; reviewing what our frontline staff and volunteers say needs to change; analysing

data, auditing, learning and reflecting together with a focus on improving children's outcomes.

- Agreeing how we will we talk about difficult issues together
- Agreeing how we problem solve together
- Ensuring we consistently communicate what we learn to our wider workforce.
- Reviewing the impact of changes to practice – what difference have we made to children and young people?

Defining Independent Scrutiny

The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny is a local contributing component in a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

The independent scrutiny function as set out in statutory guidance (Working Together 2018) will provide the critical challenge and appraisal of Berkshire West's multiagency safeguarding partnership arrangements in relation to children and young people.

The role of Independent Scrutiny is intended to:

- Provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and protect children and young people, including the effectiveness of inter-agency co-operation to promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Provide an independent view on situations or circumstances where disagreement arises between the leaders responsible for protecting children and young people in the agencies involved in multi-agency arrangements.
- Support a culture of support and challenge, in which robust scrutiny is a minimum standard for all services.
- Create space and opportunity for reflection and learning from practice and encourage partners to respectfully hold each other to account, working together to find solutions to system challenges.
- Maintain focus on the impact of service arrangements on outcomes for children and young people and ensure that children/young people's voice and experience informs systems learning.
- Identify good practice to share and risks for partnership action/mitigation.
- Inform multi-agency audit processes and collate the findings and learning from the audits.

- Act as an independent review and challenge of the implementation of recommendations from audit or reviews, which includes monitoring and reporting on the impact of recommended changes on outcomes for children and young people.
- Through personal example, open commitment and clear action, ensure diversity is positively valued, resulting in equal access and treatment in employment, service delivery and communications.
- Encourage the development of innovation in the system to enable creativity to meet the needs of children and young people.
- Inform the Annual Report from Berkshire West Safeguarding partners.

Berkshire West Independent Scrutiny arrangements will be designed to fulfil a strategic and an operational function:

1) Strategic function

Berkshire West partners will enter into contractual arrangement with an individual with multi-agency senior leadership experience (strategic function). This function will focus on reviewing the sufficiency and effectiveness of partnership safeguarding arrangements, including their impact on outcomes for children and young people.

2) Operational function

Berkshire West partners will enter into contractual arrangement with an individual with external multi-agency scrutiny, audit and review experience (operational function). The scrutineer(s) will manage and oversee audits, thematic frontline staff and volunteer forums, participatory review of service effectiveness with children and young people (i.e. in reviews of thematic learning). This individual will fulfil a pivotal role in ensuring that the voice and experience of children and young people leads to meaningful change in service design and effectiveness.

Identification of risk and development areas arising from Independent Scrutiny, very much drives the work of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership and Forum, it is essential that this is well understood by partners. In this context it is an expectation that Independent Scrutineer resource is represented directly in the Partnership and Forum meetings. It is an expectation of partners that emerging good practice and systems learning will be intentionally embedded by the system. In particular, that the learning informs practice and is followed through in evaluation, to understand impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Managing different professional perspectives

The Independent Scrutineer functions will have a particularly important role in navigating different professional perspectives on levels of need or risk, or different professional understanding about the sufficiency of the system. It is expected that the Berkshire West safeguarding system will seek to work as mature system leaders together, considering and

reviewing differences of opinion or experience respectfully, focussed on the needs and outcomes of local children and young people.

Nonetheless, partners recognise that in the context of pressures on safeguarding and protection services, and potential for leadership change, there may at times be a need for resolution of different professional perspectives. If the proposed routes to seek to understand and resolve professional differences are unsuccessful, then it is proposed that the statutory partner agencies have a final point of escalation to the Assistant Chief Constable Crime & Criminal Justice (Thames Valley Police), Chief Executives (Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading Councils) and Chief Officer (Berkshire West CCG). These senior leaders will be asked to review the matter of dispute and reach a final agreement on how the situation will be managed, in line with the escalation process in the pan-Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.



Effective safeguarding self-assessment in Education

Berkshire West was a national pilot for reviewing how safeguarding arrangements in education could be maximised in the change to national arrangements.

