

**Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding  
Partnership  
Annual Report  
2021/22**

## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR**

Throughout 2021/22, the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has continued to be felt in our communities and in the way our partner organisations work.

This has seen continued changes in working practices in 2020/21 and the partnership has proactively sought assurance that necessary safeguarding activity was being fulfilled.

I am pleased that despite the challenges of the pandemic, partners have engaged effectively with the work of the partnership. Many of our meetings have continued virtually, but I am optimistic that we will move to face-to-face meetings soon. Similarly, as a partnership we have continued to play a full role in the region and contribute to the development of regional strategies and policies.

Throughout the year, we have challenged each other to seek assurance that our practice is sound and that vulnerable children and adults are protected and safeguarded from harm. One of the most significant ways we have done this is to create separate children and adult safeguarding boards to ensure that we have adequate capacity to engage and drive forward the work of the partnership. We have also created a new Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board that brings a sharper focus on our efforts to protect and support victims, but to also prosecute offenders.

A central focus of this year's work has been on making sure we drive the statutory learning reviews we are required to undertake. These provide a real opportunity to ensure that we learn the lessons when there have been serious incidents of harm to vulnerable children and adults. To enhance this work, we have introduced a new independent quality audit to ensure that these reviews are as effective as they can be.

It has been another busy year and has seen once again a year-on-year increase in the number of contacts that Family Connect receive. We will continue to monitor the impact of this to ensure that the right contacts are being made to Family Connect and that the partnership 'threshold policy' enables effective decision making to safeguard the borough's most vulnerable children and adults.

In writing this year's annual report, we have taken a new approach and developed what we hope is a more purposeful report that is better focused on the impact of the work of the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership. I hope this new format is interesting and engaging.

## **PART TWO: TELFORD AND WREKIN THE PLACE**

The borough is a place of contrasts. The New Town of Telford has grown around existing, historic communities such as Wellington, Oakengates, Dawley and Madeley. Along the banks of the River Severn is Ironbridge, the birthplace of the industrial revolution and now a World Heritage site. Surrounding Telford is a rural hinterland – accounting for two thirds of the borough’s area.

Telford & Wrekin has a thriving economy. With a GVA<sup>1</sup> per capita rate higher than the West Midlands. The borough has retained its historic links to manufacturing and industry with 17.2% of local jobs in manufacturing.

The 2021 Census gave a population estimate of 185,600 - an increase of 11.4% from 2011 making it the fastest growing area in the West Midlands. This growth is supported by 1000+ net new builds each year which has seen the borough ranked by the annual Centre for Cities report in the top five for housing growth for the past 5 years.

As the population growth it is becoming more diverse and ageing:

- In 2011, 13% of the school children were from an ethnic minority and by 2021, the rate was 26%
- Between 2011 and 2021, the number of people aged 65+ grew by 36%. Twice the regional rate of 18%.

The population of the Borough is forecast to continue to grow to 200,000 by 2034.

The borough is a place of contrasts. Some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England are a stone’s throw from some England’s least deprived. Across Telford, there are 18 neighbourhoods (from 108) ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in England. More than a quarter of the borough’s population are living in neighbourhoods ranked amongst the 20% most deprived in England – some 53,800 people.

The impact of deprivation can be seen in health inequalities that exist in the borough. The difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods of the borough is 8.8 years for men and 6.4 years for women. Factors that drive such a difference include, for example, childhood and adult obesity.

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<sup>1</sup> An alternative measure of Gross Domestic Product or the value of the local economy.

## **PART THREE: SAFEGUARDING IN VIEW**

The year 2021/22 again saw increased demand into the Partnership's multi-agency safeguarding hub Family Connect, with 12,300 contacts, up from 11,000 in the previous year.

For children:

- 1,500 Early Help Assessments completed – 300 more than 2020/21
- An increase in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan, up to 210 from 169 in 2020/21.
- At the end of 2021/22, there were 423 looked after children and at a rate of 102 per 10,000 children. This was slightly lower than the position for the previous year at 104.

