Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
Completion Report

Report Name:	Wokingham Harry CSPR Completion Report
Reporting Officer:	Alastair Harsant, Partnership Manager, Business Unit, Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership with Wokingham Local Authority (Estelle Kelleway and Sara James)
What happened to the child/young person to initiate the review? (Please provide a short description)	At the age of 13, Harry was involved in the commission of a serious violent crime, in which he used a knife in the assault of another young person. He was subsequently convicted of the offence and was sentenced to a lengthy period of youth detention. Prior to his arrest he had been living in the Wokingham area with his mother and younger sibling. Whilst his parents are estranged, he regularly saw his father who remained active in the children's lives. During his early childhood Harry was diagnosed with a developmental disability. This condition affected his understanding of what behaviour was socially acceptable, his understanding of consequences, and his assessment of risk. Despite this Harry was determined to be treated the same as his friends and felt a strong need to 'fit in', both at school and with his peers. To support his academic ambitions, Harry was supported by the local authority with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Despite Harry's enjoyment of education and his desire to do well, his schools found it difficult to manage his behaviour and this led to a number of exclusions. This caused considerable distress to Harry, increasing feelings that he was different and that he could not be accommodated in school. The exclusions led to him spending considerable time outside of full-time education, during which he became vulnerable to criminal exploitation. Criminal exploitation may take many forms and in Harry's case this risk came from peer groups, with whom due to his developmental disability he felt a need to fit in. This risk of exploitation was identified a number of times and was demonstrated by his involvement with different groups of young people. All were older than him and had been suspected of crime and disorder before his association with them began. Whilst involved with these groups Harry went on to become involved in criminality, which became more serious as time went by. During 2020, concerns about exploitation continued to increase and Harry became involved in a number of incidents which were reported to the police. Despite being supported by a number of agencies his involvement in criminal incidents escalated, culminating in the offence leading to this safeguarding review.
How was the review carried out?	**Timeline:** • Notification of serious safeguarding incident made on 13.01.2021 • Rapid Review initiated and meeting held on 10.02.2021 • Independent Reviewer: Mark Power • Terms of Reference agreed on 03.09.2021 • Key Lines of Enquiry requested for submission by 04.11.2021 **Panel Meetings:** • First panel meeting took place on 08.09.2021 • Second panel meeting took place on 03.12.2021 • Third panel meeting took place on 14.01.2022 • Fourth panel meeting took place on 24.03.2022 • Fifth panel meeting took place on 10.06.2022

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	CSPR Report Submissions: • CSPR Report V1 received on 27.02.2022 • CSPR Report V2 received on 23.03.2022 • CSPR Report V3 received on 07.03.2022 • CSPR Report V4 received on 07.06.2022 • CSPR Report V5 received on 17.06.2022 • The final version of the CSPR Report received on 13.02.2022 **Publication:** • A partnership statement for any press interest was drafted and published alongside the report and learning brief in December 2022.
What were the learning points from the review?	**Finding 1: The Provision of Services for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs** **Learning:** There is a requirement for the local authority to develop new ways of working to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are understood. There is also a requirement to improve local capacity so that these specialist needs may be met. This is for recommendations 1 & 2 below. **Finding 2: Educational Establishments – Information Sharing and Planning** Learning: There is a need to improve the quality of information sharing when a child or young person with an EHCP changes educational establishments. If exclusions from school are to be reduced, then new pathways are required for young people with complex needs. This is for recommendations 3 & 4 below. **Finding 3: The Police Response to Young People and Suspected Criminality** Learning: If Thames Valley Police are to improve the service provided to young people, there is a need to develop a culture of safeguarding within front line staff. This needs to be supported through organisational strategy that clearly sets safeguarding as a priority and a strategic aim. This is for recommendation 5 below. **Finding 4: Children's Services – Response to Safeguarding Concerns** Learning: Whilst reviewing safeguarding referrals and contacts, Wokingham Children's Services did not understand the needs of Harry or his family. The understanding of SEND needs requires specialist knowledge and this is not currently held in the Referral and Assessment team. This is for recommendation 6 below. **Finding 5: Early Help Services for Children and Young People with SEND Needs** Learning: Harry's mother felt that the Early Help offer was ineffective in providing the emotional and practical support that she and Harry needed. There is an opportunity to use this review to improve the services offered to young people and their families, making a greater use of different agencies and community organisations.

