

## **Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership.**

### **Foreword**

The fundamental priority for all partners in the Bradford District is the welfare of children and ensuring that any children in need of help and protection receive the highest quality care and most effective and appropriate support. Professionals working with children in Bradford are committed to their responsibilities in delivering on these priorities to keep children safe.

For many years, the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has overseen the partnership response to safeguard children in the District and to ensure that they are safe, well, and able to reach their full potential.

Following changes brought about by government legislation the BSCB will cease to exist in September 2019 and new arrangements will replace it. The required changes allowed a period of reflection and review of processes and practices, both locally and nationally. Agencies in Bradford have been fortunate to utilise the work of Early Adopter authorities in drawing together a plan for the future structures and functions of the partnership.

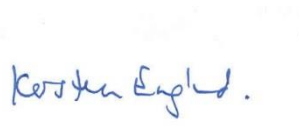
The purpose of the new arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where;

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that ensures local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

This document will set out the key changes being made in Bradford District to meet the legislative requirements. In moving to the new arrangements, we have adopted the title – **Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership.**



**Osman Khan**  
District Commander  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire Police



**Kersten England**  
Chief Executive  
BMDC



**Helen Hirst**  
Chief Officer  
Airedale, Wharfedale and  
Craven CCG, Bradford Districts CCG,  
Bradford City CCG

## **1. National and Local Context**

In March 2016 the Government accepted the recommendations of the Wood Review into Local Safeguarding Children Board arrangements. This led to changes embedded in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as well as new guidance in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018.

The changes set out new statutory responsibilities for the three key agencies responsible for safeguarding within the District, namely Bradford Council (through the Children's Services department) the Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven, Bradford City and Bradford Districts CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) in Health and West Yorkshire Police. These arrangements will cover the current boundaries of the Bradford District and its five parliamentary constituencies – Bradford East, Bradford West, Bradford South, Shipley and Keighley.

Each of the three partners has an equal responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements through the Bradford Partnership. There is also a requirement to identify other key partners who will be "relevant agencies" involved with safeguarding of children working within Bradford.

As of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the new "Bradford Partnership" will be formed. This arrangement will be a formal partnership, with an Independent Chair and Scrutiny Lead who will challenge and scrutinise the safeguarding functions across Bradford District.

The vision and principles of the new partnership arrangements are detailed at section three and these apply to all agencies working in Bradford to safeguard children. The new arrangements will ensure that all partners are working and delivering to the highest standards, and that every child in Bradford has the best opportunity to grow and thrive in a safe environment, ensuring that the right support is available, at the right time and for the right duration.

### **Safeguarding Snapshot Bradford – April 2018 to March 2019**

- ❖ Approximately 140,000 children and young people under 18 making Bradford the youngest city in the UK, accounting for 26% of the total population
- ❖ 29% of children living in poverty
- ❖ 33,406 contacts to Children's Social Care Front Door
- ❖ 8,863 referrals
- ❖ 11,177 assessments completed by Children's Social Care
- ❖ 1,178 children subject of Initial Child Protection Case Conferences as of March 2019
- ❖ 867 children on a Child Protection Plan as of March 2019
- ❖ 1,163 children & young people looked after as of 31 March 2019

- ❖ 5,462 cases open to Children's Social Care at 31 March 2018
- ❖ 9% of children in need with a disability

## **2. The Bradford Partnership**

The previous LSCB arrangements were in place for many years and the new partnership looks to build on the existing and well established structures and the relationships that underpin them as well as seeking to improve and develop them further.

The new arrangements will continue to work closely with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust Board, to ensure that the strategic vision and principles are aligned to their priorities<sup>1</sup>.

We will seek to collaborate with other safeguarding arrangements across West Yorkshire as well as the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB); this approach will ensure that cross-cutting areas of work are identified and progressed collectively thereby achieving the best outcomes for people of all ages across the District, avoiding duplication of effort where a co-ordinated response is more appropriate.

## **3. Voice of the Child**

The Voice of the Child will be secured at the heart of the future local safeguarding arrangements and we will continue to listen to children and young people to inform thinking, planning and activity.

We have engaged with young people to understand what they would want from the new arrangements and how we can support and provide guidance to keep them safe. We will continue to work with a number of established groups in Bradford that actively engage and are led by young people. Moving forward the Communication and Engagement Group is the platform for future activity.

In summary, we have found that they highlighted the following

- "Depression"
- "Neglect"
- "Knife Crime"
- "Homelessness"
- "Mental Health"

We will consider these points in our future Business planning and partners have already commenced work on some of these points.

