

## **IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**

**Date and Time :-** Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 5.30 p.m.  
**Venue:-** Microsoft Teams Meeting  
**Membership:-** Councillors Atkin, Beaumont, Buckley, Clark, Cusworth (Chair), Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Hague, Ireland, Jarvis (Vice-Chair), Khan, Marles, Marriott, Pitchley, Senior, Simpson and Julie Turner

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

### **AGENDA**

**There will be a pre-meeting for all members of the  
Improving Lives Select Commission at 2:30 p.m.**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2020 (Pages 3 - 12)**

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2020 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

**4. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

**5. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press**

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

## **6. Communications**

To receive communications from the Chair in respect of matters within the Commission's remit and work programme.

- 7. Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - Annual Report 2019-20 (Pages 13 - 59)**
- 8. Update report regarding children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic (Pages 60 - 73)**
- 9. SEND Peer Challenge Outcomes and Progress Update (Pages 74 - 86)**
- 10. Work Programme (Pages 87 - 98)**

To consider and approve the Commission's Work Programme.

- 11. Improving Lives Select Commission - Monitoring Report (Pages 99 - 100)**

To monitor the progress of recommendations made by the Improving Lives Select Commission

- 12. Improving Lives Select Commission - Sub and Project Group Updates (Pages 101 - 102)**


For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the activity regarding sub and project groups of the he Improving Lives Select Commission.

- 13. Urgent Business**

To consider any item(s) the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

- 14. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday 26 January 2021 commencing at 5:30pm as a Microsoft Teams meeting.



Sharon Kemp,  
Chief Executive.

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, 27th October, 2020**

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Jarvis, Atkin, Beaumont, Clark, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Ireland, Khan, Marles, Marriott, Pitchley, Senior and Simpson.

Apologies for absence:- There were no apologies for absence

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**102. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Resolved:** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 22 September 2020 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**103. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**104. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public and press.

**105. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

Mr Liam Harron asked the Chair to provide an update of the work of the sub-group of the Improving Lives Select Commission regarding the provision of support services for the survivors of CSE in Rotherham and asked whether the input of survivors would be included in the review.

In response the Chair provided details of the work of the sub-group, including its remit to benchmark services provided in Rotherham against those provided elsewhere, the membership of the group and the methods of research, noting that the review would involve members of the sub-group speaking to both elected members and officers at the authorities that had been selected for comparison. The Chair noted that as given the remit of the sub-group, the review would not involve survivors of CSE in Rotherham.

As a supplementary question Mr Harron asked about a request that he advised he had made previously to the Chair for her to meet with survivors of CSE and also how the results of the review conducted by the sub-group would be communicated with survivors of CSE.

In response the Chair advised that was happy to meet survivors of CSE at

any time and that Mr Harron should contact her in order to arrange this. The Chair advised that the findings of the work being carried out by the subgroup would be reported at future meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

#### **106. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair provided a short report on the June and September 2020 meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel and a noted that a more detailed briefing note had been circulated to members.

#### **107. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Education, attended the meeting to provide a report on Elective Home Education (EHE) in Rotherham.

The Chair expressed her disappointment that the report had been submitted for consideration had not been focussed on the areas of concern that members of the committee had requested, these had been to seek assurance that children who were being elective home educated were receiving an effective education and were also being safeguarded from harm.

The report stated that Elective home education (EHE) was the term that was used to describe a legal choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time. It was noted that in these circumstances the local authority had a statutory duty to establish the identities, so far as it was possible to do so, of children in their area who were being educated at home and as such may be at risk or not receiving a suitable education.

The Assistant Director, Education noted that there were many factors why a parent may choose to de-register their child from school such as their own philosophical position regarding how their child should be educated, or having concerns regarding the suitability of the school environment for their child. The Assistant Director noted that revised guidance had been received from the Department for Education regarding EHE had been issued to local authorities in 2019 but advised that further planned consultation with local authorities had been delayed due to the pandemic.

The Assistant Director noted the varying profile of children across Rotherham who were being educated at home included those who suffered from school anxiety and those whose parents made a philosophical choice to educate at home. The Assistant Director advised that the most recent figures showed an increase in the number of children being educated at home and noted that this mirrored a trend seen across the country during the pandemic. It was noted that the increase in

numbers of children being educated at home had presented challenges in ensuring that all parents who were home educating received suitable support.

The Assistant Director advised that while the decision to home educate was that of the parent, that every step would be taken where possible to discourage this action and ensure that a child stayed on roll at a school. It was noted that the regulations surrounding EHE were quite broad and were not prescriptive regarding what a “suitable education” was, and that it was the requirement of the local authority to ensure that each child received. The Assistant Director advised that if the education a child was receiving at home was not suitable or adequate then a school attendance order could be issued. The Assistant Director advised that a communication had been received from the Department for Education regarding the processes that should be followed regarding ensuring that children being educated at home were receiving a suitable education.

The Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People’s Services noted the difficulties that were being experienced nationwide by local authorities in ensuring that being children educated at home were receiving a suitable education in the context of increasing numbers and lack of clear guidance on what a suitable education was.

The Strategic Director for Children and Young People’s Services noted that it was essential for safeguarding that the council ensured it maintained good levels of contact with families where children were being lived at home.

Members welcomed the focus on safeguarding due to concerns that they had previously expressed regarding the risks of radicalisation for children who were being educated at home. Members asked for assurance that officers when visiting families who were home educating were trained to have an awareness of behaviour that may lead to radicalisation. The Assistant Director advised that staff were aware of the issue and noted that further staff development activity in this area was planned. The Assistant Director noted that the best outcomes for children being educated at home were where families had a good relationship with the council.

Members asked whether it may be a potentially better use of resources to focus on activity on keeping children in school rather than supporting them to be educated at home. The Assistant Director advised that the support surrounding EHE at Rotherham was part of a wider support offer to schools and families, and as such resources could not be redirected.

Members asked if the reasons why parents chose to educate their children at home had changed over time. The Assistant Director advised that there had been a change with more children being educated at home due to school anxiety than had been the case previously. It was also noted that some communities, such as the gypsy and traveller

community would be more likely to educate children at home than others.

Members asked for further information on the number of children who were educated at home sat formal exams. The Assistant Director advised that the financial responsibility for EHE children, including paying for exams was the responsibility of the parent but noted that if a family has a good relationship with the council then the outcomes for children, including sitting exams and going on to further education in a formal setting improved.

The Chair asked for further information on the reasons why children who had been home educated subsequently returned to school. The Assistant Director advised that the reasons were often financial, but the reason was often a change in the individual circumstances of a family. The Deputy Leader noted the challenges that were faced by families educating at home due the lack of specialist equipment in subjects such as science. Members asked how the approach to EHE in Rotherham compared to the approach taken in other areas. The Interim Director noted that Directors of Children's Services nationally been discussing the challenges of EHE and that the outcomes of these discussions would be fed back to the Department for Education.

The Chair asked for information the characteristics of the current cohort of children being educated at home. The Assistant Director advised that work on this was currently taking place.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services, the Interim Director for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Education for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recent Department for Education briefing on Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.
- 3) That the structure chart and the procedural process document for the Elective Home Education Service be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.
- 4) That once completed, the detailed analysis of the current cohort of children in Elective Home Education in Rotherham be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.
- 5) That the most up to date information on exam entry and progression to further education of children who have received Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the

## Improving Lives Select Commission.

**108. ROTHERHAM EDUCATION STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Education, attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the work of the Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership (RESP).

In introducing the report, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services noted the remit of RESP was to bring together key partners from across Rotherham's education system into a coherent and effective strategic partnership in order to maximise outcomes and improve life chances for children and young people, promote inclusion and reduce inequalities, and in doing so ensure that no school, child or young person in Rotherham would be left behind. The Deputy Leader advised that due to the pandemic, RESP had not had a full formal meeting for some time, but assured members that the objectives of RESP were still being pursued, with meetings between various stakeholders continuing throughout the period of the pandemic. The Assistant Director, who had only recently been appointed to the post confirmed that he would be the new Chair of RESP.

A table that showed progress made against key activities and actions for RESP was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

The Chair welcomed the confirmation that the new Assistant Director would be the new Chair of RESP but noted her disappointment that report that had been submitted for consideration was very general and noted that it did not focus on the areas of concern previously highlighted by the Improving Lives Select Commission. It was noted that the areas that the commission had previously asked for further information on included how gifted and talented children were being stretched, as well as for specific detail on the impact that RESP was making to educational outcomes in Rotherham.

The Assistant Director, Education noted that despite the challenges that had been experienced for all of those involved in the provision of education in Rotherham due to the pandemic, communication and collaborative working had carried on throughout the period by members of RESP. The Assistant Director also noted that since taking up the post he had facilitated a meeting between the head teachers of local authority maintained schools to enable collaboration and the sharing of best practice, and that moving forwards he was keen to provide more opportunities for schools to work together collaboratively.

The Assistant Director advised that he would be working with the new Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services to discuss the

future priorities of RESP and to establish how RESP would be managed in order to ensure that it worked in the most effective way to drive collaboration and improve outcomes across the education sector in Rotherham. The Assistant Director advised that once the revised priorities for the Rotherham Education Partnership and the timeline for their implementation had been established, they would be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

The Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services noted her commitment to RESP continuing in the future and ensuring that it effectively enabled partnership working and positive educational outcomes.

The outgoing Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services noted the strong culture of collaborative working between academies, maintained schools and the local authority in Rotherham and advised that this strength had been highlighted by OFSTED in their recent inspection of the Education Department.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Education for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

The Chair, on behalf of all members noted her thanks to the outgoing Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services, Sally Hodges for all the work she had done for children and young people during her time in Rotherham and for how closely and effectively she had worked with the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That it be recommended that Elective Home Education be a priority area for the Rotherham Education Partnership.
- 3) That information on the revised priorities for the Rotherham Education Partnership and the timeline for their implementation be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

**109. DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene and the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017 – 20 and the activity that had been taking place in the development of an updated Domestic Abuse Strategy.



The report stated that the vision for the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017 – 20, that had been developed in partnership with the Safer Rotherham Partnership, was: “In Rotherham we do not tolerate domestic abuse and as agencies, we will consistently identify risk, work to protect victims and address offending behaviour. In communities, we will promote the value of positive relationships and identify need, in order to focus on preventing conflict and abusive behaviours. Our services will work together, be responsive, evidence based and informed by those affected. Rotherham’s approach seeks to focus on improving the quality of relationships in the borough, whilst working to protect and support those already affected by domestic abuse.”