For adults:

- 447 safeguarding concerns were raised in 2021/22, with 97 progressing to a Section 42 Enquiry. This was a decrease in Safeguarding concerns compared to 2020/21, which saw 743 with 92 progressing to a Section 42 Enquiry. Across these two years, the conversion rate from Safeguarding Concern to Section 42 Enquiry increased from 13% to 215. The most common cause for a referral were neglect and acts of omission.
- Of the completed Section 42 Enquiries, of those individuals that responded, 100% felt that their desired outcome was either fully or partially met.

## **PART FOUR: PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Background**

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership is responsible for the implementation of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that protect vulnerable children and adults. This involves the development of necessary policies and strategies that define practice, and associated processes to share information where required to safeguard individuals. A core role of the partnership is to ensure that when things go wrong lessons are learnt and action taken to implement this learning. Much of the work of the Partnership is shaped by statutory requirements as prescribed by Government.

The core members of the partnership with specific statutory duties are Telford & Wrekin Council, West Mercia Police and the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group. Other key partners include:

- Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
- Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust
- Private Early Years representative
- Primary School representative
- National Probation Service
- West Mercia Youth Justice Service

- Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
- Wrekin Housing Group
- Shropshire Partners in Care
- Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

The Partnership is funded by contributions of £60,300 each from Telford & Wrekin Council, West Mercia Police and Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group. In addition, funding of £500 was received from West Mercia Youth Justice Service. In 2021/22 this meant that the Partnership had a total budget of £181,400.

The work of the Partnership is directly supported by a small team who are based in Telford & Wrekin Council. This team is partially funded by the Partnership.

### **Developing the Partnership**

The year saw significant changes to the structure of the Partnership with the creation of a Safeguarding Children Board, a Safeguarding Adults Board and a Safeguarding Partnership Executive. These new arrangements replaced a single quarterly meeting that considered both adult and children safeguarding matters. A review found that this single meeting did not provide adequate time to drive forward these two most important areas of work. and that the Partnership arrangements needed to evolve to create the necessary capacity.

Another important change in governance this year was the decision that the two safeguarding boards and the Executive should be independently chaired to enhance independent challenge and scrutiny of the work of the Partnership and the actions of the organisations making up the partnership.

Beneath each of these two new boards, the partnership structure was revised to ensure that there was adequate capacity to drive:

- Statutory case reviews to learn lessons and improve practice in response to serious incidents of harm relating to vulnerable children and adults.
- Quality assurance of the effectiveness of the Partnership's policies and practices.
- Training and communication
- Thematic sub-groups that drive priority areas of work.

The new arrangements are illustrated in Diagram One.