## **4. Vision and Principles**

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<sup>1</sup> [Connecting people and place for better health and wellbeing - A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Bradford and Airedale.](#)

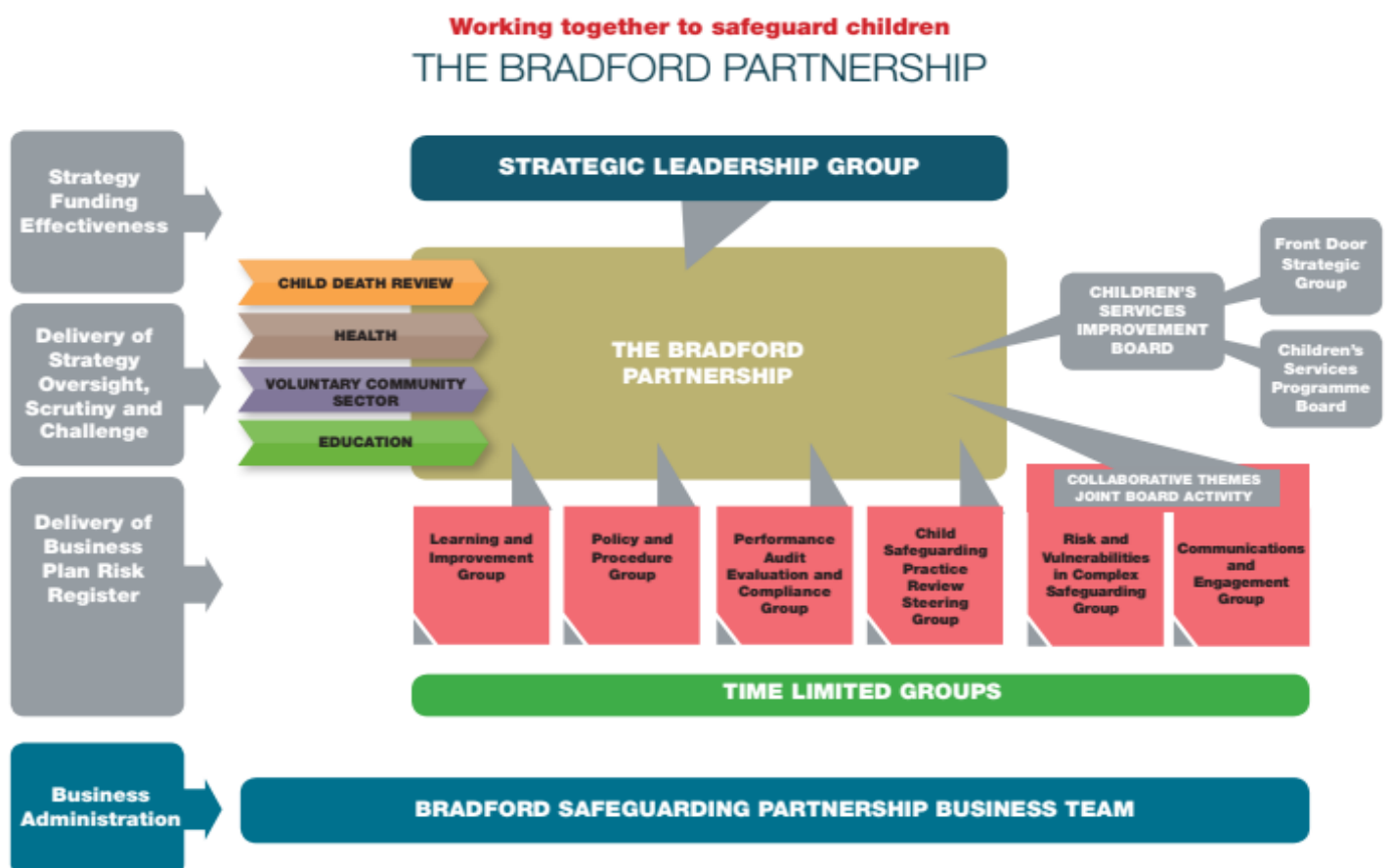
The BSCB undertook a consultation process with partners and agreed the overarching vision and principles for the new arrangements -

***“The Bradford Partnership will work to ensure that children are safe and receive a quality service”***

## Principles

- *The child is always at the centre.*
- *There will be clear governance and accountability, clearly defined roles and responsibilities*
- *There will be transparent, open and honest communication between all*
- *We will foster continual improvement which includes learning from others*
- *We will enable early support at the right time to build independence and self reliance*

## 5. How the Bradford Partnership is organised



### Strategic Leadership Group (SLG)

This group will set strategic direction, ensure effective arrangements are in place, agree funding and resolve disagreements and escalations. The group will comprise of the three safeguarding partners, the Independent Chair and Scrutiny Lead and the Lead Member for children from the Bradford Council.

