

## **Derbyshire Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – 22 July 2020**

### **Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Report by Independent Chair**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Derbyshire and Derby Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were merged, by voluntary agreement, on 29 September 2019, under the auspices of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018. Consequently, this the first feedback to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee from the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, for which I have the privilege to be the Independent Chair, having chaired the Derbyshire LSCB from March 2018.

Clearly, the context in which Safeguarding has been operating in the last few months is very different from that in which it was operating when the Annual Report was compiled for 2018/19 and very different from that anticipated when the new arrangements were implemented. Members are asked to bear that in mind in reading what follows.

#### **2. Annual Reporting**

Members of the Committee have received copies of the most recent Annual Report for the Derbyshire LSCB for 2018/19. As the two LSCBs ceased to operate from September 2019 (i.e. Mid-year), the Partnership agreed that it would be appropriate and practical not to prepare reports covering two half years, nor would it be sensible to prepare a consolidated report covering April 2019 to September 2020. Accordingly, the first full report for the new Partnership will cover the period April 2019 to March 2021. That report will be shared with this Committee, once it is completed.

#### **3. Progress against 2018/2021 Priorities**

When I presented the 2017/18 report last year, the final slide set out the priorities for Derbyshire for 2018/2021. Whilst these have been incorporated now into the Partnership Priorities, as being common to both City and County, one – Early Help – was more specific to Derbyshire.

At the time of the presentation, Derbyshire was in the middle of a period of significant change in its Early Help landscape and the Council was seeking to engage more closely and practically with other partner agencies to promote, enable and ensure that Early Help was assessed and delivered effectively by all agencies on an equal footing. As stated in the Annual Report 2018/19, a multi-agency Task and Finish group was set up to facilitate this aspiration. I can say that, with the engagement, support and commitment of all agencies, there has been a very effective response to the call for genuine partnership working and the work of the task and Finish group has been completed, other than a review in October 2020 to gain assurance that the initial progress has been maintained.

It is worth updating Members also on the progress made with the new arrangements on which I made comment last year and to which reference is made in Chapter 14 of the Annual Report 2018/19. The structure is available on the Partnership website [www.ddscp.org.uk](http://www.ddscp.org.uk).

In essence, there is a Chief Officer Group, meeting twice a year to oversee activity and assurance. This comprises the main Partners: Derbyshire County and Derby City Councils, Derbyshire Constabulary, Derby and Derbyshire CCG, Tameside and Glossop CCG and the Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner. An Executive Board meets quarterly. This has a

wider membership, including NHS Trusts, Education Groups, EMAS and Lay Members and is responsible for the effective work of the 11 subgroups and the important contribution of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). 3 of those subgroups are Joint County and City and the 2 Quality Assurance Groups have been working more closely during the period of the pandemic.

It is very pleasing to report that the transition to the new arrangements was very smooth, despite initial staffing vacancies, the need to standardise reporting and management arrangements and the additional timescale pressures of Rapid Reviews. It should be recorded that the work of the Partnership team and its Manager contributed greatly to what has been a successful start to the new arrangements.

#### **4. Partnership Business Plan 2020/21**

The Partnership Business Plan for 2020/21 has been circulated to Members of the Committee. It refers to the new arrangements and sets out the five strategic priorities for the Partnership, agreed and signed off by the Chief Officer Group in January 2020.

#### **5. Current Performance**

Regular brief reports are prepared on progress against the Business Plan Priorities and the most recent, covering the period March to June 2020, is attached for information, alongside the brief which is made available for the public.

In addition to the planned work, a comprehensive review has been undertaken by the Partnership Team on case reviews/rapid reviews undertaken locally over the last two years. This has identified how the Partnership could respond even more effectively to incidents in the future and more in depth work is underway to assist that process.

#### **6. Future Challenges**

Clearly, the last few months have been difficult for all services, not least those seeking to address the Safeguarding of children. All the practitioners and managers involved in this work must be congratulated on their commitment and performance over that very difficult period.

Challenges faced since March 2020, which continue still, include:

- Reduced demand at the front door, certainly in April/May, particularly with the closure/reduced operation of schools and referrals from health bodies. Whilst this may seem positive, it is a great concern since, whilst communication with schools and between schools and families has remained strong, there is a concern about what might be happening 'behind closed doors'.
- Future demand – amount and shape. There is an expectation that, post September, demand may begin to exceed that prior to March 2020 and work is being undertaken across the Partnership to try to identify what that demand might be in terms of level and content. It is notable that demand is now getting back to what was 'normal', even before September.

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**Independent Chair**  
**Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership**