



Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2019-2021

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is to support and enable organisations and agencies across Derby and Derbyshire to work together so that:

- 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 can become more reflective and implement changes to practice identified as positive for children and families; information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

1.2 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership was implemented by the statutory partners to deliver the new safeguarding arrangements across both areas on 29 September 2019. The statutory partners agreed that this annual report cover the period between 29 September 2019 and 31 March 2021.

1.3 Derby and Derbyshire is one of only a few areas nationally that has chosen to establish multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which span two local authority boundaries. Establishing the partnership across this wider geographical footprint has meant that it has taken more time to establish and embed the governance arrangements, which are working well and continue to evolve. As this is the first annual report of the new partnership, it focuses significantly on the work which has taken place to establish the partnership and current activities. It is our intention in future reports to give greater weight to the impact of the partnership, how it has strengthened multi-agency safeguarding and how it has improved outcomes for children.

1.4 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed priorities in September 2019 in response to a combination of specific local intelligence and demands, previous priorities, national directives, performance information and individual casework and audits. In February 2021, Chief Officers supported the addition of priority activity to strengthen safeguarding arrangements to improve the safety and welfare of infants across the partnership.

1.5 The agreed DDSCP Strategic Priorities for 2021-2022 are:

- Promote emotional health and wellbeing and reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
- Safeguard children at risk of exploitation reflecting additional features such contextual safeguarding and our understanding of emerging vulnerabilities

- Reduce the vulnerability of Electively Home Educated Children (EHE), Children excluded from school and Children who are Missing (from home, school and care)
- Reduce the adverse impact of Parental Substance Misuse and Parental Mental Health
- Promote and obtain assurance of Early Help arrangements (including responding to neglect) and response to requests for services
- Reduce the adverse impact of Domestic Abuse and family conflict
- Promote and Improve the safety and welfare of babies

1.6 Within this first 18 month period, some examples of key achievements and impact are as follows, and there are many more highlighted within relevant sections of this report:

- We have published a comprehensive 'baby safe' strategy and identified a strategic lead for baby safety across the partnership. A comprehensive programme has been launched in 2021 to increase awareness of the vulnerability of babies, further develop the knowledge and expertise of practitioners and strengthen multi-agency practice to safeguard babies.
- We have provided additional, targeted advice and support during the COVID-19 pandemic to schools across both areas, to ensure that schools felt supported and that vulnerable children who were not attending school were being appropriately identified and helped by all agencies
- We have analysed trends in contacts and referrals during COVID-19, to understand changing patterns and whether unmet need could lead to increased vulnerability and higher demand for social care services following the end of lockdown. This has led to action being taken by partner agencies and both Local Authorities to ensure that thresholds for referral are well understood and consistently applied within their organisations.
- We have strengthened arrangements to identify the most appropriate health professional(s) to participate in strategy meetings, where there is concern about harm to a child.
- We have strengthened our multi-agency response to children who are vulnerable to exploitation in Derby and Derbyshire. We can evidence how our multi-agency working is reducing risks to individual children.
- In the context of the pressures arising from the Covid pandemic and measures that have been taken to keep the community safe, all agencies have remained fully committed to the work of the partnership and all its subgroups.

2 Independent Scrutiny of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

2.1 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to ensuring that effective independent scrutiny of the multi-agency arrangements is in place to provide assurance of their effectiveness in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding incidents and conduct child safeguarding practice reviews.

2.2 An independent chair, Steve Atkinson MA (Oxon), MBA, FIOD, FRSA, provides scrutiny and challenge to the chief officer group and to the executive board. The independent chair acts with demonstrable independence and authority to ensure that the agencies respond positively and work to address areas of practice requiring development across Derby and Derbyshire. The independent chair has the authority to commission specific assurance activity to obtain the necessary confidence that local arrangements are effective. The independent chair's assessment of the effectiveness of the partnership is set out below, as part of this annual report.

Statement of Assurance by the Independent Scrutineer

2.3 The overall conclusion from my review of the operation of the partnership since September 2019 is that the partnership arrangements introduced as the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership have worked effectively, especially initially in relation to the rapid review and associated learning/development process. This has been enhanced by the addition of the core business group and the collaborative joint chairs meetings from 2020. This latter arrangement involves bi-annual discussion and collaboration with: Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Adult Boards, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, Corporate Parenting Board/Committee, Police and Crime Commissioner (as chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board) across both areas. This greater collaboration is being followed by the move to integrate the two Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People's Groups.

2.4 During the pandemic period, the integration of the two quality assurance subgroups has promoted more effective joint working. This example is being followed by the two exploitation and vulnerable young people groups, and this will enhance partnership efficiency and effectiveness, thus more fully meeting one objective of the new arrangements.

2.5 The partnership has delivered on its main immediate objectives of the implementation plan and is on track to meet the targets in the business plan, despite the significant challenges created by the pandemic from March 2020.

2.6 The agreement on funding – level and proportions – made prior to the commencement of the partnership has been honoured and is a definite strength of the arrangements. Partners are to be congratulated on that agreement, which is fundamental to effective partnership working.

2.7 Main partners and representatives of all agencies have begun to evidence consistent and robust challenge within the executive board and the chief officer group, as well as within their own organisations, and this is welcomed as it enables the partnership to reap all the benefits available from the new arrangements. It has been rightly noted that the main partners entered the new arrangements from very different start points – the local authorities as long-time leads and accountable bodies for safeguarding children; the police and CCGs/health providers as contributors, not leads.

