



# BRADFORD DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

**ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024**





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## 2 FOREWORD BY THE SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

### Foreword by the Three Statutory Partners.

As Bradford District's statutory safeguarding partners, we are pleased to present the Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP) Yearly Report for 2023-2024. This report reflects our collective commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across our diverse and vibrant community.

Over the past year, we have faced significant challenges, including resource constraints, financial pressures, the cost-of-living crisis, and the ongoing need to address systemic issues within our safeguarding structures. These factors have profoundly impacted children, young people, and families. Our commitment to continuous improvement and collaborative working has enabled us to meet these challenges and make substantial progress in key areas. This report provides an overview of our activities, achievements, and ongoing work to manage risks and enhance our safeguarding arrangements

A key highlight of this year has been the stabilisation of our workforce, which has strengthened our ability to deliver consistent and effective safeguarding services. This is the foundation for all of our work.

Our workforce is our greatest asset, and we are committed to their ongoing development. Joint learning, training, and development are critical to supporting our practitioners in delivering effective safeguarding services. This report also reflects our dedication to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth, built on transparency and openness.

Our commitment to learning from serious incidents remains unwavering. The insights gained from local child safeguarding practice reviews have been instrumental in shaping our training programmes and enhancing our practice. For instance, the thematic review of injuries in babies led to the implementation of the ICON (Coping with Infant Crying) programme and the promotion of the DadPad app, providing valuable support to new parents.

We have continued to prioritise our key areas of focus: Neglect, Injuries in Young Babies, and strengthening Leadership Structures for Safeguarding. Jointly developed strategies have guided our efforts, and we have made significant strides in building trauma-informed practice and leadership through comprehensive training and policy development.

Alongside this, the comprehensive revision of our data set, overseen by the independent scrutineer who chairs the Performance, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PMAE) subgroup, will enable us to adopt a more data-driven approach to safeguarding activities. This will allow us to understand the impact of our efforts better, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that our strategies are effective and responsive to the needs of our community.





As we look to the future, we will continue to listen, learn, and understand the needs of our community, mobilising our collective resources to ensure that Bradford District children and young people are safe, supported, and able to thrive. The upcoming structural changes, driven by the publication of "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023," will further strengthen our partnership and enhance our ability to safeguard those in need.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the agencies, professionals, and community members who have contributed to our safeguarding efforts over the past year. Your dedication, collaboration, and unwavering commitment are essential to safeguarding. We deeply value and appreciate your contributions, and together, we will continue to strive towards our vision of a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for all children and young people in Bradford District.

## Lead Safeguarding Practitioners



**Lorraine O'Donnell**  
Chief Executive  
Bradford Council



**John Robins**  
Chief Constable  
West Yorkshire Police



**Rob Webster**  
Chief Executive  
NHS West Yorkshire  
Integrated Care Board

## Designated Safeguarding Practitioners



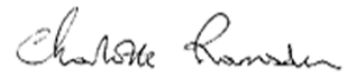
**Terese Pattern**  
Chief Executive  
BDCT and Place Lead  
Bradford District and Craven



**Richard Padwell**  
Chief Superintendent  
District Commander  
West Yorkshire Police



**Marrium Haque**  
Strategic Director  
Children's Services  
Bradford Council



**Charlotte Ramsden**  
Chief Executive  
Bradford Children and  
Families Trust

### 3 INDEPENDENT CHAIR FOREWORD



#### Foreword by Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Janice Hawkes

This report covers the period April 2023 to March 2024, during which time I have had the privilege of both chairing the Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP) and acting as its Independent Scrutineer. While Bradford and its people continue to face significant challenges, the period has seen steady progress by partner agencies to bring about improvements to practice and processes to safeguard children and young people within the District.

Throughout the period, I have observed good engagement by agencies across the partnership at all levels, the continued development of a culture of openness and constructive challenge between partners and notably a commitment to work collectively to “problem solve” and move practice forward. The publication of Working Together 2023 and the changes required in terms of chairing safeguarding partnerships provides an opportunity to further strengthen and clarify governance within the Partnership, an issue that had previously been raised by some partners who felt decision making processes at the most senior level of the Partnership were not as clear as they could be. The latter quarter of the period under review in this report saw a marked improvement in the focus and engagement of the Strategic Leadership Group – something which stands the Partnership in good stead for the implementation of its new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in the coming year.

The BDSCP has worked closely with the Children’s Services Improvement Board to support its work, recognising that no single agency can effectively drive improvement without the support of its partners. Notable successes include the embedding of the “conversations based” approach at the Integrated Front Door which has been broadly welcomed by partner agencies and the collaborative work undertaken to improve practice and processes around multi-agency risk assessment and management. The adoption within the Children and Families Trust of a clear relational practice model has been welcomed by staff within children’s social care and work is ongoing to raise awareness of the model across partner agencies. A task for the coming year will be to see endorsement across the partnership of a shared model of practice.

