



# **Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership**

## **Annual Report Executive Summary 2023-2024**

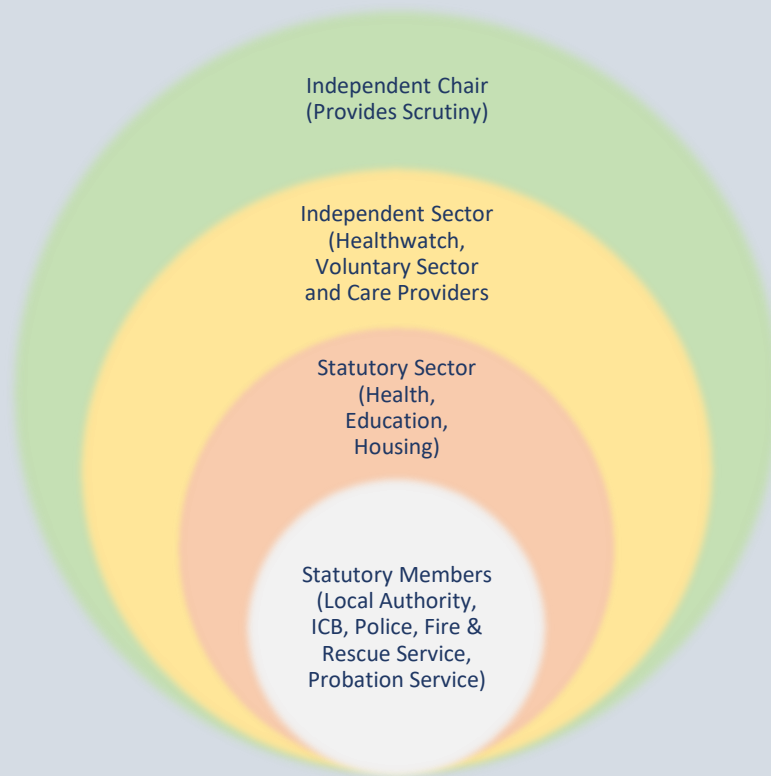




## About the B&NES Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership

### Safeguarding is everyone’s business.

The BCSSP is made up of the five statutory agencies with responsibility for safeguarding and community safety; B&NES Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the B&NES Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board, Avon Fire & Rescue Service, the Probation Service and other statutory organisations (e.g. Health and Care providers) as well as independent sector organisations (e.g. Voluntary groups) to enable us to work effectively and with joint purpose to protect children, adults, families and communities who most need our help.



Partners in B&NES continue to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children, adults at risk and communities, with the core purpose of:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**
- Safeguarding adults with care and support needs**
- Protecting local communities from crime and helping people feel safer**
- Ensuring the effectiveness of what partners do both individually and together.**



## **Our Statutory Duties**

As the BCSSP was formed from merging three different statutory areas of work, we must ensure that our practice is compliant with the responsibilities set out in the legal frameworks for each of these areas.

### **Community Safety:**

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) aim to reduce crime and the fear of crime, address risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities and facilitate the empowerment and strengthening of communities through the delivery of local initiatives. CSPs are a statutory body required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsequent amendments). The 'relevant authorities' that form the CSPs are the Local Authority, Police, Health, Probation and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Their function is to:

- Act as a legal body for CSP work, ensuring compliance with statutory duties and addressing community safety issues
- Ensure systems and processes are in place amongst partners to deliver their duties and address arising issues
- Set priorities, determine policy and strategic direction.

### **Safeguarding Children:**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out that the three safeguarding partners should agree on how to co-ordinate their safeguarding services, act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others and implement local and national learning, including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

Safeguarding arrangements must include:

- Arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area
- Arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- Arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangement.

### **Safeguarding Adults:**

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The overarching purpose of is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs. The BCSSP should:

- Assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- Assure itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused, working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- Ensure agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred



- Assure itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

## **Multi-agency Learning and Practice Development**

In this reporting period, the BCSSP has not undertaken any Domestic Homicide Reviews. It has undertaken 3 Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, of which 2 have been published and 4 Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

### **Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews**

The purpose of reviewing serious child safeguarding cases is to identify improvements that can be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

2 serious incident notifications have been received for consideration by the BCSSP between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. A Rapid Review was deemed appropriate for each notification, and it was agreed that local learning had been identified through this process. A CSPR conducted jointly with South Gloucestershire was completed and published in this period.

All 3 reviews involved babies under 1 year of age with suspected non-accidental injuries.

### **Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)**

The BCSSP must arrange for a SAR to review a case involving an adult in its area (with needs for care and support). During the period covered by this report, 1 case for consideration has been received, which did not meet the SAR criteria and 4 SAR reports have been ratified.

### **Domestic Homicide Reviews**

The BCSSP has had no DHR referrals in this reporting period.

## **Multi-agency Quality Assurance**

### **Section 11 Audit**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

For 2023-2024, the five children's Partnerships across the Avon and Somerset region worked together to audit organisations working with children and families. The self-audit form was circulated to all partners across the 5 local authority area in August 2023 to assess monitor and evidence progress and achievements in relation to meeting safeguarding requirements.

A full report has been produced and shared with the partnership.

### **Section 175 Education Audit**

All educational establishments have a legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

When the Education Reference Group was established, they agreed to take on the responsibility of the S175 audit. They made the decision to change the timeframe for conducting the audit, to align with the academic year. The audit was circulated in September 2023 and the deadline for responses was January 2024.

A full report has been written and ratified through the Education Reference Group.



### **Safeguarding Adults Audit**

The BCSSP has worked regionally with the four other Partnerships of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Somerset and North Somerset to develop one combined safeguarding adults' self-audit.

The combined safeguarding adults audit was proposed and agreed by the BCSSP Executive Group.

Whilst this audit is beneficial to the BCSSP in gaining oversight of member organisations and assurance on their community safety and safeguarding work, it is not a statutory audit and therefore not all organisation took part in the exercise. However, we did have a 29% increase on returns this year.

### **Multi-agency Training and Workforce Development**

The BCSSP training and development programme is designed to help ensure the continuing development of all staff in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and to keep our communities safe.

The appointment of a BCSSP trainer has mitigated the need to use external trainers as frequently, which has enabled greater focus on local practice issues (previously external trainers tended to utilise national events in discussions rather than specific local incidents). This change has been reflected in course feedback whereby delegates have continually highlighted the successful use of local knowledge, with discussions and practice issues being based on local information.

### **Partnership Achievements**

2023-2024 has been a period of change for the BCSSP. In person development days were held in April and December of 2023, which brought together partner organisations to review the LGA Peer Review findings and the effectiveness of the current multi-agency arrangements. The engagement of partners over these 2 days was admirable, and demonstrated the level of commitment in leading the partnership to be the best it can be. This has been positive in that a structure has been agreed and chairs appointed for the new groups, but it has also meant that some groups will no longer continue and the BCSSP is cognisant that the work of those groups still needs to be reflected within the partnership.

### **Our Commitments for 2024-2025**

The BCSSP reviewed its performance for 2023-2024 and is firmly committed to working in partnership to achieve the objectives as set out in the 2024-2027 strategic plan. Our priorities have been identified through a range of evidence. This includes learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews, bringing executive partners together for two development days and consulting with wider partners. We have also considered current legislation, national, regional and local plans, local strategic needs assessment, including crime and disorder, public health and housing.

Much work has taken place to restructure the partnership and ensure our partners were involved and in agreement with the changes. The new structure has been positively received and the commitments were agreed at a multi-agency level.