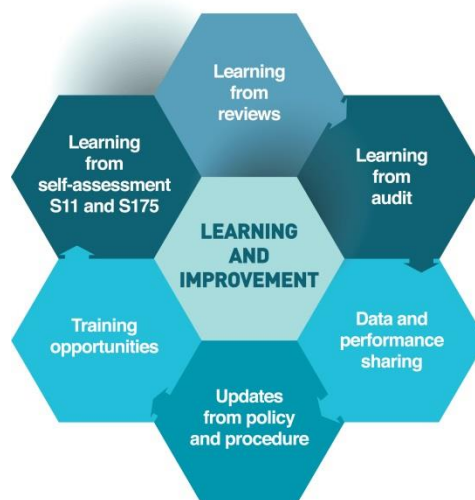
## **The Bradford Partnership**

This group will be known as “**The Bradford Partnership**”. The membership of the former BSCB has been reviewed and rationalised to include statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. This group will be chaired by the Independent Chair and Scrutiny Lead and will meet quarterly. The function of this group will be delivery of the strategy, oversight, scrutiny and challenge. The group will ensure that activity is focussed and in line with the Business Plan and Risk Register. A flexible and virtual approach will enable previous partners who are not now included as lead or relevant agencies, to remain informed and involved in relevant aspects of future safeguarding arrangements.

## **Sub-Groups**

The Sub-groups will focus upon key core functions and a review of the Chairs and membership will allow an opportunity to ensure that relevant agencies and partners can remain fully integrated in the new arrangements. The sub-groups will be responsible for the delivery of the Business Plan and Risk Register. The sub-groups will meet on a scheduled basis but will, where necessary, adopt a flexible approach to support activity emanating from wider partnership working.

## **Learning and Improvement Framework**



Working Together requires that the new arrangements maintain a shared local learning and improvement framework across those local organisations working with children and families. The ambition of this framework is to enable organisations to improve services to learn from experience into the manner organisations work together to safeguard and protect the welfare of children. Bradford has previously worked to this model, and, moving forward, we will continue to embrace this way of thinking and provide clarity of each organisation’s responsibility.

In Bradford, we see the framework as an opportunity to effectively co-ordinate and bring together the work from all of the sub-groups into an overarching and coherent approach. In particular, we will learn from:

- Local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Multi agency audits
- Data and performance information
- Updates on policies and procedures
- Multi-agency training
- Self assessments – Section 175 and Section 11 Audits
- National Research findings

We also see this as an opportunity to develop our collaborative thinking with the BSAB and CSP in a joint framework.

### **Learning and Improvement**

The new arrangements will ensure effectiveness of safeguarding children learning and development activity in the Bradford District, so that those working with children and families are appropriately skilled and competent.

This will include the delivery of accessible multi-agency training that complements the training available to the staff in single-agency or professional settings and that the training provided is evaluated and analysed to inform future planning.

We will ensure that training is compliant with national and local guidelines and procedures, and they are accessible and incorporate established and innovative delivery methods. As we identify emerging themes and gaps in training provision, the group will work closely with the BSAB, CSP and the new Bradford Partnership to develop programmes to raise awareness and understanding.

### **Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

The Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review sub-group supersedes the former Case Review Sub-group and will provide oversight and scrutiny of notifiable incidents and subsequent rapid reviews. This will be achieved through a flexible and dynamic approach as well as continuing to provide coordination and oversight of reviews, action plans and subsequent learning. Decision making will be scrutinised by the independent chair and scrutiny lead.

The sub-group will have the following key functions:

- Consider cases referred to it on a timely basis, oversee the rapid review process through a dynamic and flexible approach, ensure that immediate safeguarding action is taken if required and share any immediate learning.
- Report findings to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel within 15 working days.

- Commission and oversee local case reviews. Leadership of practice reviews will be independent of the agencies involved.
- Identify learning themes from reviews and formulate learning outcomes and action plans.
- Include areas of good practice for moderation and to share learning.

