



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY  
REVIEW BOARD  
16 December 2019**

# ITEM 05

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People  
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Help & Children's Social Care

## Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

### Purpose

- 1.1 A stable and competent workforce is the pre-requisite for safeguarding children and young people and driving forward improvements. Derby remains Ofsted rated 'Good' for its services and support to children and young people. This report provides an overview of workforce development, performance and safeguarding pressures.
- 1.2 The main workforce development continues to be the strategic review of the "Front Door" multi agency safeguarding hub arrangements following the Joint Targeted Agency Inspection in March 2019. In addition, there has also been the implementation of the Derby Derbyshire Children Safeguarding Partnership on the 29 September 2019, which replaces Derby Safeguarding Children Board.
- 1.3 The main safeguarding pressure continues to be the increase in demand for services across all areas and sufficiency of placements, which mirrors the national picture. This report provides detail of the strategic developments and performance monitoring arrangements in place to ensure robust oversight and a tight "grip" of practice at all levels.

### Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the actions being taken to make improvements and challenge progress.

### Reason(s)

- 3.1 To provide the Board with an overview of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in the city.

### Supporting information

- 4.1 Derby City Council has statutory duties to safeguard, protect and support vulnerable children and young people. The last single agency judgement inspection (Single Inspection Framework SIF) was undertaken in March 2017 by Ofsted which rated services for 'children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers' to be 'good' for overall effectiveness.

The new Ofsted ILACS framework was implemented in 2018 (Inspection of Local Authority Children Services) and Derby is scheduled for its next full judgement inspection in 2020.

Between 18 and 22 March 2019, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and HMI Probation carried out a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Derby City. This inspection included a 'deep dive' focus on the response to child sexual abuse in the family environment. This joint targeted area inspection included an evaluation of the 'front door', which receives referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of significant harm. In Derby City, all enquiries or concerns about children are progressed through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

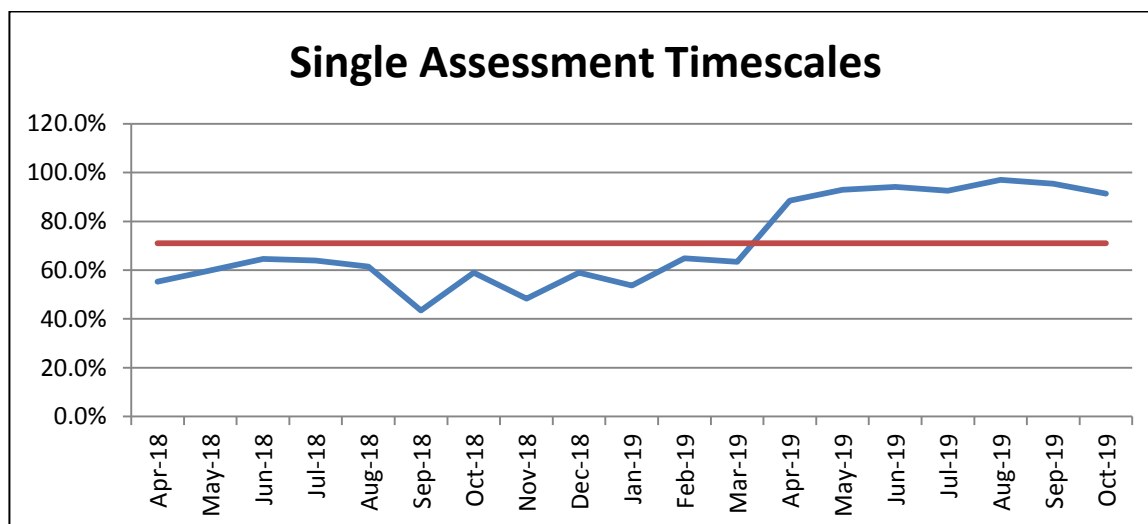
#### 4.2 The progress against the Joint Targeted Agency Inspection local area improvement plan is as follows

- The online referral form was launched in May 2019 to address variability in the quality of referrals from partners.
- The review of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub has been implemented resulting in Early Help and health professionals being co-located to address wider inclusion of services at the "front door" to ensure children receive the right service at the right time.
- Colleagues in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) can access youth offending systems to ensure relevant information aids holistic decision making.
- A LEAN review was completed, informed by stakeholders across the local area (including arrangements for domestic abuse triage) to provide transparency understanding and implementation of efficient processes.
- A monthly performance dashboard has been developed to enable senior managers assess and monitor impact, with attention to reduction of caseloads.