2.8 However, throughout most of the period covered by this report, three issues have been the subject of regular challenge and consideration: Thresholds – how they are interpreted, activated and deployed; waiting times for CAMHS services and the efficiency of providing Initial Health Assessments within statutory timescales. A fourth – promoting and improving the welfare and safety of babies – was identified during the period and is receiving a robust and well-led response

- a) Thresholds: the issue of referrals where the threshold for social care response is not demonstrated sufficiently by the referrer clearly has been the subject of debate and discussion at many levels, but the percentage of these as a proportion of overall referrals remains stubbornly at 45%-50% across the Partnership. Much work and effort has been devoted to a resolution of this issue, as a means of ensuring that the children concerned receive the right service from the right person(s) and the right time. That work must reach an agreed and effective conclusion no later than September 2021
- b) CAMHS Waiting lists: again, a stubborn issue, complicated by differing levels of demand over time, different providers, changing needs and resource availability – finance and people.
- c) Initial Health Assessments: as immediately above, this is not a simple matter, and has the additional complication of dealing with children/young people in the care of the two local authorities but placed outside their boundaries.

Both (b) and (c) are being addressed with Derbyshire CCG, with a timescale for resolution, at least in terms of an agreed process, by September 2021.

2.9 The full benefits envisaged from the Stakeholders' Group will be realised only during 2021, due to its first meeting not being until December 2020, due to the pandemic.

2.10 That desire and intent must continue to translate into action as the partnership matures. All agencies are under increasing service and financial pressure, not only because of the pandemic, and an effective response can only be on a collective scale. The practical outcomes of the work on 'predicting future demand' will be an important test of the reality of inter-agency collaboration.

2.11 More emphasis is being placed also on the influence of young people on how the partnership ensures that children are safe and their welfare promoted, building

on the foundations already in place. It will be instructive to review the impact of arrangements in a further years' time.

Steve Atkinson MA (Oxon), MBA, FIOD, FRSA **Independent Scrutineer**

The Wood Report: Sector expert review of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements included the following commentary on the DDSCP partnership arrangements:

“The new Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership covers two local authorities, two CCGs and the constabulary for the area. The partnership is led by a Chief Offices Group - including the two lead members - which directs and scrutinises the work of an executive board charged with assuring high quality coordinated services to protect and safeguard children, through its subgroups, which are voluntarily merging across the two authority areas, where appropriate. Both the COG and executive board have the same independent chair.

The independent chair has identified a number of outcomes, which indicate the partnership has improved the leadership and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements, developed the coordination and impact of work across the safeguarding partnership and minimised duplication of effort. This includes focused involvement of young people in safeguarding, more effective dissemination and transparency of learning from serious incidents, robust inter agency challenge and strengthening of the professional expertise and experience, through a cross-partnership collaborative approach. The Partnership team is clear that it supports the Safeguarding Partnership, not the individual agencies, and receives equal funding from all the statutory partners. This approach has shown its worth during the pandemic, with effective cross- agency working to identify and protect vulnerable children.” (2021)

3 Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies on outcomes for children and families

Chief Officer Group

3.1 The chief officer group ensures that the responsibilities of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership are being effectively carried out and includes the following representation:

- Derby City Council: Chief Executive
- Derby City Council: Cabinet member for Children and Young People
- Derby City Council: Director of Children’s Services (statutory role)
- Derbyshire County Council: Executive Director
- Derbyshire County Council: Cabinet member for Children and Young People
- Derbyshire County Council: Director of Children’s Services (statutory role)
- Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group: Chief Executive

- Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group: Chief Executive
- Derbyshire Constabulary: Chief Constable
- Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner

3.2 The chief officer group meets twice a year to review and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including the effectiveness of the executive board, the partnership working groups and stakeholders' group. The chief officer group met on five occasions between September 2019 and March 2021, the additional meetings held to make sure that robust safeguarding arrangements were in place to address the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

3.3 The DDSCP published a strategy outlining its priority areas of work and a business plan to monitor the effectiveness and drive forward improvements in local safeguarding arrangements across Derby and Derbyshire. The impact of the pandemic became the focus for additional priority activity during 2020.

3.4 The chief officer group commissioned performance reporting that closely monitored the impact of the pandemic on the concerns about the welfare of children and how these concerns were raised. Monthly performance summaries were reported on the DDSCP website and to senior political leaders, including members of parliament, across Derby and Derbyshire.

3.5 The chief officer group scrutinised the performance of the executive board and subgroups during the year and commissioned specific in depth analysis of key safeguarding arrangements. As a result, the chief officer group has committed the DDSCP to strengthening safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable infants, improvements in agency responses on children's mental health, initial health assessments and multi-agency understanding and implementation of safeguarding thresholds.

Executive Board

3.6 The executive board is responsible for delivering strategic influence through the business plan and the work of the partnership subgroups to improve safeguarding arrangements.

3.7 The executive board meets four times a year and at each meeting scrutinises the work of the partnership subgroups through a programme of formal reporting delivered by the chairs of each group.

