

Committee: Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Date: 25th January 2024

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report

Chair/Lead officer:

Aileen Buckton, Independent Chair, Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership
Jane McSherry, Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families

Lead member: Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services

Contact officer: Sarah Slater, Policy & Partnerships Manager

Recommendations:

- A. To note the content of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report for the period 2022-23.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report which covers the period April 2022 to March 2023. The full report can be found in Appendix 1 alongside a visual summary in Appendix 2.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The MSCP is required to produce and publish a report annually on actions taken by statutory partners and relevant agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare and outline how effective those arrangements have been in practice. The MSCP has commissioned a one-page visual summary poster to sit alongside the detailed report, in response to positive feedback from our Young Scrutineer and the partnership on the 2021-22 version.

3 DETAILS

- 3.1. Whilst there remained continued pressures on safeguarding systems following the pandemic and exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, safeguarding partners in Merton have worked together to continuously improve our safeguarding systems and strengthen the voice of the child in our Partnership.
- 3.2. During the reporting period, the partnership continued to be supported by our Young Scrutineer, Halima Mehmood, who worked in partnership with our Independent Scrutineer, Sarah Lawrence, and Independent Chair, Aileen Buckton. Our Independent Chair also chairs Merton Adults Safeguarding Board (MSAB) and both chairing roles were covered on an interim basis by Nicola Brownjohn during the report period, providing continuity during a period of sickness. Sharing an independent chair and holding our second Joint Safeguarding Conference in March 2023 has supported us to progress joint

working with adults' colleagues including around "Think Family" and embedding learning from local adults and children's learning reviews.

- 3.3. Our Executive Group remained stable during the reporting period. We have since welcomed Ian Cameron as our Met Police representative, replacing Andrew Wadey.
- 3.4. During 2022-23 work was progressed against our three thematic priorities; Early Hep and Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Think Family, and Contextual Safeguarding. The appended report provides further details about activity in these areas and the difference this has made to safeguarding practice locally. Our Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer led a thorough piece of scrutiny on "What can MSCP do to prevent the adultification of black children in Merton?", which included focus groups with children and young people to hear directly about their experiences. The MSCP also further strengthened our training and audit programmes and followed up on actions from the previous year's Section 11 safeguarding audit.
- 3.5. During 2022-23, the partnership oversaw the publication of one local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) for Franklyn. In addition, the partnership undertook two further rapid reviews for Child M and Child O following serious incident notifications submitted to Ofsted. The MSCP annual reports sets out some of the steps the partnership has taken to respond to these reviews and how learning has been embedded across the Partnership.
- 3.6. Members may be particularly interested in exploring the learning from the MSCP's local child safeguarding practice reviews, partnership reviews, and audits, which are all available on the [MSCP's website](#)¹. Seven-minute briefings are available to be widely disseminated among all professionals working to safeguard children and young people in Merton.
- 3.7. Members may also be interested in the MSCP's training offer which is available free of charge to all MSCP member agencies, the voluntary sector and independent sector agencies working with children, young people and their families in Merton. Places can be booked via the following link: [Merton Safeguarding - Learning Management System](#).²

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. N/A

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1. The MSCP annual report has had input from all statutory partners as well as local agencies and the MSCP sub-group chairs. The draft was considered by the MSCP Full Partnership in October 2023, the Strategic Safeguarding Group in November 2023 and received formal sign off from the MSCP Executive partners in January 2024. The MSCP's Independent Chair, Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer have had the opportunity to review and comment. The Annual

¹ <https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/>

² <https://training.safeguardinginmerton.org.uk/>

Report will also be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 23rd January and Cabinet in February.

6 TIMETABLE

N/A

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None.

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. As outlined in the report.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. As outlined in the report.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. As outlined in the report.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. As outlined in the report and the MSCP's Business Plan 23-25, available on the MSCP website.

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1 – Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022-23.

Appendix 2 - Visual Summary Poster - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022-23

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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