



Reading | West Berkshire | Wokingham

Berkshire West

95 Safeguarding Children Partnership

West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading

November 2020

Agenda Item 35.

Background

Alan Wood was commissioned by the DfE to lead a review of the effectiveness of LSCBs on the outcomes for children. This review took place between January and March 2016.

§ The review concluded that most Safeguarding Children Board arrangements had difficulty demonstrating their value in improving outcomes for children.

Working Together 2018 guidance replaced LSCBs with flexible equitable safeguarding partnership being designed by the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Our local history

Wokingham, Reading and West Berks LSCB's had operated as 3 separate Boards since 2004, but with a shared Independent Chair.

67 Many discussions had taken place about the benefits of merging the 3 LSCBs in order to:

- Maximise resources in terms of duplication of work and the attendance to multiple Boards by some partner agencies
- Share themes and learning which are common to all areas
- Support and challenge each other on a wider footprint to maximise outcomes for children
- Strengthen partnerships

Our new arrangements

- The 3 LSCB's merged in July 2018
- The 'new' multi-agency partnership arrangements were agreed in March 2019 – now known as the **Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership** (BWSCP)
- ∞ The new arrangements were published on 30th March 2019 and implemented on 30th June 2019.
- The new arrangements are led by the statutory partners who have equitable responsibility – with commitment from the wider partnership.
- The published arrangement document can be found here:
<https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/about-the-scp/about-the-bwscp>.

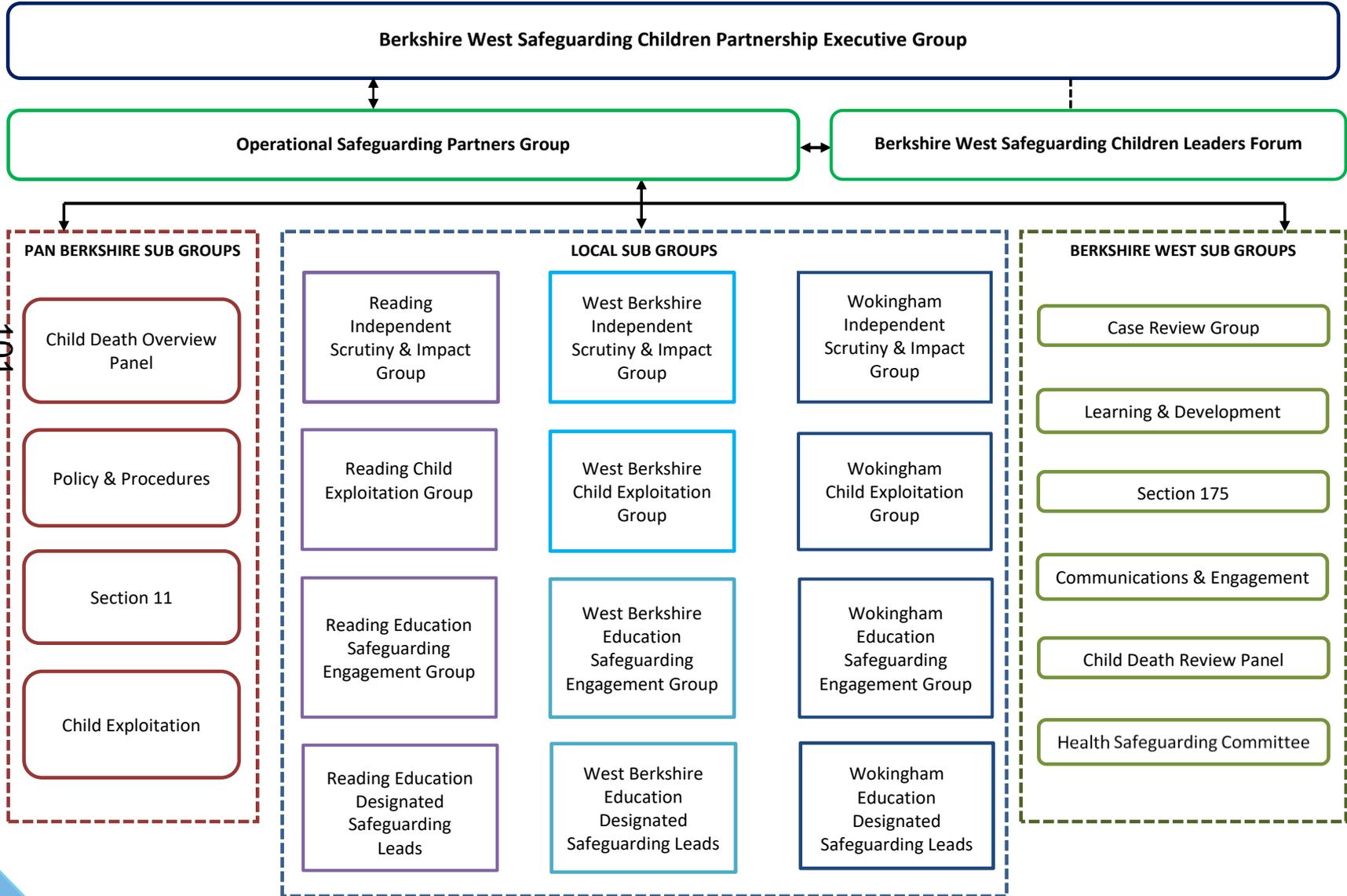
What is different?