The report below demonstrates the collaborative work undertaken by partners to promote progress against the business plan priorities, to identify learning from case reviews and ensure that learning is shared and promoted across agencies, to remain alert to emerging issues and to develop robust approaches to quality assurance and measuring the impact of partnership activity. The subgroups are the key building blocks within the partnership, and I am grateful for the continued commitment of their members to supporting its work.

The Business Unit has continued to drive forward and co-ordinate activity, enhanced by the appointment of two key posts: the Case Review Officer and the Performance, Intelligence and Quality Assurance Officer.

A positive start has been made, driven by the Business Unit, to support senior leaders' "line of sight" providing insights into the experience of children and young people and frontline practitioners through the Unit's work with schools to capture children's views (see below for more details) and through the development of the Practitioners Forum. The Practitioners' Forum is in the early stages of its development, but to date has provided myself as Independent Scrutineer a good opportunity to check out with frontline staff how key changes to multi-agency practice, such as the implementation of the new model for the Integrated Front Door, are received and experienced by those who are most impacted by them. The Forum has also provided a vehicle for eliciting support for the roll out of key programmes such as ICON and the awareness raising campaign around Private Fostering.

The work of the Neglect Subgroup has ensured increased focus on one of the partnership's key priorities, including the development of a shared practice approach, key performance measures and the planned launch across the District of the Graded Care Profile. The challenge in the coming year will be to measure the impact of these approaches in day-to-day practice. A planned programme of multi-agency audits in the autumn will hopefully act as a baseline against which to measure progress. A similar approach to driving forward progress in a key priority area through a focused subgroup could be adopted in the coming year to support the Partnership's current work around preventing injuries in small babies.

A focus for the coming year must be to continue to build a systematic process for analysing key qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate impact of multi-agency activity in key priority areas and the overall functioning of the multi-agency arrangements. Work is underway to agree a refreshed and multi-agency data set and a programme of multi-agency audit, supported by an improved audit tool has been agreed.

The past year has seen an improved and expanded multi-agency training offer, geared to address key learning points from local safeguarding practice reviews. I commend the work undertaken by the Learning and Improvement Subgroup to improve attendance and welcome the commitment of the Strategic Leadership Group to examine how individual agencies can support the drive to ensure all relevant staff receive the training identified as key through those case reviews.

The appointment within the Business Unit of a Case Review Officer to support the work of the Partnership in undertaking rapid reviews, commissioning local safeguarding practice reviews and most importantly in pulling out key themes across reviews, has been welcome. BDSCP has experienced high volumes of reviews in recent years and, in line with experience nationally, key recurring themes have been identified.

The newly developed Thematic Action Plan is an important tool in highlighting and monitoring those areas requiring action by the Partnership as a collective and by single agencies; the task for the coming year will be to ensure continued focus and scrutiny of those actions and measurement of impact.

I would like to thank colleagues from the Business Unit and across all partner agencies, working within the structure of the BDSCP and on the front line for their commitment and drive to bring about the necessary improvements to practice and in supporting children and families across the District. The challenges facing the District in the coming year are not diminishing, with continued high levels of need and the financial pressures faced by all agencies. However, the evidence of the work undertaken collectively during this past year and its impact is heartening and I have confidence in the continued commitment of Bradford's staff across all agencies to bring about further improvements in practice to safeguard our children.

I look forward to working in the coming year with the Partnership under the new arrangements as its Independent Scrutineer.



**Janice Hawkes**  
Independent Scrutineer  
Bradford District Safeguarding  
Children Partnership





## 4 ABOUT BRADFORD

Bradford District is a diverse and vibrant place that combines culture, history, and nature. It is the birthplace of many well-known people including novelist and playwright JB Priestley, world famous artist David Hockney, singer Zayn Malik, the Bronte sisters & England cricketer Adil Rashid.

Bradford is a City of Film, with the National Science and Media Museum, the Alhambra Theatre, and the Bradford Film Heritage Trail. The City is full of Victorian architecture, City Park, Sunbridge Wells, and Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. The City has been chosen as City of Culture for 2025 and planning for this is well under way to bring 12 unforgettable months of creativity, culture and the arts.

Beyond the city there are a number of towns, such as Ilkley, Keighley, Shipley, the World Heritage site of Saltaire and Bingley with it's famous Five Rise Locks, each town with their own character, as well as beautiful countryside with moors, valleys, and villages. Haworth is the world-renowned home of the Bronte sisters and attracts visitors from all over the world to visit the area including the Parsonage Museum where the family lived.

### **Alongside all this though, it is also a district of challenges.**

- Bradford District is the fifth largest local authority in England in terms of population after Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, and Manchester.
- The most recent Census of 2021 estimates that there are currently around 546,000 people in the District, of whom 21.4% are aged under 15, making Bradford the youngest English city outside of some areas in London.
- Bradford District is amongst the most deprived Districts in the country, ranked 13th in England (where rank 1 is the most deprived local authority and rank 317 is the least deprived).
- Bradford District is ranked the 5th most income-deprived and the 6th most employment-deprived local authority.

In November 2018 Children's Services in the District were graded inadequate by Ofsted and there have been struggles to address this over the intervening years which has now led to the creation of the Bradford Children and Families Trust to provide children's social work services in the district.

