

Safeguarding Early Adopters programme

Learning example

Early Adopter: Wiltshire

Learning theme: A whole systems approach to protecting young people and introducing a community focused approach to safeguarding

Introduction

Wiltshire's Safeguarding approach is based on one simple proposition:

Children, young people and adults live in families and local communities; these can be sources of support and safety or of danger and risk. Our approach to safeguarding and protecting our community is focused around where people live and with whom – it's an approach which has 'Think Family, Think Community' at its heart.

The new Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) is a more holistic approach to cover and address work which sits across children and adult services and community safety. It brings together the leaders of police, health and the Local Authority to take a holistic approach to challenges identified through:

- The Community Safety Partnership and associated work streams
- The work of the Safeguarding Adults Board
- The new Families and Children Outcomes Board (designed to provide quality assurance of safeguarding services across our system)
- The Families and Children's Transformation programme (FACT)

A priority for the new partnership was to examine our approach to protecting young people/adolescents at risk - specifically from knife crime, gangs, county lines, criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and those missing.

Early Adopters funding allowed us to recruit a Criminal exploitation – pathways & risk analyst to examine how the triangulation of data from across the partner agencies could inform and support the introduction of the multi-agency Vulnerable Adolescents Contextual Safeguarding Panel. The panel is ensuring multi-agency information and intelligence is gathered and shared to identify children and young people who are vulnerable to exploitation. We will map hotspots, trends and risks in missing episodes, identify victim and perpetrator information and target criminal activity involving children including County Lines. This informs the work of the SVPP and supports development of strategy and an operational response.

Background, aims and objectives

- A Wiltshire Risk Management Group (RMG) and Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation panel (MASCE) had been in place in Wiltshire for over five years.

- The former LSCB arrangements included a Child Exploitation and Missing Children subgroup. Through that subgroup the Board commissioned a review of cases relating to adolescents. The context for this was to begin to explore how effectively the existing child protection system protected adolescents at risk, particularly those on the edge of criminal behaviour or exploitation.
- The Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) programme proposed the development of a young people's service – which will focus upon CSE, CCE, vulnerable adolescents and missing young people and will be aimed at 10 – 18 year olds. This will incorporate our YOT, Emerald (CSE and missing team), our No wrong Door Service (young people on the edge of care) and will also have social workers, managing risk from a contextual safeguarding approach.
- It was agreed that new arrangements for Partnership working focus on place-based safeguarding and community resilience. The work of the Child Exploitation and Missing Children subgroup continues under the auspices of the Community Safety Partnership and will support the local public health approach to tackling violent crime.

Approach

- Wiltshire are part of the contextual safeguarding scale up project by the University of Bedfordshire. We are one of a small number of areas who have been successful in our bid to be a development site. The Contextual Safeguarding Scale-Up Project (CSSU) will create an operational Contextual Safeguarding system in Wiltshire.
- During the selection process for the scale up project the level of strategic commitment from a range of agencies in Wiltshire was noted as well as our early work to adopt new partnership arrangements. The work done here will provide a roadmap for other rural areas who are yet to implement their new partnership arrangements or to develop a contextual safeguarding approach.
- Because partnerships are strong in Wiltshire we can rely on a good track record of self-scrutiny and challenge. The SVPP has been created to add value to this work and will focus on challenge and scrutiny into areas of cross cutting importance.
- Partners have developed a multi-agency Wiltshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children exploitation strategy which will be delivered through the SVPP.
- Partners at our Community Safety Partnership are working together to ensure there is a public health response to violence - the SVPP ensures that the development of this response is well understood and supported by senior leaders across the partnership.
- The development of a new Vulnerability Tracker supports VACS meetings by identifying those young people most at risk. This work will be supplemented by partners coming together to examine cases and establish learning from multi-agency service involvement in the lives of those young people and their families. This learning will further inform the SVPP and, essentially, the continued development of effective multi-agency intervention.

- A multi-agency training offer is allowing us to raise awareness of child exploitation and missing children amongst the multi-agency workforce to enhance early identification and equip everyone to practice in an effective trauma-informed way.

Challenges

- Our intention to share intelligence and data where appropriate and necessary to inform the new partnership has meant that we have had to consider and overcome barriers to doing so - bringing together data held across agencies has been complicated by the use of different software and attaining the necessary licenses.
- Developing a response that works across adults, children's and community safety whilst ensuring the specific demands of WT to safeguard children are fully met has been a challenge. We have arrived at something which we think addresses the WT issues but does so in a cross-cutting way and sets out a pathway for further integration over the next period.
- Avoiding duplication has been a challenge and an area we continue to focus on.

Successes

- The new partnership is bringing together strands of partnership working which had been designed to meet statutory obligations that sit across different areas of work - namely safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, and community safety.
- The SVPP creates a team of senior leaders from across the partnership ensuring they are informed of and approach challenges across our system in a cross-cutting way.
- We have a clearer view of those adolescents most at risk, those geographies where risk is highest and, essentially, where activity is needed to prevent a next generation of children become adolescents at risk.

Conclusion

- The work of the new partnership is still developing. However the approach we have taken to co-developing a multi-agency approach to mining and analysing data is ensuring all of our work is evidence based.