3.8 The executive board delivers strategic influence through the business plan and the work of the partnership groups to improve safeguarding arrangements. The executive board monitors and challenges the effectiveness of work between the partnership groups, so that the business plan across Derby and Derbyshire is joined up and makes a positive impact on the lives of children. The business plan was

reviewed and updated for 2021-2022 incorporating additional priority activity across subgroups to strengthen the safeguarding of vulnerable babies.

3.9 There has been an increasing sense of ownership of the work of the partnership by partners, demonstrated in the contributions made in meetings, the quality of information being delivered, the joined up performance reporting, assurance framework and priorities for future audit activity. Feedback following training events indicates that learning from local assurance and reviews is strengthening and improving practice across Derby and Derbyshire. The improved links between all the subgroups has led to an improved understanding of the risks to children and young people across the area and informs the workplan of each subgroup.

3.10 The independent chair has taken an active role to promote liaison with Derby and Derbyshire safeguarding adult boards, health and wellbeing boards, community safety partnerships, corporate parenting board/committee, councillors, police and crime commissioner, education chairs and other partnership arrangements across both areas. This has fed into many of the subgroups and to the work of the executive board.

3.11 Lay members representing local communities, have been actively involved within the executive board providing an additional source of independent scrutiny of the arrangements delivered by the partnership. They have participated in discussion providing influence, challenge and contributions that have supported work with schools and the wider strategy.

3.12 The Derby and Derbyshire Child Death Overview Panel, that has separate independent governance arrangements from the partnership, provides an annual report for consideration by the executive board. This promotes key learning from child death reviews, including reviews that have focussed on a particular theme such as sudden and unexpected death of an infant. The partnership has incorporated this learning as part of the strategic approach to improving outcomes for infants.

3.13 The executive board has a risk register in place to identify and review actions being taken to reduce key risks to the safety and welfare of children. For example, the executive board has sought assurance and evidence of planned action to mitigate risks identified from the increased adverse impact on the emotional wellbeing of young people during the pandemic. The Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group has provided formal reports and updates demonstrating how services are being commissioned and incidence monitored. This will increase access to services at an earlier stage as emotional difficulties are identified and reduce waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The executive board will continue to monitor progress through the quality assurance group and retain the risk on the register until sufficient progress has been evidenced.

Core Business Group

3.14 The partnership core business group was established in February 2020 and meets on a quarterly basis. This additional subgroup was added to the local arrangements to provide an opportunity for the statutory partners to review and plan activity across the subgroups and enable a well-coordinated programme of action to be delivered at the executive board.

3.15 The core business group has provided an essential opportunity for engagement with the statutory partners and the DDSCP business team to drive forward the work of the partnership.

3.16 Strategic developments being carried out across the partnership area have been scrutinised at an early stage and include developments such as the local area response to implementing the domestic abuse bill, multi-agency threshold compliance and service responses to the emotional well-being of children and young people.

Quality Assurance subgroup

3.17 Initially, two quality assurance subgroups were established, one for Derby and a second focusing on Derbyshire. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an imperative to work even more closely across the two areas to understand the impact for children and on key safeguarding services. This closer joint working resulted in a decision in late 2020 to merge the groups. The joint quality assurance subgroup uses ongoing monitoring and specific activity to scrutinise the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children and young people, promoting the welfare of children and improving outcomes for children in need of help and protection across Derby and Derbyshire.

3.18 Timely and accurate information from across different agencies helps the quality assurance subgroup to:

- assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children, young people and families, including Early Help
- assess whether DDSCP partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations
- understand current and projected local need overall, and in relation to specific areas
- build an understanding of frontline practice
- develop well-informed priorities
- decide what action to take to improve frontline services
- provide assurance that the implementation of learning from case reviews and other quality assurance activity is leading to improvements in the outcomes for children and young people

3.19 The quality assurance subgroup has established across the partnership a quality assurance strategy to:

- monitor performance and escalating areas of concern;

- build a good understanding of how safe children are and where we need to improve;
- use data effectively to inform approaches, strategies and plans to improve performance and outcomes for children and their families;
- provide evidence of the quality and impact of our work in relation to the outcomes for children, young people and their families in Derby and Derbyshire;
- reflect on practice; listening, learning and leading on improvements.

3.20 As part of the quality assurance strategy, partner organisations reviewed learning from case reviews, local and multi-agency audit and performance data to establish a matrix for the completion of assurance activity across the whole area. This demonstrates improved partnership approach to identify the collective priorities for the whole area that reflects where progress and improvement needs to be assured. Crucial to this work is the assurance linked to case reviews and what this will tell the partnership about the areas where activity needs to make the most improvement to local arrangements. Successful challenge between organisations has led to a more in depth understanding of both areas where improvement is needed as well as specific activity that can be taken. For example, assurance of the request for services from the two local authorities (commonly referred to as the 'front door') helped identify where agencies could improve the information they provide when requesting services.

3.21 The quality assurance subgroup scrutinises performance reports on specific topics or from different organisations, including annual assurance of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs). Reports which originate from single agencies/groups of agencies working to understand/improve on a particular area or function, are reported into the quality assurance subgroup where appropriate, with others commissioned directly by the executive board or core business group. Reports are reviewed and subsequent discussions help to inform next steps and improvement priorities as well as sharing learning from good practise. Some examples of performance reporting include single and joint agency work to provide assurance around:

- Safeguarding referrals and the judgements made about the seriousness of the concern (thresholds);
- Child protection (S47) enquiries, child protection processes and strategy meetings/discussions;
- The responses of agencies to concerns about the professional conduct of staff and volunteers.

