

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

7 NOVEMBER 2017

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (MSCB) ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

Report from: John Drew, MSCB Independent Chair

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Annual Report 2016-17 to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The MSCB Independent Chair publishes an annual report describing how agencies in Medway have worked together through the year and how effective the arrangements are in Medway to keep children and young people safe from harm, abuse or neglect.

The report summarises the progress that has been made in 2016-17 and the plans to develop this further in 2017-18.

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 what is done by each agency represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway; and
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by 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;
- Medway Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Kent Police & Crime Commissioner;
- National Probation Service;
- Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company;
- HM Young Offenders Institution Cookham Wood;
- Medway Secure Training Centre; and
- Children And Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

2. Background

- 2.1 The MSCB Independent Chair is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway. The Annual Report was approved by the MSCB at its meeting on 14 July 2017. The report is presented annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Community Safety Partnership and is appended to this report at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Annual Report brings together in one place reports on all the principle work carried out in Medway during 2016-17 that have been designed to keep children safe from harm, abuse or neglect.
- 2.3 The Annual Report 2016-17 includes:
- Independent Chairs assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangements in Medway for keeping children safe from harm, abuse or neglect;
 - An overview of the Board's governance and accountability arrangements including the statutory role of the Board, its structure and key relationships with other strategic boards;
 - An analysis of the key achievements of the MSCB for the year against the six priorities;
 - Single Agency reports on safeguarding;
 - An overview of the quality assurance and learning and improvement activities during the year;
 - The priorities the MSCB has set for the year ahead; and
 - A summary of the MSCB accounts for the next three years.

3. Minutes of Discussion at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 The MSCB Annual Report was considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 October 2017. The minutes of this discussion were as follows:
- 3.2 **Discussion:**
- The Chairman of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB), John Drew C.B.E., presented the MSCB Annual Report 2016-17.
- 3.3 The Chairman of the MSCB drew the Committee's attention to the findings of audits, case reviews and regular reporting which had demonstrated that there had been significant problems with recruiting and retaining experienced and able staff to work with children. This problem was reflected nationally and was most serious amongst social workers, health staff and those working in the custodial estate. Going forward, as one of six priority areas, the MSCB would be supporting a local recruitment strategy to facilitate improvements in this regard.
- 3.4 The Chairman of the MSCB continued there two key issues. Firstly referring to three Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) which were held or initiated in 2016/2017, the Chairman of the MSCB offered that the conclusions of 2

reviews and an update on the third, of which would not be concluded before such time, would be presented at the half yearly update.

- 3.5 Secondly, in relation to two custodial centres in Medway, Cookham Wood Young Offender Institution and Medway Secure Training Centre (STC), the Chairwoman explained that the MSCB would launch a new way of reviewing the treatment of children in these establishments and the Council had reformed the operation of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service to improve safeguarding.
- 3.6 In the next year the MSCB would also be prioritising links to Medway's schools and the impact of domestic abuse and exploitation.
- 3.7 Members thanked the Chairman of the MSCB for the report and then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:
- 3.8 **Wood Review and Children and Social Work Act 2017** – At the request of a Member, the Chairman of the MSCB advised that the supporting guidance on the Act, in particular the degree of freedom allowed by the Act, had not been published. A consultation on the guidance would commence imminently, circa. 2 weeks. The Chairman of the MSCB undertook to provide the Committee with an update report at a future meeting of the Committee.
- 3.9 **Domestic Abuse Campaign** – A Member commended Medway's nomination for a Community Engagement Award at the National Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards. In response to a question requesting further information on the campaign and the award, the Chairman of the MSCB undertook to provide more detailed information.
- 3.10 **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) waiting list** – Asked whether a 33 week wait for an assessment was typical, the Chairman of the MSCB advised that this was the longest wait and not a reflection of the average wait. He noted this was a reduced waiting time but that there remained a problem.
- 3.11 In response to a query about how the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust had reduced assessment waiting times, the Chairman of the MSCB noted that the Sussex Partnership had been able to retain staffing levels and streamline the process.
- 3.12 **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) training** – In response to a question whether compliance with Level 3 Safeguarding Children Training and PREVENT training by Medway CAMHS staff should be 100%, rather than the reported 86% and 71% respectively, the Chairman of the MSCB agreed and explained in part this figure was due to staff turnover.
- 3.13 **NHS funding for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)** – When asked why the NHS would not be providing funding to any LSCBs, the Chairman of the MSCB noted this was the national position of the NHS. Funding from the NHS would go directly to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- 3.14 **Custodial centres** – In response to a question pertaining to the review of child treatment, the Chairman of the MSCB explained there would be a more

comprehensive review of child restraint, other than just the present annual review, aimed at improving how people could raise issues and concerns. This approach had support from both the governor of Cookham Wood Young Offender Institution and the Director of Medway STC.