The group will convene on a regular basis to monitor and evaluate progress of multi-agency and single-agency action plans in response to reviews and report progress to the Bradford Partnership. Working with other sub-groups we will ensure that lessons learned from local and national reviews are disseminated to staff in all local organisations and seek assurance that changes to practice have been embedded, and that reviews are published, where applicable, through a number of mediums, including the Partnership website.

### **Practice and Procedures**

This sub-group will enable the co-ordination and development of policies, procedures and guidance for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Bradford. This will take into account the findings of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review and from all national reviews with a view to considering how identified improvements and learning should be implemented locally. The sub-group will also consider national multi-agency policies, procedures, guidance or research findings, in terms of the need to develop any additional local policy, procedures or guidance.

We will also continue to work with our colleagues in Local Authorities across West Yorkshire to develop policies and procedures.

### **Performance, Audit, Evaluation and Compliance**

This sub-group will monitor, evaluate and seek assurance about the effectiveness of safeguarding activity by partners individually and collectively and report this to the Bradford Partnership and Strategic Leadership Group to inform strategic decision-making. The group will analyse data, receive monitoring information and conduct multi-agency challenge panels to identify quality of practice and lessons to be learned for multi-agency practice, and subsequently provide assurance that findings are being responded to. The group will also oversee multi-agency safeguarding self-evaluations including Section 11 and Section 175 audits. Finally, and most importantly the group will ensure that the voice of the child is evidenced in all areas of work carried out across the partnership. The group will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the new Prevention and Early Help model in Bradford as it evolves and embeds across the District.

### **Child Death Review** (Previously Child Death Overview Panel)

Governmental leadership of Child Death Reviews will transfer from the Department of Education to the Department of Health, with the Local Authority and CCGs being the

accountable bodies locally. The main changes are the additional multi-professional meeting that takes place prior to the Child Death Review partners review.

Whilst continued “affiliation” with the new safeguarding partnership is important for the future, we are looking to establish the most appropriate governance arrangements that recognises the changes to the arrangements and will enable support and accountability. The Bradford Health and Wellbeing Board will maintain strategic oversight and will delegate the executive management of the arrangements to their Integrated Change Board. The new safeguarding arrangements will continue to support the work of the group, and retain the strong working relationship with all the sub-groups to ensure operational change and learning and improvement is maximised throughout the District. It is proposed that that the group will be called the Child Death Overview Panel.

## **6. Relevant Agencies**

The safeguarding partners are keen to ensure that the voice and influence of other partners is maintained in the new arrangements and to also assure themselves that agencies have appropriate, robust policies and procedures in place. This will be achieved through appropriate representation on the Bradford Partnership group as well as all the sub-groups.

Appendix A outlines the relevant agencies

Within Bradford there has been a long standing and effective relationship with the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and across the Health partnership.

The **VCS** comprises over 300 organisations working with babies, children, young people and families. It encompasses a wide variety of organisation in terms of size and provision. The VCS have maintained a steering group which reported to the BSCB. This steering group will continue and act as an advisory body to the VCS and to the Young Lives Bradford team, to share information and promote good safeguarding practice for children and young people within the sector and to provide scrutiny and challenge to the new arrangements on behalf of the VCS.

The VCS will be represented on the Bradford Partnership Group as well as across all the sub-groups. This representation will be on behalf of the VCS but in some cases there will be a benefit of having specific VCS organisations also attending groups, including time limited groups as subject matter experts. The VCS steering group with support from Young Lives Bradford will coordinate representation where required.

Health membership will be reviewed to ensure representation from the different agencies and two geographical areas, Bradford and Airedale, whilst avoiding duplication.

Bradford and Airedale Health Safeguarding Children Group play a key role in supporting and overseeing the Bradford and Airedale Health Services’ statutory responsibility for



Safeguarding Children and Young People under the age of 18 years. This is achieved through promoting, coordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding practice delivered by health service personnel within Bradford and Airedale Health Services Organisations. The Group also provides expert advice and assurance to Health Services providers and other agencies on specific safeguarding children issues related to Health care services.

The Group will continue to support and contribute to the work of new safeguarding arrangements in providing a source of expert advice, assurance and challenge as well as coordinating activity of the Health agencies that contribute to the sub-groups so as to provide an opportunity for all Health agencies to contribute and influence the agenda.

The education infrastructure in Bradford, like other Districts, remains complex; and in order to ensure effective communication and involvement, all schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers, in Bradford will be fully engaged and included in the new safeguarding arrangements as relevant agencies.