To support this Education Safeguarding Groups have been established in the Reading and Wokingham areas, led by schools, mirroring a prior arrangement in the West Berkshire area which has been slightly expanded.

The common functions of these groups are to:

- Enable the views, experience and risk (as perceived by Headteachers) to inform the safeguarding leadership of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Arrangement (previously referred to as the LSCB) and vice versa.
- Identify risk and mitigation of issues relating to schools will be explicitly monitored by the group; this will include problem solving.
- Review national changes in guidance or regional/national partnership learning of relevance to schools' safeguarding.
- Supporting the design and overview of the annual event for schools to share local learning and good practice.
- Oversee the effectiveness of education safeguarding and protection arrangements for children and young people by developing and monitoring s175 related improvement.
- Ensure effective two-way communication with their existing sectors and forums.
- Contribution to training needs analysis and the effective sharing of resources where applicable

In addition, schools' engagement with and voice on Independent Scrutiny sub-groups that will provide crucial resource to fulfil the 'Independent Scrutiny' and quality assurance functions, is being strengthened.

Local Authority education leaders (with statutory accountability) have worked together with school leaders to consider how S175/S11 self-assessment processes can be adapted within this context. The view and experience of School Leaders in Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire has directly shaped and informed this planning.



S175 self-assessment

1. **NSPCC accessible tool** - That S175 self-assessment is made as accessible as possible. The NSPCC tool already used in one locality area supports this and feedback from school leaders is that tool works well for schools: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-andresources/working-with-schools/esat/>
2. **Local learning** - We recognise that this tool won't always reflect our local needs and risks or challenges, so where we need to; we propose that we add in a few additional questions that capture this learning. The Education Safeguarding Groups would oversee these questions.
3. **A summary report** – to analyse overall themes, trends, patterns and development areas will be prepared by the Local Authority (due to statutory accountability) and shared in draft with the Education Safeguarding Group and Quality & Performance.
4. **Risk** – if safeguarding risk is identified it is the Local Authorities responsibility to work alongside the school concerned to improve practice until concerns are resolved. The Safeguarding Partnership will have overall oversight of these arrangements.
5. **Peer Review** – Reading's schools have really benefitted from piloting a safeguarding Peer Review process where leaders from schools pair up and peer review an aspect of each other's safeguarding, to share learning and improve practice. We will replicate this model on a Berkshire West footprint. We think this would help share learning between locality areas and support specialist or alternative education providers. Peer Reviewers would be trained in a support/challenge approach to review.
6. **Governors/Trustees** – we recognise that Governors' understanding of how to analyse safeguarding practice in schools and provide internal support and challenge is variable. We think the Safeguarding Partners could assist, by training Berkshire West Governors in the skill of support/challenge questioning approach in their role, specifically applied to their statutory accountability for safeguarding.
7. **Early Years** - In addition, we'll also work together to devise a parallel safeguarding self-assessment tool for early years providers, in partnership with Early Years leaders.

Overall, Berkshire West partners think this framework will give us a strong arrangement that will demonstrate to external partners, including Ofsted in school inspections, that safeguarding leadership, self-assessment and quality assurance is strong within our school leadership system. Externally, this is assured and supported by the wider Safeguarding Partnership.

This enables a 'golden thread' of safeguarding to be clearly evident from frontline practice in schools, through Local Authority governance, to the overarching Safeguarding Board arrangements.

The dialogue with our children, young people and families

Professional experience and insight is no substitute for seeking to understand the lived experience of local children and young people. Previous Berkshire West LSCB good practice clearly highlights that children and young people's contribution to audit and assurance arrangements has often challenged professional assumptions and led to changes to local arrangements, improving outcomes for children and young people.

Our approach will be to build upon existing good practice where children and young people have worked with local leaders in co-production roles, which includes building on Reading's recent Young Researcher's Aspiration Whitley programme and the investment in training of over 500 children and young people in restorative practices in Berkshire West, to provide a foundation for systematic co-production.