All agencies across the District have had challenges from funding and recruitment and earlier this year Bradford Metropolitan District Council announced a plan to make £175 million savings over the next five years to bridge a gap in its finances.

## The Data

Between April 2023 and the end of March 2024 there had been a total of 41,745 contacts with the Integrated Front Door of the Bradford Children and Families Trust, which was an average of 3479 per month (an increase from an average of 2953 in 2022/23).

These contacts resulted in 8919 referrals into the Children's Trust (down from 9212 in 2022/23).

As of the end of March 2024 there were 1358 Children subject of Child in Need Plans (down 25 from the previous year), 719 Children subject of Child Protection Plans (down 246) and 1485 Children in Care of the Local Authority (down 101).

## 5 PRIORITIES OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The BDSCP has priorities for the Partnership for the next period. These are;

### Priority One – Child Neglect

Developing strategies and tools to enable effective multi-agency responses to concerns of neglect across the Bradford District.

### Priority Two – Injuries in Young Babies

Developing multi-agency practice and process to support families at the earliest possible juncture to reduce the instances of non-accidental injuries in babies.

### Priority Three – Developing the Leadership Structure for Safeguarding

Recognising the need to continually refresh and develop the Partnership management structures to reflect changes in senior leadership. Ensuring that the vision of the Partnership is upheld.



## Priority One - What we are doing or planning.

The Neglect Subgroup is leading on the Partnership responses to neglect across the district. Please the update for this group below.

Bradford has also undertaken a benchmarking activity with other local authorities with similar demographics and issues of deprivation to understand how they have formulated their responses to neglect. As part of this, Bradford has linked in with Birmingham, who have made significant progress in this area, to look at identifying best practice that could be transferrable to Bradford.

## Priority Two - What we are doing or planning.

The Partnership has assisted in the relaunch of ICON - Coping with Infant Crying.

### ICON stands for:

- Infant crying is normal, and it will stop.
- Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby, and the crying will stop.
- Okay, to walk away if you have checked the baby; it is safe, and the crying is getting to you.
- Never ever shake or hurt a baby.

Alongside this, the Partnership has been highlighting the DadPad app as a helpful resource for new dads. It provides practical advice and tips on everything from newborn care to coping with the emotional challenges of parenthood.

The Partnership commissioned a Thematic Review of Injuries in Babies cases that had been identified in the district. As well as progressing the recommendations from the report we also organised three briefing sessions run by the author where partitioners could hear what her conclusions were from the cases reviewed and could discuss how things could be done differently in the future to take into account the findings she had highlighted.

## Priority Three - What we are doing or planning.

Following the updated version of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 there was a requirement placed on Safeguarding Children Partnerships to review their structures and lines of accountability. Locally this process has begun with a refreshed Senior Leadership Group and a rationalisation of the structure below that to create a clearer line of accountability between strategic vision and operational delivery. The new structures are still under review with a requirement to publish these by the end of 2024.



## **6 WORK OF THE BDSCP SUBGROUPS**

### **Neglect Subgroup - What we have done**

The Neglect Subgroup was formed in March 2023 as a direct response to the identification of responses to neglect as being the top priority for BDSCP. The first area that the group looked at was developing an overall strategy for addressing neglect in the District. This was signed off the Senior Leadership Group of BDSCP. This was published in May 2023 and the group activities are designed to work towards the priorities in this strategy (Neglect Strategy).

During the year the Subgroup have reviewed and refreshed the Neglect Toolkit that was designed to assist professionals assess different aspects of children's lives and understand whether or not these considered together would be indicative of neglect and enable them to respond to this at the earliest possible moment (Neglect Toolkit). The group have also been looking at replacing this with a nationally recognised assessment tool, Graded Care Profile 2, which has been created by NSPCC and used across the country in a large number of districts. It provides a structured framework to evaluate the quality of care across various areas including physical care, safety, love and esteem. It gives an objective measure of the care of a child by a carer and takes into account the commitment and effort shown by the carer. The Subgroup recommended this tool to the SLG and it has been agreed that the Partnership will pay for training in order to launch this across the partnership in Autumn 2024.

The group received presentations from colleagues in Birmingham whose responses to neglect have been assessed as of good quality and considered what lessons from their work could be applied to our response in the Bradford District. The Birmingham Children's Trust, praised for its innovative and effective strategies in child welfare, has been recognised for its approach to safeguarding, receiving a 'good' grade in the most recent Ofsted Inspection in March 2023.

The group also considered the findings related to neglect from Child Practice Reviews, both locally and nationally, and considered responses to these in terms of training and professional practice.

### **Neglect Subgroup - Areas of more progress**

Funding has been made available to roll out training for the Graded Care Profile 2. This is a nationally recognised assessment tool which has been created by NSPCC and used across the country in a large number of districts. It provides an evidence-based assessment tool for use by agencies across Bradford and will assist in improving responses to emerging issues of neglect in families.

The Partnership is undertaking a data mapping process to identify "hotspots" for neglect concerns so that support opportunities for families in those areas can be assessed.