It was noted that within the strategy the vision had been broken down into a range of key objectives, and that in order enable the development of a refreshed strategy, a review of each objective had been carried out in order to reflect on progress and to identify any continuing gaps in the strategy. The report provided details on the objectives of the strategy alongside of an analysis of the progress made in the delivery of each objective. The full Domestic Abuse Strategy was attached as an appendix to the officer’s report.

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety noted the achievements of the strategy as well as the review activity that had taken place during its implementation that would be fed into the development of the refreshed strategy. The Cabinet Member noted that a report on the commissioning of Domestic Abuse Services would be considered by Cabinet on 23 November 2020, and that members would have the opportunity to scrutinise the report and recommendations as part the pre-decision scrutiny process.

The Cabinet Member noted that the issue of Domestic Abuse, and in particular the issue of stalking and harassment had been a key area of enquiry for the Improving Lives Select Commission in recent times. The Cabinet Member advised that as a result of these discussions the Safer Rotherham Partnership had undertaken further work and additional monitoring with regard to stalking and harassment in cases of domestic abuse. The Cabinet Member advised that stalking and harassment was often a part of a broader pattern of abusive behaviours in cases of domestic abuse, and as such stalking and harassment had been included in the standard assessment framework and was also a key part of the safety planning work undertaken by statutory and commissioned services.

The Cabinet Member assured members that the protection of victims from stalking and harassment was considered in the delivery of all services that provided to support victims of domestic abuse. The Cabinet Member also noted that work had been carried out regarding the issue of stalking by people not known by the victim and advised that data had shown that up to the end of 2019, no incidents of this type of stalking and harassment had been identified in Rotherham. The Cabinet Member advised that the

Safer Rotherham Partnership had also developed a clear stalking pathway in order to provide clarity in terms of the support that would be offered to any victims of stalking by strangers.

The Chair noted how the provision of Domestic Abuses services and the support provided to victims had increased and developed over the period operation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and welcomed the activity that was currently taking place to inform the development of a refreshed strategy.

Members asked whether the activity that had taken place around stalking and harassment also included stalking and harassment activity that had been carried out online. The Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services assured members that all forms of stalking and harassment activity were investigated if reported. Members also sought assurance that those receiving reports of domestic abuse had been trained to identify incidents of abuse that had been carried out online and were asking the right questions to enable a full picture of a situation to be gathered. The Head of Community Safety noted that this had been an area highlighted for further staff development and training. Members also asked for information on the number of non-molestation orders that had been issued and were advised by the Head of Community Safety that information on this would be circulated to members of the committee.

The Cabinet Member noted the challenges surrounding referrals being made to the police and other services during the pandemic due to the related restrictions on people's lives, and advised that these issues would continue to be a challenge into the future as services continued to be delivered online. The Cabinet Member advised that despite the current challenges surrounding the provision of services, the profile of the problem of domestic abuse and the provision of support services in Rotherham had developed greatly in recent years. The Cabinet Member noted her thanks to the former South Yorkshire Police District Commander for Rotherham, Una Jennings for the work she had carried out in improving how domestic abuse was dealt with in Rotherham.

Members agreed with the Cabinet Member's concerns regarding the challenges of victims of domestic abuse being referred to services during the pandemic, noting that many successful methods such as the "Ask Angela" initiative were not currently accessible due to the restrictions. Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the significant work that she had carried out in raising the profile of domestic abuse and taking the actions that had been required in order to ensure that services related to combatting domestic abuse were as effective as possible.

Members also sought assurance that services were accessible to residents from all different backgrounds, including for those who English was not their first language. The Cabinet Member assured members that services were accessible to all members of the community and that services could support all victims of domestic abuse including men,

people in co-abusive relationships and people in same sex relationships.

The Chair asked for further information on proactive and preventative work around domestic abuse. The Head of Community Safety provided information on the preventative work that was being carried out where an individual's behaviour was providing cause for concern as well information on how preventative work was part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education curriculum in schools.

The Chair asked whether service users would be involved in the development of the refreshed Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Head of Community Safety advised that feedback had been gathered throughout the period of operation of the current strategy noted that this information would be fed into the development of the refreshed strategy.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene and the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) That information on the number of non-molestation orders issued in 2020 be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission
- 3) That members of the Improving Lives Select Commission are involved in the development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy.

**110. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2020/21.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the Work Programme be updated as discussed.
- 2) That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved.

**111. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered the outstanding actions on the Monitoring Report.

**Resolved: -** That Monitoring Report be noted.

10

**112. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES**

The Chair provided a progress report on sub and project group activity.

**Resolved: -**

That the update be noted.

**113. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**114. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved: -**

That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 5:30pm as a Microsoft Teams meeting.



Public Report  
Improving Lives Select Commission

---

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission 15 December 2020

**Report Title**

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Annual Report 2019-20

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?** No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report:**

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

Beverley Czyz, Interim Business Manager, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

**Ward(s) Affected** All wards

**Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to introduce the first Annual Report of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP). It is a statutory requirement under the *Children Act 2004* for the safeguarding partners to produce an annual report setting out about the activity undertaken by safeguarding partners in the previous twelve months and how effective these activities have been in safeguarding and promote the welfare of children in their local areas.

**Recommendations**

That the Improving Lives Select Commission receive and consider the RSCP Annual Report 2019-2020.

**List of Appendices Included**

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2019-2020

**Background Papers** None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

The report will also be considered by the two other safeguarding partners governance arrangements and the National Child Practice Review Panel.

**Council Approval Required:** No

**Exempt from the Press and Public:** No



## **Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Annual Report 2019-20**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB) transitioned into the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) on 19 September 2019. The RSCP now provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify and respond to the needs of children in Rotherham, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.
- 1.2. Statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, sets out that the partnership annual report should provide transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity undertaken by safeguarding partners in the previous twelve months. It must also set out what the partnership have done as a result of the arrangements, including learning and improvement from Serious Case Reviews and their replacement local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- 1.3. As part of the governance arrangements it is a requirement that the RSCP Annual Report 2019-20 is presented through Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's own scrutiny arrangements as well as the other safeguarding partners own governance arrangements.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The RSCB annual report reflects on the activities undertaken in relation to its core business and priorities identified for the year 2019/2020. It considers how well it has worked to the priorities and objectives within its Strategic Business Plan 2019-2020 as follows:
  - **Safe at Home**
  - **Safe in the Community**
  - **Safe Safeguarding Systems**
- 2.2. Key areas of progress achieved against each of these objectives and areas of priority are as set out in the attached RSCP Annual Report 2019/2020. The first section provides an analysis by the Independent Chair in their scrutiny role regarding the activities undertaken by the safeguarding partnership and their effectiveness in delivery their safeguarding plan against the multi0agency safeguarding arrangements in place.
- 2.3. As well as identifying what went well, the report sets out that there are areas of activity that could be done differently or better and some of the challenges faced in achieving the priorities over the year. It also acts as an executive summary for the detailed reporting and analysis of the priorities by the safeguarding partners as well as their plans for the coming year. This analysis shows that much progress has been made but areas for development remain.

2.4. The areas identified for development highlighted in the report include:

- Budgeting pressures.
- Ensuring that babies and very young children are kept safe
- Further scrutiny of the Early Help Strategy and Front Door
- New developments, including contextual safeguarding in the identification, assessment and response to criminal exploitation and adolescent neglect.
- Review of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements and safeguarding plan
- Ensuring the voices and lived experiences of children and young people, families and workforce are represented across the activities undertaken by the RSCP.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 n/a

### **4. Consultation**

4.1 All members of the RSCP Executive Group have contributed and been consulted on the content of the report.

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 n/a

### **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

6.1 n/a

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1. The requirement for the safeguarding partners to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding children in the local area is mandated in the *Children Act 2004, section 16G (7)* as amended by the *Children and Social Work Act 2017* which sets out that:

At least once in every 12-month period, the safeguarding partners must prepare and publish a report on —

- (a) what the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area have done as a result of the arrangements, and
- (b) how effective the arrangements have been in practice.

7.2. Statutory guidance within *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* also sets out that:

7.3.

In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.



In addition, the report should also include:

- Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers.
- An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.
- A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements.
- Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

7.4. Safeguarding partners should make sure the report is widely available, and the published safeguarding arrangements should set out where the reports will be published.

7.5. A copy of all published reports should be sent to the *Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel* and the *What Works Centre for Children's Social Care* within seven days of being published.

7.6. Where there is a secure establishment in a local area, safeguarding partners should include a review of the use of restraint within that establishment in their report, and the findings of the review should be reported to the Youth Justice Board

7.7. The three safeguarding partners should report any updates to the published arrangements in their yearly report and the proposed timescale for implementation.

## **8. Human Resources Implications**

8.1 None

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 Publication of this report is one of ways of holding RMBC and other safeguarding partner as well as relevant agencies to account in relation to their safeguarding children arrangements and seeking assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

10.1 Equality & diversity issues are reflected in the report

## **11. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

11.1 Publication of this report is one of the ways of holding RMBC, other safeguarding partner agencies to account over their safeguarding arrangements for children.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1. There is clear evidence in the RSCP Annual Report 2019-2020 that progress made to ensure the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children has been far reaching despite the challenges experienced over the year, particularly in the later six months of operation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The RSCP has, from the strong foundations laid by the RLSCB, met its full range of its statutory responsibilities including those for assurance of safeguarding effectiveness across its three priorities.

12.2. While there is further work to be done in delivering on the RSCP strategic priorities and objectives, there is a strong commitment from the partnership and relevant agencies to ensure children and young people are at the forefront of their activities. In addition, the review of the MASA will ensure that the structures and governance in place will continue to provide the necessary focus in achieving the priorities and principles within its safeguarding plan.