Berkshire West partners are ambitious and expect:

- Children and young people to be routinely involved in all independent scrutiny or quality assurance thematic reviews
- That the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements is most effectively undertaken by the views and experiences of children, young people and families
- That opportunities to invest in children and young people to review service effectiveness, co-design systems change and evaluate the impact of services for children and young people will be maximised
- Where changes to service design is identified, it is the expectation of Berkshire West partners that children and young people with experience of the needs that the service(s) respond to, are involved in service review, design or commissioning
- We will continue to ask our relevant agencies and other partners how they ensure they have captured the voices of children, young people and families in their work as well as identifying other innovative ways to gather this feedback through the partnership
- Where possible, we will involve families in learning reviews and safeguarding events.

We will utilise existing groups or forums where children and young people can have their say, share their views and experiences, challenge and support local decision makers and shape and influence strategic planning, commissioning and service provision at an individual, service and strategic level.

In time, Berkshire West intends to work towards sustainable and effective co-production, evaluation, scrutiny and challenge of the sufficiency of the safeguarding system. It is important that children and young people work with senior leaders to design what those arrangements look like and how they most effectively function.

Learning from challenging situations together

Safeguarding is not an exact science. It is essential that as system leaders we work together to review and learn from circumstances where multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and protection have not met the standards that we expect or where something has gone wrong. Our approach to inter-agency learning is at heart one of mutual support and accountability, leaders need support to reflect safely together on what might have been managed differently. All Berkshire West partners are committed to seeking to develop a respectful dialogue that focuses on understanding the challenges and considering how we might work together to reduce the likelihood of these circumstances arising again. First and foremost, it focuses on the child and young person at the heart of the circumstance, recognising our shared responsibility.

These reviews provide opportunity for good practice to be shared, to inform our partnership understanding of what works well. Conversely, when things go wrong there needs to be a rigorous, objective analysis of what happened and why so that important lessons can be learnt, and services improved to reduce the risk of future harm to children). Independent Scrutiny has a role in these cases. Overall this will drive improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Berkshire West Case Review group, chaired by the CCG Designated Nurse, leads this function for Berkshire West Safeguarding Partners. The function of this group is to oversee all open serious incident cases and their corresponding action plans, and consider examples of good practice. The learning from the group is shared with Berkshire West Safeguarding Leaders Forum, for review and comment, to disseminate learning points across the wider partnership and to support review and evaluation of the impact of systems change on outcomes for children. This learning and impact of systems change will be summarised in the annual report from Berkshire West Safeguarding partners.

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

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

In partnership Berkshire West Case Review group will continue to:

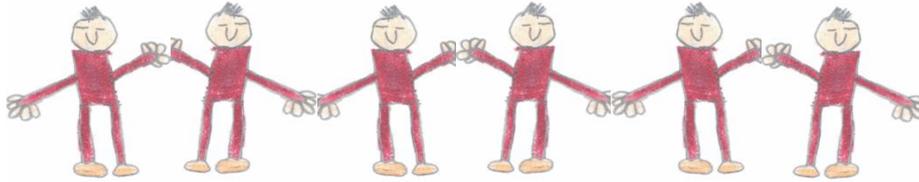
- identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance and learning
- commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken

The Case Review Group will determine whether a case meets the criteria to be referred to the National Panel or an alternative form of case review such as a Multi-agency Learning

Review or a Single-agency Learning Review. The national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel must be notified within 5 working days of becoming aware of a serious incident.

Specialist input to learning reviews will be sought as required. Depending on the nature and complexity of the circumstances surrounding the review, Berkshire West expects reports to be completed and published as soon as possible and no later than six months from the date of the decision to initiate a review. Where other proceedings may have an impact on or delay publication, Berkshire West safeguarding partners will initiate dialogue with the Panel and the Secretary of State of the reasons for the delay or if there are any special considerations around publication.

Members of the group are actively encouraged to bring examples of good practice as another means of developing our understanding of what works well and to identify potential 'near misses' which can give the partnership advanced warning of required systems change.



Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) arrangements

The pan-Berkshire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) serves Berkshire West, Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Slough. CDOP will sustain its existing model in these transition arrangements. CDOP is further developing its approach to be more holistic in discussion of the children and young people considered by CDOP, in response to local learning which has highlighted a propensity to focussing on medical analysis of the circumstances around the death of a child.