## Learning and Improvement Subgroup - What we have done

We have continued with a large and still expanding offer of core training. A useful and clear training calendar advertising face to face, virtual and eLearning training offer has been circulated and is available on the Safer Bradford website to assist staff in identifying key training offers.

We concentrate on multi-agency level 3 training, but also have links available with the Virtual College who offer level 1 and 2 training online. Refreshed training includes the key priority of neglect, utilising the model of looking at case studies, cumulative harm and working through the Neglect Toolkit. We have also run professional practice sessions on injuries in immobile babies, another key partnership priority, as well as Fabricated or Induced Illness (so called FII).

During Safeguarding Week in June 2023, BDSCP joined with the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board and the Bradford Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence team to run a conference focusing on Professional Curiosity, which features in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR's) Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's). The event was attended by over a hundred people from across the spectrum of agencies in Bradford. In addition, separate sessions looking at Raising Awareness – Safeguarding Disabled Children, "County Lines" Professionals Training, Critical Thinking, Education Safeguarding, Unconscious Bias as well as presentations from a Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking charity were run during the week.

Over the last year we have changed all our training from the signs of safety model to a restorative approach and introduced the Thorpe Model related to how Social Care receive and respond to contacts in the front door team, in line with Children's Social Care's new approach. The Partnership is due to work towards utilising Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) as the multi-agency model for safeguarding and we are already planning how this will be incorporated in Neglect and other training. Included in this is a planned conference in the autumn to launch GCP2 across the Partnership and link this with responding to neglect.

A further conference is planned for June 2024, which will again be held jointly with the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board and the Bradford Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Team looking at learning from all forms of case review and looking at commonalities of recommendations is planned for June 2024.

During 2023/24 460 BDSCP face to face training sessions have been attended by Bradford staff. In addition, over 4200 sessions have been undertaken on the Virtual College site.

## Learning and Improvement Subgroup - Areas of more progress

The group is considering how to incorporate role play / immersive learning and communication skills into our training offer. Specific training for workers from overseas is being considered along with how to reference cultural competency in our training, an area highlighted in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews locally and nationally.

Work continues to develop a methodology for measuring impact of training along with how learning is being disseminated within individual agencies. This has proved challenging to receive assurance about, but the group continues in its efforts to provide the assurance the Partnership needs regarding this.

Booking and attendance on training continues to be problematic. Despite SLG agreement, some charges for non-attendance are not being paid. Whilst we acknowledge the pressures of work, we continue to be disappointed in lost opportunities for staff to broaden their knowledge in key priority areas. Detailed data on courses by agency is being reviewed. Some courses e.g. the conference and professional practice sessions, appear to be better attended and we are seeking to understand what makes some training more desirable for staff and others less appealing so that we can tailor the offer more effectively. In particular, we are working hard to ensure that training covering key Partnership priorities, in particular neglect, is as well attended as is possible.



## **Safeguarding and Professional Practice Subgroup (SaPP) - What we have done**

The group has undertaken work around the Bradford Private Fostering Strategy to update the process and highlight circumstances that amount to a Private Fostering Arrangement and the range of support that is available for this.

As part of the joint work Bradford undertake with the other four local authorities in West Yorkshire, we authored a new document providing guidance for “Engaging with fathers and other significant others.” This was a direct consequence of the responses to the Star Hobson case where existing guidance did not cover all family structures. This is now available on the West Yorkshire Consortium procedures website to assist professionals across the county.

SaPP has led on multi-agency working practices and guidance for Strategy Meetings, which are multi-agency meetings to discuss immediate safeguarding concerns. It has been recognised that these historically had not been run as efficiently as would be ideal to ensure agreed safety planning, and that the inviting of the correct professionals had been inconsistent. The work of the group has been focused on providing updated guidance and improving processes and early signs from audits undertaken since the changes have shown improvements.

SaPP have been involved in a new process for assessing the needs and risks for children prior to birth. The Pre-Birth Assessment Panel is a new process for assessing risk and need and assists professionals in responding in a more timely fashion to issues prior to the birth of children. It seeks, among other things, to enable prompt responses where legal proceedings are assessed as being likely to protect the child.

The group has reviewed the composite list of practice and policy improvement areas identified from our Case Reviews and ensured these are part of a forward planner of work. The group has asked for the planned multi agency audit themes to be added to the standing agenda to ensure any learning is captured.

## **Safeguarding and Professional Practice Subgroup (SaPP) - Areas of more progress**

In conjunction with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board, SaPP has begun work on an innovative methodology for responding to concerns about Forced Marriage, so called Honour Based Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation. This will provide a multi-agency method for sharing information, managing risk and responding to concerns. It is planned for this to come live in the 2024/25 financial year and will be reported on more fully in next year’s annual report.



## Case Review Subgroup - What we have done

The Case Review Subgroup has overall responsibility for overseeing both Practice Reviews commissioned by the Partnership to look at specific cases where there is learning, as well as undertaking the Rapid Review process to consider if the circumstances warrant a full review or whether learning can be captured in alternative ways. The group, along with the Oversight and Delivery Group, have responsibility for monitoring the progression of the action plans developed to meet the learning from Reviews and seek assurance from agencies about progress against these plans.

