

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2012 AND BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14

Report from: Eleanor Brazil, MSCB Independent Chair

Author: Sally Mortimore, MSCB Manager

Summary

This report updates the Committee on the work of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) in 2012/13 and looks forward to its future work. It will present the MSCB priorities for 2013-2014.

The report and an accompanying presentation to be made to the Committee by the Independent Vice-Chair of MSCB will enable members to scrutinise the performance and plans of the Board.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) is set up under the Children Act 2004 and has the following main objectives:

- To **coordinate** the activity of each agency represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway
- To **ensure the effectiveness** of the activity of those agencies for that purpose

1.2 The MSCB has a pooled budget made up from financial contributions from its constituent statutory partners:

- Medway Council
- Kent Police
- Kent Probation
- NHS Kent & Medway
- Medway Secure Training Centre
- HMP YOI Cookham Wood
- Children & Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

2. Background

2.1 As part of the Board's governance arrangements, the Independent Chair of MSCB presents progress reports to the committee twice a year to enable Members to scrutinise performance and to hold the Chair to account for the

- impact of the work of the Board. This report will update members in relation to the progress that the MSCB has made against its priorities for 2012/13 and towards the development of its business plan 2013/14.
- 2.2 The importance of robust and regular overview of the MSCB's work by elected Members is consistent with best practice identified in statutory guidance. The Lead Member for Children's Services sits on the MSCB in a participant observer role in line with the requirements of Working Together 2013.
- 2.3 The MSCB is not responsible for the direct commissioning or delivery of safeguarding services. Its statutory role is to ensure the effectiveness and coordination of the work of local partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It does this through developing policies and procedures, commissioning multi agency safeguarding training and through challenge, support and quality assurance activities.
- 2.4 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are required to produce annual business plans, which set out their identified priorities and their work programme for the future. Working Together 2013 reduced centralised procedural prescription and strengthens the LSCB roles in quality assurance of the work undertaken by constituent partners and the 'challenge' role of LSCBs to ensure the ongoing statutory, multi-agency oversight of safeguarding.
- 2.5 The MSCB annual report 2012/13 provides an overview of safeguarding activity during the year and is designed to enable the Board to demonstrate the effectiveness of this work in Medway. Where possible, it evidences the impact of safeguarding activity of partner agencies and services, acting together or individually, have on the lives of children and families. The MSCB agreed key safeguarding objectives for 2013/14 were based upon the priorities identified from a safeguarding needs analysis undertaken in 2012 and key safeguarding objectives identified by single agency partners. The 2013/14 MSCB objectives are appended at Appendix I. The report can be found at: <http://www.mscb.org.uk/publications.html>
- 2.6 In January 2013, Ofsted undertook an unannounced inspection of Child Protection Arrangements in Medway and judged these to be "inadequate". In relation to the MSCB, the report stated: 'There is strong commitment to protecting children and young people by members of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) and evidence that the MSCB has had a positive impact in some areas of child protection practice. For example ensuring good multi-agency arrangements with regard to protecting children who are at risk of sexual exploitation. However, there has not been sufficient focus on the core business of child protection. The MSCB has not effectively monitored the quality of child protection practice and not sufficiently improved key elements of partnership working such as information sharing, application of thresholds and participation of agencies in child protection conferences.'
- 2.7 The MSCB did not sufficiently consider the quantity and quality information from Medway Council's Children's Social Care in order to recognise the difficulties facing the service and issues that were subsequently identified by Ofsted. A recent comprehensive review of the MSCB has provided the Board with a clear framework to address these shortcomings (see below). At its

meeting on 20 September 2013, the MSCB will agree actions to ensure this happens.

- 2.8 In response to the inspection report, Medway Council and its partners developed an improvement plan, the implementation of which is monitored by an independently chaired Improvement Board, which reports on progress to the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Children and Families who issued an Improvement Notice in July 2013.
- 2.9 The MSCB chair is a member of the Improvement Board to ensure that the MSCB actively contributes to improvement and is responsive to the need to monitor the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- 2.10 This report to committee will provide a brief summary of the work of the Board during the previous year and members are respectfully advised to review the full published report on the MSCB website (link above).
- 2.11 The MSCB Chair last presented to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 January 2013. The committee noted that report and recommended the MSCB to work with agencies to develop a policy to ensure Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) were initiated within one month. As a response, the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures that set out local agency responsibilities and responses to safeguarding concerns includes the stipulation that CAFs must be initiated within one month of the decision that a CAF is required is made.
- 2.12 Members also requested that future reports include a glossary of terms. This is attached to this report as an Appendix.

3. MSCB Annual Report 2012/13

3.1 Aim 1: To ensure the effectiveness of the work of local partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- 3.1.1 In order to address the shortcomings identified in the Ofsted report, the MSCB commissioned a review of its effectiveness which took place in June/July and which has made a number of recommendations, which the MSCB is currently considering. In September, the MSCB is also re-evaluating the implementation and understanding by partners of the threshold for intervention by childrens social care in order to satisfy itself that this is appropriate.
- 3.1.2 During the year, the MSCB extended its quality assurance framework to an additional 4 partners, building on the experience of the three pilots in 2011/12 who continued their adoption of the framework. The framework supports partners to assemble quantitative, qualitative and outcomes information to demonstrate the effectiveness against identified priorities. For example, this allowed partners to gather evidence to demonstrate their compliance against the requirements of section 11 of the Children Act 2004 which sets out the safeguarding responsibilities of partner agencies and services that they commission as well as progress against and the impact of other aims and objectives agreed through the business planning process. Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust and Kent Probation both were able to demonstrate improved participation at Child Protection Conferences as well

as improvements in staff safeguarding supervision and practice. The secure estate in Medway (that is, the Medway Secure Training Centre and HMYOI Cookham Wood) were able to demonstrate improved outcomes relating to numbers of restraint against young people and acts of self harm through improved direct work with young people, staff training and improved communication with young people. In surveys, young people reported they felt safer and these improvements were commented on in inspection reports for both establishments.

3.2 Aim 2: To coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- 3.2.1 As a response to the Ofsted inspection of child protection arrangements, the MSCB undertook a self-evaluation which led to the development of an MSCB Executive Group, which oversees and drives the effectiveness of the Board and ensures that statutory duties are fulfilled, including how the voice of the child and feedback from partners and staff influences the development of services and how early help pathways are evaluated.
- 3.2.2 During the year, the MSCB has received reports relating to partner participation in Child Protection Conferences and identified high rates of inquoracy (conferences are considered to be inquorate if representation of one of the core agencies - police, social care and health is absent. However, there are likely to be conferences where certain partners are not involved – for example, the Police. These prescriptive procedures (which are more stringent than some of our neighbours) meant that improving quoracy was a difficult challenge. New procedures have been drafted with Kent which change quoracy rules to be met through the attendance of the *right* partners, rather than through prescription.
- 3.2.3 Whilst the numbers of GPs that attend Child Protection conferences remained low during the period, there was a significant improvement in the numbers of reports that were submitted to conferences. A new conference report template for GPs was developed with the Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which GPs have commented they find helpful. 85% of GP practices in Medway were identified as having an identified safeguarding lead in an audit undertaken by the CCG during the year.
- 3.2.4 A deep dive review of children subject to child protection plans who subsequently became looked after enabled us to reduce the numbers of children who were subject to unnecessary “dual processes” and facilitated the development of a single focussed and complete planning process for children.
- 3.2.5 Multi-agency safeguarding training across the workforce has been supported during the year by the appointment of a part time Learning & Development Officer who has developed new training programmes on safeguarding issues identified through audits, serious case reviews and changes to policy and practice brought about by Working Together 2013. This includes training about working with difficult to engage families, working with men, Domestic abuse and Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. To supplement the quality assurance mechanisms that the Board already has in place to ensure that training materials are relevant and fit for purpose, the training offer is evaluated through the use of follow up questionnaires which seek to establish

the impact on practice that attendance at training has had. This has shown that staff report that the training positively supports their practice and learning.

3.2.6 In 2012/13 the MSCB undertook a serious case review that considered the case of “Callum”, an adolescent who exhibited additional vulnerabilities and who was found to have drowned several months after being reported as missing from home. The review highlighted the need for partner agencies to be more responsive to children who may be “difficult to engage” and for the need to develop strategies to support and promote resilience in some children and young people. This area of work has become a priority focus of the MSCB’s work in 2013/14.

3.2.7 Some MSCB partners also contributed to the SCR undertaken by a London Borough of “Child F” – a looked after child who died in custody and was in receipt of services from a number of Medway agencies. This was published in August and recommendations and actions that resulted will be monitored through the MSCB Quality Assurance subgroup.

3.3 **Aim 3: Protecting and promoting the wellbeing of vulnerable groups of children**

3.3.1 Domestic abuse has been a key focus for the MSCB during the past year and the board has worked closely with the Medway Community Safety Partnership to deliver the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy.

3.3.2 The Board also responded to the 2011 Ofsted inspection recommendation that the MSCB “ensure that the appropriate notification arrangements are in place so that children affected by domestic abuse are identified, protected and supported” by developing a pilot whereby police send notifications of standard and medium risk (as assessed by the police) to selected school and health professionals. The pilot has been extended twice in order to provide more data for analysis in relation to its effectiveness with a view to potentially rolling out across all schools in Medway.

3.3.3 Work by the MSCB Multi-agency Case File Audit Group during the year identified that information sharing and notification protocols are in place but it is recognised that staff need more confidence in knowing how to use them. This is being addressed through training and development of the supervision framework developed and implemented by the Board and improvements noted.