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	This for recommendations 7 & 8 below.
What recommendations were made and what actions were taken to address the recommendations?	**Recommendation 1: The local authority should develop new procedure for the early review of EHCPs when a child or young person moves local authority area at the same time as transitioning from primary to secondary school.** **Action 1.1: The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team track movers-into the Borough on a live tracking system and will take appropriate action when notified of a child or young person moving into the Borough.** **Impact:** The Wokingham SEND Team Officers arrange a multi- disciplinary (MDT) meeting to share any relevant information between new professionals and those formerly involved. This provides continuity for children/young people moving between Local Authorities and mitigates the risk of important information being missed, or the family 'repeating their story'. Any relevant forms are completed and uploaded to the SEND Teams record keeping system to ensure those supporting have the right information available to them. The SEND Team is committed to improving the timeliness of the responses when notified of a child or young person moving into the Borough. **Action 1.2: Action following the conversion of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to Wokingham Borough Council paperwork will be to engage with the school to have an Annual Review, based on the child or young person moving in. If there is an allocated Social Worker, they will also be invited to attend. If there is not an allocated Social Worker, then the meeting will need to consider whether a referral to Social Care is needed and who should make that referral.** **Impact:** This practice is increasingly embedded in Wokingham Borough Council. Social workers (where involved) are invited to annual reviews of children with EHCPs. If there is not an allocated social worker, those present at the annual review consider whether a referral to social care or Early Help is required and determine who should make the referral. If the child does not have an educational placement confirmed, a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) is completed to ensure multi-agency oversight. **Action 1.3: The Transitions Mapping Group will flag movers into the Wokingham Borough as "red" RAG rated while these processes are in train, to give visibility to the needs of individual children and young people moving into the Borough and keep their needs high on the agenda.** **Impact:** Wokingham Council now identifies children and young people moving into the borough who may be higher risk. This means higher risk children and young people would be monitored while an Annual Review is arranged. SEND Team Officers attend key meetings however with Transitions colleagues continue to identify and track this cohort. Children Moving into the borough are subject to the legislation under Section 47 of the Children and Families Act and 9.157 to 9.162 of the SEND Code of Practice. On notification of a child or young person moving into Wokingham Borough Council, the case is allocated accordingly to a SEND Casework Practitioner following our internal allocations process. The allocated Casework Practitioner will review the mover in, and in the instance of high risk, i.e. Child Looked After (CLA) or on Children Protection (CP), the Casework Practitioner will notify their Senior Case Manager and agree next steps on an individual basis and according to need. This will include considering whether immediate alternative provision is required and how the case should be

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monitored, alongside preparing for Early Help Child Need Assessment (EHCNA) decision making panel to allow WBC to decide whether the plan should be maintained, reviewed or reassessed.

Recommendation 2: The Local Authority should develop arrangements with the BWSCP, to provide ongoing assurances that the improvement board is effective in the delivery of change and that it is able to evidence how improvements are delivering better outcomes for children and young people.

Action 2.1: Establishment of a multi-agency improvement panel to support the Wokingham SEND Strategy 2021-2025.

Impact: The multi-agency forum has been refreshed, and the revised 'SEND Partnership' focus is on a co-produced SEND Strategy 2024-29; the delivery of 'Safety Valve' (a DFE initiative to help local authorities address overspending on SEND service); QA and continuous improvement across the whole SEND system.

Within the various subgroups reporting to the SEND Partnership Board, Chairs have been identified within the SEND Partnership (education, health and social care), which increases the joint accountability of the Area rather than solely the local authority driving improvement. The Board is co-chaired by the Local Authority Director of Children Services and the Integrated Care Board Place Director (health).