The group meets bi-monthly and is well attended by multi-agency partners.

### Work undertaken during the reporting period.

Ten Rapid Reviews were undertaken during this period and actions and learning have been collated by the group to take forward across the Partnership. Work has been ongoing to improve reporting templates incorporating stronger evidence of analysis of information submitted to enhance learning.

One of these Rapid Reviews which BDSCP did not progress to a CSPR has been included in the National Panel Review into intrafamilial sexual abuse which is currently being undertaken.

In addition, there have been six Practice Reviews that took place to capture learning from incidents that have occurred. The Case Review Group oversees the commission of these reviews identifying authors with the appropriate knowledge to effectively identify learning outcomes that the District can effectively address to improve practice.

Four CSPRs were published during the period by The Partnership (see Section 7 below).

Given the number of reviews and subsequent recommendations the Subgroup considered opportunities to maximise responses from partners. The BDSCP wanted to ensure a focus on responses to all review recommendations and have worked on a document that addresses these in a thematic way to better coordinate the work of the Subgroups and agencies to respond effectively to the recommendations from these and previous reviews. This is now forming the core of work planning for the Subgroups with the Oversight and Delivery Group maintaining an overview of progress towards achieving the requirements of the reviews. This is an innovative process that was developed locally and has been approved by the National Panel for Child Practice Reviews.

Work will continue into the next reporting period to seek assurance from partners against these themes through action plans and a series of practitioner events co-ordinated through the Oversight and Delivery Group.



Two reviews are currently ongoing locally and will be published in the 2024/25 year.

Throughout the period the group received reports and sought assurance against action plans from partners to previous review learning, including Star Hobson.

The rapid review partners have also had meetings with the National Panel to discuss review work and to provide assurance against action planning.

In September a Case Review Officer was appointed to the Business Unit which has been of great support with the work carried out by the group.

A Case Review Management System was commissioned to co-ordinate all review work and went live in January 2024 with training for staff who input data into the system.

### **Case Review Subgroup - Areas of more progress**

Work has continued looking at alternative responses to review work to try to identify innovative methods of sharing learning with frontline practitioners. This has been done in conjunction with colleagues in the Learning and Improvement Group to consider alternative methods to disseminate learning to frontline practitioners in order to influence practice in key areas identified by the reviews. An example of this is a piece of work being planned with external facilitators to supporting best practice in supervision for practitioners.

Partners have met to discuss the Serious Incident Notification Process in light of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and to ensure optimum responses to notifications are arrived at. This work is progressing.



## All Age Exploitation Subgroup (AAE) - What we have done

The All Age Exploitation (AAE) Subgroup has been instrumental in addressing and preventing exploitation within the Bradford District over the past year. This Subgroup has focused on creating a safer environment for children and adults by implementing strategic actions and collaborative efforts, reflecting the priorities outlined in the Working Together Guidance 2023.

Throughout the year, the Subgroup has supported initiatives like the Breaking the Cycle Team, which seeks to divert young people from serious crime and exploitation. This team collaborates with police and youth practitioners in local hospitals, providing immediate support to young people affected by violence. Such efforts align with the priority of early intervention and prevention, ensuring that at-risk individuals receive timely and effective support.

A significant focus has been raising awareness and educating stakeholders about various forms of exploitation. Presentations on coercive practices, such as witchcraft linked to modern day slavery and human trafficking, have provided critical insights into emerging trends. These educational efforts have been essential in equipping professionals with the knowledge needed to identify and respond to exploitation, supporting the priority of informed practice and inter-agency collaboration.

The Subgroup has also developed a comprehensive branding strategy for the exploitation agenda centred on Prevent, Protect, Pursue, and Prepare principles. This initiative, funded by the Community Safety Partnership, aims to enhance the visibility and impact of the Subgroup's work and promote a unified approach to tackling exploitation across the district.

Collaboration has been a cornerstone of the Subgroup's activities. By exploring successful case studies, such as the Leeds Street Support Initiative, the Subgroup has identified best practices for supporting vulnerable individuals, including those living street-based lives at risk of exploitation. These discussions have fostered a shared understanding and commitment to implementing effective interventions that align with the priority of working in partnership.

Addressing organized crime and its links to child exploitation has been another critical area of focus. The Subgroup has initiated collaborative efforts to identify and support children at risk of being drawn into organised crime activities. This work underscores the importance of safeguarding vulnerable children through targeted interventions and multi-agency cooperation.

Community-specific projects have also been a priority. The Subgroup has supported Barnardo's work within the Roma community, utilising staff with strong community ties to conduct meaningful research and interventions. This project exemplifies the Subgroup's commitment to culturally sensitive approaches and inclusive safeguarding practices.