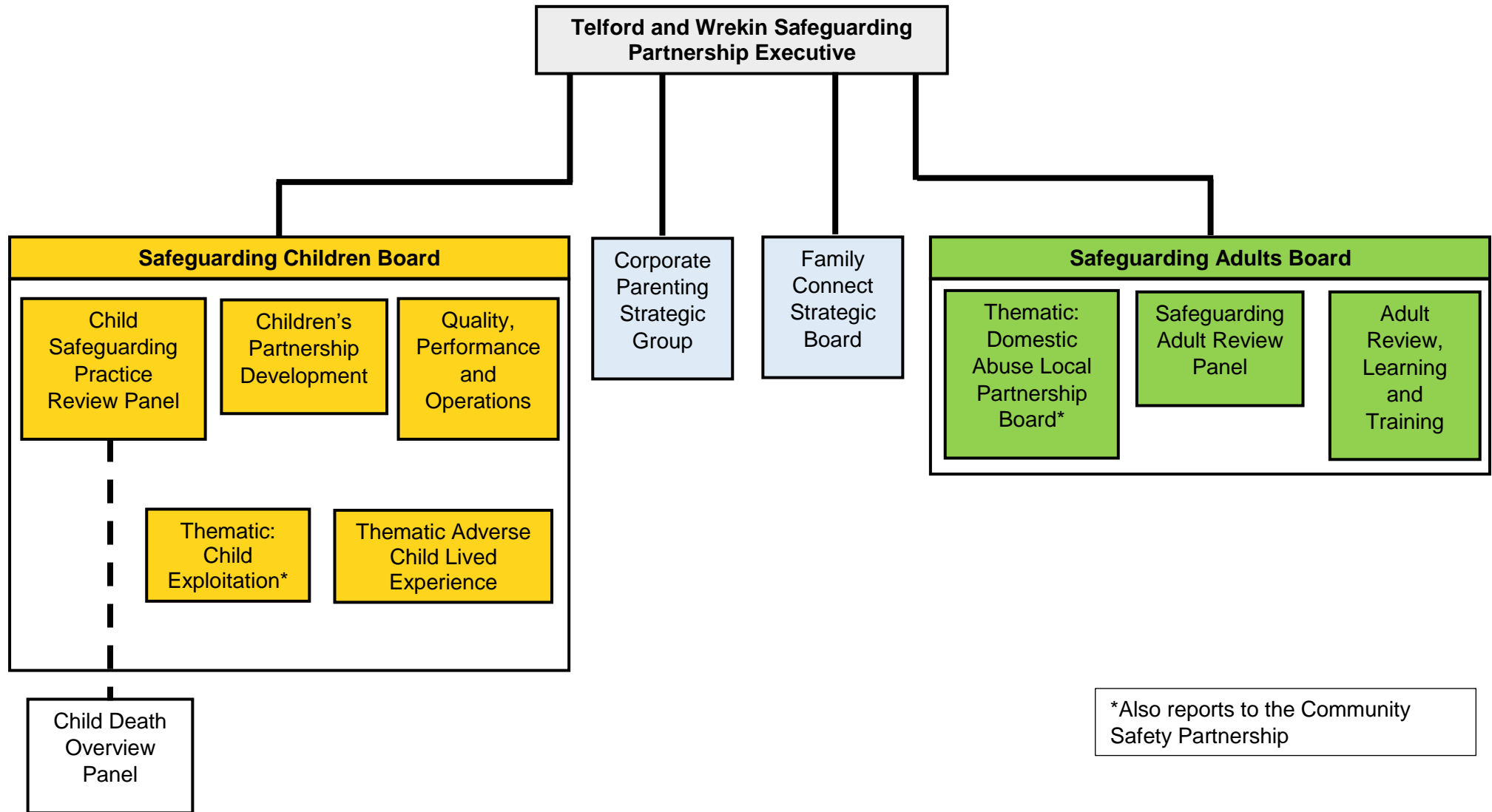
Following the creation of these new arrangements a new overarching strategic plan for the Partnership was created with four priorities:

- 1. Sharing and engaging with the Telford and Wrekin Community**
- 2. Implementing learning from reviews**
- 3. Further developing policies and procedures**
- 4. Ensuring appropriate single agency and multi-agency quality assurance processes are in place**

During the year the Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board each met four times and the Executive twice to drive forward these priorities.

Part five of this report sets out what has been achieved against these priorities.

Diagram One: Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Arrangements



## **PART FIVE: DRIVING DELIVERY OF OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### **1. Sharing and Engaging with the Telford and Wrekin Community**

The Partnership has a robust programme of communication and engagement with the community and practitioners which includes:

- A partnership website which hosts all key policies and strategies for practitioners, a broad range of information for residents and signposting to support where a person has concerns about a vulnerable child or adult.
- Professional newsletters to practitioners and partners which include, for example, practice updates and briefing notes following learning events.
- Specific promotional campaigns, for example Safeguarding Adults Week.
- Awareness raising by supporting specific events that deliver on our priorities, including:
  - CSE Awareness Day Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March
  - White Ribbon Day Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December
- Themed learning events identified through Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, for example, most recently a 'non-accidental injury' learning event for practitioners from across partner organisations.