3.22 Partner agencies have set out priorities to focus quality assurance activity and assure that learning from case reviews and performance information has led to improvement in practice. The safety of babies, domestic abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse are planned priorities for DDSCP local assurance.

Covid 19 Pandemic Assurance Activity

3.23 As a result of concerns about the impact of the pandemic during 2020, the two quality assurance subgroups arranged to meet jointly and more frequently, to enable 'real time' monitoring of key indicators and promote oversight of local safeguarding arrangements at a time of significant change for the whole community.

3.24 An interim performance framework was developed which took into account the key concerns raised in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. The performance framework and analysis of the impact of the pandemic on safeguarding arrangements were reported on a monthly basis to the executive board. Monthly summaries provided reassurance to senior elected leaders across the partnership area, local members of parliament and the public about the impact of the pandemic.

3.25 A scoping exercise was carried out during the first lockdown to obtain assurance of whether vulnerable children that were known to services were being seen, and that the support provided by schools and early help was in place. The report identified that there was limited visibility of pre-school children and helped the partnership identify opportunities for all agencies to strengthen oversight of vulnerable children.

3.26 Action was taken to review the impact and demand on the 'front door' of children's social care in both areas, so that the partnership could understand the effectiveness of referrals made during the pandemic. Partner agencies checked to see if the appropriate judgement had been made about the level of concern and whether this had been communicated effectively in the referral. Key findings have helped agencies promote:

- Using feedback following referrals to enable discussion with staff, in supervision, to drive forward the quality of referrals and improve confidence to resolve professional difference of opinion where necessary;
- The use of early help services including a need to encourage improved communication between referring agencies and schools/early help advisors;
- Updates to single agency internal training and sharing of briefings to professionals regarding the use of the threshold document and escalation policy as essential tools when considering a referral.

3.27 A briefing paper was widely circulated across the partnership to encourage learning arising from the review of the 'front door' to access services to be used in day to day practice to improve the quality of referrals.

3.28 The quality assurance subgroup also received assurance from both local authorities to demonstrate that internal processes had been adapted to ensure that vulnerable children were being seen and risks were being appropriately managed to enable visits by a professional where required.

3.29 The COVID 19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on services and the children and families that they work with. A partnership *Predicting Demand* group was established to analyse potential future services demands and priorities so that children would receive the right support at the right time. Ensuring that help and

protection for vulnerable children and their families was delivered was a key priority for local partners.

3.30 The predicting demand group identified the need to promote clarity about access to services during this very difficult time for children and the community. The group promoted guidance that aimed to strengthen the way in which requests for services and referrals to children's social care are made so that children are safe and their welfare promoted. During the first lockdown, a briefing document was circulated by the partnership to reinforce the focus on safeguarding and how to access services for children and young people. Critical areas of practice, such as being able to see vulnerable children, were set out and partnership webpages created to address the need for up to date information for the multi-agency workforce.

Case Review subgroups

3.31 A case review subgroup is held separately for the Derby area and for the Derbyshire area, with independent reciprocal chairing, so that the complexities arising from the cases are understood, improvements in practice are identified and learning shared. The independent chairs participate in meetings across both areas and the DDSCP child safeguarding practice review manager ensures that learning and the management of reviews in meet consistent high standards.

3.32 Both subgroups are responsible for:

- commissioning and completing rapid reviews on cases where notifications are made by local authorities in response to serious child safeguarding incidents;
- commissioning, facilitating and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews;
- completing serious case reviews and local learning reviews which started prior to 29 September 2019;
- co-operating and supporting the work of the panel to complete national child safeguarding practice reviews;
- publishing, promoting and embedding learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.

3.33 Between September 2019 and March 2021, the following new activity was commissioned by the case review subgroups:

- Eight rapid reviews were completed with effective challenge between partner agencies in place to ensure that analysis of areas for development was robust. Feedback was received from the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel about the good quality of completed reviews and the proposed actions that were being put in place to improve local arrangements.
- Three child safeguarding practice reviews (concerning 6 different individual children) commenced and two reviews (concerning two individual children) were confirmed for commissioning.

3.34 Prior to September 2019, the two local safeguarding children boards commissioned a total of seven serious case reviews that required action to be taken by the DDSCP. Five serious case reviews have now been published on behalf of the local safeguarding children boards and learning promoted across the workforce. Two serious case reviews will be published in 2021 following the resolution of criminal court processes.

3.35 A joint case review action planning subgroup is held to monitor progress and drive forward actions arising from case reviews. The group has successfully gathered evidence from audit activity, workforce feedback and organisations involved in reviews to complete nearly all actions arising from reviews commissioned by the previous local safeguarding children boards.

Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People subgroups

3.36 Two separate exploitation and vulnerable young people subgroups in Derby and Derbyshire are being brought together in May 2021 to operate as a single joint subgroup following a review in February 2021. The purpose of aligning the work of the two groups together is to enable the partnership to have improved oversight and assurance of the complex interlinked themes that impact adversely on outcomes for young people.

