

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2020

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (MSCP) UPDATE REPORT

Report from: Ian Sutherland, MSCP Chair
Rory Patterson, MSCP Independent Scrutineer

Author: Simon Plummer, MSCP Business Manager

Summary

The purpose of the report is to update the committee on the work of the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) during 2019-20 and to provide members with an update on the MSCP Strategic Plan and Business Plan 2020-22.

The report has been written in accordance with the joint protocol between strategic partnerships in Medway. The MSCP Annual Report 2019- 20 will follow later in the year.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) was set up on 2 September 2019 to replace the Local Safeguarding Children Board. These new arrangements were in response to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and were approved by Cabinet on 9 April 2019.

1.2 Medway Council, Kent Police and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are the three safeguarding partners that make up the MSCP. The purpose of the MSCP is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats

- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

1.3 The MSCP 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
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service

2. Background

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 Medway published its safeguarding partnership arrangements in June 2019 and introduced the new arrangements on 2 September 2019. The MSCP comprises an Executive and a number of sub groups. The Executive is the main business forum ensuring that the partnership maintains its main focus on the strategic priorities that impact on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway. The Executive is led by the three safeguarding partners – Police, CCG and Local Authority. The Executive is jointly chaired by the three partners on a rotational basis and meets every two months. Ian Sutherland, Director of People – Children and Adults Services, Medway Council is the current Chair of the MSCP Executive until September 2020 when Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Pritchard, Kent Police will take over as Chair.

- 2.4 The main objective of the MSCP Executive is to ensure that the functions of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies are effectively discharged in accordance with the requirements set out in Working Together 2018.
- 2.5 The MSCP has seven sub groups in place, four of which are joint Kent and Medway sub groups.
- 2.6 Secure Estate Quality Assurance Sub Group – The sub group brings together agencies with involvement in HMYOI Cookham Wood to disseminate learning to improve outcomes for young people in custody and to ensure effective safeguarding procedures are in place. The group undertakes an annual review of safeguarding and restraint in the Secure Estate in Medway.
- 2.7 Learning Lessons Sub Group – The key role of the sub group is to ensure there is a culture of continuous learning and improvement across partner agencies. The group reviews and scrutinises action plans for case reviews and disseminates learning, both as good practice and areas for improvement from local and national reviews.
- 2.8 Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) Sub Group – the key role of the group is to review and scrutinise the safeguarding children performance across all MSCP member agencies, and monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding children activities undertaken by agencies.
- 2.9 Kent and Medway Policy and Procedures Sub Group – The group has responsibility for co-ordinating the development of local multi agency policies, procedures and guidance for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across Kent and Medway.
- 2.10 Kent and Medway Joint Exploitation Group – The group oversees the multi agency activity around: Sexual Exploitation; Gangs/ County Lines; Radicalisation/ Extremism; Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; Modern Slavery and; Online Safeguarding.
- 2.11 Kent and Medway Health Safeguarding Group – The group is the key forum for all signatories and safeguarding leads from the health system to share and receive information, promote good practice, address concerns and system challenge and to raise matters to the MSCP Executive.
- 2.12 Kent and Medway Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) – CDOP is the multi agency panel set up to review the deaths of all children normally resident in the area, in order to learn lessons and share any findings for the prevention of future deaths.

3. Summary of Progress

- 3.1 The MSCP is required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway. The full MSCP Annual Report 2019-20 will be presented to the Committee later in the year. An update on the progress of the work of the MSCP since September 2019 is below.

- 3.2 Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) - Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formerly Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are undertaken 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. Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships may decide to conduct a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) if a child has been seriously harmed and in accordance with the guidance in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases, at both local and national level, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.3 Since September 2019, the MSCP has not commissioned any Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Two Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) which were commissioned by the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) have been published this year.
- 3.4 In January 2020 SCR George was published following the death of three year old George. The Ambulance Service was called to a street in London to attend to an unresponsive three year old George. George had suffered a cardiac arrest and was taken to hospital where he died. Following a criminal investigation it was found that mother's then partner had twice pushed his car seat back and crushed George. The recommendations from the review were:
- Seek confirmation from Kent Children's Social Care that in circumstances when it receives Police notification of an incident involving a child, it reliably captures and responds to all relevant information
 - Monitor progress made in implementing all recommendations in agencies' submitted reports or which were identified during the course of the George SCR.
 - Seek confirmation that all members agencies' training and development programmes address current lawful definitions and required understanding of 'coercive and controlling conduct' The MSCP Learning Lesson Sub-group is monitoring the implementation of the above, as well as additional operational recommendations identified by agencies involved in this SCR.
- 3.5 In January 2020 SCR Faith was published. This SCR was commissioned following a retrospective health review which identified that as a child Faith had been seen by health practitioners with symptoms that may have been indicative of sexual abuse and that there appeared to have been a failure of multi-agency responses to indicators of risk throughout Faith's childhood. The recommendations from the review were:
- Partner agencies in Medway should review their staff development activities in relation to child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation to ensure that all practitioners have the required knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise and respond to child sexual abuse within the family including hearing the "voice" and lived experience of the child.
 - Consideration should be given by Medway Hospital to pre-pubescent girls being jointly seen by a gynaecologist and a paediatrician (or a relevant specialist children's practitioner). Best practice would be a joint paediatric/gynaecologist clinic for these patients.