In particular the following changes will be made in Berkshire West:

- a) Holding child death review meetings for all deaths, following closer working links with Paediatric mortality and morbidity meetings, tertiary centres and hospices (when a Berkshire West Child dies who is known to our services).
- b) Transferring Rapid Response for Unexpected Child Death to Joint Agency Response (JAR).
- c) Allocating a key worker to every bereaved family.

On a wider Berkshire footprint (including Bracknell Forest, Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead) we are:

- a) Ensuring our processes are consistent across the six localities and embedding our best practice learning as standard practice across the county.
- b) Reviewing the options for linking more closely with neighbouring CDOPs would maximise the learning potential for the system. In particular, a provisional learning arrangement with Oxfordshire CDOP is being negotiated.
- c) Launching eCDOP in January 2019 and ensuring full connectivity with the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) from 1 April 2019.
- d) Confirming the senior leadership quality assurance arrangements to promote a continual learning culture and review the effectiveness of the CDOP function.
- e) Reviewing the model of joint home visits against the findings of Rapid Response audits of unexpected child deaths for 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- f) Considering the new role of the Medical Examiner being introduced into all acute hospitals on 1st April 2019 in relation to child deaths.
- g) Working with the Coroner to determine the additional criteria for referral of Berkshire child deaths to the Coroner's office.

Workforce development and training

Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements are a rich source of learning. This learning need to be accessible and translated to frontline staff and volunteer's day-to-day practice. 'Working Together 2018' expects the CCG, Police and Local Authority) identify what learning opportunities are needed, and review the effectiveness of this provision.

Berkshire West safeguarding training is provided in different forms to respond to the learning needs of staff and volunteers at the following levels:

- Universal – Staff / volunteers who have occasional contact with children and young people
- Universal – Staff/volunteers who might get involved in safeguarding processes
- Targeted & Specialist – Staff where a substantial amount of time is spent working with vulnerable and at risk children young people
- Specialist – Senior leaders.

Continuous learning requires a shared collective understanding of new and emerging needs, trends and risks. Learning must be applicable to practice, wherever possible we will seek to de-mystify training and provide bite-sized learning inputs. The success of the Berkshire West forum model of inter-agency learning has proven particularly effective at engaging pharmacists, GPs, police officers and school staff; this will be maintained. We are committed to ensuring that the Berkshire West workforce receives updates on evidenced based practice about what works and utilising research.

Wherever possible, we will provide reflective learning spaces where frontline staff and volunteers can share their experience of working with children and families around particular issues or concerns; to learn together as a whole system. This contributes to our shared partnership commitment to improving outcomes for our children, young people and families.

In 19/20 the successful learning forums will continue to be expanded and further developed and to ensure learning is as accessible as possible, these will become more frequent. These forums embed the learning from Serious Case Reviews. We will also introduce learning days, which will be thematically focussed, which will enable attendees to attend for some or all of the programme, depending on their working arrangements. The first two themes for Forums are adolescent risk and developing professional practice. This will provide capacity for additional learning events in response to local learning in a timely way. In between Forum meetings there will be 'seven minute briefing' dissemination. These events will be accessible free of charge, due to the impact of funding restrictions in services limiting partner agency attendance at learning events.

The review of partner agencies learning and development programmes and impact on practice and outcomes for children will continue.

Funding arrangements

Statutory Partners have reached an agreement for funding to cover the transition year 2019/20. This agreement demonstrates the commitment from partners to continue to robustly support the new arrangements during the transition year.

Discussions on the funding moving forward into 2020/21 will begin in September 2019.