## 13. Accountable Officer(s)

Approvals Obtained from:

- Catherine Hall - Deputy Chief Nurse/Designated Nurse Safeguarding and Looked After Children, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group
- Steve Chapman – Temp Chief Superintendent, Rotherham District Commander, South Yorkshire Police
- Suzanne Joyner - Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Jenny Myers – Independent Chair, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	n/a	
Assistant Director of Legal Services	n/a	
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	n/a	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	n/a	

*Report Author: Bev Czyz, Interim Business Manager, Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership*

This report is published on the RSCP 's website or can be found at:

[http://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/download/3/annual\\_reports\\_and\\_business\\_plans](http://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/download/3/annual_reports_and_business_plans)



# **Rotherham**

## **Safeguarding Children**

### **Partnership**

#### **First Annual Report**

#### **2019 - 2020**

## Contents

<i>Introduction .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Independent Scrutiny of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Safeguarding Plan .....</i>	<i>4</i>
Summary points.....	5
What has gone well? .....	5
Partnership Challenges - What do we need to do differently or better? .....	7
Final comments .....	8
<b>Rotherham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Implementation of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Priority 1 - Safe at Home .....</i>	<i>16</i>
Neglect .....	16
Looked After Children.....	17
<i>Priority 2 - Safe in the Community .....</i>	<i>19</i>
Children Exploitation Data Snapshot.....	22
<i>Priority 3 - Safe Safeguarding Systems.....</i>	<i>25</i>
COVID-19 Safeguarding Assurance .....	28
Learning from Experience .....	29
Child Death Review .....	30
Learning and Improvement .....	30
Performance & Quality Assurance .....	33
Safeguarding Practice Review Group .....	37
<i>Summary Conclusion.....</i>	<i>39</i>

## Introduction

Welcome to the first Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report (RSCP) which has been prepared by the Interim Business Manager on behalf of Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB) transitioned into the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) on 19 September 2019. The RSCP now provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify and respond to the needs of children in Rotherham, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, sets out that the partnership annual report should provide transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity undertaken by safeguarding partners in the previous twelve months. It must also set out what the partnership have done as a result of the arrangements, including learning and improvement from Serious Case Reviews and their replacement local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

The report therefore highlights how the safeguarding partners have committed to work together effectively in a multi-agency approach to identifying where action can be taken to improve the services provided to children and their families. A structured programme of highlight reports and multi-agency audits has identified areas for further improvement and this together with performance analysis, consideration of inspection outcomes, and learning from recent Serious Case Reviews have informed the RSCP Business Plan for 2019-2022.

The priorities for the new partnership are grouped under three key headings:

- **Safe at Home**
- **Safe in the Community**
- **Safe Safeguarding Systems**

Through these priority areas the new partnership sought to focus on specific areas for improvement, to keep a strong focus on exploitation and drive further child focussed, self-reflective practice with strong challenge within and across agencies. The partnership safeguarding plan was designed to build on previous improvements and any challenges or barriers to making progress. The above priorities were also informed by key principles which underpinned all activity undertaken by the partnership to safeguard promote the welfare of children in Rotherham as follows:

**Principle 1.** Championing the interests and rights of children and young people

**Principle 2.** Involving all partners in Rotherham in a duty to cooperate on safeguarding matters

- Principle 3.** Receiving independent challenge and scrutiny, to ensure feedback, accountability and learning
- Principle 4.** Change is led by measurable improvements in the safeguarding systems and outcomes for children and their families.

This report provides evidence of the impact of this work and analysis of our progress against these priorities during our first year of operation from our inception on 19 September 2019 and ends on 30 September 2020. The layout of this annual report and analysis of its effectiveness is framed around the partnership priorities and underpinning principles. The report begins with the Independent Chair's analysis of the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements and implementation of the safeguarding plan in Rotherham against its priorities which also acts as an Executive Summary of the report.

As this report is published, all services for children and families in Rotherham, and the Country as a whole, face unparalleled circumstances and challenges brought about by the spread of COVID-19 and the resulting pandemic. However, these challenges have also presented an opportunity for the new partnership to demonstrate how well and quickly they have embedded the arrangements to work collaboratively and respond to these challenges. The report, therefore, recognises the progress the RSCP has made throughout the year, despite the challenges presented, whilst also highlighting those that remain and which we will continue to address in 2020/21.

**Chris Edwards, Chief Officer, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Lauren Poultney, Assistant Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police**

## Independent Scrutiny of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Safeguarding Plan

Rotherham introduced their new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in September 2019 at which time the LSCB ceased to exist. I was recruited to take on the role of Independent Chair and scrutineer of the safeguarding arrangements for Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) from the 1st October 2019.

Nationally there is a wide variation in how scrutiny is taking place, In Rotherham, it was agreed by Chief Officers and Executives that the new arrangements would retain an Independent Chair who will provide the necessary scrutiny and judge the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

The purpose of Independent scrutiny is to provide **assurance, monitoring & challenge** to the quality of agencies' work and to:

- ❖ Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard & promote the welfare of all children, including arrangements to identify & review serious child safeguarding cases
- ❖ Act as constructive critical friend & be a key driver to promoting reflection for continuous improvement
- ❖ Judge how effectively the arrangements are working for children & families as well as for practitioners, as well as how well the safeguarding partners are providing leadership.

The approach taken by me over the last 18 months has involved:

- Chairing the Executive Group of the RSCP
- Chairing the Wider Safeguarding Partnership Group
- Scrutinising the work of RSCP the serious child safeguarding case review delivery group to ensure the effectiveness of arrangements to identify & review serious child safeguarding cases
- Chairing the Chief Officer's group
- Scrutinising the work of the RSCP delivery groups, including their terms of reference, work plans and outputs
- Reviewing reports into multi agency audits, training and performance data
- Resolving partnership escalation and conflict resolution process including around budgets
- Ensuring that the partnership response to COVID-19 effectively safeguarded the most vulnerable children.

Following a meeting with Chief Officers and the Executive Group at the end of 2019, it was agreed that my scrutiny of the arrangements would be based around a self-assessment of the Rotherham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements using the [Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements Report 2019](#) developed by Jenny Pearce.

The six steps below are not intended as a checklist for inspection but as a tool for partners to use separately and together to develop and reflect on the effectiveness of the safeguarding children plan. The template will be presented to the Chief Officers and Executive Group as part of the review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in November 2020. The overall assessment against each of the six steps can be seen in more detail on the website.

<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>The three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation</b>
<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children</b>
<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children</b>
<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing</b>
<b>STEP 5</b>	<b>There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews</b>
<b>STEP 6</b>	<b>There is an active program of multi-agency safeguarding children training and workforce development</b>

### **Summary points**

The strategic partnership in Rotherham has worked hard to maintain effective oversight of the safeguarding arrangements in Rotherham. There is strong leadership and constructive, critical challenge of practice. Whilst there have been a number of significant challenges over the last year that put the partnership and some individual agencies under pressure, it has demonstrated a willingness by all to seek resolution and gave me confidence that concerns will be acted on in a timely way and children's welfare put first.

### **What has gone well?**

#### ***Partnership engagement***

This was the first year of the new arrangements and the three core partners have been actively involved in the strategic planning and implementation of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements demonstrated through the regular Executive Group meetings. They agreed some core principles and three key areas of priority as reflected in this report: Safe at Home, Safe in the Community and Safe Safeguarding Systems.

The wider partnership meetings have good representation from both statutory and voluntary organisations, including schools. Relevant agencies have demonstrated their commitment to safeguarding by contributing across a range of meetings and delivery groups. I have also met regularly with Chief Officers, lead members and chaired the Chief Officer safeguarding assurance group.



I have developed solid working relationship with the Safeguarding Adults Board, Independent Chair to ensure that where possible we address activities together. The Section 11 partnership safeguarding assurance reporting was a shared activity, as is the forthcoming and previous Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW). Under the partnership protocol, I also meet with other wider strategic partnership chairs and councillors through a variety of meetings so that there is more focus and join up on the whole system response to some of the issues that affect each group such as domestic abuse, exploitation and substance misuse, and mental health. A wider protocol for joint working is in the process of development.

### ***Learning from Serious Case Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews***

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Partners to identify serious safeguarding incidents at a local level and then to review them as appropriate so that improvements can be made. Serious incidents, notifications and rapid reviews have been carried out as per government guidance and where necessary single/multi agency reviews or audits commissioned. Review of the case review group and membership resulting in more senior chairing and representation from key agencies.

There has been scrutiny by the RSCP of how partners embed lessons from reviews and audits into practice and their own training and a review of outstanding action plans. I would suggest that more work is needed over the next 12 months to evaluate the impact of various approaches to reviews and to ensure that the focus of learning includes both local and national reviews. Key agencies took part in case review training I facilitated and consequently templates and processes have been updated accordingly.

The RSCP also participated in working with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on the national thematic review into non-accidental injury into children aged under one, with a focus on the role of fathers. When published the partnership will reflect on its findings and consider any improvements that can be made locally in response to the learning identified.

### ***COVID-19 assurance that children are effectively safeguarded***

The partnership response to COVID-19 and safeguarding children was reassuring both at a strategic and operational level. I held regular assurance meeting with named partners and the Executive Group to ensure there was a joined-up approach to the identification of the most vulnerable children and families. The response and joint working between the local authority, schools and agencies has been excellent and all have worked hard to ensure that the most vulnerable children continued to have access to school and support. The number of Elective Home Educated (EHE) children is, however, rising which is a cause for concern and will need to be carefully monitored by the partnership.

### ***Performance Monitoring/assurance/audit***

As highlighted in the partnership safeguarding snapshot and through the report there has been scrutiny of both single and multi-agency performance and assurance information. There have been several audits presented to the RSCP that provide a window into the multi-agency safeguarding system. The RSCP also received the section 11 self-assessment and

provided challenge to partners and relevant agencies regarding their evidence against the descriptors within each safeguarding standard.

The performance information has led to the partnership focussing on reducing the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan and the number of Looked After Children, which are higher than statistical neighbours and other areas in the region. The partnership has also worked together to increase the number of Early Help Assessments undertaken by partners and relevant agencies and this maintains a focus going into 2020-2021.

The partnership has also tested the application of thresholds through audit of contacts from the health economy and education settings as well as taking forward learning from the audit of strategy meetings to strengthen the response from the multi-agency safeguarding system.

### ***Holding agencies to account***

All key partners have presented assurance reports post any inspection. The Rotherham Foundation Trust (TRFT) have provided details of their action and improvement plan to the Executive as a result of CQC inspections resulting in challenge and assurance meetings. I have also held two meetings with the Chief Executive and deputy executives of TRFT and the Chief Nurse. Ofsted have recently undertaken a focused visit to Children's Social Care and the outcome of the report will be published on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

### **Partnership Challenges - What do we need to do differently or better?**

#### ***Budget***

When I took up the role of Independent Chair it was clear that there was a significant overspend on the partnership budget, resulting in a deficit that needed to be met. Partners agreed after consultation to split the deficit to achieve a balanced budget for 2019/20. There was, however, no agreement across the three named partners as to the contribution to 2020/21 budget. The long delay in confirming the police contribution by the PCC resulted in significant drift and delay in a review of the back-office support arrangements and a restructure resulted in a reduction of staff and redundancy. Going forward the potential of a reduction in contributions and pressure on partners continues and without timely agreement will have a direct impact on the ability of the business office to carry out its statutory functions.