3.37 The exploitation and vulnerable young people subgroup responsibilities include to:

- develop and oversee the implementation of the *Children at Risk of Exploitation Strategy* and action plan, incorporating existing strategies and plans relating to the above areas;
- gather feedback and views from young people and use to inform practice and service development;
- evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these strategies and action plans through outcome and performance monitoring;
- promote the sharing of information across these areas to identify those young people most at risk and the effective co-ordination of agency responses.

3.38 The partnership has established a clearer understanding of the breadth and range of issues that present a risk to young people and strong links with the education subgroups to strengthen awareness of emerging risks and issues. The engagement and participation of young people has progressed with three young people involved in a subgroup (two attending virtually for the first time in November 2019). This success is being built upon with consultation currently ongoing on strategic approaches to future participation and engagement across the partnership area.

3.39 Other partnership operational and strategic groups such as *Channel Panel* (considering issues of radicalisation), *Missing and Children at risk of Exploitation Task Group*, are represented at the exploitation and vulnerable young people subgroup to ensure that there is joined up oversight and planning to improve safeguarding of vulnerable young people.

3.40 The exploitation and vulnerable young people subgroups were able to share feedback on key safeguarding issues from the *Youth Council 'Voices in Action'* in Derby ensuring that the views and opinions of young people informed the improvement of safeguarding arrangements locally.

3.41 Elective home education and the emotional well-being and mental health of young people became priority issues for oversight by both subgroups as the pandemic impacted on young people and increased their vulnerability. Both these themes were formally raised at the executive board so that partnership developments could be understood, and planned action discussed. Subsequent feedback on the commissioning and delivery of emotional well-being services was scrutinised and remains a key area for the partnership. Representation was made by the partnership to the *Department for Education* seeking to address the ongoing vulnerabilities for children electively home educated and who are not seen by professionals.

3.42 The work of the subgroups has led to an increasing understanding of the complexities around child criminal exploitation and this has led to the development of effective responses to this particularly vulnerable cohort of young people, especially those who have special education needs and disabilities (*SEND*). Future work in the coming year will include strengthening and promoting awareness of the needs of young care leavers and those who have special education needs and disabilities as they transition to adulthood. Alongside this, action is planned to strengthen local arrangements so that there is a greater awareness of the challenges faced by young people within their communities and the importance of taking action to address contextual safeguarding and place based risk. Feedback from schools, the police, community safety partner organisations and children is informing the development of strategic approaches that will address similarities and differences between the city and county experiences of risks in the community.

Education subgroups

3.43 An education subgroup is held separately for the Derby area and for the Derbyshire area to enable engagement with nearly 500 education settings in total. The education subgroups are responsible for promoting good safeguarding practice and keeping children safe across the education sector. The two primary objectives are to:

- co-ordinate what is done across the education sector for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; and
- ensure the effectiveness of what is done, through quality assurance of local safeguarding arrangements in education settings.

3.44 The chairs of both subgroups and the independent chair of the partnership routinely meet together to strengthen local arrangements including inter-agency communication and identify how to promote best practice across the sector including learning arising from case reviews. This has enabled a co-ordinated approach and understanding across county and city education sectors.

3.45 The partnership has been proactive on behalf of the education sector in its engagement with both the *Department for Education* and the *Disclosure and Barring Service* to strengthen local arrangements, share learning in local briefings and contribute to improvements of national guidance.

3.46 Schools described their increasing role and point of contact for families during the pandemic as “being at the centre of the community again”. Schools experienced having an increasing role not only with vulnerable children but also as critical sources for support for parents seeking help for a wide range of difficulties. Leadership and support from local authorities was reported to the partnership as extremely valued and effective by the education sector during the pandemic. Schools provided assurance of arrangements that they had in place during the pandemic to ensure that vulnerable children were being seen.

3.47 Support for designated safeguarding leads in schools has remained a priority. The partnership provides routine safeguarding updates across the education sector and has worked with schools to ensure updates are routinely circulated of template safeguarding policies and national guidance. A safeguarding conference was held for designated safeguarding leads in Derby and safeguarding forums were held for designated safeguarding leads across Derbyshire.

3.48 Alongside comments from pupils about their experiences in school and how they are kept safe from domestic abuse, schools helped the partnership review measures that are in place to alert them of incidents of domestic abuse attended by police officers (this is known locally as *Stopping Domestic Abuse Together*). This will lead to strengthening arrangements in the coming year and incorporate action to help young people understand what happens following an incident in their home.

3.49 Proactive measures are routinely taken to promote online safety and share resources across the sector. In particular, the development and launch of the ***i-vengers*** online safety initiative for primary schools and all special schools has been particularly successful with excellent participation by schools and feedback about the impact of the initiative.

3.50 The office of the police and crime commissioner has been working with the education sector and partnership to ensure good quality and consistent inputs into schools around safeguarding issues. The *Coriell Award* for Derbyshire secondary schools has been launched to promote effective teaching and interventions around substance misuse. Action has been taken to strengthen emotional well-being services for pupils in schools through the clarification and promotion of initiatives being offered to schools.

District Safeguarding subgroup

3.51 The district safeguarding subgroup seeks to promote and safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults within the six district council areas. The

subgroup provides an opportunity to strengthen safeguarding arrangements for both children and adults.

3.52 The group acts as a forum for the district safeguarding leads to share ideas, best practice, generate economies of scale through training and the production of materials and perhaps most importantly, develops the safeguarding network that is an effective conduit between the partnership and the work of district councils to keep children safe.

