

# Report to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**25 March 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2022/23
<b>Director:</b>	Sally Giles Interim Director of Children and Education
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## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Scrutiny Board considers and notes the 2022/23 Sandwell Children Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 introduced Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs) giving equal responsibilities to 3 statutory agencies (Local Authorities, Police and Integrated Commissioning Boards - ICB's) for agreeing and ensuring 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 targeted and social care services in the Borough. These four key agencies are known locally and leads Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP).
- 2.2 To bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners are duty bound to publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set:



- SCSP's summary of activities during 22/23, to include Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- The priorities for the reported period and what activities took place to take forward these priorities.
- Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training and the impact on practice for improved outcomes for children and families, from Early Help to children in care and care leavers.
- Any resulting improvements from activities (including from Rapid Reviews and Local or National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews)
- The scrutiny arrangements in place and how successful they have been to support the MASA
- The role, visibility and voice of children and families in the safeguarding activities.

2.3 The attached annual report published by SCSP outlines the activities undertaken in line with the requirements during 2022/23 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 demonstrates where increased attention and additional developmental activities have taken place to areas identified for improvement and to strengthen multi agency working to safeguard vulnerable children and families.

2.5 Throughout the annual report, 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><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b></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><b>Strong resilient communities</b></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>

### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) was established on 1 April 2019 as the local strategic body with shared and equal duties placed on four named key agencies to ensure joined-up arrangements are developed, and effective for all local agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Sandwell.
- 4.2 The local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) was initially developed and published in 2019 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 full potential as well as for all children and families to receive services at the right time according to their individual needs and in a co-ordinated way.
- 4.3 In compliance with the requirements for LSP, the SCSP have a programme of scrutiny activities to continuously 'test out' the effectiveness of the MASA and the work of the SCSP. This annual report demonstrates the areas and themes scrutinised by the resident Independent Scrutineer and includes areas identified for development



arising from the annual scrutiny activities including any actions relevant to partner agencies.

- 4.4 Working Together 2018 encourages the Independent Scrutineer to comment on the accuracy of LSP's annual reports prior to publication. This can also be seen in the final section of this year's annual report.
- 4.5 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 2024.
- 4.6 The SCSP met on 6 occasions (bi-monthly) to manage the core and progressing business, with a further 2 additional partnership development events taking place during 22/23.

### **The current position**

- 4.7 The SCSP have maintained its two substantive priority areas as: tackling child neglect and exploitation with the additional area for focus on 'early help' identified from the previous year and the progress made is included in this annual report.
- 4.8 There continues to be a comprehensive partnership training programme to ensure that the children's workforce remain abreast of new national, regional and local practice updates and receive effective and timely learning and development opportunities.
- 4.9 The local arrangements for the review of child deaths, through the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) sit within the auspices of the local authorities Public Health and ICB's and are monitored via the formation of a Black Country CDOP. SCSP is represented as members within this group with the SCSP receiving annual updates as is referenced in the annual report by the SCSP.

### **Consultation**

- 4.12 The Partnership has been widely consulted on the annual report which was ratified by the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership on 25 October 2023 and shared with other strategic boards to inform work happening locally to support children and families. This includes the member of the 5+ Boards as; 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).

4.14 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.

### Sustainability of Proposals

4.15 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

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The formulation of the annual report was met from existing resources.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	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 NHS Integrated Care Board. The report is also made publicly available on each of the Safeguarding Partners respective websites.
<b>Risk:</b>	There are no risk implications arising from this report.
<b>Equality:</b>	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.



<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Ensuring that partners work together to keep children safe underpins their right to enjoy health and wellbeing. Sharing intelligence and data about the prevalence of safeguarding concerns provides opportunities to intervene earlier to protect children from harm.
<b>Social Value:</b>	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.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	N/A

## 6 Appendices

2022/23 Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report.

## 7. Background Papers

None.