#### ***Ensure that babies and very young children are kept safe***

Nationally there has been a rise in serious injury in children aged under one. I have requested a multi-agency audit of children who have recently been stepped down from child protection plans or have caused concern in the past and had a new baby to ensure that locally agencies are doing the best they can to identify and support families with new babies. Finalising and promoting the new neglect strategy alongside the Graded Care Profile 2 will be a key part of this work.

#### ***More scrutiny of the Early Help Strategy and Front Door***

The second year of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements should have more of a focus on Early Help to really assure itself that thresholds are being applied consistently and that families receiving the right help at the right time by the right people.

### *New developments*

There is the beginning of an exploration of how the wider safeguarding system could understand more about contextual safeguarding in the identification, assessment and response to criminal exploitation and adolescent neglect. This is in the early stages but should form part of the partnership work over the next year.

### *Review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements*

It is timely now to begin to plan for a review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements with Chief Officers and the Executive Group. The delivery groups need to demonstrate over the next year more of an impact on the work of the partnership with clear and joined up delivery plans against the partnership priorities. I would suggest that at the end of next year that key assurance is sought and evidenced around how and why were priorities selected and more narrative around how they have made a difference to outcomes for children and young people. The voices and lived experiences of children and young people, families and workforce also need to be shown to have more direct influence on partnership work.

### *Final comments*

The legacy of Rotherham and the continued media spotlight continues to have an impact on Rotherham and the partnership which, in my view, creates a level of anxiety that other areas don't experience to the same extent. The demographics of the area which has a high proportion of young families means that number of children who are in local authority care or on child protection plans continues to be high. The additional pressure on Children Services as a result of Operation Stovewood continues to put a strain on already scarce resources. The impact of COVID-19 continues to test the partnership capacity and resources. However, despite all of the above, there is innovation and pride in the work and a real ambition to continue to do the best they can to keep children safe.

In my view the move from the LSCB ways of working to the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements has taken some time. So, although the structures were in place on implementation, the functions and operation of the delivery groups, back office review and wider responsibilities did not happen at pace which resulted in some drift and delay. I believe that scrutiny by the Executive and in my role as Independent Chair, alongside the commitment and hard work of staff has improved this, and that next year will see more focused work.

Going forward I would suggest that the named partners could focus an aspect of the scrutiny on some more specific areas of practice to get more direct feedback from children and families and the front-line staff. Ensuring the voice of the child and their lived experience is at the heart of the safeguarding partnership.

**Jenny Myers MA CQSW**  
**Independent Chair**

## Rotherham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

### Implementation of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

*The Children and Social Work Act 2017*, which received Royal Assent in April 2017, made significant changes to statutory arrangements to promote the welfare of and safeguarding children in their local area.

- Section 30 of the Act removed the requirement for local areas to have a *Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)*.
- Sections 16 – 23 of the Act amended the Children Act 2004 and introduced a duty on the safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Group) to make arrangements with other locally determined relevant partners to work together in a local area to protect and safeguard children.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, changed the governance arrangements which existed under the earlier legislation and statutory guidance and outlines what the responsibilities of safeguarding partners are, delivered through the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. This includes a shared accountability between the three statutory safeguarding partners, the requirement to have independent scrutiny and the transition to undertaking national and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The three safeguarding partners were required to publish their safeguarding arrangements by 29 June 2019 and implement those arrangements by 29 September 2019. Transitional guidance was also published to set out the process of change from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to the new safeguarding children arrangements, which included new accountability arrangements for Child Death Reviews, the completion and publication of Serious Case Review and transition to local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) published its arrangements on 17th June 2019. Further details regarding the arrangements and structure of the partnership can be found in the [RSCP published safeguarding arrangements](#), on their new and updated [RSCP website](#). The safeguarding arrangements explain the RSCP governance arrangements, how the Executive Group operates, what the wider partnership entails, what is expected of its members, the functions of its Delivery Groups and where risk, liability, accountability and ownership lie.

The RSCP is led by an Executive Group, comprised of senior leadership representatives from the three statutory safeguarding partners:

- Rotherham Metropolitan District Council,
- NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group
- South Yorkshire Police

It also includes senior leadership colleagues from two health provider organisations, the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) and The

Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT). In addition, Rotherham's Wider Safeguarding Partnership encompasses all *Relevant Agencies* whose work contributes to children and young people's wellbeing, education, physical and mental health, safeguarding, citizenship and contributions to society.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements has been strengthened by revised terms of reference for its Executive Group and each of the Delivery Groups that feed into and are held to account by the Executive regarding progress with their work plan and the RSCP safeguarding plan objectives. The three Safeguarding Partners have introduced regular scheduled Executive Group meetings, chaired by their Independent Chair to discuss issues such as the local priorities, the structure and functioning of the Partnership, the agenda of forthcoming Partnership meetings, the financial arrangements and any cases subject of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

This includes agreeing on ways to co-ordinate safeguarding services, acting as a strategic leadership group to engage and support others, and implementing learning from both local and national serious child safeguarding incidents. *Working Together 2018* is also clear that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements does not work in isolation but is part of the locality's broader means of ensuring citizens' wellbeing. As such the RSCP operates a partnership protocol with other statutory partnerships in the locality. This has strengthened the oversight of the Partnership.

Independent scrutiny is a statutory requirement and is designed to provide assurance internally to partners and relevant agencies as well as their governing and scrutiny bodies and externally to inspectorates. Independent scrutiny is provided to the RSCP by an independent chairperson, who provides a further layer of scrutiny and assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Rotherham, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases and the child death review arrangements.

This independent scrutiny is part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners, Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) and Peer Review activity across the region. Safeguarding partners also ensure that the scrutineer is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement. The Independent Chair therefore considers how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

The revised partnership structure, which build on, streamlined and strengthened the existing partnership arrangements which were already working well can be seen below. The priorities and underlying principles for the partnership are outlined in the [RSCP 2019-2022 Business Plan on a Page](#) and are:

- **Safe at Home**
- **Safe in the Community**

- **Safe Safeguarding Systems**

## Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure





## Contextual Information

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire and lies at the centre of the Sheffield City Region. The Borough is divided into 21 wards covering a wide diversity of urban, suburban and rural areas. Rotherham covers an area of 110 square miles with a resident population of **263,400**<sup>1</sup>.

There are **50,900** children aged 0-15 in Rotherham and 26,100 young people aged 16-24. Whilst the majority get a good start in life, child poverty is highly polarised across the Borough and life chances can vary greatly. In the most deprived areas, **25%** of the population are aged 0-15, but in the least deprived, the proportion is only **16%**. Rotherham has a lower proportion of young people aged 18-24 than the national average due to young people moving elsewhere to study or work.


Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England (In 2015, **31.5%** of Rotherham's population lived in the most deprived fifth of England whilst only **8%** lived in the least deprived fifth of England). Further information on the composition and context of Rotherham can be found in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) at <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/data/>.


<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate for 2017


## Safeguarding Snapshot 2019/2020




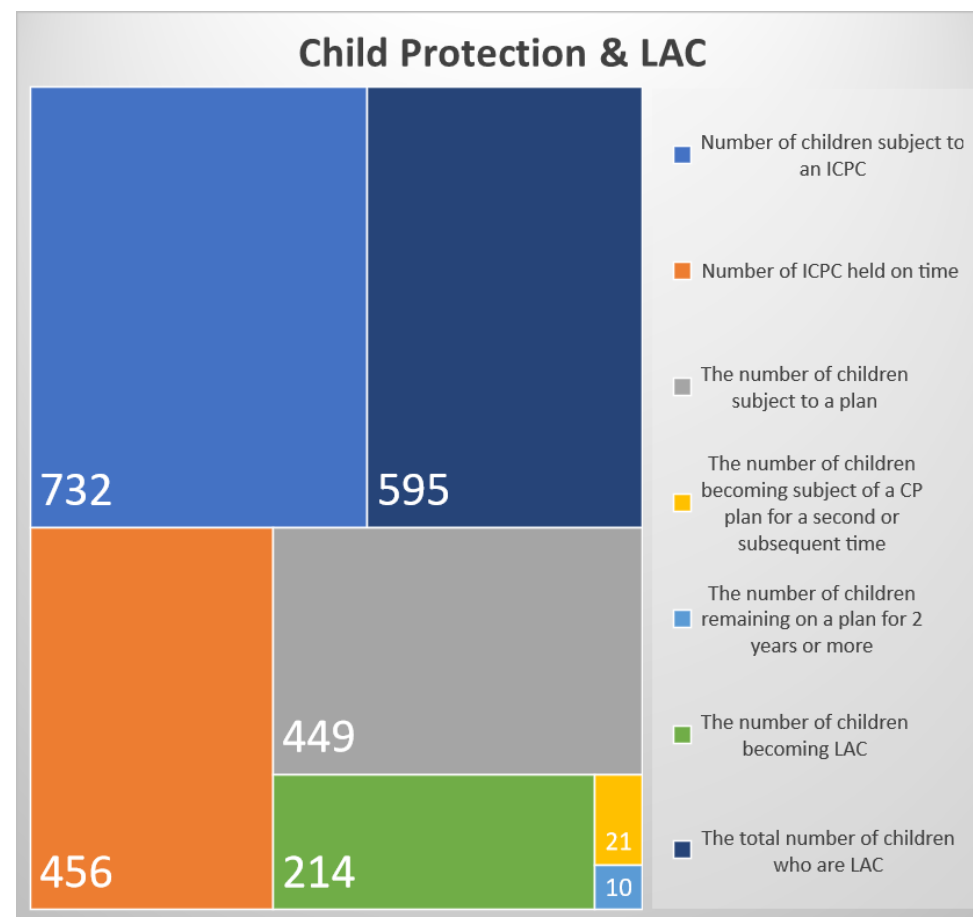
- There has been a decline in the number of contacts since last year
- Timeliness of Early Help Assessments improved, with **82.4%** on time
- The number of Section 47 Investigations completed remains stable.


 **Initial child protection conferences (ICPC)** - The number of children subject to an ICPC at year end was lower than that of previous year (786). There was a **62.5%** increase in the number of children subject to an ICPC. The overall timeliness for ICPC for 2019/20 (**62.3%**) reduced significantly by **24.3%** from previous year end (**86.6%**).

