

Health and Wellbeing Board

31 January 2023

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020/21



Report of David Pickard Independent Chair & Scrutineer - Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)

Electoral division(s) affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) with the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/22. The full annual report is also available via the DSCP website at [DSCP Annual Report 2021-22 \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](https://www.durham-scp.org.uk)

Executive summary

2. The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership is required in law to produce a report at least every 12 months into the effectiveness of its arrangements to safeguard children in the area.
3. This report details our Vision and Values and the work undertaken against set priorities for 2021-22 and outlines our focus for the following year.

Recommendations

4. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:
 - a) Note the content of this report.
 - b) Accept the DSCP Annual Report for information as an overview of the work undertaken in 2021/22 and our priorities for action in 2022/23.
 - c) Send any questions on the DSCP Annual Report to chris.ring@durham.gov.uk

Background

5. The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. It has an independent chair and scrutineer and consists of three statutory partners, namely Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council and the Integrated Care Board. Other relevant agencies form part of the broader partnership across Education, Health, Criminal Justice and the Voluntary & Community Sector.
6. The DSCP's primary responsibility is to provide a way for local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in County Durham and to ensure that they do so effectively.
7. Statutory Guidance from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) requires each local Safeguarding Children Partnership to produce and publish an Annual Report every 12 months, evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.
8. The DSCP Annual Report 2021/22 sets out the work of multi-agency partners to ensure effective arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and young people from abuse and neglect. It describes the work undertaken against the 2020/21 priorities and sets out the future priorities for 2021/22.

Vision and Values

9. Our Vision is simple, it's about 'Keeping Children Safe' on the premise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It acts as an umbrella covering all that we do and underpinned through our three Core Values – Tenacity; Curiosity; Openness.
 - **Prevention through early intervention** – work together to prevent harm at the earliest opportunity
 - **Joined-up response** - We will respond promptly drawing on appropriate expertise of others
 - **Listening** - We will listen to and observe children to ensure their voice is heard even when they don't or can't speak out.
 - **Identifying** - We will identify those most likely to be harmed by sharing information and data effectively.

DSCP Priorities for 2020/21

10. The priorities for the year 2020/21 were determined through multi-agency discussions including at DSCP development sessions:

- The Lived Experience and Voice of Children
- Management Understanding and Decision Making
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Cumulative Harm and Risk Assessment

Achievements Against Priorities

11. The Lived Experience and Voice of Children

Activity

- Standards of Expectation designed and introduced across all partner agencies.
- Professional Pledge updated and relaunched commitment that children are central to all we do and that we hold each other to account
- DSCP training offer designed so that lived experience of children is consistent in all courses
- Impact Forums introduced to assess real difference on practice multi-agency training has had
- Audit programme developed so voice and lived experience is considered across all DSCP and single agency audits.

Impact

- Agencies understand the expected standards when considering lived experience/ voice of children.
- Robust processes are in place in each agency to monitor and report on compliance and impact.

12. Management Understanding and Decision Making

Activity

- Standards for Reflective Discussion developed and embedded into practice across partner agencies.
- Professional Pledge updated and relaunched commitment children are central to all we do and we hold each other to account around decisions made.
- Risk Assessment/Cumulative Harm embedded into Safeguarding Managers training.
- Audit activity and Third-Party Assurance to examine decision making in child protection processes.

Impact

- Through audit and key scrutiny there is clear evidence of reflective supervision taking place across agencies.
- Regular evidence appears of strong supervision and management oversight in a high percentage of cases.

13. Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Activity

- Enhanced multi-agency training provision introduced
- Extensive 12 week phased multi-agency Communications Plan developed and implemented
- Good Practice guidance developed Focus of DSCP Development Day, October 2021 (Professor Simon Hackett)
- The DSCP revised and relaunched its harmful sexual behaviour procedures in February 2020. A series of briefing was offered across Children's Services to highlight the procedures
- A briefing was also provided to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Central Referral Unit (CRU) that sits within First Contact
- A referral pathway was agreed with CDYJS and First Contact to ensure that appropriate referrals were shared with CDYJS
- A tool has been developed for practitioners across the partners to use to identify the stages of sexual development for children and young people including behaviours that are healthy through to problematic, inappropriate or concerning and abusive.

Impact

- Referrals under the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) pathway have increased since the relaunch and County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) who manage the HSB pathway on behalf of the partnership, have observed referral numbers increasing (to CDYJS) from 24 referral between 1/4/19 to 31/3/20 to 152 for the same period 2021 to 2022.
- The increase in referrals has seen a much better response from partners in information sharing via the professionals only meetings that take place that include police, health, CDYJS, schools and children's services. This has improved how we can support young people and their parents/primary carers when their child is under police investigation and how we can ensure that their safety and that of others is not compromised through safety planning and when indicated, risk management plans.
- The increase in referrals has seen an increase in AIM3 assessments including AIM: Under 12s assessments. These assessments have been undertaken with a social worker and a case manager from CDYJS (one worker has to be trained in the respective AIM assessment framework).

- CDYJS has been able to provide support, consultation and quality assurance oversight for the practitioners undertaking the assessments from a manager who is now trained in the supervision of AIM3.
- A range of resources for working with HSB have been collated and are available to practitioners in Children's Services.
- CDYJS has been able to provide support for practitioners with interventions when requested.
- The tool gives guidance on how to respond to such behaviours. The tool has been promoted through briefing that have taken place in July 2022.

14. **Cumulative Harm and Risk Assessment**

Activity

- Cumulative Harm guidance developed and cascaded across communication channels looking at key areas like Harm Matrix and Chronologies.
- Practice Expectations 12 month Rollout Plan introduced.
- Access into Signs of Safety briefings enhanced and woven into all DSCP training provision.

Impact

- Through appropriate levels of scrutiny and health check, multiagency meetings are well facilitated to enable the continued assessment of risk and progress for children and families.
- There is a robust analysis of family history, capacity to change and the impact on the child.
- There has been improvement as to how professionals use plain language that children and families understand.

What's Next for 2022/23

15. Since the publication of the Annual Report the new meeting structure described within the report has gone live, all posts within the Business Unit have been recruited to and the Performance and Learning Group are identifying key priorities for 2022-23.
16. The report highlights additional key areas of activity that are:
 - Continue to embed the Signs of Safety Practice Framework across partner agencies.
 - Improve effectiveness of Partnership scrutiny and the assessment of impact
 - Launch the DSCP website (this has now gone live).
 - Maintain the Child Protection procedure updates.
 - Progress the work of the Child Death Overview panel.

Conclusion

17. The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/22 provides assurance that the Partnership is fulfilling its statutory duties and has made significant progress over throughout the year, particularly in relation to learning and improving practice across the partnership. This ambition will continue, supported by the new meetings structures and appointments within the DSCP Business Unit throughout 2022-23.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Yearly financial contributions to Durham SCP are received from partner agencies and are detailed in the DSCP Annual Report.

Staffing

The priorities identified in the DSCP Annual Report will be delivered using existing resources. Durham County Council will contribute to the delivery of the priorities in partnership with other statutory authorities.

Risk

No adverse implications.

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty

The DSCP Annual Report identifies the actions to safeguard the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

Accommodation

No adverse implications.

Crime and disorder

The DSCP Annual Report reflects priorities and action that impact positively on crime and disorder in County Durham.

Human rights

No adverse implications.

Consultation

Consultation with partner agencies and stakeholders has been undertaken as part of the development of the DSCP Annual Report.

Procurement

No adverse implications.

Disability Issues

No adverse implications.

Legal Implications

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires each area Safeguarding Children Partnership to produce and publish an Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.