

# Report to Council

**31 January 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2021/2022
<b>Director:</b>	Michael Jarrett Director of Children and Education
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## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the 2021/2022 Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) Annual Report and make any recommendations as necessary.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 introduced new flexible arrangements for safeguarding children. The agencies and organisations from each local authority area named in legislation to lead the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) have collectively agreed to be known as Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP), have formalised and published the MASA for the area which came into effect as of April 2019. The SCSP MASA, have a fundamental purpose, to support and enable all 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.

2.2 The SCSP is made up of the leading Statutory agencies known as:

- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)
- West Midlands Police (WMP)
- NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) (former CCG)
- Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) for the provision of Children Social Care;

Including representatives from other organisations listed in legislation as 'Relevant Partners, and in Sandwell, includes:

- Sandwell Community and Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- Education
- Other attendees as regular representatives of the SCSP include:
  - The Independent Chair
  - Independent Scrutineer – as named in Statutory guidance
  - Professional Advisors,
  - Local Council Member,
  - Lay-Person, and
  - Business Support - as required via Statutory guidance

2.3 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.

2.4 The attached annual report published by SCSP outlines the activities undertaken in line with the requirements during 2021/22 and provides an





overview of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sandwell during that period.

## 2.5 The report provides:

- evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from Early Help:  
<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/glossary?azid> to Looked after children:  
<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/glossary?azid> and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the reporting period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the SCSP have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.
- a reflection from the independent scrutineer on the effectiveness and delivery against our MASA, and how our arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well as safeguarding partners we are providing strong leadership.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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:

	Best start in life for children and young people 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.
	Strong resilient communities 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.



	Sandwell has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's live and communities.
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## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The SCSP Annual Report for 2021/22 demonstrates the inter-agency activities to safeguard and promote the welfare of Sandwell's children.
- 4.2 The Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) established on 1 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 SCSP met on a bi-monthly basis, having 6 prescheduled meetings for the reporting year 21/22, as well as convening a further 6 meetings, including extra-ordinary meetings to receive exception reports, emerging issues from a national perspective and arising and recovering from Covid 19 Pandemic, as well as its annual development event.

The SCSP also have within its refined structure direct links to other strategic partnerships/boards whose work is expected to include support /connectivity to children and families. This includes other public boards including Health and wellbeing boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, the SCT Improvement Board, Community Safety Partnership, the Local Youth Justice Board linking to Violence Reduction Unit, Domestic



Abuse Strategic Partnership, Corporate Parenting Board, and the Children and Families Strategic Partnership.

- 4.6 In addition to the mandated 'core functions to be delivered via all local safeguarding children's partnerships, the SCSP have agreed and added the following as themed areas as 'Key Priorities' for 2021 – 2022 these are:

- **Neglect,**
- **Exploitation, and**
- **Early Help – (from autumn 2021)** In 2021, following a challenge between partners in Sandwell, it became apparent that the threshold for statutory social care was not clearly understood or duly applied across the partnership, this was evident in the high numbers of inappropriate Multi-Agency Referral Forms (MARF) being received at the 'front-door' with little or no evidence of activities (Early Help) or support offered prior to seeking statutory interventions.

**A further 2 themes areas following the outcome of learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LSCPR) were heightened for increased focus, attention and improvement, these being:**

The visibility and voice of Father's, Men/Partners/significant others in our work with children,  
Increase our knowledge, understanding, confidence and cultural competence to work with children and families across the diverse communities in Sandwell.

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 The Partnership has been widely consulted on the annual report which was ratified by the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership on 8 December 2022 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.

- 4.9 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. Understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has been a priority for the Health and Well-being Board.



<b>Social Value:</b>	<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 We will have respect for each other and recognise and respond positively to difference. We will be positive about the future, and have aspirations for Sandwell's children, be solution focused, committed and innovative.</p>
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.

## 6 Appendices

2021/22 Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report

## 7. Background Papers

None.