 **Child protection plans (CPP)** - The numbers of children becoming subject to a plan and ceasing to be subject to a plan have remained relatively stable. The number of CPP cases has been gradually reducing over the last few months to **449** and now stands at **58** less than previous year end.

 **Child protection plans - time period** - The number of children becoming subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time (in 24 months) is **2.1%** higher than the previous year. Plans lasting 2 years or more increased and the yearend figure was **1%** higher than the previous year. Plans lasting 2 years or more that were 'ceased' in period outturn is significantly higher (**4.7%**) when compared to the previous year (**1.2%**).

 **Looked After Children** - The number of LAC children has continued a downward trend throughout the year and at **595** has ended at **47** less than in 2018/19 (**642**). The number of admissions into care has reduced by to **214** versus 271 when compared to the previous year end. The number of children ceasing to be LAC has remained consistent at **259** compared to **254** at previous year end.



 LAC permanence has increased to **32.4%** at yearend and similarly the number of children who ceased to be LAC due to a Special Guardianship Order has also increased to **16.2%**.

## Priority 1 - Safe at Home

*The majority of children who need help and support are suffering from some form of neglect. This may be because parents do not understand how to meet their child's needs or because their ability to do so is impaired because of substance or alcohol abuse, mental health needs or domestic abuse. Our aim through the Rotherham neglect strategy to help professionals to spot the early signs of neglect and to intervene as early as possible with the right level of support to improve outcomes for children.*

*We will continue our focus on the safety and well-being of children who are looked after by the local authority, seeking assurance that there are sufficient quality places for children in or near Rotherham and that their needs, including their health needs are assessed and met in a timely fashion.*

### What went well?

The Rotherham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is working well. There is close working with RMBC Children and Young People Service (C&YPS) Safeguarding, Early Help, South Yorkshire Police (SYP), NHSR CCG senior representatives and other multi agency partners. They all attend the joint meetings to ensure abuse or neglect is recognised early and are involved in making decisions around appropriate levels of responses. This ensures that the thresholds are consistently applied for children in circumstances of abuse or neglect.

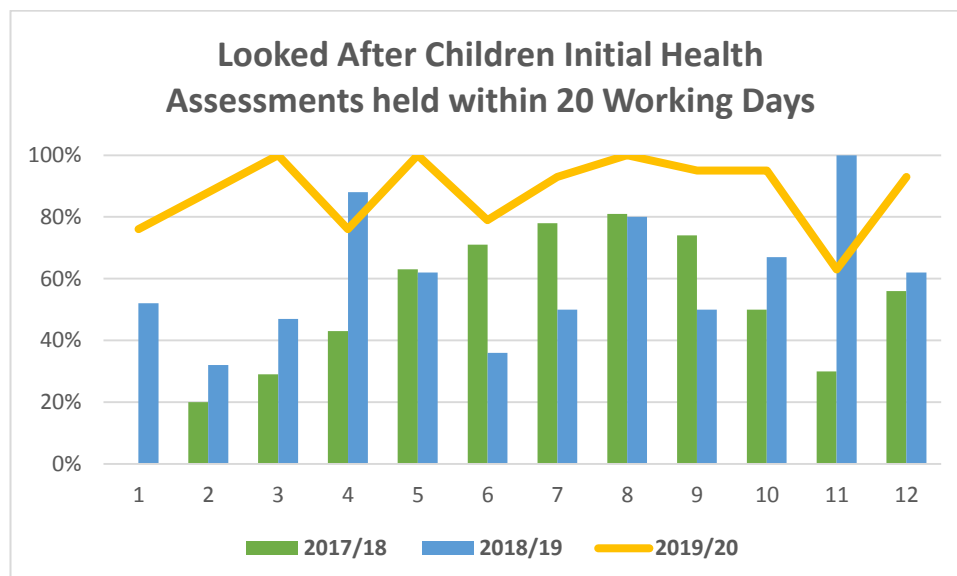
The Partnership has progressed the development of key guidance, to promote the provision of more timely, appropriate support for children and families within Rotherham. Partners have engaged to ensure this is embedded within their agencies. The Partnership provides multi-agency training and support to ensure workers are able recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about a child. The voice of the child is central to all work undertaken with children. There has also been progress regarding children in particular circumstances as detailed below:

### Neglect

- Following a multi-agency working party, the Neglect Strategy is being revised and refreshed and as a co-production piece of work with young people. There was also a review of the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) toolkit will be used. Further virtual learning delivery was agreed regarding the use of the toolkit and other tools that sit alongside it such as the hoarding scale, alongside further guidance for practitioners to consider strategically as to where the GCP2 will be used and clear practice guidance.
- This work could not have been done, had it not been for the strong partnership arrangements, which exist in Rotherham. This ensured the work on refreshing the strategy was co-produced, with work now ongoing to support its conclusion and delivery, with learning being captured, and areas for improvement being acted upon quickly. In support of the Neglect Strategy, training has been led by Rotherham Social Care in training attendees at Strategy meetings on what is required and why.

## Looked After Children

- Rotherham partners worked together to ensure that the needs of all children in care were rated according to level of need and that the most appropriate professional sees the child or young person based on their identified unmet need. This could be a Social Worker, School Teacher, health worker or police officer. Agencies are sharing intelligence well and always in the interest of the child.
- Rotherham multi-agency teams are working together innovatively to deliver adult medicals for Foster Carers and prospective Adopters. These are unprecedented times and require staff to all pull together in the interest of our children and families. The Deputy Designated Nurse has set up robust systems to support this way of working and has received national interest as it appears extremely effective. GPs in Rotherham are supportive of this work and it has released them to care for patients.
- Proactive and tenacious senior leadership within NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (NHSR CCG) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has provided both grip and traction on challenges within the Borough regarding our high number of children in care when compared to other Local Authorities (LA) in South Yorkshire.
- The CCG were able to implement the changes that the Looked After Children Council raised with us in 2018. Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) are now undertaken in a more 'user friendly' manner; with appointments for school age children being outside of school hours and several clinics being held in alternative venues.
- The CCG have worked across commissioners and providers to ensure that our children in care receive timely statutory health assessments. The outturn data for Initial Health Assessments within the 20-working day timeframe was **88%**. Below is a chart displaying a monthly breakdown and it also includes previous year's data to show the overall progress.



- TRFT have expanded their Looked After Children service, which provides a consistent point of contact, a direct response to work involving looked after children who expressed the need to develop therapeutic relationships with health care staff. The LAC team work closely with RMBC colleagues to ensure a seamless approach to care for this group.

### **What could we do differently or better?**

As well as the progress referenced above the RSCP has experienced some challenges and barriers in achieving its objectives and activities under Priority 1.

- The numbers of children in care remain high and this has resulted in a proportion of our children being placed in host authorities. Unfortunately for children placed outside of the local area there are national challenges in ensuring that health needs are met. These challenges are raised regularly with NHS England & Ireland.
- Child abuse investigations have dedicated officers and staff working in roles across the Partnership, and due to the nature of their work, turnover of staff can be frequent. Challenges often revolve around maintaining requisite skills and sharing information in a timely way. This can lead to service level agreements and accurate recording/sharing of information being delayed. The ongoing audit work has highlighted areas for improvement e.g. to improve detail on police investigation systems and more efficient sharing of information from partnership meetings.

### **What more do we need to do or change?**

- The safeguarding partners have been shown to act quickly on recommendations, embed good practice and ensure staff continue to have appropriate training to discharge their duties to the highest standard. This needs to continue in the coming year.
- 2020/2021 will see the full implementation of a personalized LAC nursing team which has been commissioned by RMBC and NHSR CCG to focus on improving health outcomes. This team will be fully established by Autumn 2020 and will make a huge difference to our children in care health and welfare issues.
- 2020/2021 will see us strive to be in a strong position in readiness for the anticipated developments and opportunities that an Integrated Care System can give. NHSR CCG leaders for safeguarding and children in care continue to be proactive and add value for Rotherham residents. Examples include leading on aspects of care delivery such as health contribution to MASH; LPS and reducing unwarranted variation in care delivery.
- The next steps from a Rotherham perspective is to consider a wider health and social care footprint and drive up the standard of healthcare for our children placed out of authority. In 2020/2021 TRFT LAC health team are increasing paediatric time by appointing a Named Doctor for LAC. This appointment is imminent and adds to the CCGs desire to improve LACs wellbeing. In addition, our dental offer will increase awareness for the nursing and social work teams.
- Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) are due to come into force in Oct 2020 which will impact on 16 to 18 year olds. LPS will replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) as the system to lawfully deprive somebody of their liberty. Regular updates provided regarding possible implications/ risks, are being sought and the CCG awaits further guidance for 2020/21.
- COVID-19 has forced agencies to adapt to different means of communication. Some of these have shown positive results, and more should be done to explore how to maintain these different ways of working can be integrated into routine practice.

- The further development of the new RSCP website will be helpful in ensuring access to information throughout the area as well as updated practice guidance for children in particular circumstances

## Priority 2 - Safe in the Community

*We continue to give priority to child sexual exploitation to maintain the significant progress made across the partnership and to further improve practice. We are now integrating our work on CSE with other forms of exploitation through the Child Exploitation Strategy and will take account of the recent research on contextual safeguarding. The partnership will also consider the implications of the research on the impact of adverse childhood experiences on children's development and well-being and agree actions to ensure that services for children are informed by this.*

This priority is led by the **Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG)** whose work plan cuts across five key themes, each of which has a lead within the CE delivery plan:

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Children**
- **Support to Victims and Survivors**
- **Learning and Development**
- **Child Protection and Detection of Crime**
- **Operation Stovewood**

While this work is firmly aligned with the partnership priority **Safe in the Community**, the activity also supports many aspects across all the other two priorities in terms of its preventative work and in ensuring that governance and structures for Child Exploitation are effective.

