

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 JUNE 2022

MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (MSCP) UPDATE REPORT

Report from: Paula Wilkins, Executive Chief Nurse, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Chair
Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People, Medway Council
Emma Banks, Detective Chief Superintendent, Kent Police
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 2021-22 and to provide members with an update on the MSCP Strategic Plan 2022-23 and Business Plan 2021-23.

The report has been written in accordance with the joint protocol between strategic partnerships in Medway. The MSCP Annual Report 2021- 22 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 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 of financial contributions from its constituent statutory partners:

- Medway Council
- Kent and Medway CCG and Health partners
- Kent Police & Crime Commissioner
- Probation Service
- 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 CCG (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 The MSCP 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 jointly chaired by the three partners on a rotational basis. Paula Wilkins, Executive Chief Nurse, Kent and Medway CCG took over as Chair of the MSCP in September 2021 from Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Pritchard, Kent Police who had been chair from September 2020. The MSCP has nine sub groups in place, four of which are joint Kent and Medway sub groups. All sub groups have representation from the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies and report to the MSCP Executive.

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.

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 2021-22 will be presented to the Committee later in the year. The MSCP Executive meets every two months. The last two meetings were held on 7 February 2022 and 25 April 2022. The next meeting is held on 6 June 2022. Below is a summary of the key activity of the MSCP.

3.2 Rapid Reviews – Rapid Reviews are undertaken following the notification of a serious incident and must be completed within 15 working days. The MSCP has completed one Rapid Review in the last six months. The Rapid Review was completed in March 2022 following a Serious Incident notification that was made to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in relation to the death of a three-month-old baby. The MSCP Rapid Review Panel, chaired by Kent Police, concluded that the case met the criteria for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review and a review has been commissioned. The outcome of the review was sent to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Panel has confirmed that they were in agreement with the MSCP decision making. The National Panel provided positive feedback on the Rapid Review report and commented that the report was well structured and well written.

3.3 Case Reviews – The MSCP will be publishing the learning from two reviews in June 2022, followed by learning events. The MSCP is also involved in a number of out of area Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

3.4 The Learning Lesson subgroup continues to monitor and complete actions from the MSCP audits and reviews. In May 2022 the MSCP and CCG co-hosted a learning event to address some of the actions identified in MSCP reviews; the event focused on supporting adolescents with complex healthcare needs.

3.5 The MSCP Independent Scrutineer undertook a review of two of the MSCP reviews and action plans (Williams and Smith). He found similar themes in these reviews and others taking place.

- Parental mental health
- Domestic Abuse
- Impact of cumulative neglect
- Multiple referrals to children's social care
- Information from health providers not fully known
- Hidden males
- Professional Curiosity – “seeing past the obvious”

3.6 The MSCP Independent Scrutineer found evidence that Learning Lesson subgroup members were taking responsibility for learning dissemination and

that actions were being acted upon by agencies. The challenge remains in showing how effective actions have been which is difficult to quantify. There was some drift in completing actions identified and some overlapping actions across reviews.

- 3.7 Multi-Agency Audits - The MSCP has in place a Multi-Agency Audit Group, the Case File Audit Group (CFAG), whose role is to undertake audits to identify good practice and multi-agency learning. Each quarter the CFAG focuses on a theme and spends the day reviewing cases. The theme of the audits is agreed upon by the MSCP Executive. Cases are selected at random from a list that meets the criteria of the theme of the audit. Partner agencies are asked to audit their case files and populate the MSCP case file audit tool ahead of the meeting. The most recent Case File Audit took place in March 2022 and was focused on the theme of parental mental health. The identified areas for learning include:
- How professionals can support engagement with services and evidence efforts made.
 - Professionals' response when families choose not to engage with services.
 - Understanding the lived experiences and relationships of parents and all children in the family.
 - Seeking appropriate health information and input where parents are known to mental health services.
 - Contingency planning when needs escalate.
- 3.8 The MSCP Independent Scrutineer has identified the work of the Case File Audit Group (CFAG) as one of the strengths of the system which has continued to maintain the multi-agency audit programme even though it has had to move this work online. The programme is based on the partnership's priorities and is able to highlight areas for learning and improvement.
- 3.9 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's role.
- 3.10 The MSCP Independent Scrutineer, Rory Patterson, has completed his work assessing the impact of local learning reviews in Medway. This concluded that lessons were disseminated widely across the partner organisations and that these were monitored by the relevant agencies. However, there was a delay in the implementation of some of the recommendations and too much time had passed between the serious incident and the completion of recommendations. The MSCP has taken on a recommendation to focus more on the impact of actions from learning reviews and the difference the agreed actions have made. In addition, Rory has been using The Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny model developed by the University of Bedfordshire as a framework to assess the effectiveness of the partnership. This work reports

that the MSCP is well established and has good working relationships between partners. The framework has helped to identify a number of gaps and areas where the partnership could be strengthened.

- 3.11 Multi-agency Safeguarding Training – The MSCP has been continuing to roll out multi-agency training virtually using MS Teams as well as introducing new sessions over the last six months. From May 2022 the MSCP is resuming face- to-face training as well as continuing to run shorter courses virtually. In addition, the promotion of the Kent and Medway e-learning training has continued.
- 3.12 Neglect Strategy Update – Neglect is one of the five strategic priorities of the MSCP for 2022-23 set out in its Strategic Plan. As part of its multi-agency response to neglect, the MSCP published the Medway Neglect Strategy in July 2021. Alongside the publication of the strategy, the MSCP have set up a Neglect Strategy Implementation Group and a Neglect Champions network with each partner identifying a champion to represent their organisation. The champions have developed training for professionals and met every two months to share learning, develop resources and provide support around neglect.
- 3.13 The MSCP Executive has agreed that there will be a specific focus on Neglect in 2022 and a Neglect Conference was held for professionals on 25 March 2022. The online conference was well attended by over 100 professionals and included key updates from partner agencies, the voice of the child, learning lessons from reviews and the Graded Care Profile (GCP2). The MSCP Executive acknowledges that whilst a lot of work has been undertaken since the publication of the Neglect Strategy, there is still more work to be done by all partners to achieve the strategic priorities in the strategy. Further work is needed to embed the GCP2 and to ensure that the partnership is able to monitor this to ensure that it has a positive impact on children and families in Medway.

4. MSCP Strategic Plan and Business Plan

- 4.1 In April 2022, the MSCP Executive approved the MSCP Strategic Plan 2022-23 which is attached in Appendix 1. The Strategic Plan sets out five priorities which are:
- Effective Partnerships
 - Contextual Safeguarding and trauma informed practice
 - Domestic abuse
 - Neglect
 - Effective Early Help
- 4.2 In September 2022, the MSCP will be adding a new priority around violence against women and girls and sexually harmful behaviour. This follows the publication of the Kent Police 'Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021-2024'.

4.3 The MSCP has a Business Plan which sets out the detailed actions under each of the five priority areas. A copy of the MSCP Business Plan 2021-23 is attached in Appendix 2.

5. Risk management

5.1 Whilst there are no specific risks identified, the MSCP annual report 2021-22 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 MSCP is a statutory body funded through financial and “in kind” contributions from local agencies. There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report.

7. Recommendations

7.1. The Committee is asked to note and consider the contents of the update report, the Strategic Plan 2022-2023 and the draft Business Plan 2021-2023.

Lead officer contact

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – MSCP Strategic Plan 2022 – 2023
Appendix 2 – MSCP Business Plan 2021 – 2023 (Draft)

Background papers

None