- All partner agencies should promote the use of the sexual abuse pathway in cases of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, emphasising the use of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), and make sure that the pathway is embedded into day to day practice.
- All partner agencies should work together to consider the effectiveness of recognition and response in situations where criminal exploitation may feature in a young person's life.
- Partner agencies should work together to develop an agreed multi-agency whole family approach to work with complex families. This approach should include expectations regarding information sharing and understanding and working with the root causes of adult issues that are affecting parenting capacity.
- Medway Safeguarding Children Board should seek evidence from Children's Services that legal planning is used at an early enough stage and that this provides the framework for thorough assessments and ongoing work with the child and their family.
- Medway Safeguarding Children Board should seek evidence from Children's Services that the cause of placement breakdown is analysed via disruption meetings and that findings are incorporated into ongoing planning for the child.
- Partner agencies should establish a multi-agency approach to the provision of therapeutic services to children and young people and that this approach should clarify roles and responsibilities and at a minimum involves schools, health and social work services.
- NHS England should review the system for accessing both electronic paper and archived primary care records in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose in assisting GPs in their current practice and also any required statutory reviews.

3.6 Independent Scrutiny – The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance, through monitoring and challenge, in judging the effectiveness and quality of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. This is undertaken through objective scrutiny, acting as a constructive critical friend, promoting reflection to drive improvements, and reporting how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership to fulfil their safeguarding children role.

3.7 In January 2020, the MSCP appointed an Independent Scrutineer for the MSCP, Rory Patterson and an Independent Scrutineer for the Secure Estate, John Drew.

3.8 Rory Patterson, MSCP Independent Scrutineer has provided the following update: Over the last 4 months I have met with over 20 colleagues, twice attended the MSCP Executive and attended a number of partnership subgroups. There is no doubting the openness and commitment among partners to promote partnership working and there is optimism that this will translate into a positive impact on children and families in the area. While there is considerable goodwill, this will need to translate into positive actions which will make a difference to children. Overall, partnerships seem sound and constructive although there is acknowledgement that there is still room for improvement. One area that could be strengthened is greater clarity about the

wider partnership's priorities and accountability of those working below executive level.

- 3.9 The recent major reorganisation of the CCG in Kent has had an impact on the continuity of relationships at a strategic level as new roles have only just been established and filled. It is not clear at this stage what impact these changes will have on partnership working and on the experiences of children and families in the area. There is also more scope for the partners to share information about how their own service level action plans impact on the functioning of the wider partnership and have and contribute to the improvement journey for children's services.
- 3.10 An integral part of the quality assurance framework in Medway is the work undertaken by the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership. I have attended the Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) Sub-Group and the Learning Lessons Sub-Group of the MSCP. Both of these groups are well attended by partners and provide an opportunity for scrutiny, reflection and challenge. The PMQA Subgroup has a work programme which incorporates regular monitoring of the Safeguarding Partnership's Dataset; reporting of single agency audits; and annual reports on key areas of safeguarding such as missing children and private fostering. I heard about the positive work the Council was doing in relation to missing children, and witnessed constructive challenge between partners about attendance at child protection conferences.
- 3.11 The Learning Lessons sub group is responsible for the effective dissemination of learning from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and for monitoring the implementation of recommendations from reviews. In order to support this the MSCP arranges sessions to ensure the learning from national and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) as well as multi agency audits is accessible understood by practitioners. The subgroup has to ensure that the learning from LCSPRs widely disseminated throughout the partnership. The subgroup also advises the Safeguarding Executive on whether a Local Child Safeguarding Review should be undertaken. This is an important meeting for identifying and disseminating learning in the partnership in addition to providing effective challenge to how partners are working together to safeguard children.
- 3.12 Working with the partnership manager I am gathering material to conduct an assessment of the current effectiveness of partnership working. This is based on a model developed by the University of Bedfordshire, and should allow the partnership to chart changes in how they are working over time. The model can be used at different levels in the partnership and is able to highlight a range of perspectives, including feedback from children and families. This should provide a common framework for partners to develop a jointly owned approach to tackling some of the existing barriers'.
- 3.13 Impact of COVID-19 – The MSCP has continued to deliver all of its key functions including statutory functions during the pandemic. We have delayed deadlines for particular pieces of work to reduce the impact on partner agencies and to allow them to focus on front line service. MSCP Executive

and Sub Group meetings have continued as virtual meetings using MS Teams.