### What has worked well?

- The Partnership has developed an overarching strategy, which encompasses all forms of Child Exploitation. Some of the ongoing work includes refreshing awareness campaigns linked to spotting the signs of exploitation and reducing the risk of exploitation. Both in a working environment and as a member of the public. These campaigns include initiatives such as *See Something-Say Something*, *Ask for Angela* and *Operation Makesafe*.
- The *Ask for Angela* campaign has been adapted to address other issues which people may be experiencing during lockdown. It's aimed at all ages and the posters include generic questions such as 'is someone making threats to you?' and 'are you being harassed by someone?'. The posters are currently being displayed in around 40 small, local shops across the borough.
- The partnership has received performance and assurance data on child exploitation including children missing and their return home interviews. Information and intelligence is reviewed daily, and reported on at a weekly partnership meeting, chaired by South Yorkshire Police (SYP). All information and intelligence relating to potential victims, offenders and locations for exploitation, are discussed, and acted upon at this meeting.
- Subsequent investigations are then progressed through the Evolve Team, who are made up of police, social care, health and Barnardo's. This investigation structure ensures agencies

work together in a timely, efficient way to minimise the trauma on victims, maximise the evidential capture and ensure all options for identifying and bringing a suspect to justice are exhausted.

- The Partnership provided challenge and scrutiny on charging and prosecution decisions and as a result agreed a new audit to inform future actions.
- The multi-agency partnership continued to respond to referrals received regarding risks associated with child criminal exploitation. Under new safeguarding partnership arrangements, the delivery group for child exploitation continued to meet regularly, ensuring further learning opportunities for all professionals.
- Contextual safeguarding is promoted throughout agencies, Early Help assessments are key in supporting early identification and intervention to those at risk.
- The partnership Child Exploitation assessment tool is now in use to support the identification of children who may be subject to exploitation and supports multi-agency management.
- A range of 7-minute briefings including on Contextual Safeguarding and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were produced by NHSR CCG and were widely distributed and well received.
- Work with multiagency sectors who have influence over extra-familial contexts (e.g. schools, youth groups), has taken place to assist young people to:
  - Recognise and recover from trauma,
  - Re-build family relationships,
  - Re-engage in education and other activities.
- Within Rotherham we are currently seeing challenges around gangs and groups involved in exploitation in its many guises. Partners in Rotherham take concerns very seriously.
- MASH meetings are held on all cases of CCE and frontline professionals informed of outcomes. CCG colleagues within the MASH maintain a database on children who go missing and the outcome of each episode to provide detailed multi-agency evidence of unmet need.
- Rotherham Trauma & Resilience Service (TRS) supports/delivers a wraparound health and well-being offer to victims/survivors of historic sexual exploitation. TRS continue work with local statutory and voluntary partners to create a 'Trauma Informed Rotherham'.
- In addition, TRS work closely with the National Crime Agency (NCA) to ensure that responses are integrated and take account of research on how best to support individuals and staff from the impact of this abuse. TRS are leading the research into partnership working on wraparound services for victims/survivors and their families. Their annual academic evaluations being shared widely and well received.
- The partnership has continued to ensure that the vulnerability of missing children is recognised, and they are effectively safeguarded. Key to delivery was the commitment and attendance at the Child Exploitation Delivery Group by all statutory partners, relevant agencies and voluntary sector.

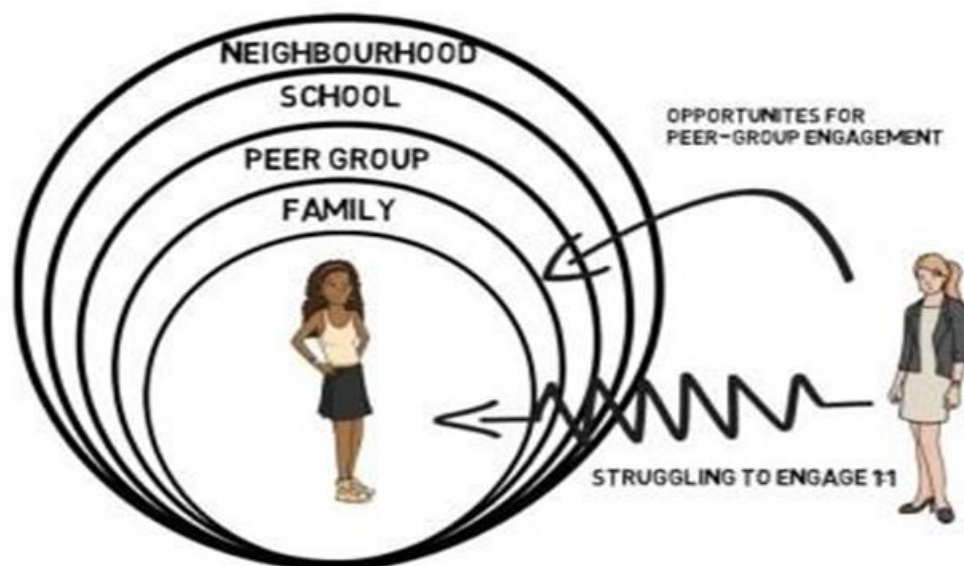
### **What could we do differently or better?**

- There remain challenges in ensuring people and the wider community recognise the signs of exploitation and report it when they see it. Information and intelligence reports have



reduced over the last twelve months, along with referrals from agencies. Training and awareness sessions across Rotherham are key to ensuring risks are identified and met.

- Traditional approaches to protecting children/young people from harm have focused on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home, and don't consider the time that children/young people spend outside the home. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts. Contextual Safeguarding expands the objectives of the traditional child protection systems with a Contextual Safeguarding approach aiming to disrupt harmful extra-familial contexts rather than move young people away from them.
- This approach seeks to identify ways in which professionals, adults and young people can change social conditions of environments in which the abuse has or is occurring. As a Rotherham partnership we therefore need to focus more on Contextual Safeguarding and continue to develop our work with schools who have a vast array of knowledge of our children and young people and their peer networks.
- The partnership could better or increase our understanding of services available to victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Contextual Safeguarding to identify and resolve any delays in engagement. As part of this we also need to understand whether there been any impact on access to services for CSE and CCE due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- The partnership also seeks to better understand the increase in online offending and the use of technology by perpetrators in order to enhance its awareness and response to grooming and offending through digital environments.



#### What more do we need to do or change?

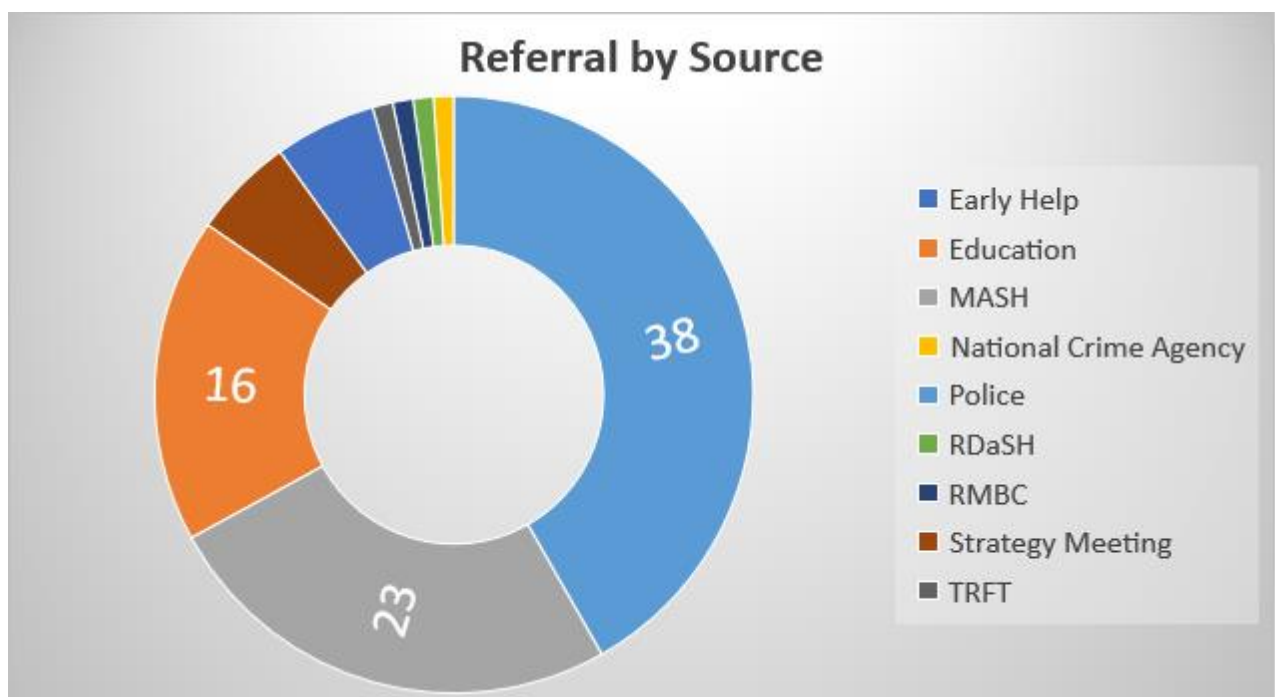
- In order to understand the wider picture of CSE, CCE and contextual safeguarding and to support all aspects of the delivery plan, the partnership will seek to align all performance data into a single format.
- Understanding the impact of contextual safeguarding on children and young people within the Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Collation of information

