

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

16 FEBRUARY 2021

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (MSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

Report from: Andy Pritchard, Detective Superintendent, Kent Police (Chair)
Ian Sutherland, Director of Children & Adults Services
Sarah Vaux, Director of Nursing and Quality, Kent and Medway
Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Rory Patterson, MSCP Independent Scrutineer

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the first Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report 2019-20 to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Whilst the predominant focus of the report is on the work of the MSCP since it was set up on 2 September 2019, the report provides a summary of activity across the whole year and includes work undertaken by the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) in preparation for the transition to the new arrangements. The report summarises the progress that has been made in 2019-20 and the plans to develop this further in 2020-21.

The report also provides an update on the MSCP Business Plan 2020-22.

This report was considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2020 and its comments are set out at section 4 of the report.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. The Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) was set up on 2 September 2019 to replace the Medway 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 Kent 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 the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies:

- Medway Council
- Kent and 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 safeguarding partners are required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Medway. The report is presented annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Community Safety Partnership. The annual report is appended to this report at Appendix One.

2.2. The annual report brings together in one place reports on all the principle work carried out in Medway during 2019-20 that have been designed to keep children safe from harm, abuse or neglect.

2.3. The Annual Report 2019-20 includes:

- An overview of the partnership's governance and accountability arrangements including the statutory role of the partnership, its structure and key relationships with other strategic partnerships;
- An update from the Independent Scrutineer on his work to evaluate the partnership;
- An analysis of the key activity of the MSCP for the year;
- An overview of the quality assurance and learning and improvement activities during the year; and
- A summary of the MSCP accounts.

3. MSCP Business Plan

3.1. 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:

- Effective Partnerships
- Contextual Safeguarding and trauma informed practice
- Domestic Abuse
- Neglect
- Effective Early Help

3.2. A copy of the MSCP Business Plan 2020-22 is attached in Appendix Two.

3.3. The Board was initially due to consider the Business Plan (Action Plan) at its meeting on 13 April 2021, however it has been included within this report for expedience. In addition to the MSCP Annual Report the Board is asked to consider the Business Plan. In doing so, the Board is asked to remove the agenda item scheduled for 13 April 2021.

4. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 December 2020

4.1. The Committee considered the annual report of the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP), which was introduced by the current Chair, Detective Superintendent Andy Pritchard. The Committee raised a number of comments and questions, which included:

4.1.1. **Agency response during pandemic** – the Chair of the MSCP explained that the partnership response had been co-ordinated, with a real concern around hidden harm due to the lack of natural surveillance caused by lockdown restrictions. Efforts were made to mitigate this as much as possible, with close liaison taking place with schools and social care to ensure contact was made with vulnerable children and families. The NHS Kent and Medway CCG representative also confirmed that unlike the first wave of the pandemic where some health visiting and school nursing staff were redeployed to covid-19 response related tasks, this was not the case for the second or any subsequent waves.

4.1.2. **Independent Scrutineer** – in response to a question around the role of the independent scrutineer, the Chair of the MSCP explained that the independent role had a more productive use of time than previously, as it no longer included chairing responsibilities and it enabled effective challenge of the thinking and approach of the partnership.

4.1.3. **Time lag of data** – comment was made that some of the data included in the report was quite out of date. The Business Manager undertook to investigate this further and confirmed that accessing more current data available was a

focus of the Performance Management and Quality Assurance sub-group, although it was explained that there was some delay in regional and national comparative data.

- 4.1.4. **Relocation of the family court** – officers confirmed their disappointment of the relocation of the family court out of Medway, into Kent, although it was not expected to have a significant impact on safeguarding functions and the use of virtual court arrangements was starting to reduce initial delays experienced at the start of the pandemic.
- 4.1.5. **Child poverty** – in response to a question about how child poverty was defined and measured, officers explained that this was likely to be linked to measures of income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) for Medway, but this would be confirmed to the committee outside of the meeting.
- 4.1.6. **Training opportunities** – in response to a question about how training was advertised, particularly to the community and voluntary sector, officers explained they worked with Medway Voluntary Association and the NSPCC to raise awareness of training opportunities and they did work to tailor training content and availability to suit particular groups, such as schools and taxi drivers, as examples.
- 4.1.7. **Cyber bullying** – this was a concern that has been raised by young people and in response to a question about how the partnership was addressing this, the Chair of the MSCP confirmed it needed to have a greater focus within the partnership. It was added that engagement with schools was a priority and two school leaders would be joining the MSCP Executive to become more connected to the partnership, its priorities and approaches.
- 4.1.8. **Vaccinations** – in response to a question around immunisation rates, the representative of the NHS Kent and Medway CCG confirmed that Medway's performance was slightly below the national average for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination take up, an issue which was often linked to deprivation but was also linked to factors such as publicity issues which were difficult to reverse in some communities. It was also reported that the flu vaccination uptake had been much higher this year than previous years. She also undertook to report back to the Committee on Medway's performance with other immunisation take up.
- 4.1.9. **Children travelling by train** – a question was asked whether there was a link between out of area children travelling to Medway schools by train and county line and gang activity. In response the MSCP Chair explained that travelling by train was one possible way gangs may operate but it was one of many. Criminal exploitation of children manifested in a number of ways and was a focus of the Joint Exploitation Group to identify children involved or at risk of exploitation and to provide a wrap around service for those children.
- 4.1.10. **Engagement children and families** – in response to a question about seeking views of children and families, the Independent Scrutineer explained there were good examples of listening to their views but there were issues

about doing this consistently and how it impacted on service delivery. This was recognised as a challenge for all partnerships but was a priority for the MSCP to listen to concerns and use that to inform training, priorities and focus areas.

- 4.1.11. The Committee noted the report and requested a briefing note providing information and the definition and measures of child poverty.

5. Risk management

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

6. Financial and Legal implications

- 6.1. 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.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

7.1.1. Note the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out at section 4 of the report.

7.1.2. Consider and comment on the Annual Report set out at Appendix One to the report and the effectiveness of local services in keeping children safe,

7.1.3. Consider and comment on the Business Plan set out at Appendix Two to the report,

7.1.4. Agree to remove the MSCP Action Plan (which is the Business Plan) from the Board’s agenda on 13 April 2021 as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix One – Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report 2019-20

Appendix Two – Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Business Plan 2020-22 (Draft)

Background papers

None