Action 2.2: To provide additional assurance to the BWSCP an enhanced SEND related data set to be developed, shared, and scrutinised by partner agencies at the Wokingham Independent Scrutiny and Impact Group (ISIG).

Impact: The SEND data set includes information relating to:

- SEND pupils who have received suspensions, exclusions, are Electively Home Educated (EHE) or Children Missing Education (CME).
- SEND pupils with a Child Protection (CP) and Child in Need (CIN) plans.
- SEND Pupils who receive Pupil Premium and Free School Meals (FSM).

Those pupils who have received a suspension or exclusion are approached by their local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will discuss all re- occurring pupils with suspensions and ones at risk of permanent exclusion to see what further support and advice can be given.

Secondary Head Teachers and relevant primary Heads have been approached by the local authority to offer either a monthly or half termly meeting to discuss suspensions and those pupils especially at risk of a Permanent Exclusion (PEX) to give advice and support around appropriate education either in school or otherwise.

Additionally, a SEND Assurance Board has been established during 2024, with representation across the partnership (SEND, education, health and care). Meeting every half-term, part of its remit is to use data relating to children and young people with SEND to identify themes to focus on throughout the year. The Assurance Board has meet during 2024 with a thematic focus on suspensions and permanent exclusions affecting children with SEND. The findings of this meeting have in turn been reported to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board for senior leaders' oversight, which includes colleagues across education, health and social care.

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Recommendation 3: New information sharing procedures should be developed in the Berkshire West partnership area, to provide an enhanced level of information sharing for students who have an EHCP at the time of changing education establishments. This should include professional meetings attended by the relevant schools, the agencies working with the young person, and the parents/ guardians.

Action 3.1: BWSCP will support a discussion between Assistant Directors/Director's for Education across Berkshire West to discuss this recommendation.

Impact: We have reviewed this with schools and other relevant organisations and concluded that new procedures are not needed. Schools have been reminded of the existing legal requirements on information sharing.

Recommendation 4: The local authority should review the provision of resources and pathways available to schools, in order to reduce the use of exclusions for children and young people with EHCP. This should be delivered by a working group that involves headteachers and specialist staff from both maintained and non-maintained schools.

Action 4.1: Establish a Vulnerable Learners Panel to create the required pathway and enable enhanced resources to Schools via signposting and finance if appropriate to meet the needs of vulnerable learners such as those at risk of exclusion. The Panel will include membership of headteachers and specialist staff from both maintained and non-maintained schools.

Impact: The Vulnerable Learners Panel pilot is complete. 37 requests for support for 'vulnerable learners' over the course of the pilot, from 11 educational settings. SEND was overwhelmingly the main reason for request (89%), followed by 'health' needs such as diabetes or epilepsy (30%), SEMH and exclusions (30%) and low attendance (24%).

A significant amount of funding was provided by the Council to support this cohort, in line with an early intervention approach and removing barriers to timely and effective support.

As the Vulnerable Learners pilot has now ended, the Head of SEND is working with the Chair of Exceptional Needs Funding (ENF, a very similar forum to Vulnerable Learners but led by schools) to incorporate the learning from the pilot to reconfigure and redefine ENF to support 'vulnerable learners' with a focus on early intervention, effective signposting, and monitoring of the impact of this support.

Recommendation 5: Thames Valley Police should produce new policy and guidance in relation to children and young people who are identified as suspects in a criminal investigation. This should be underpinned by an annual training programme to develop a culture of safeguarding and partnership working, delivered to all police officers and police community support officers.

Action 5.1: Thames Valley Police (TVP) has a vulnerability and risk annual programme and as part of this package, child criminality was covered in the 2022 vulnerability and risk training delivered to Incident & Crime Response officers (ICR) and Neighbourhood teams.

Impact: The vodcast is available on the TVP intranet and has been included in the training offer. Standard TVP process is for post-training feedback to be sought from participants. All training feedback is fed into the TVP training delivery board as standard practice for QA purposes.