This year, the Exploitation Hub has continued to develop. Updates to the hub's structure and operations, including creating performance measures and integrating feedback from service users, have strengthened its capacity to address exploitation effectively. The Subgroup has emphasised maintaining robust links between adult and children's services, ensuring a comprehensive approach to transitional safeguarding.

Human trafficking and Modern Day Slavery have been prominent topics within the Subgroup's discussions. Updates on current trends and strategies, training offers and information sharing through the Police Intelligence Portal have reinforced the importance of vigilance and collaboration in combating these issues.

Ongoing practice reviews and continuous improvement efforts have been integral to the Subgroup's work. By incorporating lessons learned from various incidents and reports, the Subgroup has refined its strategies and training programs, ensuring they remain relevant and effective. Additionally, capturing the voices of children impacted by exploitation has been a priority, ensuring their experiences inform future strategies and interventions.

The Subgroup has also progressed in implementing its delivery plan, with leads assigned to various strands to ensure coordinated action across the district. This structured approach has facilitated a continuous focused response to exploitation.

### **All Age Exploitation Subgroup (AAE) - Areas of more progress**

The All Age Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan will remain a focal point for the next 12 months. The Subgroup is committed to building on progress, enhancing multi-agency

collaboration, and ensuring that strategic priorities are met effectively. Through ongoing efforts and dedicated focus, the Subgroup aims to make further strides in preventing and addressing exploitation, creating a safer and more supportive environment for all individuals within the Bradford District.

## Performance Monitoring Audit and Evaluation Subgroup (PMAE) - What we have done

The Performance, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PMAE) Subgroup has faced several challenges over the past year, including changes in leadership and the absence of a Performance Manager. These issues impacted the Subgroup's effectiveness. However, with the independent scrutineer's recent appointment as the Subgroup's chair and a new Performance and Information Manager, the Subgroup is now better positioned to make significant progress.

Throughout the year, the PMAE Subgroup has made notable strides in enhancing the evaluation of current practice reviews by implementing an appreciative inquiry approach. This approach aims to build on strengths and successes, fostering a more positive and proactive safeguarding environment. Additionally, efforts have been coordinated to address challenges in the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment (Section 11) process, ensuring a more streamlined and practical approach to safeguarding assessments. This will be reviewed during 2024/25.

Efforts are also being made to refine performance measures and develop a new data dashboard, which is particularly crucial in response to the findings from the Star Hobson review. The aim is to create a more streamlined and focused data framework that highlights key areas aligned with the group's priorities and facilitates better decision-making.

## Performance Monitoring Audit and Evaluation Subgroup (PMAE) - Areas of more progress

A key focus for the upcoming year is integrating multi-agency data into the Subgroup's evaluations. Historically, the focus has been on data from Local Authority, specifically Children's Services. Progress is now being made to capture data from multiple agencies, providing a broader picture of safeguarding across the district. This multi-agency data approach will enhance our understanding of the safeguarding landscape, leading to more informed decisions and improved outcomes for children and families.

The PMAE Subgroup will focus on finalising the performance dashboard and enacting the quality assurance framework in the coming year. These initiatives are expected to enhance the Subgroup's ability to effectively monitor and evaluate safeguarding practices. Additionally, the Subgroup is committed to developing a pragmatic and actionable work plan for 2024, ensuring clear goals and milestones are set. This structured approach will help solidify the Subgroup's operational framework and work plan, driving continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.

The Subgroup will continue to address the integration of single-agency audits into multi-agency assurance processes. This includes fostering a culture of openness and reciprocal sharing of audit findings among agencies to improve collective safeguarding efforts. Enhancing information sharing is a critical priority, particularly in supporting children and families through effective initial child protection processes.



## Oversight and Delivery Group Subgroup (ODG) - What we have done

This group works to coordinate the work of all the subgroups and assists with focusing key Partnership priorities. The group seeks to identify issues from across the Subgroups that need highlighting to the Partnership senior leaders as emerging issues that they need to consider in their strategic planning.

During the year, the group continued to monitor progress against the recommendations and actions generated by the Star Hobson Practice Review. It has also started work to coordinate activity to address the recommendations of other practice reviews brought together in the themes document.

The group has maintained working contacts with other professional bodies covering the district for example the West Yorkshire Integrated Care System Board where shared learning from reviews has been presented.

ODG has contributed to discussions about the necessary changes to the revised Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) that are required by the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 published in December 2023.

## Oversight and Delivery Group Subgroup (ODG) - Areas of more progress

The group will continue to monitor and coordinate progress of responses to the Practice Review recommendations highlighting blockages in progress to the senior leaders for consideration of targeted action to address these.

The group will be reviewing the Terms of Reference for the group, in light of the changes required by Working Together 2023, to ensure that the refreshed structures retain the strengths of the current structures and enable the contributions of as wide a group of safeguarding organisations working in Bradford as possible.

### Additional Work

BDSCP has set up and supported an Educational Reference Group for the District. This group, while not formally part of the Subgroup structure, promotes the Partnership's engagement with education providers across the district and enhances a two-way process of sharing concerns and seeking solutions to safeguarding issues within educational settings.