The impact has been

- Average caseload in the MASH being 15 in October 2019 (24 in March 2019)
- Less than 10 agency workers since September 2019 (18 in March 2019)
- Timeliness of single assessment has been consistently above 90% since May 2019 with current performance of 91.3% at the end of October 2019. (63.4% in March 2019)

#### 4.3



- 4.4 Derby Derbyshire Children Safeguarding Partnership.  
Working Together 2018 replaces the requirement to have Local Safeguarding Children Boards and for Safeguarding Partners, comprising of local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and chief officers of police, to agree arrangements locally to safeguard and protect children. The new arrangements bring together the lead members and chief officers from Derby and Derbyshire statutory agencies to oversee and scrutinise the work of a joint executive safeguarding board. The board is independently chaired and arrangements for the new joint Partnership went live on the 29 September 2019 following Cabinet approval on 11 September 2019.
- 4.5 The purpose of local arrangements 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.
- 4.6 Since the 29 September 2019 the combined partnership arrangement has been serviced by a single business unit hosted by Derby City. The transition arrangements have been overseen by both a strategic group of Chief Officers and operationally by a senior management led project team, both of which ensured a smooth transition of functions. The initial review of effectiveness will be reported to Children's Scrutiny in February 2020.
- 4.7 In respect of monitoring safeguarding practice there is a comprehensive programme of quality assurance. Since the March 2017 Ofsted inspection, quarterly quality assurance targeted audits and visits have been undertaken, both single agency and multi-agency. The most recent single agency targeted visit was undertaken in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 12 November 2019 by the Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care, Head of Children's Safeguarding (Fieldwork) and Head of Children's Quality Assurance. In attendance was the Regional Improvement Advisor from the Department of Education. The purpose of the visit was to assure of decision making following contact and referral of safeguarding concerns, assessing progress from actions raised during the previous targeted visit (12 August 2019) and ascertaining impact of changes from JTAI improvement plan for front line staff. Method of assurance was through audit, focus group and observation.
- 4.8 Key areas of improvement evidenced in November following work from the August targeted visit were
- Increased numbers of written referrals received from partners.
  - Workload stabilised for social workers in MASH
  - Management arrangements in MASH more resilient.

Two focus groups were held. Firstly, with social workers that assured sufficient quality of supervision and support was received; that social workers had manageable workloads and there was positive impact of both colocation of the new services and in respect of all MASH teams being situated in the Council House. Secondly, the Domestic Abuse Hub focus group assured of the positive impact of the LEAN review resulting in a more efficient and effective processing of domestic abuse referrals.

A child protection strategy meeting was observed and both the quality of chairing and the quality of health and education contribution were considered excellent in terms of understanding holistic risk and facilitating decisions.

Audit of referrals (contacts) showed information received from partners was of satisfactory quality and that thresholds were appropriately applied.

- 4.9 The governance arrangements for monitoring safeguarding practice is extensive and collectively as a system there is a robust and effective approach which is now firmly embedded. At the highest level, there is a monthly Assurance Safeguarding Meeting attended by the Chief Executive Officer of the Council and the Independent Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership. This enables oversight and challenge of safeguarding matters at the highest level.