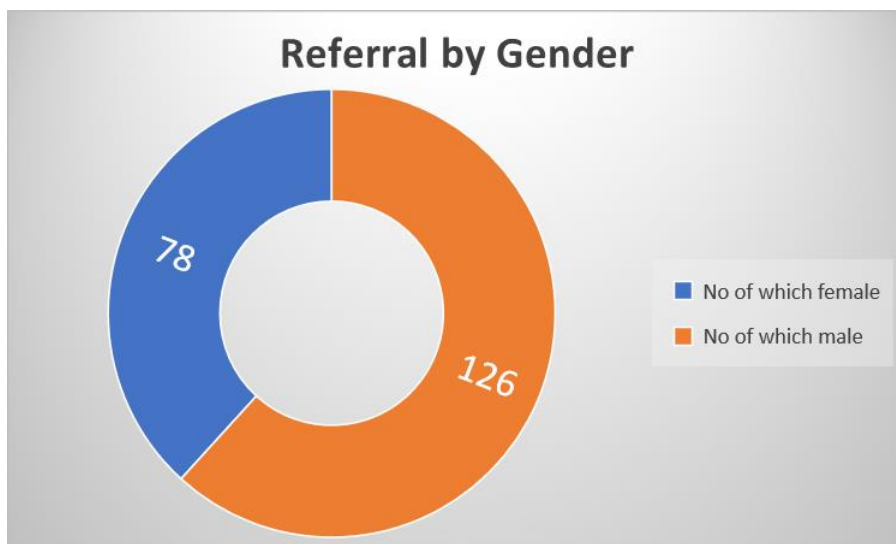
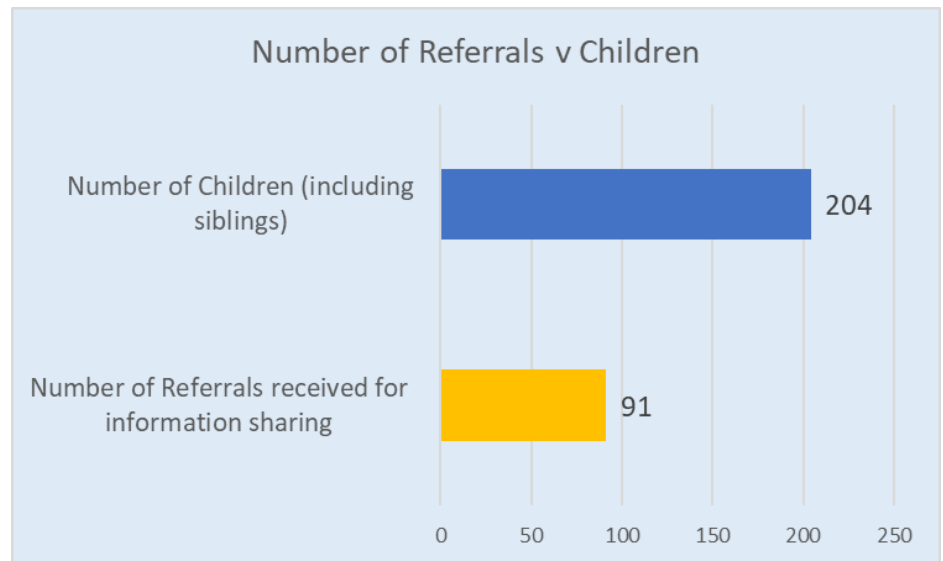


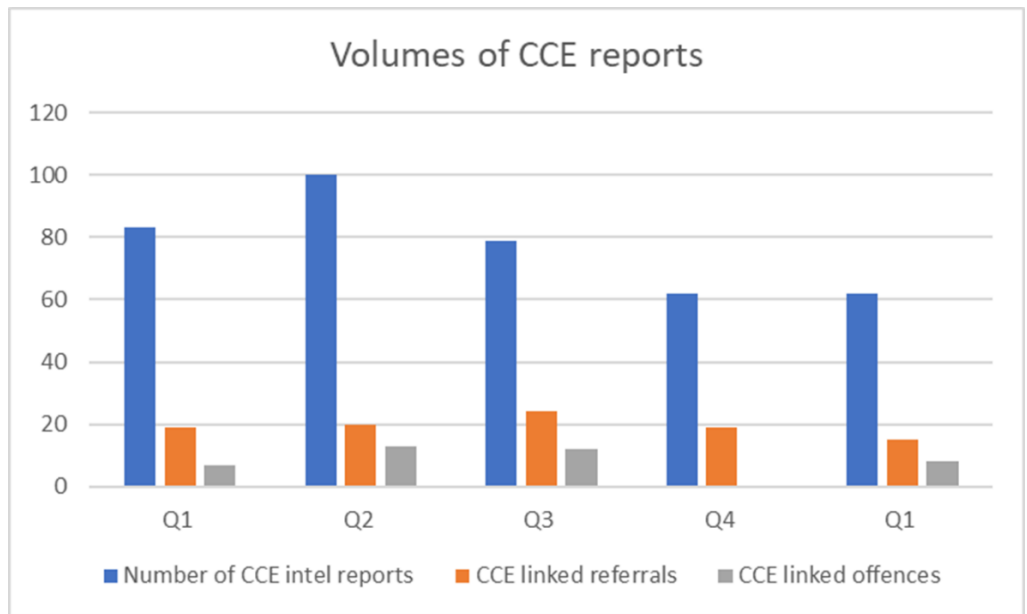
that identifies the ethnicity of children and their families routinely and their friendship groups and where positive influences are derived from.

- With the closures of school due to COVID-19, the opportunities to see children have been greatly reduced. This is likely to impact on recognition of those who may be subject to child exploitation. As schools resumed, there will be a challenge to identify and meet the needs of such children, particularly as there will be many additional needs identified across the safeguarding spectrum.
- As a borough we will need to look at how we can best understand the risks of contextual safeguarding and engage more with children and young people in order that together we help to keep them safe. Contextual safeguarding is a community response rather than merely a statutory services response.
- The partnership also needs an improved understanding of support agencies available for children and young people at risk or exposed to contextual safeguarding, CSE and CCE.
- The Wider Safeguarding Partnership meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 will focus on moving forward from Child Exploitation approaches to embedding Contextual Safeguarding in practice across partners and relevant agencies.
- The partnership will develop wider opportunities for online learning, focusing on key messages for our staff and the wider public as to what constitutes exploitation and how best to report it.
- As communities become more reliant on mobile or digital data, the opportunities to commit offences widen. There is a need with the support of SYP to identify Technology Champions in agencies who can identify signals/concerns, give advice and capture evidence linked to online offending. Funding for this year will train and enhance the skills of Champions who will go on to Safeguard children and give advice across Rotherham on how best to manage investigations focussed on offending online.

#### Children Exploitation Data Snapshot







### Priority 3 - Safe Safeguarding Systems

*The partnership will deliver a programme of audit and workforce development tied to the priorities we have established. A new safeguarding self- assessment across adults and children's services will be introduced and the evidence in these self-audits will be tested through multi-agency challenge. We will also examine the findings from audits undertaken within agencies and undertake a programme of multi-agency audit to measure the effectiveness of practice.*

The **Wider Safeguarding Partnership** has met three times since the inception of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in September 2019. It has used each of these meetings as an opportunity to seek input from relevant agencies and the voluntary sector to consider and contribute to the RSCP safeguarding plan and to also brief them on safeguarding developments both locally and nationally, including Safeguarding Awareness Week and the new refreshed RSCP website. The members of the Wider Safeguarding Partnership also used the opportunity to report on their COVID-19 response and to collective discussion solutions to emerging issues.

#### What has worked well?

- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children were published in June 2019 and commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in line with statutory guidance. The three statutory partners (NHSR CCG, RMBC and SYP) together with wider local agencies and third sector organisations are committed to building on progress already made and securing further improvements to ensure children and families are given help as early as possible and are protected.
- The partnership has used this first year of new arrangements to establish how it will work, develop the priorities and come together as a strategic group willing and able to promote positive change and improvement. It has faced financial challenges which it has managed to resolve and worked within reduced means. The partnership has been able to have challenging conversations about issues and the difficulties facing the children and young people of Rotherham, with its unique history which remain a very high priority.
- The Partnership delivery groups have clear work-plans to ensure that their work is focussed and drives forward the priorities and is accountable to the Partnership Board.
- The Partnership has acted quickly to develop audit and assurance reviews in line with wider aspects of safeguarding children across Rotherham. Some of these audits have already been completed, with recommendations implemented and immediate improvement seen. As a result, for example, there has been improved data quality within police investigations, more timely sharing of information and increased use of technology/mobile data when attending strategy meetings.
- Agencies completed their Safeguarding Self-Assessment in July 2020 which enabled their practice to be measured and audited against the standards.
- The Partnership has developed and worked to deliver a comprehensive programme of training, using alternative methods. This has been supported by the Delivery Groups.

- The RSCP Safeguarding Children Procedures have been amended as a result of audit findings and other learning to ensure that practices are effective to safeguarding children between agencies.
- TRFT have worked with partners to review and update the RSCP Safeguarding Procedures, such as bruising in non-mobile babies.
- The NHSR CCG has produced a range of safeguarding 7-minute briefings for use across the partnership on a range of subjects in line with the partnership priorities.
- The Local Authority and NHSR CCG have implemented Child Death arrangements.

### **What could we do differently or better?**

- The Partnership has a wealth of performance information from several agencies including police, social care and health. While important, there is a need to review this information, to identify the most appropriate partnership data to inform progress against current priorities.
- While there are several strategies in place, operational arrangements to safeguard children can rely on workers having an awareness of policy and procedure. The Partnership is challenged by the current situation of COVID-19, potential staff shortages across the agencies and fiscal limitations.
- The resolution of the safeguarding partner financial contributions delayed actions in respect of arrangements about the partnership support team, however, these are now resolved and the revised structure and approach within the Partnership Business Support Unit is in place.

### **What more do we need to do or change?**

- The partnership should continue to focus on the development of a stable skilled and competent workforce, who are able to work proactively together to ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard children. Communication is key in this, and the development of systems which can communicate with each other will be pivotal to improving this.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a raft of new ways of working some of which as a partnership we would wish to take the opportunity to further explore and consider more innovative ways of working in future.
- The partnership should review the front door and early help arrangements.

As part of the RSCP's role in ensuring effective governance, accountability and communication to the wider safeguarding partnership it has undertaken activities that are cross cutting and that provided traction across all three of its priorities. These activities sought to enhance effective partnership working and to provide partners and relevant agencies with a clear understanding of the wider safeguarding context and their roles and responsibilities within it. Much of the work was undertaken under the refreshed partnership protocol which provides clarity about the relationship between these partnerships and their individual priorities. This has strengthened the work of partnership to make safeguarding

children a priority and in ensuring that the needs of children in Rotherham are foremost in service design and delivery.

## **COVID-19 Safeguarding Assurance**

In early April 2020, the RSCP quickly came together as a partnership to consider how the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown would impact on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Rotherham. The partnership began to hold regular COVID Assurance meetings to provide oversight of any key issues, emerging themes, effectiveness of partnership working and any safeguarding risks across the partnership.

Within this the partnership received updates from individual partners and the key data around contacts, referrals and outcomes as well as any impact on the workforce. These strategic meetings were chaired by the Independent Chair, Jenny Myers who has remained in regular contact with Chief Officers and Senior Leaders in the partnership, to gain assurance that vulnerable children will continue to be safeguarded. The assurance meetings and conversations confirmed that:

### **What is working well:**

- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is operating well with the support of virtual and on-site staff.
- Mechanisms are in place to review, assess and plan for domestic abuse cases, including how Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) will operate.
- Daily Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse (MADA) meetings are being held for victims of high-risk domestic abuse
- Health Professionals in the MASH are assisting with information sharing for other areas as required such as Early Help, Strategy meetings etc.
- Health professionals within the MASH have worked regionally in considering missing children and sharing systems and process that track children from missing to found.
- Active participation at a senior level in Multi-Agency Zoom Meetings to consider how best for health, Local Authority, Education, Police and voluntary sector to support children who are vulnerable.
- Vulnerable children and their families are still being 'seen' and their voices are still being heard. But in different and innovative ways.
- Frontline Staff are utilising a variety of methods to explain the current challenge of COVID-19 to different age groups. All resources are shared across Rotherham.
- The safeguarding partners and relevant agencies are working closely together to consider all aspects of children's vulnerability including children who are 'shielded' for their own issues and those of their immediate family members.
- Safeguarding assurance is sought via virtual media from healthcare providers this includes safeguarding standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Continuity plans are in place for reviewing child deaths and any serious incidents reported into the partnership and the Government have issued guidance in relation to serious incident notifications and responses.
- Work has taken place regionally with newly qualified dental staff and locally with community dentists and TRFT to consider LAC dental needs as a priority.

