

## INFORMAL CABINET & CABINET REPORT

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<i>Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020-21</i>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Debbie Jones : Executive Director, Children, Families &amp; Education</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2020-2024</b> To safeguard children and promote their welfare in line with the Council's ambition for Independence of children and their families. <a href="#">Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</a>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO:</b> Not a key decision	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

### 1. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 note the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) Annual Report for 2020-21 which sets out to:
  - a) summarise both single agency activity and partnership activity to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Croydon
  - b) reflect on the challenges and responses to Covid-19 to support the safeguarding agenda
  - c) summarise the quality of safeguarding arrangements
  - d) evidence the effectiveness of the partnership to:
    - share learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews
    - impact on outcomes for children
    - know what it hasn't achieved and how it will address this

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The CSCP Annual Report 2019/20 fulfils the statutory duty required of all LSCPs to publish an annual account of the work undertaken to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children.

## **3. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE LSCP AND INDEPENDENT CHAIR/SCRUTINEER**

- 3.1 The statutory roles, objectives and functions of LSCPs are set out in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004, (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017). The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. The three safeguarding partners are:
- a) the local authority
  - b) a clinical commissioning group
  - c) the chief officer of police

Each partner is represented by their Deputy on the CSCP Executive which meets monthly, although met weekly from March to July 2020, during the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown period.

- 3.2 The three safeguarding partners have agreed on ways to
- co-ordinate their safeguarding services;
  - act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others;
  - and to implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents
- 3.3 The purpose of these arrangements is to support and enable 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
- 3.4 The three safeguarding partners have continued to employ the independent chair as the CSCP Scrutineer to ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

## **4. PERFORMANCE OF THE CSCP**

- 4.1 Throughout 2020/21 the role of the CSCP has been pivotal in terms of securing improvements in multi-agency working and promoting and embedding learning from serious case reviews. It has also provided continuity and consistency of safeguarding advice during Covid-19, including keeping each other agency fully apprised of what work was occurring or indeed at risk during this time.
- 4.2 The Annual Report also outlines progress and achievements in relation to the three CSCP priorities; Neglect, Vulnerable Adolescents and Children with Disabilities.
- 4.3 The report provides account of the work of each of the individual partner agencies in respect of safeguarding children, their success and the areas that require further attention.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Each agency was asked to self-assess its activity and outcomes during the period in question. Very few agencies responded using the template provided and further discussions took place on a one-to-one basis. These discussions were a positive opportunity for agencies to reflect on their processes and plans to safeguard children, both in what they do and how they evidence achieving it.
- 5.2 The work to prepare this report commenced in July 2021 and this process has highlighted that a more robust and informative response will be achieved by having a number of discussion sessions with agencies, which will start from January 2022 in order to compile the 2021/22 report.

## **6. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

- 6.1 The CSCP Annual Report was presented to Pre-Scrutiny Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the main points highlighted from the meeting were:-
  - Comments were mostly focused on their being insufficient evidence to show the impact the CSCP activity had, to improve outcomes for children, particularly around neglect. (This was revised)
  - Further work is needed on this report to provide the necessary reassurance to Scrutiny that the partnership is working effectively to protect Croydon's children and that improvements are being identified and delivered. (Some amendments made, but we believe it does meet this brief)
  - Additional data around Antenatal and HV checks is requested, to show how Croydon performs against statistical neighbours. (Comparable data not available)
  - More Croydon focused evidence of Police activity (Revised following more information provided by the police)
  - There is an impression that the partners are not writing this together but that they all send in their contributions which is then edited. Do the partners have joint ownership? We suggest a joint statement by the three

leads that they are confident that children in the Borough are being properly safeguarded. (This was revised)

- The formatting was not uniform and therefore difficult to read/process in places. (Noted for future)

6.3 This report was presented to Informal Cabinet on the 11<sup>th</sup> January and Scrutiny on 18<sup>th</sup> February.

6.2 Dates are agreed to have more meaningful discussions with Scrutiny much earlier in the process for the 2021/22 Report.

## **7 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report, as this is a retrospective report. The CSCB operates within a budget to which partner agencies contribute.

Approved by: Philip Herd, Head of Finance CYPE on behalf of Richard Ennis, Corporate Director

## **8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The Interim Head of Social Care and Education Law comments on behalf of the Interim Director of Law and Governance.

8.2 Section 16E of the Children Act 2004 requires the safeguarding partners for a local authority area in England to work together to exercise their functions in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area. The safeguarding partners include the local authority.

8.3 Section 16G of the Children Act 2004 requires the safeguarding partners to prepare and publish a report at least every 12 months on what the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies have done as a result of the children's safeguarding arrangements, and how effective the arrangements have been in practice.

8.4 There is also statutory guidance on the working of local safeguarding arrangements in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2019).

8.5 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation and guidance.

Approved by Petrena Sharpe, Interim Head of Social Care and Education Law on behalf of the Interim Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.

## **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

9.1 Whilst there are no direct human resources implications arising from this report the information presented will help to shape and influence HR practice, policy

and procedures in relation to roles and responsibilities that are safeguarding children.

Approved by: Deborah Calliste on behalf of the Director of Human Resources

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 10.1 The role of the CSCP is to safeguard all children and promote their welfare. The CSCP has played a leading role in challenging inequalities and in safeguarding protected groups. For example the three CSCP Priority Groups have championed the needs of
- children with disabilities,
  - vulnerable adolescents and
  - Children suffering neglect.
- 10.2 The vulnerable adolescent priority group has encouraged agencies across Croydon to identify and challenge disproportionality in particular in respect of BAME children. The [VAR Report](#) made recommendations that disproportionality relating to ethnicity, gender and deprivation requires attention and action. This has evidenced over-representation of male BAME children in many areas, such as school exclusion and criminal justice yet under-representation in receiving support. This is a core approach across the work of the CSCP and will be evidenced in the 2021/22 report.
- 10.3 The CSCP has recently provided Unconscious Bias Awareness training, funded by Crystal Palace Football Club. Hundreds have already completed the training and commitment given that every Croydon School staff team will complete this online course. The training outcomes will be evidenced in the 2021/22 report.
- 10.4 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must therefore have due regard to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 10.5 If a characteristic is found to experience an adverse impact, an action plan to mitigate this should be produced.

Approved by Denise McCausland, Equalities Programme Manager

## **11. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT**

- 11.1 Not applicable

**12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

12.1 Not applicable

**13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

13.1 Cabinet is asked to note the CSCP Annual Report 2020/21

**14. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not applicable

**15. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 **WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

NO

15.2 **HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

NO

The Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care comments: There is no individual or confidential information contained within the report. Information has been provided in summary form from each of the relevant agencies.

*Approved Debbie Jones, Interim Corporate Director CYPE.*

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

*Appendix 1 – CSCP Annual Report 2020/21*

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None