



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

6 NOVEMBER 2018

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (MSCB) ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

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 2017-18 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 2017-18 and the plans to develop this further in 2018-19.

The MSCB Annual Report was considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2018. The minutes of this discussion are set out in section 3 of the report.

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 and health partners;
- Kent Police & Crime Commissioner;

- National Probation Service;
- Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company;
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service;
- 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 Executive at its meeting on 3 September 2018. 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 2017-18 that have been designed to keep children safe from harm, abuse or neglect.
- 2.3 The Annual Report 2017-18 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;
 - An overview of the quality assurance and learning and improvement activities during the year;
 - The priorities the MSCB has set for the year ahead;
 - A summary of the MSCB accounts for the next three years; and
 - Single Agency reports on safeguarding.
- 2.4 The MSCB Annual Report was considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2017. The minutes of this discussion are set out in section 3 of the report, below.

3. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 October 2018

- 3.1 The Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Independent Chair introduced the MSCB's Annual Report 2017-18 which included details about how agencies in Medway had worked collectively through the year and how effective safeguarding arrangements were for children and young people in Medway.
- 3.2 Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- 3.2.1 **Future arrangements** – in response to a question about the Board’s membership, the Independent Chair explained that following new legislation, the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) was being removed, allowing the Council, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups to develop their own arrangements, which would need to be developed and set by summer 2019. Those arrangements could enable involvement from Special Educational Need providers and businesses, which were both suggested by Members.
- 3.2.2 **Non attendance** – in response to a question about non attendance by two agencies detailed in the report, the Independent Chair explained that in both cases attendance had improved in the current year.
- 3.2.3 **Recruitment and retention of social workers** – in response to a question about this issue, which had been an ongoing problem for Medway, the Independent Chair confirmed that Medway’s proximity to London was a large factor in this issue and one shared by other authorities in similar locations from London. He added that Medway had put in place some innovative ideas to encourage recruitment and retention and the Deputy Director, Children and Adults confirmed that retention and recruitment rates were improving.
- 3.2.4 **Education Safeguarding Audit** – concern was raised about the response rate of schools to the audit, which had been 55%. The Independent Chair explained that the response rate for 2018/19 was much improved due to the development of stronger relationships with schools, established by the Education Safeguarding Officer. It was reported that this post had recently become vacant but was being recruited to in order to continue the great progress the previous post holder had made.
- 3.2.5 **Gangs** – in response to an update request on strategies for addressing gangs, officers explained that there was a great deal of partnership work on this rising issue and best practice was being shared from Islington’s Youth Offending Team. It was suggested that the Committee consider having a full report on gangs in the future.
- 3.2.6 **Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Sub Group** – a Member asked for detail around the MASE Sub-Group’s action plan which sought to reduce risk and harm caused by sexual exploitation to children and young people across Medway. The Independent Chair undertook to circulate the action plan and to also attach it to the next MSCB report.
- 3.2.7 **Use of social media** – A Medway Youth Council representative advised that young people were more likely to use social platforms such as snapchat and YouTube rather than Twitter. He also informed the Committee that the MYC conference later in the year would be focussing on community safety.
- 3.2.8 **Early Help case recording** – The Committee’s Teacher representative commented on the amount of time early help case recording took, which was a capacity issue for schools. In response, the Independent Chair stated that work was being done to streamline the system and reduce the amount of paperwork required.

3.2.9 **Access to Children and Family hubs** – in response to a comment about the hubs being difficult to access for some areas, such as Rainham, officers confirmed that satellite provision was provided in areas, for Rainham this was at Miers Court Primary School. Where needs were identified, short term specific programmes could be run at satellite sites to meet such need.

3.3 The Committee noted the report.

4. Risk management

4.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCB annual report 2017-18 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 Health and Wellbeing 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 2017-18.

Background papers

None