3.53 The subgroup had a specific focus on understanding concerns and information about the needs of communities during the pandemic, with a focus on ensuring resources were in place to respond to the increase in domestic abuse and homelessness.

3.54 Training has been shared and districts safeguarding leads are promoting the partnership safeguarding training across the workforce. The work of the group has led to a better 'joined up' approach to safeguarding across districts and boroughs that includes a greater level of knowledge, a collaborative forum to focus on key issues, a wider network of support, advice and guidance for safeguarding leads and lead officers.

Policies and Procedures subgroup

3.55 The policies and procedures subgroup ensures that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice guidance are available across the partnership area. This enables practitioners, managers, and volunteers to use the right information to help them safeguard and promote the welfare of children when they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention. The responsibilities of the subgroup is to make sure that:

- policies and procedures are up to date and available;
- new legislation/regulations and guidance is used to inform revision of local policies and procedures;
- learning from local and national case reviews informs updates to procedures.

3.56 A comprehensive suite of policies and procedures exists and is published on the partnership website. These are systemically reviewed, and specific new guidance commissioned as needed. The joint work carried out in other subgroups has more effectively brought together senior managers that has led to the better alignment of practice, policies and procedures since the commencement of the partnership.

3.57 In response to COVID-19 pandemic, briefing documents on ***Responding to Safeguarding Concerns*** and ***Vulnerable Children and Domestic Abuse*** were published to help practitioners to take appropriate safeguarding action at a very difficult time for children and their families.

3.58 A large number of key policies/procedures and guidance has been reviewed and published over the past 18 months, and these have been accompanied by briefing documents and training presentations for practitioners to help support a consistent implementation across the partnership.

3.59 For example, in December 2019 the **Threshold Document** was reviewed and updated collaboratively with partner agencies. It explains the criteria for providing help to unborn babies, children, young people, families and carers. Following learning from audit and case reviews, the **Pre-birth Protocol** was strengthened to ensure all unborn babies have their needs identified and met as early as possible. The **Delivery Safety Plan** template is now included in the protocol to help practitioners ensure that the arrangements for the birth of a child in need or who is subject of a child protection plan are robust and agreed in collaboration with midwifery services.

3.60 Updates have been made to the Derby and Derbyshire **Graded Care Profile** (GCP), used to support multi-disciplinary practitioners and families to assess the parenting and care of children against the child's care and developmental needs and prevent neglect.

3.61 The **Self Harm and Suicide Guidance** has been revised to reflect the increasing concerns about the number of young people in Derby and Derbyshire who are struggling with their mental health and or self-harm behaviour or suicidal ideation.

3.62 **Modern Slavery** procedures have been updated to incorporate changes to national referral mechanism and **Safeguarding Children at Risk of Abuse Through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** has been reviewed following publication of revised statutory guidance.

3.63 The completion of new and extensive guidance for practitioners **Working with Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse** includes commentary from young people involved in local reviews that promotes learning and fills a notable gap in available guidance on the complex topic.

3.64 A **Keeping Babies Safe Strategy** has been developed and launched by the Keeping Babies Safe Steering Group to help practitioner improve the safety and welfare of all babies. The policies and procedures group has commenced work with key agencies to develop an **Infant Care Pathway**, identified as a key innovative development arising from a local child safeguarding practice review to strengthen the assessment of the needs of babies.

3.65 Alongside the scheduled partnership Safeguarding Children Procedures updates we have further key changes planned to include changes to strengthen the **Fabricated Illness Procedures** and implement the use of the combined health chronology.

3.66 We will additionally be developing children's guidance on ***Eating Disorders and Obesity*** following a local review and will align this with the recent Derby and Derbyshire Public Health Obesity Strategy.

3.67 The partnership is responsible for coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of arrangements of partner agencies that safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Derby and Derbyshire. To achieve this, the partnership obtains assurance of the safeguarding arrangements of partner agencies as set out by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 through annual safeguarding audits.

Learning and Organisational Development subgroup

3.68 The learning and organisational development subgroup has been established to drive forward high quality and innovative learning opportunities including training, along with effective supervision, for the whole multi-agency partnership to create an environment in which practice can flourish.

3.69 A culture of continuous development and improvement is promoted locally from the learning arising from the other partnership groups alongside national research and guidance to improve safeguarding practice. The joint partnership group is responsible for:

- conducting analysis of safeguarding training needs across the workforce and taking account of learning from Case Reviews and Quality Assurance activity;
- producing an annual training programme which takes account of the identified training needs of the workforce, practice findings from the annual audit cycle and the priorities of the Partnership;
- reviewing and updating the joint multi-agency safeguarding training programme across Derby and Derbyshire and commissioning training as required;
- promoting and embedding learning in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice;
- innovating to ensure that learning and improvement is delivered effectively;
- assuring the quality of single and multi-agency training and securing evidence of the ongoing impact it has on practice and the wellbeing of children.

3.70 Strong effective links are in place to make sure that learning from case reviews and assurance activity informs practice development through both multi-agency and single agency training and development. Learning from case reviews has been embedded within e-learning courses and virtual training including strengthened content to help identify vulnerabilities in families with new babies and understand stress factors impacting on care provided by the parents or carers.

3.71 Practitioners and managers from Derby and Derbyshire have provided feedback and evidence of the positive impact of training for them and their practice. They have experienced learning from local reviews and the voice of the child embedded within all courses.