The Partnership has maintained a focus on practice improvements through a Multi-Agency Improvement Development Group that is chaired by the Independent Scrutineer, Janice Hawkes. This group provides a forum to drive improvements in practice across the safeguarding agencies and enable proposed changes to be discussed across the Partnership and agreed. The group has worked to improve the Strategy Meeting processes, information sharing across agencies as well as the workings of the Integrated Front Door where concerns are shared with Children's Social Care. It also provides a forum for discussing specific issues around practice and seeking solutions.

## **7 LEARNING FROM LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS**

During this period Bradford published four Practice Reviews related to serious incidents with children in the District. The Partnership wanted to use these reviews as a vehicle to learning and to seek to ensure that frontline practice reflects these areas of learning.

- **The Siblings**
- **Child A**
- **Sara Edvina and Danuka**
- **Thematic Review babies who sustain injuries**

Across these reviews there were themes covering parental mental health concerns, domestic abuse in the family, cultural competency, neglect, effectiveness of assessment and supervision, and injuries to very young children.

As part of BDSCP responses, the author for the Thematic Review undertook a series of frontline practitioner events, which over seventy people attended, to present her findings and provoke discussion about how the partnership could respond to the issues highlighted in the report. These were well received sessions. One participant stated "I set off that morning in the snow and was thinking I hope this is going to be worth my time, slightly feeling it probably wouldn't be relevant and be more guided towards CSC staff – How wrong I was. I have to say that when I saw the demographics of the 3 case studies, I actually felt sick – I'm the teenage pregnancy midwife and the pregnant teenagers I'm currently caring for will be the next set of case studies if we don't get it right. The day was really informative, and I felt Nikki was very connected to the whole group and also really realistic about what we can do better. I'm glad she asked for our feedback because it also helped me to think about what I can do better moving forward. It really got my brain ticking about how we can try our best to not let this become a repeat cycle."

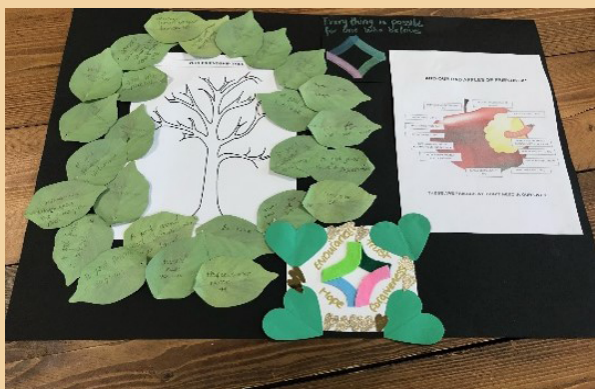
The BDSCP wanted to ensure a focus on responses to all review recommendations and have worked on a document that addresses these in a thematic way to better coordinate the work of the Subgroups and agencies to respond effectively to the recommendations from these and previous reviews. This is now forming the core of work planning for the Subgroups with the Oversight and Delivery Group maintaining an overview of progress towards achieving the requirements of the reviews. This is an innovative process that was developed locally and has been approved by the National Panel for Child Practice Reviews.

## 8 VOICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

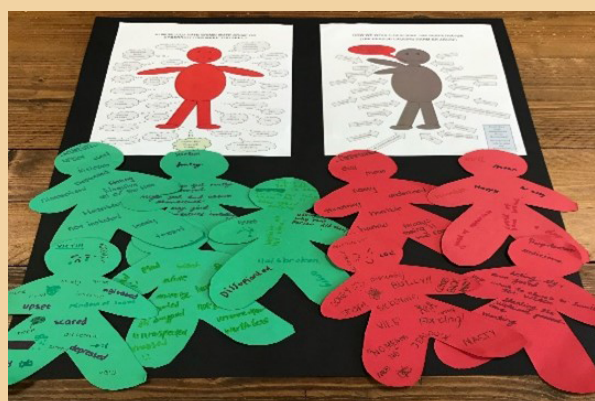
Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership continues to look at innovative ways to engage with children across the district.

### Children's Voice Project

Children's Voice is a joint project involving the Partnership and schools within the Bradford District and aims to increase knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues, as well as providing the opportunity for pupils to explore experiences through a variety of plenary sessions including individual and joint tasks with a creative element. The project is designed for any KS3 student who may potentially be deemed to be at risk of abuse or neglect - including SEN children, looked after children and supported children within the Bradford District. However, schools may elect to include other pupils who they feel may benefit from this project.



The project runs for 5 lots of 2-hour sessions and is delivered by 3 members of the Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit who collectively have prior experience in teaching / training, social work as well as social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) practice within schools.



In the first 2 sessions the children explore topics such as: what is safeguarding? What makes a good friend? What is abuse? What is hate and mate crime? Who are victims and perpetrators and how this would make an individual feel?



The following two sessions are creative, where the children create individual squares of card or fabric using a range of craft materials. These are then collated together to form a final piece of work depicting their voice by answering the questions "what makes you feel safe?" and "what makes you feel happy?" The final piece along with the other tasks completed within the project are kept within the school. In the final session of the programme, the children are presented with their completed work, certificates and a thank you gift.



It is also intended that the Partnership will seek the opinion of children involved in the project to provide their vital insight into a range of safeguarding topics - for example, the last Children's Voice

cohort provided their opinion on the 'All-Age Exploitation' logos. There will also be additional opportunities for the group (or individuals within the group) to provide direct feedback to the Partnership when we wish to seek the views of 'experts with experience' by joining a district wide focus group. Building these relationships will allow the Partnership to call on representatives from the Childrens Voice Group to provide input on future projects and maintain the voice of the child throughout our work.

These sessions will continue to be offered to schools within the Bradford District – and the second cohort is now underway. We have plans to deliver the project via an alternative methodology with Barnardo's and three further schools have already expressed an interest in being involved.



## Bradford District Care Foundation Trust

BDCFT Public Health Nursing Children Services (PHNCS) have introduced The Voice of the Child Guidance for Staff relating to children aged 0–5 years and 5–19 years, with the aim of staff being able to truly capture the child's lived experience. It is recognised that it is often easier to focus on what the parent says rather than on what is seen and heard but by using the voice of the child approach, one can truly capture the child's lived experience. By noticing the child's emotional state, cues, likes, dislikes, sensitivities, and preferences, staff can start to understand their world and perspective. Importantly, staff can make observations in relation to risks and notice when there are problems. Being skilled at capturing the Voice of the Child should ensure early intervention is provided and that signs of neglect and abuse are identified earlier.

The Voice of the Child training has been provided by the (PHNCS) and is required for all staff working within the PHNCS working with children aged 0-19 years.

This guidance has recently been updated to include guidance specific to children with specialist learning and education needs. These guides are detailed and are a good source of support for staff who are implementing this in everyday practice.

## 9 SAFEGUARDING EVENTS AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

During this period the Safeguarding Training Coordinator completed a Training Strategy for BDSCP & BSAB (Training Strategy).

A programme of face-to-face training courses has continued to be developed and offered to professionals. These include topics such as Safeguarding Children Assessment and Analysis Framework, Working in the Margins – Safeguarding Disabled Children, Understanding Sexual Abuse, Working with Disguised Compliance, Your Role in the Child Protection Process, Fabricated or Induced Illness, Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines, Poverty and Child Neglect, Trauma Informed and Relationship Based Practice as well as Allegation Management.

As outlined in the Learning and Improvement entry above, the Partnership also ran a series of events during Safeguarding Week in June 2023 including a Tri-Board Event considering Professional Curiosity.

Looking to the rest of 2024 and into 2025, the Training Calendar includes a number of events in June 2024 during Safeguarding Week, including the previously mentioned Tri-Board Event which will look at learning from Case Reviews. Additionally, there are planned events looking at so called "Hidden Men", Self-Neglect and Missing Children.



## 10 FINANCES

The Business Unit received combined contributions from the three statutory partners of £684,324 for staffing and running costs of Partnership activities for both the BDSCP and BSAB. Of this, the spending amounted to £560,202 an underspend of £124,222 for the year which was mainly the result of staff vacancies during the year.

## 11 LOOKING AHEAD

In response to the publication of Working Together 2023 (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023), BDSCP is reviewing the structure of the Partnership, the membership of the various groups that make up that structure and the governance of the Partnership and its activities. The final structural changes need to be decided upon and in place by the end of 2024 and a report of these will be included in the Annual Report 2024/25.

## 12 HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

### Talk to us about a child or young person – practitioners

We have a dedicated Practitioners Advice and Guidance telephone number to share information about any concerns you have about a child or young person within the Bradford District or to make a referral.

#### Before making a referral

Prior to making a referral, all practitioners need to:

- Speak with their Safeguarding Lead within their own organisation.
- Ask themselves “Have you done everything you can to help and support the family?” · Refer to the Continuum of Need document (PDF) on the Bradford Safeguarding Partnership Website.
- Contact the allocated Social Worker directly if Children’s Services are already working with the child or young person.



## CONTACT US

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### If you are a practitioner

During office hours:

Call us on **01274 433999**

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm

Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Out of office hours:

Practitioners can **share information or make a referral using our online forms.**

If you are worried about a child and would like to make a referral out of hours or if you need some further information or advice, use our Children's Services portal.

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### If you are a member of the public

Call us on our freephone number – **0800 953 0966**

#### **Bradford Children and Families Portal.**

Use our online forms through the **Bradford Children and Families Portal.** The portal is our online system that allows members of the public to share any concerns they have about a child by completing a secure form. You do not need to leave your details.

#### **Bradford Families and Young Persons (FYI) Directory.**

If you are looking for information and advice, please visit our Bradford Families and Young Persons (FYI) Directory.

#### **Emergency Duty Team.**

The Emergency Duty Team (for emergencies outside of office hours) will make an assessment, on the telephone, of any immediate need or risk and take appropriate action to ensure that child or young person is safe until the next working day.

Call our Emergency Duty Team **01274 431010**

#### **Police**

If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police on **101** or **999** for emergencies.