- 3.15 **Role of social workers at Cookham Wood and Medway STC** – In response a question regarding the role of the Medway Social Work Team in the custodial centres, the Chairman of the MSCB agreed with concerns by the Council about the support and direction available to the 3 social workers at Cookham Wood. Unlike other models in Medway these social workers were not part of a Hub, with access to the same level of supervision. The Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services added it is unclear how the social workers inform the work of case workers.
- 3.16 **Link with schools, youth and social groups** – Asked whether the MSCB had a role in safeguarding children at youth and social groups e.g. sports and events, the Chairman of the MSCB explained that the focus of the MSCB at present would be on schools as this was where they spent more time. He noted that these groups were subject to child protection requirements. The Chairman of the MSCB undertook to consider the future role of the MSCB in this regard.
- 3.17 **Targets** – A Member observed that many of the statements regarding progress towards targets within the report were procedural or administrative and did not describe the impact or measure the outcome. The Chairman of the MSCB agreed with the critique and undertook to see how this information could be included.
- 3.18 **Children missing from care and home** – highlighting that the number of children who had gone missing from care or home was large and increasing, a Member asked whether this was a local trend or reflected nationally, further whether there was a strategy to safeguard these children. The Chairman of the MSCB explained that it was not clear whether the rise in numbers was due to a true increase or whether it was due to improved reporting and recording. He also noted the data included Looked After Children (LAC) that had been placed in Medway by other authorities and who had gone missing. The numbers were an indication of the high level of vulnerability especially sexual exploitation; with improving data and associated knowledge of the children at risk tackling the issue had been improved. The Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services added the Council utilised a Graded Care Profile Tool which assisted professionals to measure the quality of care given to a child and any risk of harm. The tool involved different aspects of the family life being graded utilising a questionnaire. A family would be visited a number of times to track progress.
- 3.19 **Modern day slavery** – A Member raised a concern that the report did not address modern day slavery; the Chairman of the MSCB undertook to provide a position within the half yearly report.
- 3.20 **Child Protection Plan (CPP)** – At the request of a Member, the Chairman of the MSCB clarified there was an error at paragraph 1.20 of Appendix A, the 506 figure at April 2017 should read April 2016.

- 3.21 **LADO referrals** – In response to a question enquiring why there had been an increase in LADO referrals, the Chairman of the MSCB explained that the majority of the referrals were from Cookham Wood Young Offender Institution and Medway STC and agreed a greater scrutiny of the data was required. The Chairman of the MSCB undertook to provide the data.
- 3.22 **Child offender numbers** – In response to a comment of a Member, the Chairman of the MSCB noted Medway had a high proportion of all child offenders nationally owing to past closures of other facilities, including in London. He added at his last known count only 1 child from Medway was in custody.
- 3.23 **School engagement** – Asked why some schools were not engaged with the MSCB and what action would be taken to resolve this, the Chairman of the MSCB noted that potential reasons may be that the schools were unaware of what resource was available, the increasing autonomy of schools and the school may have felt the resources were not relevant. He followed that the Board had appointed a part time officer solely responsible for schools and that the Board would undertake a more periodic check regarding the degree of engagement.
- 3.24 **Gang violence** – In response to question over how the MSCB were raising awareness of attacks, particularly acid attacks, the Chairman of the MSCB confirmed it was remit of Community Safety Partnerships and Youth Offending Boards.

3.25 **Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

4. Risk management

- 4.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCB annual report 2016-17 presents an analysis of safeguarding in Medway and work to challenge and support the Council and its other partners to address and reduce risks to children.

5. Financial implications

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

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The production of an annual report for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory requirement as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), HM Government.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Board is asked to consider and comment on the annual report and the effectiveness of local services in keeping children safe.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Annual Report
2016-17

Background papers

None