

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 2019

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (MSCB) UPDATE REPORT

Report from: John Drew, MSCB Independent Chair

Author: Simon Plummer, MSCB Business Manager

Summary

The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the work of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) during 2018-19 and to provide members with an update on the MSCB Business Plan 2017-20.

The report has been written in accordance with the joint protocol between strategic partnerships in Medway and it follows the presentation of the MSCB Annual Report 2017-18 in October 2018. The MSCB Annual Report 2018-19 will follow later in the year.

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.
- 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
- HM Young Offenders Institution Cookham Wood
- Medway Secure Training Centre

- Kent Fire and Rescue Service
- Children And Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

1.3 A protocol has been signed between the MSCB, Health and Wellbeing Board, Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adult Board and the Medway Community Safety Partnership to ensure appropriate co-ordination and coherence between the boards.

2. Background

2.1 The MSCB comprises an Executive, a Board and a number of sub groups. The Executive is the main business forum ensuring that the MSCB maintains its main focus on the strategic priorities that impact on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway. The day-to-day work of the Board is managed through the sub group structure. The Executive, Board and its sub groups are supported by the MSCB Staff Team, who are employed by Medway Council and based in Gun Wharf.

2.2 The main responsibilities for MSCB are defined under regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Regulations and include:

- developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures;
- communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- participating in the planning of services for children in the area of authority; and
- undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their board partners on lessons to be learned.

3. Summary of Progress

3.1 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 MSCB Annual Report 2017-18 was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2018. A further update on the work of the MSCB is below. The MSCB Annual Report 2018-19 will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board later in the year.

3.2 Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) - Local Safeguarding Children Boards undertake Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) when children die or are seriously injured, and abuse and/or neglect are suspected or known to be a factor, and/or there are concerns about how local agencies worked together. The purpose of such reviews is to learn lessons and improve practice. Such reviews result in action plans that should drive this improvement.

3.3 The first SCR was referred in following a Serious Incident (SI) investigation carried out by Medway NHS Foundation Trust. The SI was carried out

following a retrospective review of records which identified a failure to escalate safeguarding concerns in relation to sexual abuse. Jane Wonnacott has been appointed as Independent Author for this review. DCI Gavin Moss has taken over as Chair of the SCR panel from Susie Harper. The Independent Reviewer has met with agencies including panel representatives, chronology authors and professionals who had worked directly with the subject of the review. The Independent reviewer has also met with the subject of the review. The Independent Reviewer is finalising her draft report to present to the Panel on 29 April 2019. The Overview report will then be presented to the MSCB Board on 17 May 2019.

- 3.4 The second SCR is in relation to the death of a three year old in Croydon. The Metropolitan Police made a referral for a Serious Case Review (SCR) to the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board in March 2018. The Independent Author is Nigel Bower and the Panel is being chaired by Tina Hughes. The primary focus of the review is the period from October 2013 to February 2018. Two panel meetings have been held with the last on 4 March 2019. At that meeting the panel considered the first drafts of each agencies Individual Management Reviews (IMRs).
- 3.5 The MSCB has now published a SCR in relation to the abuse of children at Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) which first aired in a BBC Panorama documentary. The Independent review titled, 'Learning for organisations arising from incidents at Medway STC' was published on 21 January 2019.
- 3.6 The purpose of the review was to identify learning and improvements to be made to safeguarding, both nationally and locally, as well as promote the welfare of children and to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. Alex Walters, a highly experienced and well regarded specialist in children's social work was appointed as the independent reviewer and Reg Hooke, a former head of the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Command, chaired the review panel.
- 3.7 The review involved 14 agencies or organisations who all had involvement with Medway STC, either as commissioners of services within the STC or as local statutory agencies who had safeguarding responsibilities for the children. Extensive work was carried out including comprehensive Individual Management Reviews by all 14 organisations, information reports from six further organisations, individual meetings, interviews with children who had been at the centre at the time and staff at the secure estate. Other organisations who offer support through their helplines to children in custody, such as Childline and the Howard League for Penal Reform, were also contacted and meetings were also held with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the producer of the Panorama programme and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
- 3.8 Medway STC was being run by G4S at the time of the undercover filming and transferred to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in April 2016.
- 3.9 The review sets out a large number of recommendations and identified three primary areas of focus for learning:

1. How to create safe working cultures within organisations. This covers areas such as safe recruitment, policies, training and supervision of staff; the creation of transparent and effective arrangements for staff and children to raise their concerns with clear management oversight and whistleblowing procedures.
 2. How to ensure that statutory agencies and their arrangements for responding to allegations/concerns about adults who are in positions of trust or peer abuse are effective in protecting children from abuse and that local monitoring is effective.
 3. How to ensure appropriate and child focussed commissioning practice by national organisations responsible for the contracts for service provision including from the voluntary sector within the secure estate which are informed by local safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.10 Agencies involved in the review have prepared action plans to address the recommendations which are being monitored by the MSCB.
- 3.11 Implementation of Working Together 2018 – The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty to be placed on three agencies, namely the Local Authority, the Chief Officer of Police and Clinical Commissioning Group (referred to as Safeguarding Partners), to make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.
- 3.12 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) was published in July 2018 setting out:
- the three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents;
 - to fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies; and
 - all three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.13 Medway Council, Kent Police and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have developed proposals for a Safeguarding Partnership for Medway to replace the current Safeguarding Children Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board considered the proposed safeguarding partnership arrangements for Medway at its meeting on 19 February 2019. Subject to agreement by Cabinet on 9 April 2019, the new arrangements will be published by 29 June 2019. Transition to the new arrangements will take place by 29 September 2019.
- 3.14 Multi agency audits – The MSCB undertakes themed multi agency audits to identify good practice and multi agency learning through the Case File Audit Group (CFAG). Themes have included neglect, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. An overview report is completed to provide a key summary of the lessons from the audits and recommendations from the group. These recommendations are built into the MSCB Action and

Improvement plan which is managed and implemented by the MSCB Learning Lessons sub group.

- 3.15 The theme of the last audit considered by the MSCB was child sexual exploitation. In this audit two cases were identified as good and four as requiring improvement. The following key themes were identified:
- The children identified as at risk, or being exploited, are beyond parental control. Evidence from the audit suggests that parents were unable to parent teenagers, or their style of parenting is inappropriate to the presenting risks, there were a lack of boundaries, and the inability to implement them.
 - Where cases involved teenagers there was a positive focus on trying to work with them but the role of fathers was missing from assessments.
 - The children identified as at risk, or being exploited, display harmfully sexual behaviours. Professionals need an understanding of risk associated with sexual health and of sexual behaviours in children.
 - Parents display a lack of understanding of risk and have been considered naïve, unresponsive or resistant
 - The focus of professionals is often on the child presenting with CSE risks and not the siblings; this is sometimes in part due to the parents
 - Children being identified as at risk have older siblings who displayed the same behaviours and were at risk themselves as children
 - Professionals could have taken the opportunity to call a professionals meeting when there were concerns about a family
 - Earlier information sharing is needed to evidence the impact of emotional abuse and neglect on children.
- 3.16 Multi agency dataset – Partner agencies submit on a quarterly basis their agency data to the Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) sub group. Below is a summary of some of the key issues highlighted in the dataset:
- 497 Early Help Assessments (EHAs) were started in Quarter 1 and 2 of 2018-19 and the service is on target for a similar number of EHA's in the year compared with the previous year of 1002.
 - There were 2222 contacts received by First Response on cases not already open to Children's Services in Quarter 1 2018-19 and 40% of these met the threshold. There were 1567 contacts in Quarter 2 2018-19 with 54% of them meeting threshold. This shows an increase in the % of referrals meeting threshold from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2. Multi agency threshold workshops have been running since the introduction of the new threshold document in April 2018.
 - More referrals are now being received from the adult emergency room at Medway NHS Foundation Trust in relation to risks posed to children from adult behaviours demonstrating a better understanding of identifying and referring behaviour of concern.
 - There were 273 domestic abuse incidents with children and young people in the household resulting in a Domestic Abuse Notification (DAN) in Quarter 2 2018-19. This is higher than the 221 DANs in Quarter 1 however this follows the normal increasing seasonal trend for domestic abuse during the summer.

- There had been a decrease in the number of missing children incidents from 440 in Quarter 1 to 284 in Quarter 2. The 284 in Quarter 2 refers to 118 children, 16 of these children are those placed in Medway by other local authorities – this equates to 14.8% of the 284 incidents.

Scrutiny and Challenge Arrangements and holding agencies to account – The MSCB has in place a programme for agency annual reports to be presented to the Board detailing actions taken to improve effectiveness, strategic issues for the organisation and what life is like for front line staff. The MSCB also maintains a Challenge Log to demonstrate how the MSCB is challenging partners on their responsibilities and provides details about the action taken to address the concerns raised by MSCB.

4. MSCB Strategic Plan and Business Plan

- 4.1 The MSCB agreed six new priorities for 2017-20 set out in the MSCB Strategic Plan. The MSCB has a Business Plan which sets out the detailed actions under each of the six priority areas. A copy of the MSCB Business Plan is attached in the Appendix.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCB annual report 2018-19 will present 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.

6. Financial and Legal implications

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

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 The committee is asked to consider and note the contents of the update report and provide any comments.

Lead officer contact

John Drew C.B.E., Independent Chair, MSCB john.drew@medway.gov.uk
Simon Plummer, MSCB Business Manager simon.plummer@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix – MSCB Business Plan 2017-20 – Version 8 May 2019

Background Papers

None.