- There is a new role of Independent Scrutineer as we no longer have an Independent Chair
- There is no 'Board'. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners meet as an Executive Group 3 times per year but have contact in between the meetings to ensure any significant Berkshire West issues can be discussed and resolved. Multi-agency partnership discussions for each locality will now take place at the Independent Scrutiny and Impact Group (ISIG)
- There will be 2/3 Children's Leaders Forums per year, these are the wider partnership meetings to share learning and good practice and the experience of children and practitioners across the Berkshire West partnership.
- There is an Education Safeguarding Engagement Group in each area to ensure school leaders have a chance to directly feed into safeguarding discussions.
- The **responsibility for safeguarding sits with all of us** and not with a separate body or Independent Chair.

What is the same?

- We still share key safeguarding responsibilities, such as Child Protection Policy and procedures and the Child Death Review process, across Berkshire.
- We can still ‘think local’ within Wokingham based subgroups and concentrate on those issues specific to our area. However we are now able to share learning and good practice across Berkshire West, as well as discuss themes and issues that are wider than our local borders.
- The partnership remains passionate about improving lives for our local children, but with a partnership structure that we can make work for us.

BWSCP Structure



Review after Year 1

There are many very positive elements of the new arrangements:

- There has been excellent attendance and support from a wide range of partners at all sub groups, including 3rd sector, with a rich and sophisticated level of skill and knowledge, which comes together to promote challenge in a safe way
- ¹⁰²Willingness to think differently has been a strength, even when partners have felt anxious deviating from the old familiar format
- The statutory partners are cohesive in their approach to making the arrangements work and driving forward change to improve outcomes for children
- The Partnership Support Team has emerged as a real strength in helping to steer the partnership on its new journey and supporting the core business held in the subgroup structure

Review after Year 1: Challenge and Change

- Our partnership is committed to scrutinizing our effectiveness and changing the arrangements if improvements are required. The year one review led to the following changes:
 - An Operational Leaders Group has been established at a Berkshire West level to drive forward progress in cross cutting themes. This group can add the context of how services work together and to facilitate planning of the work required by the partnership and another level of scrutiny and impact
 - The Independent Scrutiny function has been revised to provide a more flexible approach by a colleague who understands the local dynamics, whilst still allowing us to commission external scrutiny to demonstrate complete impartiality on specific pieces of work, e.g. large multi-agency audits, peer review.

Review after Year 1: Key Achievements

In our first year there are some significant achievements. This includes:

- A clear and effective Rapid Review process that provides detailed and comprehensive learning for cases at an early stage, which has been recognised by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel as best practice.
- A new website for Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership that brings together all the key information from the previous LSCB websites and makes the location of information for practitioners and families clearer and easier to access.
- A committed Strategic Partnership ensured the best plans were in place to identify and respond to risk to help protect vulnerable children and support practitioners during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Review after Year 1: Key Achievements

- The locally devised and produced 'Be Brave – Speak up' online campaign which reached 81,824 (with a total number of impressions being 522,445 being watched an average 6.3 times) and shared 207 times on Facebook.
- ^{100%} A free to access online Universal Safeguarding course has been created locally and made available on the BWSCP website for all our partners to access – this had been particularly welcomed by our Education community.
- Local learning and key information from 5 Serious Case Reviews was delivered to 167 practitioners as an opportunity to participate in multi-agency safeguarding discussions.

Review after Year 1: Key Achievements

- A review of Threshold and Levels of Need documentation across Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading has led to the revision and production of new aligned Threshold Guidance in each area. There is still a Wokingham document, reflecting local processes, but the three new documents use similar language and have a similar approach, look and feel. This is a huge step forward in supporting all our practitioners to understand when and how to make a referral to our Children's Services. This has just been agreed and will be launched soon.

Further information about our first year can be found here, in our annual report:

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/about-the-scp/berkshire-west-annual-reports>

Contact Details:

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership Website

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk>

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The partnership support team:

- Esther Blake – Strategic Partnership Manager, Brighter Futures for Children
- Sherrie Newell – Operational Partnership Manager, Wokingham Council
- Donna Gray – Senior Coordinator, Brighter Futures for Children
- Vacant – Coordinator

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