A Learning System

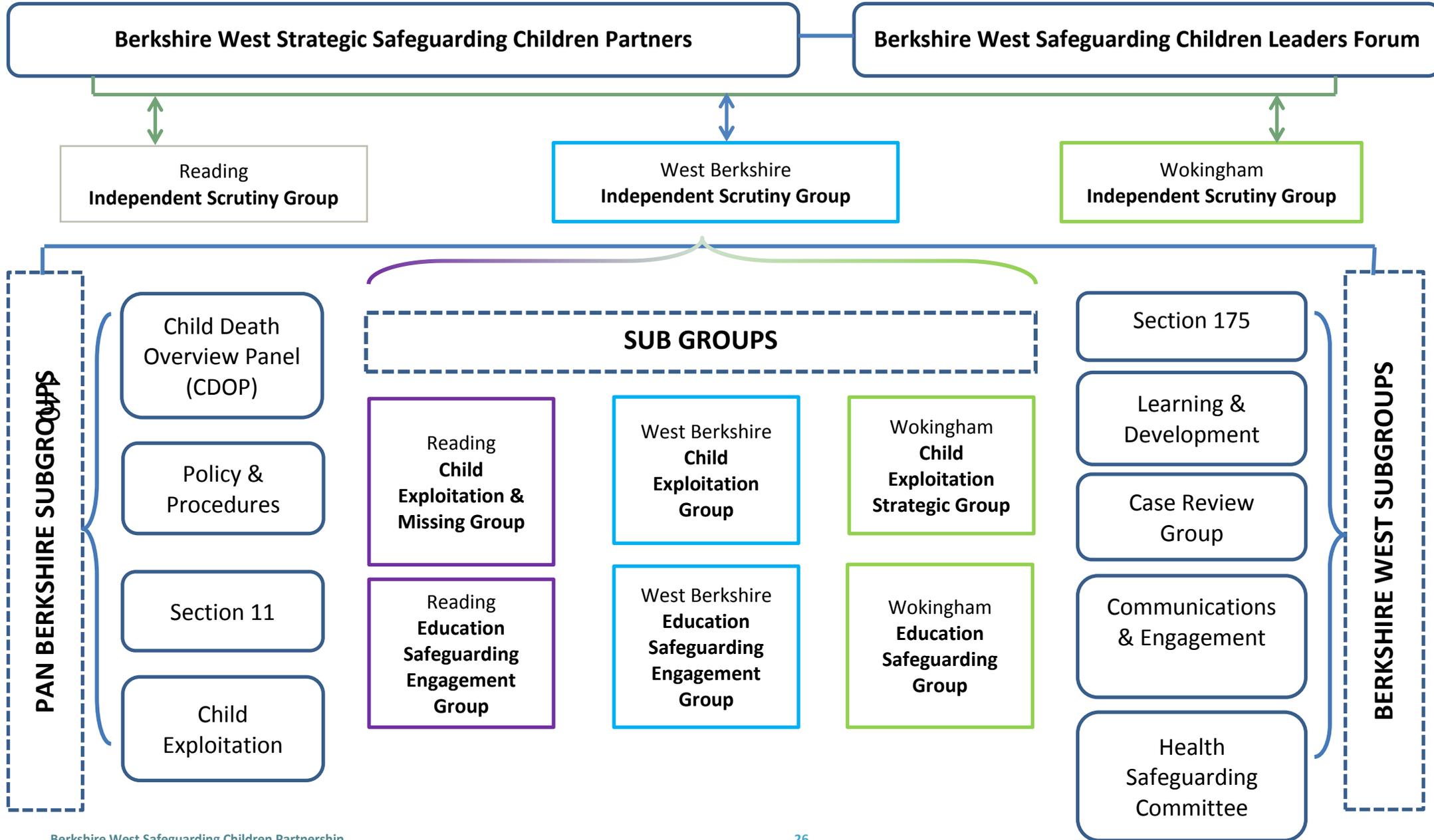
Berkshire West leaders are committed to working together to create an ongoing learning culture.

All leaders recognise that the first twelve months of the new Berkshire West Safeguarding Children arrangements will be a key period of learning, in which adaptation and responsiveness will be of crucial importance.

Systems leaders are committed to working together to continually improve the system in collaboration, with a focus on improving outcomes for local children and young people.



APPENDIX 1: Berkshire West Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement Structure



APPENDIX 2: Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partners Governance

These arrangements will be subject to review via a range of governance structures across the partnership. This will be listed below, with the date approved.

Governance Body/Meeting	Date Reviewed

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