- 3.14 The pandemic has had an impact on the delivery of multi agency face to face training. This was on hold during April and May 2020 and in June 2020 virtual training begun being rolled out. The MSCP has been promoting the use of the MSCP E-learning packages as an alternative to face to face training.
- 3.15 The MSCP has been sharing briefings from partners on changes to services and has set up a COVID-19 section on the MSCP website providing useful updates and resources for professionals.
- 3.16 MSCP Leadership Event – The MSCP held its first Leadership Event on 24 January 2020. The MSCP Leadership Group are run as twice yearly Safeguarding Conferences, with attendance from all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. The Leadership event was attended by over 90 professionals and focused on the Learning from the Smith Family Review; the findings from the Children’s Commissioner report for Medway Children’s Services and the Kent Police HMIC Inspection Report. Partners were also able to feed into the development of the MSCP Business Plan.
- 3.17 Section 11 Audits - Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility on key agencies and organisations to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Section 11 audit is a self audit and repeated by the MSCP in full every two years.
- 3.18 The MSCP Executive has approved proposals developed by the Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) sub group for the 2020-22 cycle of section 11 audits. The Section 11 tool was launched in February 2020 at a launch event and agencies are in the process of completing the self assessment audits. Each agency will be expected to present their Section 11 audit to a multi agency challenge panel who will scrutinise the findings. Following this, a multi agency staff survey will be launched for staff to test the findings of the Section 11 audits.

4. MSCP Strategic Plan and Business Plan

- 4.1 The MSCP held its first Development Day on Friday 27 September 2019. The purpose of the day was to help develop the Strategic Plan for the MSCP by identifying the key priorities for the new partnership to ensure that agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Medway. The MSCP Executive met with a range of partners on the day including health providers, probation, the secure estate and education. The discussion focused on what has been working well for safeguarding children and what the key areas for improvement are. Partners heard about the findings of a recent survey with young people and parents and considered how the voice and lived experience of the child can be embedded through all its work. The group also considered recent inspections across the partnership and learning from case reviews

4.2 The MSCP agreed five new priorities for 2020-22 set out in the MSCP Strategic Plan. The MSCP has a Business Plan which sets out the detailed actions under each of the five priority areas. The five priorities for 2020-22 are:

1. Effective Partnerships

What do we want to achieve?

- Partners hold each other to account, support and challenge each other and use the challenge and escalation process effectively
- A partnership that learns from case reviews and audits
- Professionals recognise and reflect the child's lived experience and utilise a range of communication methods to engage with children
- Children and young people have the opportunity to be involved in the work of the MSCP

How will we achieve it?

- Develop and implement the MSCP Quality Assurance Framework
- Ensure inspectorate recommendations are effectively implemented
- Develop joint learning from case review events across Kent and Medway
- Assess the child's voice and lived experience through multi agency audits
- Develop opportunities to work with wider groups of children and young people to support the work of the MSCP

2. Contextual Safeguarding and trauma informed practice

What do we want to achieve?

- An effective multi agency response to contextual safeguarding and agreed set of tools for practitioners, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms
- An engaged workforce that understands contextual safeguarding and thresholds for tiered child protection interventions and services
- Partners act to prevent safeguarding issues arising and minimise the harm and impacts arising from those that do occur

How will we achieve it?

- Implementing a partnership approach to contextual safeguarding which identifies and responds to risks outside the family home
- Using trauma informed practice to understand and meet the needs of children

3. Domestic Abuse

What do we want to achieve?

- To prevent and reduce domestic abuse and ensure when children experience domestic abuse they can access the help and services which they need
- To have a competent and confident workforce who are able to recognise and appropriately respond to the needs of children affected by domestic abuse

How will we achieve it?

- Work closely with the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive to deliver the Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Delivery of learning opportunities to ensure Medway professionals are aware of services for children and young people and support health relationship education to young people
- Ensure that the multi agency audit programme includes themed audits on domestic abuse

4. Neglect

What do we want to achieve?

- Children in households where neglect is a feature are helped and when necessary protected
- To ensure that professionals have an enhanced understanding of neglect including adolescent neglect

How will we achieve it?

- Implement a multi agency neglect strategy to support the utilisation of the Graded Care Profile (GCP) to provide professionals with an objective measure of the care of children
- Ensure high quality training opportunities are available to support the identification of neglect
- Ensure that the multi agency audit programme includes themed audits on neglect

5. Effective Early Help

What do we want to achieve?

- Children and young people receive effective early help and appropriate interventions when needs are identified and/or problems arise

How will we achieve it?

- Support the development of a robust Early Help Strategy and service delivery model

4.3 A copy of the MSCP Strategic Plan 2020-22 is attached in Appendix One and the MSCP Business Plan 2020-22 in Appendix Two.

5. Risk management

5.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCP annual report 2019-20 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. Consultation

6.1 The MSCP consulted with a wider variety of stakeholders in the development of the MSCP Strategic Plan 2020-22 and the five priorities. A Development Day was held on 27 September 2019 to consult with partners on the

development of the priorities. The MSCP consulted with parents, carers and young people through a survey during August 2019.

7. Financial and Legal implications

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

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the update report and Business Plan and provide any comments.

Lead officer contact

Simon Plummer, MSCP Business Manager simon.plummer@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – MSCP Strategic Plan 2020 – 2022

Appendix 2 – MSCP Business Plan 2020 – 2022 (Draft)

Background Papers

None.