



# **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board**



**ANNUAL REPORT- Summary Version  
2012- 2013**

Most young people in Wolverhampton can and do rely on a partnership of dedicated professionals who they can turn to when they are at risk of or subject to abuse, neglect or exploitation. They have a right to receive the best possible help from teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, probation officers or social workers. This report describes how they all those people and the agencies who employ them work together and individually to do just that.

This year's report describes what all agencies have been doing individually and together to help young people to be safer. As importantly it says what we are doing in the next 12 months and beyond to further improve outcomes for them. As the independent chair of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, as a resident of the City and as a parent and grandparent I am committed to helping young people feel and be safe. It is a massive responsibility and none of us undertake it lightly. I know my colleagues on the Board and every professional who works with young people here shares that ambition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Alan Coe'. The signature is stylized with a large 'A' and a long, sweeping underline.

Alan Coe

## **Why do we have a Board and what is an annual report?**

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) primary purpose is to improve outcomes for children and young people. We have a collective statutory responsibility to monitor and hold all partners to account for their safeguarding arrangements. We produce evidence to demonstrate that the partnership works well together. We want to be sure that we try and prevent children getting into risky situations and ensure they are protected if they do. We also strive to learn from situations where children or young people have needed protection; we are constantly improving ways to identify what works well, what needs to change and what we could do differently together. This is a summary of a much fuller report and highlights what we have done, what problems we have faced and what are plans are for the next two years.

## **Make up of the Board**

The Board's membership includes all the main partners who regularly work together to protect young people. They include the NHS, Council representatives including children's social care Services, The Police, Probation, The Voluntary sector and representatives of representatives of the community. It has an independent chair.

## **ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR**

The time of the Board and its member has been spent a number of important areas. They are :

- ensuring that where children and young people are abused the response has been fast and effective;
- making sure more people understand their role in safeguarding young people; and
- improving the way we identify people who are potentially at risk and by intervening and offering support reducing the chances that they will be subject to abuse or exploitation.

Our successes

The full report gives much more detail of what individual agencies and the partnership have achieved. These are a few highlights:

- We have trained staff on a new policy that makes it clearer when children may have reached the threshold for direct intervention to make them safe. This is important as it is essential we know when to try and offer support in a preventative way and also know when we must intervene to protect young people from direct harm.
- We have launched a new protocol for staff about what to do when young people might be subject to sexual exploitation.

- Through a nationally and locally reported conference we have raised the profile of the issue of 'forced marriage.' We are now writing guidance to support help people know what to do if they become aware of the issue.
- There has been city wide training about the dangers of the 'hidden harm' done to children by the substance abuse of adults who are responsible for their wellbeing.
- To assure ourselves that all partner organisations have appropriate measures in place to safeguard children each organisation is asked to audit and report back on what it is doing. We have analysed the response on this and it has informed our work plan for next year. The audit process needs more work before we can totally confident about the consistency and reliability of the responses we have had.
- We delivered multi-agency training at 65 events. This was more than previous years. It was offered to member agencies at a range of venues city-wide.
- *Promoting Safeguarding Week* took place during the week of October half-term. A broad range of agencies , including Health, youth service and children centres celebrated the week by having a stand placed in prominent areas ie, reception areas, and foyers to advertise and promote services and raise the profile of safeguarding
- The Mental Health Trust is raising awareness among its staff working with adults to ensure they are also focussing on children in the family. This has included training sessions and information sheets to ensure children are included in assessments and appropriate action is taken if there are concerns.
- There is improved practice concerning the response to young people who deliberately self-harm
- The Council children's social care services are now increasingly being delivered locally and with partners. Children and their families can now expect easier access to support locally form a wider range of professionals.

## **Prevention in Partnership**

Much work that helps safeguard children and young people is not done directly by the Safeguarding Board. Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF) launched the City's multi-agency Violence against Women and Girls 3-year strategy and detailed action plan during the year. Its key strands of work are around domestic violence, sexual violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called honour crime.

The work of the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership supports prevention and early identification of people likely to be exposed to danger and abuse. The partnership works with a range of partners to deliver national programmes such as Troubled Families and Hidden Harm. With partners

such as Base 25 the Empower and Inspire programmes have been successful in helping young people increase their self-esteem and confidence and make informed decisions.

### **Child Protection Activity**

In the past year the number of families with children with Child Protection Plans has gradually increased. Interpretation of this statistic is difficult and conclusions are hard to reach. This can be seen as a success if it is the result of better identification of children and young people at risk of or having been the subject of abuse. A decline in economic activity in the city and a rise in associated pressures on individuals and families is thought to be one contributor to any rise.