3.72 Over 4000 practitioners registered to participate in DDSCP safeguarding learning and development programme since it was launched in May 2020. Due to the pandemic all face to face training was postponed.

3.73 Online e-learning courses were developed locally by the partnership and bespoke e-learning courses have been completed by approximately 3,000 delegates. Courses were developed effectively using online technologies in consultation with partner agencies to mitigate pressures and ensure appropriate training opportunities were available as a priority.

3.74 Virtual training, that enabled multi-agency participation in learning for key safeguarding courses, has been completed by over 1000 practitioners. Attendees have responded positively to the new approaches to learning provided by the partnership team and agency representatives (who are members of the training pool). Excellent feedback indicates practitioners are able to demonstrate increased knowledge, skills and confidence in their safeguarding of children and young people.

3.75 The establishment of a suite of learning and development opportunities has widened accessibility for the workforce and proved extremely successful. It is envisaged that this approach will be expanded over the coming year and will remain an essential element alongside face to face training that will resume for specific courses.

3.76 The partnership is pleased to have successfully delivered online conferences and has future learning events planned for the coming year. The opportunities arising from the use of these technologies is allowing greater accessibility across the whole geographical area and is an extremely positive development in the work to strengthen safeguarding arrangements locally.

Stakeholders group

3.77 Relevant agencies are involved in the work of partnership subgroups directly depending on their role and are invited to participate stakeholder events to drive forward improvement to safeguarding arrangements across Derby and Derbyshire.

3.78 The stakeholder group events ensure that:

- ongoing learning and improvement is shared across the partnership from the work of the sub groups;
- partners and stakeholders have the opportunity to shape ongoing development and business plans for the partnership;
- partners and stakeholders are able to identify emerging thematic safeguarding concerns for children both from within and from outside their families.

3.79 This approach will enable joint identification of, and response to, existing and emerging needs and agreement on priorities to improve outcomes for children.

3.80 The first stakeholders group conference was delayed by the impact of the pandemic and took place on 11 December 2020 and 22 January 2021 with around 130 participants attending the events. The conference was well received providing an opportunity to share an overview of the progress made by the partnership and set out what was known about the effectiveness of local arrangements. Feedback from partners indicated that the implementation of the partnership arrangements across the whole area was working well. The joined up learning and development opportunities across the whole area received excellent feedback from practitioners with a stronger links incorporating learning from local reviews. The new joint quality assurance arrangements have joined up detailed assurance linked to audit and case reviews across the partnership area. This is leading to an improved strategic approach to identifying and addressing key areas. Future stakeholder conferences are planned for 2021 and will focus on themed events. This will included a specific event identified as a result of local assurance work to strengthen safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable infants and school age children.

4 An analysis of evidence of progress on agreed priorities

4.1 The partnership priorities 2019 – 2021 were:

- Promote emotional health and wellbeing and reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
- Safeguard children at risk of exploitation reflecting additional features such contextual safeguarding and our understanding of emerging vulnerabilities
- Reduce the vulnerability of Electively Home Educated Children (EHE), Children excluded from school and Children who are Missing (from home, school and care)
- Reduce the adverse impact of Parental Substance Misuse and Parental Mental Health
- Promote and obtain assurance of Early Help arrangements (including responding to neglect) and response to requests for services
- Reduce the adverse impact of Domestic Abuse and family conflict

4.2 Progress was made to establish the new safeguarding partnership and ensure that action was taken to address the priorities in the context of a very challenging time for the community and services arising from Covid-19.

4.3 Learning from case reviews informed the development of new training that was launched by the partnership. Robust action was taken to circulate resources to schools about emotional health and wellbeing. Action was taken to raise the awareness of contextual safeguarding and place based risk so that children are kept safe in the areas where they live and go to school. Early help, parental substance misuse and mental health, and the impact of domestic abuse have all been features drawn out of local reviews and in the process of being incorporated within learning briefings that will be published in 2021.

4.4 Planned Quality Assurance activity was refocussed during 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The partnership prioritised obtaining assurance that vulnerable

children were being seen and that requests for services were identifying concerns appropriately. Partner organisations are working with the two local authorities to continue to improve contacts and referrals so that the right information is being provided at the right time to keep children safe. Action is being taken to reduce the number of contacts and referrals that lead to no further action across the partnership area through the work of the *Predicting Demand* group that works closely with the partnership quality assurance subgroup across Derby and Derbyshire. The need to re-focus quality assurance activity, together with the impact of Covid-19 on agencies' capacity, has had some impact on the thematic multi-agency audits which the partnership would usually carry out. A programme of regular multi-agency auditing will resume in a planned way during the coming year, beginning with a focus on assurance of arrangements in place to keep vulnerable babies safe in spring 2021.

4.5 The completion of outstanding serious case reviews from the two local safeguarding children boards along with rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews commissioned by the partnership has presented a resource challenge. Work to complete serious case reviews has been achieved other than in cases affected by court processes. The partnership has prioritised the completion of rapid reviews and has kept the national panel up to date where delays have occurred arising from the complexity of individual cases. The partnership has ensured that immediate learning has been implemented and a strategic plan is in place to ensure that essential activity is being completed to drive forward learning from reviews and progress is closely monitored.