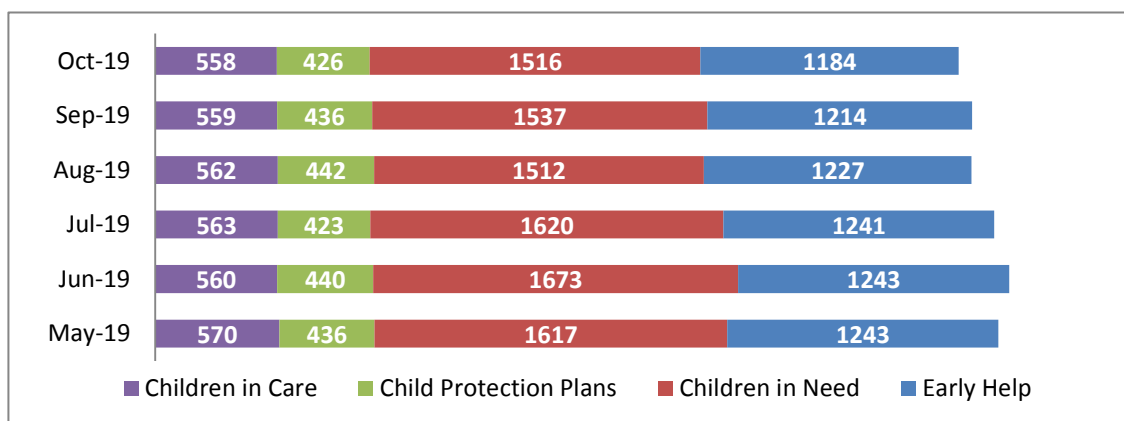
Underneath, there is a monthly Children and Young People Practice and Development Board where the Strategic Director of People holds the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care and her heads of service to account. Audit reports are presented by the Head of Children's Quality Assurance and improvements, where needed, are agreed and timescaled. An annual improvement plan guides the work of this Board and formal quarterly progress against actions are submitted by managers. Underneath this there are a number of performance groups that continually monitor and act upon intelligence and weekly performance reports to identify, address or escalate practice concerns as needed.

The local authority also has to account and provide information as assurance to the previous Children's Safeguarding Board now the Derby Derbyshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership and associated sub groups.

- 4.9 In respect of safeguarding pressures, children's early help and social care services have experienced approximately 20% increase in demand over the past three years. This means that our practitioners, social workers and team managers have responsibility for a greater number of children. Derby prides itself on maintaining a zero tolerance to unallocated cases, though as referenced in the JTAI, this means there are higher than national average caseloads in some parts of social care services. Dedicated work overseen by a Corporate Demand Management Board is gradually turning the curve on this area which is reliant on a strong and effective Front Door (MASH) arrangement. See 4.11

4.10 Recruiting and retaining social workers continues to be a priority and Derby have had success in reducing agency social workers over the past 12 months to an all-time low of 8 (5.6% of social work establishment). There have been no agency social work managers of any teams or agency social workers within children in care services for over three years.

4.11 Overview of all cases May – October 2019



NB March 2016

- Early Help –989
- Children in Need – 1,511
- Children with a child protection plan - 311
- Looked after children and young people - 460

## Public/stakeholder engagement

5.1 There is an ongoing programme of engagement with social work staff and managers to ensure a direct line of sight and communication between senior managers and the front line.

## Other options

6.1 There is openness to exploring all options to improve safeguarding practice.

## Financial and value for money issues

7.1 For 2017/18 the agency social worker expenditure was £2m  
 For 2018/19 the agency social worker expenditure was £1.5m  
 For 2019/20 it is estimated that agency social worker expenditure will be £695,000

## Legal implications

- 8.1 Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to provide sufficient social workers to act as key workers to children in care, children subject to child protection plans and to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and to assess children in need.

Section 30 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 Act 'abolishes' Local Safeguarding Children Boards by deleting sections 13 to 16 of the Children Act 2004.

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 Act the three statutory safeguarding partners (Local Authorities, Chief Officers of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)) must make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area. These are referred to as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018), sets out the statutory guidance to which all new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements must adhere. Under the guidance it is permissible for the new arrangements to cover more than one local authority area with the same principle applying for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Chief Officers of Police

## Other significant implications

- 9.1 None identified.

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role                       | Name   | Date of sign-off |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>Legal</b>               | Olu Idowu HOS Legal Services                                     | 05.12.19         |
| <b>Finance</b>             | Alison Parkin HOS Finance  | 26.11.19         |
| <b>Service Director(s)</b> | Suanne Lim, Service Director Early Help & Children's Social Care | 05.12.19         |
| <b>Report sponsor</b>      | Andy Smith Strategic Director of People                          | 05.12.19         |
| <b>Other(s)</b>            | Judith Russ Head of Children's Safeguarding                      | Nov 2019         |