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Recommendation 6: Wokingham Children's Services should update policy and guidance for the review of referrals and contacts that involve children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Action 6.1: Update the Practice standards to include:

- **Check to establish if a child has an EHCP at point of contact, and record this on the contact/Child's mosaic record (case recording system).**
- **At point of assessment, ensure the assessing Social Worker reviews the EHCP before seeing the child, to assist with understanding whether the child has any specific communication, and comprehension needs in planning the visit and also who else might be involved/have information that might be relevant.**

Impact: A referral and Assessment Audit was completed on 22nd May 2023. There was good evidence of Social Workers feeding into EHCP assessment and of additional needs being discussed in supervision. It is recognized that there is still ongoing work here, to see that EHCP's are being routinely considered as part of screening and assessment. These audits are now part of the Wokingham's core audit tool and audit annual cycle.

This work is ongoing with current staffing level making impossible at the moment to fulfil our aspiration of having EHCPs to inform all child and family assessments.

Recommendation 7: Wokingham Children's Services, with the support of the BWSCP, should conduct a multi-agency audit of cases where the Early Help service has been tasked to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This should include direct representation of the families involved in the cases, to ensure that services deliver their needs, and that the safeguarding partnership understands how it feels to be in receipt of early help services.

Action 7.1:

- **Phase 1: Audit scope and methodology to be developed.**
- **Phase 2: Audit to be completed and an overview report provided.**

Impact: This work was completed in January 2023 and included feedback from families. The Executive Summary was presented to the Wokingham ISIG meeting on 22nd May 2023. The work involved looking back at cases when the Early Help service has supported young people with SEN and disabilities to see how well Early Help has worked – whether it has met the young people's needs and what the experience was like for them and their families.

The work identified several improvements, and the learning was incorporated into the Safety Delivery programme. These improvements will help provide a better service to young people and families:

- Sharing knowledge by professional working with children getting SEND support.
- Review the wording of the Early Help Offer and the criteria on the Early Help Hub to improve clarity and consistency.
- Information on the Early Help Hub will be shared more widely to increased other teams' understanding of the needs being met.

Recommendation 8: Wokingham Children's Services should consider how the full benefits of the Exclusion Prevention scheme may be provided to young people who live in Wokingham, whilst

	attending school in a different local authority area. These arrangements should be included in any future policy and procedure that is developed to support the scheme. **Action 8.1: Pilot of the Exclusion Prevention Programme to be delivered.** **Impact:** A pilot scheme has been launched (September 2022) to reduce the number of pupils being excluded (suspended or expelled) from school. The pilot is working with nine pupils across the five Wokingham Borough schools with the highest exclusion rates. A dedicated Assistant Team Manager has been assigned to enhance the offer and focus delivery of the programme. The pilot is ongoing but is already proving successful with: • 100% engagement rate from those in the programme, which doubles engagement rates when compared to other referral pathways i.e., targeted intervention, prevention. • Feedback from parents has been very positive in terms of the changes they are witnessing the behaviour of their children/engagement with school. • Of those children who have completed the programme thus far, positive feedback has been received from the schools and the children have not been subject to further exclusions. • In one case a pupil on the pilot who was due to be moved to another school due to problems will now be allowed to stay at the current school after the school noticed improved behaviour. The pilot includes work to ensure ongoing engagement when the pupils leave it – this includes mentoring programmes and involvement in activities such as sport. **Action 8.2: Post-trial evaluation, including measures of success to be undertaken.** **Impact:** The Pilot is ongoing and has proved successful. The children involved in the pilot did not have any further exclusions. **Action 8.3: Service Specification to be developed prior to launch – this will outline the eligibility criteria (which includes Wokingham children attending schools outside of the LA boundary).** **Impact:** The Updated Service Specification was delivered in October 2023 and is in place, with eligibility criteria set out in the main document. Exclusion Prevention programme pilot currently running with 6 Wokingham schools. However, any child who is at risk of exclusion for crime related behaviour at school and that attends a school not within the pilot, can continue to be referred through the prevention pathway.
Please provide an analysis of the impact of the actions on children and young people	Impact analysis is detailed above against each recommendation action.

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