4.6 A significant benefit for the new partnership arrangements has been the opportunity that has arisen to complete analysis of case reviews thematically drawing on a range of different reviews carried out over since 2016 across Derby and Derbyshire. A report was provided to Chief Officers drawing upon analysis of cases for infants under the age of one who have been seriously harmed or died as a result of abuse or neglect. The Chief Officers endorsed action across the partnership to: strengthen safeguarding arrangements to improve the safety and welfare of babies as a priority across the partnership; obtain assurance of sustained improvement and reduction of serious harm to babies; establish a partnership lead for the strategic response to improving the safety and welfare of babies. Promoting and improving the safety and welfare of babies has been added as a priority for the partnership in the coming year.

5 **A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews**

5.1 The DDSCP has taken action to complete outstanding tasks from the two local safeguarding children boards:

- Five serious case reviews have been published on the partnership website along with updates on the progress made to complete the multi-agency action plans for the individual reviews. The publication of two reviews has been delayed due to Court proceedings
- Two non-statutory learning reviews are in the process of being completed.

5.2 Practitioners, managers and family members have provided key contributions to the case reviews being completed by the partnership. Learning events have been held to draw out key features of frontline practice. Parents, foster carers and young people have provided feedback directly to independent overview authors. Good progress has been made to draw out thematic learning that is strengthening the identification and response to vulnerable infants. Further thematic learning from reviews is helping to raise awareness of the risk of neglect to school age children.

5.3 Practitioners and managers involved in a review commissioned by the Derbyshire safeguarding children board participated in the National Review into non-accidental injury (NAI) in infants under the age of 1. The findings from the national review are to be published in 2021.

5.4 A joint action planning subgroup coordinates the completion of case review action plans and ensures that associated activity to drive forward learning is effective across partnership subgroups. Good progress has been made to obtain evidence of the impact of case reviews on improving practice and outcomes for children.

5.5 Keeping babies safe from abuse and neglect is a priority for the partnership and this strategic work has developed as a direct result of thematic analysis of learning arising from local reviews. An action plan is in place to drive this work forward and will be monitored by the Keeping Babies Safe Steering Group and senior leaders from the partnership.

5.6 Families are routinely invited to participate in reviews and young people involved in serious case reviews have provided invaluable commentary and suggestions that have been included in *Child Sexual Abuse within the Family: Guidance for practitioners and managers*.

6 Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

6.1 Lay members representing local communities are actively involved within the work of the partnership attending the Executive Board and three young people have participated in the Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People subgroup meetings. Their influence, challenge and contributions are helping the partnership develop local arrangements and their involvement provides an additional source of independent scrutiny of the activity delivered by the Partnership.

6.2 In order to build on the important contributions of young people the partnership is in the process of establishing a Participation Strategy. An initial draft strategy has been completed and will be implemented in the coming year to ensure the individual and collective voice of children and young people in decision making, planning and review processes across the partnership helps drive forward how we all work together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. This will enable the

partnership to learn from children and young people about how we can do things better and make a difference to the way we make decisions and plans.

6.3 Case review activity over the last 18 months has been able to include the participation of young people wherever possible and quality assurance audit processes include a multi-agency audit template which has a keen focus on how well practitioners use the voice of the child within assessment, planning/review and direct work. The participation strategy also identifies a need to establish further opportunities will be explored to allow children, young people and their families to have specific input into quality assurance activity in the future.

6.4 Voices in Action is a youth council for young people aged 11 to 19 years old in Derby representing their school, support group or youth project. The partnership team and agency representatives worked with Voices in Action during the year to complete discussions with young people on a range of safeguarding topics including domestic abuse; emotional wellbeing; returning to school and the support needed if there was to be a local lockdown; food and physical activity during lockdown and beyond; and safeguarding arrangements (such as what this meant, the law, roles/responsibilities of services, children's support needs and services who should help). Feedback from young people arising from these discussions was fed back to individual agencies and shared across the partnership subgroups so that their views could contribute wider across Derby and Derbyshire.

6.5 In Derbyshire, longstanding arrangements to involve young people have been reviewed, and a new Youth Network launched in spring 2021. This connects together school councils and other youth forums. The network enables partners to reach out to about 30,000 young people aged 11+ across the county to understand what life is like for them, and what is important to them. The first consultation with the network is underway in spring 2021 and is seeking feedback about how well young people they feel they have been supported by adults during the Covid-19 pandemic.

7 Updates to the published arrangements

7.1 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership reviewed the effectiveness of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in December 2020 and the Chief Officer Group agreed the action being taken to update the arrangements in February 2021. The following updates have been made to local arrangements since September 2019 to strengthen the work of the partnership:

- A Core Business Group has been established for the statutory partners to review and plan activity across the subgroups and Executive Board
- Quality Assurance is now delivered by one subgroup that covers both the Derby and Derbyshire footprint. This facilitates additional peer review of processes across both localities including sharing of good practice and reduces duplication.
- Strategic oversight of Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People is now delivered by one subgroup that covers both the Derby and Derbyshire footprint.

7.2 The Partnership plans to carry out further annual reviews of the implementation local arrangements to identify its effectiveness in improving safeguarding arrangements and identify any further developments as required.

Note

There is no secure establishment provision in Derby or Derbyshire.

A copy of the DDSCP Annual Report was submitted 03/08/2021 to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care and published on the DDSCP website.