#### **Children**

A key engagement mechanism by which the voice of the child is heard by the Safeguarding Children Board is the Children Safeguarding Board network. These are safeguarding boards in school run by children, with a total of 42 boards currently established within both primary and secondary schools in Telford and Wrekin. This year a key focus has been getting these Board re-established after the impact of Covid. The network has continued its excellent work and has focused on developing ideas to safeguard the wellbeing of children. For example, one school board has developed ten ways to better wellbeing and keeping safe which includes exercise, mindfulness and art. In addition, the network has focused on outdoor safety and online safety. The Board receives funding from the Partnership to achieve its goals and is supported by the Severn Training & Schools Alliance.

#### **Adults**

For adults the Telford & Wrekin Making it Real Board plays a key role in informing the work of the Adult Safeguarding Board. Making it Real are 'experts by experience', and so are uniquely placed to ensure that partners are kept in touch with the day-to-day realities for people who use services within the borough, and to ensure that local people are placed at the heart of decisions around the future of adult social care in Telford and Wrekin.

Through participation in the work of the Safer Stronger Board the Adult Safeguarding Team has forged new partnerships with Neighbourhood Officers. This has led to providing joint drop-in sessions at community centres across the Borough to raise



awareness of safeguarding and facilitate access to support for hard-to-reach groups. These drop-in sessions are a new initiative, and positive feedback has been received from both individuals and professionals, with plans to further expand the initiative to focus upon increasing engagement with ethnically diverse communities.

## **2. Implementing Learning from Reviews**

### **Children:**

In line with Working Together 2018, during 2021/22 the CSPR Panel received and undertook seven Rapid Reviews involving multi-agency input, information sharing and learning outcomes. Of these seven Rapid Reviews three progressed to a full Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Throughout the year we have evolved our processes to drive this work to ensure that we can meet statutory timescales and to improve the quality of this work. Latterly, we have appointed an expert independent external auditor to quality assess Rapid Reviews before they are submitted to National Panel.

From the review work completed, individual actions plans relating to the learning from these reviews have been created and are monitored by the Panel at its monthly meetings. The key learning themes from this review activity are:

- The need to reinforce the central role that professional curiosity should play in all cases.
- The correct and appropriate action educational settings should apply when a child discloses taking an overdose and that education settings should work together to share information when siblings attend different schools.
- To raise awareness of ‘invisible men’ and other adults in the family, or, connected to the family.

In addition, reviews have been undertaken on the midwifery assessment and referral process in relation to known substance misuse in pregnancy, the Multi-Agency Child Enquiry (MACE) processes within Family Connect and Safeguarding and Supporting Women with Additional Needs (SWAN)<sup>2</sup> referral process.

### **Adults:**

The SAR Panel met on a monthly basis and has undertaken and completed two Multi Agency Case File Audits (MACFA) where the criteria for a SAR had not been met however there was still learning to identified and implemented. All learning has

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<sup>2</sup> Where vulnerable pregnant women are identified by the maternity service, there is a process for planning and providing additional support for the mother-to-be and her baby. The SWAN group is a midwife-led group that includes attendance from health visitors, identified midwives and the family nurse partnership (FNP) with information contributed by Family Connect.

been addressed with changes made to improve practice and processes. For example, Commissioned Motivational Interviewing training for practitioners across the partnership following learning identified within one of the MACFAs.

To improve our processes around SARs, we have streamlined and ensured consistency in Review scoping documents to be used across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin for agencies that cover both areas. Similarly, we have developed and publicised a SAR Practitioner leaflet to provide support and guidance around their role within a SAR

In terms of external challenge, following an ADASS Association of Directors of Adult Social Services. the Adult Social Care team at Telford & Wrekin Council were rated as Exceptional.

### **3. Further develop policies and procedures**

#### **Regional work**

The Partnership has continued to play a full role in the West Midlands Regional Editorial Groups for adults and children's safeguarding partnerships, which develops and reviews regional policies and procedures.

Throughout 2021/22, we contributed to a programme of reviews, including Children with Disabilities, Forced Marriage, Children of parents with mental health problems, Information sharing and confidentiality, disguised compliance, coercive control and families who are hostile or resistant to change, honour-based abuse, and fabricated and induced illness. Where appropriate such changes in policy were communicated with relevant practitioners.

We also contributed fully to the development of Regional Section 11 process which will mean that partners who cover more than one Board area will no longer be required to produce multiple submissions.

#### **Children**

Through review work we have enhanced our approach to supporting children that have been effected by youth violence, offending and all forms of exploitation through the commissioning of St Giles to work with vulnerable children right across our windscreen of need for Child Exploitation.

Following adoption by the local authority, the Family Safeguarding Model has moved to become to a multi-agency way of working to support children and families in need of support. This has been well received by both families and practitioners and initial evaluations are demonstrating real benefits to working together in this new way.

Professional Curiosity Best Practice Guidance was developed, encouraging partners to 'see past the obvious'; raising questions, challenging and escalating concerns

where appropriate, quickly and clearly, to improve how we protect and meet the needs of children in Telford and Wrekin.

We have also contributed to the development of a procedure and pathway for the multi-agency response to young people presenting to a health based placed of safety when in mental health crisis.

## **Adults**

In January 2022, the Council's Adult Safeguarding Team rolled out a new Adult at Risk Service, with additional staff capacity funded by the Council and West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner. This new service works with adults who are at risk due to a range of different reasons and circumstances, but do not meet the threshold for statutory adult safeguarding, or funded adult social care as defined within Care Act legislation. This was a key area of risk identified by the Partnership.

The service is available to adults from the age of 18 at risk of harm. This can include:

- Difficulties managing on a day-to-day basis
- Risk of eviction and homelessness
- Risk from Criminal exploitation including County Lines/Cuckooing
- Issues with finances and debts

This new service has supported 12 adults with a range of support needs including:

- Domestic abuse - 4 cases
- Criminal exploitation - 3 cases
- Financial abuse - 2 cases
- Sexual abuse - 1 case
- History of childhood sexual exploitation - 2 cases

Key safeguarding adult policies and procedures that have been reviewed and made available through our online policy system "Care Knowledge" include:

- The Threshold of Needs Document
- Person in a Position of Trust Framework and Policy.

## **4. Ensure appropriate single agency and multi-agency quality assurance processes are in place.**

### **Children**

- Our last Section 11 audit was completed in November 2020 and all recommendations have been implemented. This is a bi-annual process, and we have committed to participate in a West Midlands regional Section 11 online tool for future audits.

- The Council's Safeguarding Service has undertaken a range of deep dive audit work to identify where support can be improved for any families where there is chronic neglect to ensure that the right interventions are in place.
- We have conducted Early Years and Childcare Section 11 safeguarding audits across the majority of these settings. For nursery/pre-school provision 91% of settings were audited in 2020/21, an increase of 4% and 74% of childminders were audited, an increase of 8% on last year.
- We have worked in partnership with the Schools Education Safeguarding team to identify action points in Section 157/175 audits. This team also delivered safer supervision training in partnership with this team.
- We undertook and implemented actions identified through a Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Case File Audit.

In addition the Partnership has challenged partners over critical reviews of their individual services including for example:

- The Ockenden Review of Maternity Services in the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Health Trust which concluded in March 2022. The findings from the Review have been reported/discussed at the Safeguarding Children Board and the Partnership Executive where assurances were sought over the safety of current services and the implementation of the Review recommendations.
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust (SaTH) were issued with a Section 31 notice in February 2021, and health partners provide regular updates to the partnership, providing assurance that work is being carried out to review arrangements for children and young people presenting in mental health crisis.

