

Report to Council

18 January 2022

Subject:	Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020/2021
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1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider the 2020/21 Sandwell Children Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) Annual Report and make any recommendations as necessary.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 abolished Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and introduced Local Safeguarding Partnership's (LSP's) giving equal responsibilities to 3 statutory agencies (Local Authorities, Police and CCG's) for agreeing the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Sandwell have added a fourth equal statutory partner, being Sandwell Children's Trust who are the providers for children's social care services in Sandwell. These four key agencies are known locally as Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP).

Within the statutory functions defined for the Local Safeguarding Partnership, the statutory partners must develop local safeguarding arrangements which must be published and include:





- arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area
- arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangements.

- 2.2 To bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- 2.3 The attached annual report published by SCSP outlines the activities undertaken in line with the requirements during 2020/21 and provides an overview of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sandwell during that period.
- 2.4 The report provides evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies and recognises the increased challenges brought about by the global Covid pandemic and the impact this has had and continues to have on the entire population; and particularly on all agencies working to safeguard vulnerable children and families. Despite the very difficult year, SCSP are able to evidence the delivery of the core functions, including training; monitoring outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers; a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners during the year (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting in improvements; and the ways in which partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

- 3.1 The work of SCSP, and the annual report itself, provides a transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements. This enables a holistic view in respect of the Council's Vision 2030 and in particular:

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high-quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Sandwell has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The SCSP Annual Report for 2020/21 describes the effectiveness of children's safeguarding and the promotion of child welfare across Sandwell.
- 4.2 The Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) established on 1st April 2019 are the local strategic body with shared and equal duties to ensure joined-up arrangements are developed, and effective for all agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Sandwell.
- 4.3 The local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) was developed and published following full consultation with relevant agencies, children and young people and is widely shared to ensure safeguarding children in Sandwell is everyone's responsibility and all



children have the opportunities to achieve their best outcomes and for children and families to receive services at the right time according to their individual needs and in a co-ordinated way.

4.4 In compliance with the requirements for LSP, the SCSP published MASA details which included the plans for independent scrutiny of arrangements and this annual report demonstrates the areas and themes scrutinised by the recruited independent scrutineer and the effectiveness of our MASA.

4.5 The Board met on 6 occasions (bi-monthly) to manage the core and progressing business, with a further 12 additional 'Covid Business Continuity meetings' which were introduced to respond specifically to multiple risk and pressure points arising from national and local directives, government restrictions, alerts and departmental guidance in relation to the pandemic.

4.6 The Board was well attended by key partners to monitor the effectiveness of delivery against the three key strategic priorities:

SP1: Improving the performance of the Board;

SP2: Improving services for Sandwell's children;

SP3: Improving the response to exploitation.

4.7 Areas for development arising from the annual scrutiny activities including those relevant to any agency, are set out in the Annual Report. The delivery of these actions continues to be monitored, together with the impact on outcomes.

4.8 The SCSP currently have an Independent Chair and the future of this role is under review. It is intended for the outcome of this review to inform the leadership arrangements as of April 2022.

4.9 The current position

4.10 The SCSP priorities remain as: tackling child neglect and exploitation. There continues to be a focus on ensuring that those working with children receive effective learning and development.



4.11 Under previous arrangements for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) was under the auspices of the former SSCB, this was also relocated to local authorities Public Health and CCG's in the revised Working Together 2018 publication. These arrangements are now in place with the formation of a Black Country CDOP, with representation from the SCSP.

4.12 The new Partnership presented its Annual Report in June 2021.

4.13 Consultation

4.14 The Partnership has been widely consulted on the annual report which was ratified by the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership on 18th September 2021 and shared with other strategic boards to inform work happening locally to support children and families. This includes; Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB), Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB), Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP), Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) Improvement Boards and Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board Meeting (SSPPCB). The annual report is published on the SCSP website and a copy was sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, Department for Education (DfE), Police & Crime Commissioner and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care within seven days of being published.

4.15 Sustainability of Proposals

4.16 Areas for development or assurance relevant to each agency, are set out in the Annual Report. The delivery of these actions continues to be monitored, together with the impact on outcomes.

5 Implications

Resources:	<p>There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.</p> <p>The formulation of the annual report was met from existing resources.</p>
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Legal and Governance:	<p>In accordance with Working Together 2018, a copy of the report has been sent to the Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC, Chief Executive of Sandwell Children's Trust, Leader of the Council, Chair of Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, Chair of the Health and Well-being Board and Police and Crime Commissioner and the Clinical Commissioning Group.</p> <p>The report is also made publicly available on each of the Safeguarding Partners respective websites.</p>
Risk:	There are no risk implications arising from this report.
Equality:	<p>The SCSP annual report is the responsibility of the SCSP and is a summary and assessment of the work of all partners in meeting the safeguarding agenda. This report is for information only and the actions contained within the Board's plan will have their own Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as required.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Ensuring that partners work together to keep children safe underpins their right to enjoy health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Sharing intelligence and data about the prevalence of safeguarding concerns provides opportunities to intervene earlier to protect children from harm.</p> <p>Understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has been a priority for the Health and Well-being Board.</p>
Social Value	<p>As a partnership our vision is for all children to be safe at home and in their communities, where they are loved, cared for and have the stability to grow healthily and to achieve their ambition'. The values which underpin the work of the SCSP are captured in the statements below:</p> <p>We will put children at the heart of what we do Together we will make Sandwell safer for children We will always listen, learn and improve</p>



	<p>We will have respect for each other and recognise and respond positively to difference</p> <p>We will be positive about the future, and have aspirations for Sandwell's children, be solution focused, committed and innovative.</p>
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6 Appendices

2020/21 Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report

7. Background Papers

None

