
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 17th February 2021

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2019-2020

Purpose

1. To present the Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report to the Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - Members consider and comment upon Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2019-2020.

Background

3. Local Safeguarding Boards were established by the Children Act 2004 which required each local authority to establish a Board to ensure effective coordination between agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

The Social Work Act (2017), and subsequent revision of the Statutory guidance; Working Together (2018 version) has abolished Local Safeguarding Children Boards and redirected the statutory duties under the leadership of three key safeguarding partners, being Local Authority, Police and Health (Clinical Commissioning Group) with support from wider partners.

These new arrangements came into effect from September 2019. During this transformation, Dudley adopted a 'life course' approach to safeguarding and the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) was created. This report therefore reflects work carried out between September 2019 and March 2020.

4. The DSPP is the overarching strategic group which oversees the work of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership Group and the Safeguarding Adults Board, enabling a life course safeguarding approach across the Partnership.

5. Partners across Dudley and the wider Black Country have embraced the new statutory guidance with regards to Safeguarding. Further work is required in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) around the processing of contacts, the quality of referrals and consistent threshold. This work will be undertaken on a multi-agency basis through the MASH Operational Group, the MASH Strategic Board and will be included in the Improvement Plan.
6. Since the implementation of the first lockdown in March 2019, the DSPP Executive made a decision to meet weekly (a commitment which has continued) to ensure that safeguarding arrangements across the life course have remained safe and effective. DCSPG have been positively assured about the management of services and outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Finance

7. A breakdown of how the DSCB / DSPP was funded can be found as set out on page 8 of the DCSPG Annual Report

Law

8. New arrangements for Safeguarding were introduced by the Social Work Act 2017 and the revised publication of Working Together 2018.

Equality Impact

9. The DSPP work to prevent the abuse, neglect and harm of all children and young people within Dudley, inclusive of all children and their families; respecting their individual levels of ability, gender, gender identity, race, religion and belief systems and sexual orientation. The multi-disciplinary partnership aims to reduce the impact of inequalities through the coordination of services aimed at addressing these issues.
10. This report does not conflict with the Councils Policy on Equality.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

11. The multi-agency training offer has been impacted by Covid 19. This has meant that 'in person' face to face training is no longer an option at this point in time. However, the core training offer has been converted to e learning and now training is starting to be offered as 'virtual' face to face.

Commercial/Procurement

12. There are no commercial or procurement implications arising from the content of this report

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

13. Neglect, exploitation and abuse in childhood are known to be important determinants of physical and mental health problems that can impact across the rest of a child's life. It is critical that Safeguarding Partnership co-ordinate work to prevent and respond to neglect, abuse and exploitation; and help build resilience in those children, young people and their families that have experienced adversity.
14. The new safeguarding arrangements across the life course are already providing valuable opportunities to better co-ordinate safeguarding support and health support through transition from childhood to adulthood.
15. The joint priorities across the life course have enabled end to end discussions around safeguarding support, providing the best possible help for families at the right time.
16. Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership will remain vigilant with regard to emerging safeguarding issues in particular around mental health, as they affect children and young people, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and will respond to ensure that all agencies come together, are supported and provide assurance regarding their safeguarding responsibilities



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List of Background Documents

Appendix 1 – DSCPG Annual Report 2019-2020