In addition the Partnership and individual partners have engaged with the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation, looking at how partners have responded to Child Sexual Exploitation since 1989. The Inquiry is expected to report in 2022.

### **Adults**

- Our last West Midlands Care Act Compliance Audit was completed in May 2021. Significant progress has been made on actions to date, and this will continue into 2022-2023. This is a bi-annual process, and we have committed to participate in a West Midlands regional online tool for future audits.

- We have carried out a Multi-Agency Case File Audit for a referral which did not meet the criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review, but where learning was identified.

### **Effective training**

As a result of Covid-19 face to face training was postponed and there was a push to deliver training via e-learning. The Partnership has paid for licenses on the Council's online learning platform Ollie, providing access to:

- Adult Safeguarding
- An introduction to ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and Early Trauma
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Child Protection – An Introduction
- Child Protection Investigation
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Awareness
- Corporate Parenting
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
- Domestic Abuse Awareness
- Early Help for Children and Families
- Emotional Abuse (Children)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Hoarding – An Introduction
- Legislation and Partnership Working
- Neglect (Children)
- Physical Abuse (Children)
- PREVENT
- Prevent – Raising Awareness of Radicalisation
- Using the Threshold of Needs Matrix

Throughout the year, partners continued to develop their own training to ensure that their practitioners had the right skills and knowledge to safeguard vulnerable children and adults. This included:

- Shropshire Community Health Trust: Bespoke safeguarding children and adults' induction videos created to complement the Trust's Corporate Induction.
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust: In September 2021 a new medical staff safeguarding training programme was also introduced to support medical staffing compliance, this remains under ongoing review.

### **Children**

- Delivering training on Raising Awareness of Exploitation & Vulnerability, Child Protection, Private Fostering
- Reviewing the Managing Allegations against staff and volunteers in a position of trust training, to be available to all multi-agency partners, early years and education providers
- Providing training in, and reviewing guidance for Thresholds, Early Help Assessments and Support Plans

## **Adults**

Since April 2021 the Adults Review Learning & Training group has:

- Delivered seminars around Making Safeguarding Personal across the partnership
- Reviewed the Cross Border Safeguarding Arrangement Policy to ensure it is still fit for purpose
- Commissioned a seminar across the partnership to focus on decision making and the importance of clear recording.
- Undertaken the West Midlands Care Act Compliance Regional Audit and started to implement identified improvements
- Reviewed and raised awareness of the Organisational Concerns Policy and Framework to ensure it is still fit for purpose

## **PART SIX: LOOKING FORWARD**

As a partnership we are very clear on our areas of focus moving forward. These include

### **Children**

In 2022/23 we expect to see the publication of the report of the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation. We will fully engage with the recommendations of the report and will respond accordingly and take on board lessons, as a partnership we can learn.

This year much of our collective focus has been on undertaking Rapid Reviews and subsequent CSPRs. Whilst this has provided valuable learning, next year we need to ensure that we undertake a number of Multi-Agency Case File Audits on themes that test our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements where we are aware there are pressures and challenges in the system.

Similarly, we have made progress this year on the development of a partnership dataset that brings together key information from across the partnership on the health of and demand in the system. We want however, to undertake further work to ensure that such a dataset fully underpins the work of the Safeguarding Children Board.

We will also look to undertake a review of our training offer to ensure that the multi-agency offer is fit-for-purpose, intelligence based and compliments existing single agency safeguarding training offers.

### **Adults**

Whilst much progress has been made this year, we will continue to work to fully implement our adult safeguarding quality assurance framework to capture quality assurance activities and measures. Related to this is the implementation of an

enhanced performance dashboard with greater focus upon qualitative measures, and ensuring the persons voice is heard throughout the safeguarding process

A key goal of our Domestic Abuse Local Partnership is to develop and implement a new strategy based on changes introduced as a result of the Domestic Abuse Act 2020.