The Bradford Partnership group and sub-groups will include representatives across all aspects of the Educational system. This will include representation from Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Special and Further Education. The Bradford Partnership will maintain the close working relationship with the Local Authority Education Safeguarding Team and engagement will be maintained through the Designated Safeguarding Leads forums, Head Teacher forums and School Governor forums. These networks will allow the other schools such as independent, academies and free schools to become involved in the new arrangements. In Bradford the Section 175 audit will continue to be an opportunity for schools to self assess against consistent safeguarding principles.

## **7. Collaboration**

Bradford continues to recognise opportunities to increase collaboration between the BSAB, CSP and the new Bradford Partnership group and sub-groups. This is set against the backdrop of reducing budgets and increasing demands that bring organisational review and reshaping to deliver more with less. It also recognises the emergence of more complex safeguarding matters which impact across Children's Safeguarding, the Adult Safeguarding arena and the Community Safety Partnership.

Across each of the three Boards, the sub-group structures manage core functions as well Board specific objectives. Some of these core functions create obvious opportunities for a more consistent and collaborative approach that takes into account cross-cutting themes and presents opportunities for shared learning. Work has commenced to develop these work streams namely Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding, and Communications and Engagement.

### **Communications and Engagement**

Building upon the excellent work by the Safeguarding Adult Board a Communications and Engagement Group now exists with representation from the CSP and the Children's safeguarding arrangements. The group provides a consistent, timely, accessible and inclusive approach to campaigning, awareness raising and key messaging on issues affecting the health, safety and well-being of people in Bradford. The ethos of the group is to allow communication both ways, from the safeguarding partners but also to engage in a way that captures the voice of the child (and service users in Adults).

The intended audiences are:

- Service Users (children, young people and adults)
- Parents, Carers
- Professionals & Practitioners including the Voluntary and Community Sector
- General public
- Board Members

The group includes safeguarding as well as media expertise and aims to provide a proactive, innovative and consistent approach to communications. This work is supported by a Communications officer from the Business Unit Team.

### **Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding**

Over a number of years Bradford has benefited from an established and experienced Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Sub-Group. Moving forward, Safeguarding partners are now addressing the emergence of organised crime, modern day slavery and criminal exploitation as new threats in a similar way to the same conversations in the last decade around child sexual exploitation. The group has now extended its remit to coordinate activity around a number of themes, in raising awareness and understanding. This is being developed under the banner of "complex safeguarding".

### **Serious Case Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.**

Learning lessons from reviews has created an opportunity for collaboration as many high profile cases repeatedly identify similar themes for learning and improvement. In order to share and maximise learning we have developed specific **shared learning events** that included themes from Serious Case Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews and will continue this approach. These events take into account local as well as national learning. We also recognise the value in increasing multi-agency training opportunities across all BSAB, CSP and the new Bradford Partnership in the future.

### **Regional Collaboration**

In addition senior leaders from the five Districts in West Yorkshire have indicated a common wish to progress collaborative work. There are a number of county wide/regional groups already in existences and a coordination group is to be formed around these groups to support local activity and share good practice.

### **8. Independent scrutiny**

Bradford has recently recruited a new Independent Chair and Scrutiny Lead. This reflects the traditional role as independent chair and the new role of scrutiny and quality assurance. As a result of the recent Oftsed inspection, the independent chair is a member of the Children Services Improvement Board.

The Business Partnership Team supporting the Partnership reports directly to the Office of Chief Executive. This allows a greater element of independence for the Team, particularly around scrutiny and challenge. We recognise the need for all the partners to professionally challenge each other about their processes and performance and this is coordinated through the new arrangements. The Council's effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is also scrutinised through the process of Overview & Scrutiny which is recognised as valuable process and will be continued.

The role of independent scrutiny is to provide additional assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, and this will add value to what we already know and do. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires that safeguarding partners ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement. Some forms of scrutiny will need to be independently commissioned, for example local child safeguarding practice reviews.

The role will also

- Assess how well organisations come together to cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to hold each other to account for effective safeguarding.
- Scrutinise any quality assurance activity (including multi-agency case file auditing and processes for identifying lessons to be learned).
- Scrutinise the effectiveness of training, including multiagency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the extent to which appropriate and effective systems and processes are in place in all partner agencies so as to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that children are

protected and that appropriate safeguarding strategies are developed and embedded.