3.3.4 The MSCB shares a Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation subgroup with Kent Safeguarding Children Board which has established a strategy for data collection and collation and staff training and developed a toolkit for frontline staff to support early identification and recognition of risk factors. This was rolled out across all sectors of the safeguarding professional community and ensures a consistent approach to protect such vulnerable children. Alongside this, the MSCB receives regular reports relating to children that are missing from care and missing from education and there are clear links with the work with children that may be at risk of exploitation. The January 2013 Ofsted inspection report was positive about the effectiveness of the MSCB’s work to support these groups of vulnerable young people.

4. MSCB Business Plan 2013/14

- 4.1 The overarching key aims for the MSCB remain to:
- Ensure the effectiveness of the work of local partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - Coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - Protect and promote the well being of vulnerable groups of children.
- 4.2 Beneath these aims sit a number of objectives, identified as priorities by the MSCB and its constituent partners based upon local identified issues, recommendations from inspections and national safeguarding priorities. These are appended to this report.
- 4.3 The Board will focus on the following during the coming year:
- Working with the Improvement Board and tracking progress of the Improvement plan
 - Improving the quality of child protection conferences and the quality deliver and management of child protection plans
 - Publishing and implementing refreshed multi-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures that are aligned with Working Together 2013
 - Reviewing the threshold criteria for childrens social care and ensuring it is fit for purpose and effective
 - Ensuring partners contribute to high quality assessments of children's safeguarding needs
 - Evidencing the impact of early preventative services in safeguarding and diverting them appropriately from statutory provision
 - Promoting resilience in adolescents who may be at risk of harm, children who may be affected by domestic abuse and children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation

5 Risk management

- 5.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCB annual report presents an analysis of safeguarding in Medway and works to challenge and support the Council and its other partners to address and reduce risks to children.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The MSCB priorities and resultant Business Plan is the product of consultation with statutory partners through their representatives on the Medway Safeguarding Children Board. Board partners have reported to the Board on their progress against their specific single agency safeguarding objectives on the basis of the priorities in this report. The report has been shared with the Lead Member for Childrens Services, the Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board, the Chief Executive of Medway Council, the Lead Member of Medway Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner in line with requirements of Working Together 2013.

7. Implications for looked after children

- 7.1 As many of the children who are looked after will themselves have been the subject of safeguarding and child protection services and arrangements, then improvements in those arrangements will benefit this group.

8. Financial and legal implications

- 8.1 MSCB is a statutory body funded through financial and “in kind” contributions from local agencies. There are no legal or financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee scrutinise the annual report and MSCB Business Plan and make any recommendations to the Board for issues to be addressed.

Lead officer contact

Eleanor Brazil, Independent Chair, MSCB

mscbchair@medway.gov.uk

Sally Mortimore, MSCB Manager

sally.mortimore@medway.gov.uk
Tel 01634 334326

Background papers

- Medway Safeguarding Children Board Annual Review of 2012/13 and Business Plan 2013/14. Can be downloaded at <http://www.mscb.org.uk/publications.html>
- Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Medway 3-14 October 2011 Report can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/medway>
- Ofsted Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children. Report can be downloaded at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/medway>

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Glossary of terms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASSET	Structured assessment tool to be used by Youth Offending Teams
CA	Children Act
CAF	Common assessment framework
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CAFCASS	Child and Family Court Support Service
CAST	Child and adolescent support team
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection
CIN / ChIN	Children in Need
CISRS	Children's Independent Safeguarding Review Service
CO	Care Order
CP	Child Protection
CPC	Child Protection Conference
CPS	Crown prosecution service
CRAST	Children's Referral Assessment and Support Team
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSO	Child Safety Order
CSS/C	Children's social services/care
CST	Kent Police Combined Safeguarding Team
CYP	Children and Young People
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DA	Domestic abuse
DATs	Drug Action Teams
DASH	Domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour based violence
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service (Replaces CRB)
DCPC	Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator
DCS	Director of Children's services
DUST	Drug use screening tool
EPO	Emergency protection order
EPP	Emergency Police Protection
FE	Further Education
FII	Fabricated and induced illness
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FNP	Family Nurse Partnership
HV	Health Visitor
IMR	Independent Management Review
IPS	Integrated Prevention Service
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LLR	Lesson Learned Review
MA	Multi Agency
MARAC	Multi agency risk assessment conference

APPENDIX

MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
Medway CAN	Medway Children Action Network
Medway FIS	Medway Family Information Service
MSCB	Medway Safeguarding Children Board
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
OOH	Out of Hours
PPO	Police protection order OR Probation and Prison Ombudsman
PRU	Pupil referral unit
QA	Quality Assurance
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SCR	Serious Case Review
SUDI	Sudden unexpected death in infancy
SW	Social Worker
TAC / F	Team around the child / family
WT	Working Together
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOI	Youth Offender Institution
YOS/YOT	Youth offending service, Youth offending team