- Evaluate arrangements for the operation of the safeguarding partnership, including the purpose and functions of meetings, and recommend and implement appropriate changes.
- Confirm, or not, that effective performance management, audit and quality assurance mechanisms are in place within partner organisations which will support the 3 safeguarding partners to fulfil their statutory objectives, and which will enable the partnership to identify and measure its success and impact.
- Ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families are appropriately represented and heard in the work of the partnership.

### **Professional Challenge and Escalation**

Safeguarding partners will work together to resolve any professional challenges and disputes locally. Whilst every effort will be made to work across the partnership in a strengths-based way, there may be occasions where necessary agreement cannot be reached after escalation to the Partnership. Agencies should follow the [‘Resolving Professional Disagreements/Escalation Policy’](#) where such instances occur. Where the disagreements or challenge involves one of more of the safeguarding partners, the Strategic Leadership Group will resolve the matter.

## **9. Bradford Safeguarding Business Partnership Team and funding.**

Bradford has combined the Business Units of Children’s and Adult Safeguarding and moving forward this will enable a more consistent approach and increase opportunities to merge overlapping work. The Unit will be known as the **Bradford Safeguarding Business Partnership Team**.

The team will continue to support safeguarding arrangements namely

- Administration of meetings
- Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and associated learning and practice improvement
- Learning and Improvement including multi-agency training
- Performance, information and audit including Section 11 and Section 175.
- Production and publication of the Annual Report – this will include a contribution from the independent chair and scrutiny lead on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, their performance and the effectiveness of local services. The report will be published through existing networks and on the website for the new arrangements.
- Publication of a threshold document – within Bradford this has been completed with the Continuum of Need and Risk Identification Tool. This recently

commissioned work recognises the new arrangements and a communication plan agreed with partners.

Future funding will be agreed between the safeguarding partners, which should be equitable and proportionate, and will enable the Business Partnership Team to fulfil its functions and enable the new arrangements to deliver against statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities. Current funding covers staffing costs, multi-agency training and audits and limited serious case reviews/lessons learnt work and the future funding will need to continue to adequately cover these functions.

## **10. Transitional Arrangements and Continuous Improvement**

We will continue to carry out all the statutory functions of the BSCB until the commencement of the new Partnership.

For any SCRs not completed or completed and not published in this 12 month period we will ensure that we comply with transitional guidance within Working Together. Where an SCR has not been completed at the point the new safeguarding partner arrangements begin to operate, for example, if any have only recently been commissioned, we will seek to complete and publish the SCR within six months of the date of the decision to initiate a review, with a maximum of 12 months to do so.

Similarly we will also comply with transitional guidance around the transition from CDOP to the new Child Death Review process, and the data recorded appropriately. Before safeguarding partner arrangements begin to operate in a local area, the BSCB will plan how and when to hand over all relevant data and information to the safeguarding partners. In doing so, they should comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

If we identify any matters relating to deaths that are relevant to the welfare of children in the District or to public health and safety and we decide it would be appropriate for someone to take action we will ensure these are forwarded to Child Death Review partners for their information and consideration.

As outlined, previously, the BSCB brought together learning and improvements through the Learning and Improvement Framework, Annual Training Delivery Plan (2018/19) and the Learning and Development Strategy (2018-20 Draft). These are shaped through the statutory requirements and the BSCB Learning and Improvement sub-group. This framework provided a sound basis for bringing key sub-groups together to improve practice and learn from reviews, which will be a key requirement of the new Local Child Safeguarding Practice reviews that we are adopting.

## **11. References and further information**

[DfE \(2016\) Wood report: review of the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards](#)

[DfE \(2018\) Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

[Connecting people and place for better health and wellbeing - A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Bradford and Airedale](#)

[Bradford Safeguarding Children Board – Continuum of Need](#)

[Bradford Safeguarding Children Board – Resolving Professional Disagreement and Escalation](#)

For more information please contact:

Mark Griffin – Business Unit Manager - Bradford Safeguarding Children Board/Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board

Email – [Mark.Griffin@Bradford.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Griffin@Bradford.gov.uk)

Website - [www.bradford-scb.org.uk](http://www.bradford-scb.org.uk)

Telephone - 01274 434361

Floor 6, Margaret McMillan Tower,  
Princes Way, Bradford, BD1 1NN

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 - Relevant Agencies**

- National Probation Service
- CRC
- All schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers
- CAFCASS
- Youth Offending Service
- Housing Providers
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust
- Bradford District Care Foundation Trust
- VCS
- West Yorkshire Ambulance Service
- NHS England