- Potential foster carers, adoptees and family carers continue to have a medical completed. This has been achieved through partnership working with RMBC, NHSR CCG, TRFT and the GP's of Rotherham. This has resulted in approximately **180** medicals being completed from April 2020 to September 2020.

### **What could we do differently or better?**

- Identifying Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) needs and data sharing, although partners have attended the Children Commissioners Launch of the CHILDRN APP, which will dramatically improve data sharing opportunities.
- The possibility of missing an unmet need or risk due to reduced face to face contacts which has brought challenges regarding our ability to effectively safeguarding children and young people. These include young people not always having the confidential space to effectively explore their concerns and make subsequent disclosures and a lack of opportunities to physically observe the child or young person's appearance, presentation, and home environment.
- The ability to effectively assess how safe the service was, as there were so many unknowns due to lack of face to face contacts in community and acute settings.
- The challenges of distributing laptops and other resources to schools.
- Some areas have stopped undertaking Out of Area health assessments due to redeployment; however, this work was picked up by the local TRFT resources.

### **What more do we need to do or change?**

- Partners in Rotherham together developed a tool to consider how every contact was made to count. This tool includes discussing with the child how they were coping during lockdown and what did a day in their life look like. Staff working in new ways would have like to utilise it earlier to benefit more children. The tool will be promoted further, and its impact considered as part of the COVID-19 assurance work.
- To continue offering a broad menu of digital engagement options, including platform such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Webchat. These are not used as a replacement for therapeutic delivery, but to maximise engagement in between scheduled appointments.
- Consultation with young people to get a sense of which platforms are most popular or better suited for the purposes of digital engagement.
- Maintain strong multi agency links that have developed by linking services virtually across Rotherham; to continue the 'can do' attitude to be proactive and responsive to challenges that lie ahead.
- RSCP would like to see a more cohesive approach from central government departments in their working relationships as this has sometimes proved challenging at the point of provision.

### **Learning from Experience**

The **RSCP Executive Group** receives assurance from several different sources in order to ensure the RSCP is making sufficient progress against its business plan priorities, as well as to



consider how well agencies are contributing to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

These activities are managed through the **RSCP Delivery Groups** and other focussed Task and Finish group as need arises. The activities are linked to the RSCP priorities and objectives and there is alignment of cross cutting activity across delivery plans. This is to not only ensure there is good governance, as set out within the **Safe Safeguarding Systems** priority, but also that to ensure it contributes to the other two priorities of **Safe at Home** and **Safe in the Community**. The work of the Delivery Groups and their contribution to the RSCP Priorities is set out below.

### Child Death Review

- The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is a multi-agency panel which reviews the death of any child aged from 0 to 18 years who is normally resident in the local authority area. The purpose of the panel is to consider the circumstances of the death, and whether there are any areas of learning that can prevent future similar deaths.
- During the year 2019-2020 sadly there have been **14** child deaths in Rotherham. **7** were classed as 'expected' child deaths. **7** were classed as 'unexpected' child deaths. Most of the expected deaths related to children with long term health conditions. Two of the unexpected deaths related to young babies and were categorised as sudden infant deaths. Messages related to safe sleep continue to be promoted within RDASH training and across Rotherham.
- The partnership also received an Interim Report on Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy and Childhood (SUDIC). The purpose of the review was to look at the effectiveness of the CDR arrangements against statutory requirements.
- A review was conducted of the cases which would have been termed as unexpected deaths between October – December 2019. During this period 4 deaths occurred within Rotherham which would have met the criteria for SUDIC. Following a review into the processes of these deaths, 5 learning points were identified which were to be followed up by the CDOP.
- It was noted the new process had brought additional complexities, but this was now being embedded. However, the Executive Group agreed the report provided reassurances and it was evident that responses to child deaths were good.



### Learning and Improvement

The purpose the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group (LIDG) is to:

- Receive the key areas of learning arising from Lessons Learned Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, multi-agency audits and other quality assurance work. The delivery group will then establish how to implement the learning in terms of changes to practice, procedures, standards, learning, commissioning, and service delivery.

- Review new national practice guidance and research on behalf of the RSCP, taking into account how it impacts upon multi-agency safeguarding children policies and procedures
- Maintain and promote relevant and up-to-date safeguarding children policies and procedures for multi-agency working and oversee their maintenance and publication
- Review a multi-agency learning and development offer based on the priorities of the Partnership, outcomes from audit and the needs of the workforce.
- Assure the Partnership that learning and development by agencies is evaluated by agencies and the impact on outcomes for children and young people is understood.

The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group is responsible for delivering on **safeguarding children training and awareness raising**. The RSCP is committed to supporting a range of multi-agency learning opportunities to practitioners working within Rotherham. Details of the blended learning offered by the RSCP can be found in the [Multi-Agency Learning Prospectus](#). The partnership has developed a Learning and Improvement Strategy which acknowledges a wide range of learning is offered by agencies across the Partnership and will where possible seek to support and enhance this.

The Partnership recognise the significance of a co-ordinated approach in which the overriding principle is that '*safeguarding is everyone's responsibility*'. The importance of safeguarding across the wider partnership is recognised and therefore many voluntary and statutory organisations (relevant partners) will be consulted and active partners of this strategy.

In line with the RSCP its core values all safeguarding learning should:

- Place the child at its centre and promote the importance of understanding the child's daily life experiences, ascertaining their wishes and feelings, listening to the child and never losing sight of his or her needs.
- Create and support an ethos that values working collaboratively with others (*valuing different roles, knowledge and skills*),
- Respect diversity (*including culture, race, religion and disability*)
- Promote equality and encourage the participation of children and families in the safeguarding processes.

### **What is working well?**

#### **Safe at Home:**

- Neglect has been a main area of focus during 2019/20 and much work has been undertaken to refresh the Neglect Strategy and to consider approaches to benchmark neglect. This work is detailed further under Priority 1.
- Neglect is a main agenda item at the next Learning and Improvement Delivery Group in order to seek assurance regarding the partners understanding of the long-term impact of cumulative harm through neglect and has been linked to the learning from recent practice reviews.

- The partners and relevant agencies continue to ensure they receive appropriate training on a range of safeguarding topics both on a multi-agency basis and in-house, this includes learning and development on neglect.

### Safe in the Community:

- There are strong links to Child Exploitation and Performance & Quality Assurance Delivery Groups regarding disseminating learning and testing the impact on practice
- Safeguarding Awareness Week in November 2019 covered a wide variety of sessions and topics and is due to be rolled out again to include a session with the wider partnership on Contextual Safeguarding.
- The partnership provided a response to *Operation Makesafe* where early identification and response was key to progressing work with Early Help Services.

### Safe Safeguarding Systems:

- The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group has refreshed its membership and Terms of Reference as well as streamlining and revising its delivery plan to ensure it is focussed on the RSCP priorities and plans.
- There are regular updates to the online multi-agency procedures and associated pathways, protocols and practice guidance in line with local and national agendas.
- The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group produces and disseminate 'learning on a page' from audit findings.
- Further learning has been extracted through case specific practitioner learning events which highlighted further work around neglect, trauma and impact on parenting.
- The RSCP has received assurance from serious cases and lessons learnt reviews and undertaken a validation exercise to ensure the action plans have been concluded and are demonstrating impact.
- The RSCP has participated in a partnership practitioner event for the National Review and has disseminated the key messages and learning across the partnership.
- The RSCP has developed and implemented a Learning and Improvement Strategy in order to ensure that all training and development provides a focus on practitioner development and improving standards of practice.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all multi-agency face to face safeguarding sessions run by the RSCP were halted in March 2020 in line with Government guidance. Learning and development resources and sessions have therefore moved to e-learning, virtual classroom courses or webinars. Webinars and virtual classroom courses are led by a real tutor and are run in real time. Via this medium, delegates can still ask questions and interact with the facilitator and the other attendees, thus learning and best practice remains shared. This conversion was swift and effective.
- The platform allows for workshops, exercises, polls, videos, audio, documents, tutor webcam and games to be shared with the delegates making the experience immersive and interactive and experiential. These current arrangements will be reviewed by the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group in compliance with further Government guidelines as further information arises.

- This provided a comprehensive online training catalogue designed to support practitioners across the workforce with safeguarding children learning and development that includes access to over 30 e-learning courses, virtual classroom courses or webinars including safeguarding awareness and a variety of subjects for children experiencing or living in particular circumstances.
- The RSCP training offer is continually reviewed to ensure that it responds to local need and priorities and the training strategy takes into account national, regional and local factors, including acting on the recommendations of serious incidents, practice reviews, child death reviews, and other lessons learned.
- In 2019-2020, 58 courses across a range of safeguarding subjects were offered to practitioners across the partnership in Rotherham as per [the course prospectus](#).
- Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW) held by the partnership in November 2019 saw all partners and relevant agencies across the Wider Safeguarding Partnership take part in a range of training, workshops and briefings that covered a range of subjects.

#### **What could we do differently or better?**

- A full Learning Needs Analysis needs to be undertaken to provide a fuller analysis of the multi-learning offer so as to better understand the take up and effectiveness of the learning delivered both for and by agencies. This needs to include a review of the RSCP virtual offer and to consider the delivery strategy for 2020/21.
- Following this there needs to be an update of the RSCP Learning Offer and course prospectus for Jan–April 2021, building on feedback thus far.

#### **What do we need to change or do more of?**

- There needs to be further work on embedding learning from serious incident actions, this is to include Neglect and Trauma Informed Approaches.
- Following the refresh of the Neglect Strategy there is a need to increasing awareness and use of Graded Care Profile2 (GCP2) as a tool to benchmark neglect and which supports the signs of safety approach.
- There is a need to ensure that the RSCP can work within budget to provide multi-agency learning as required which is over and above partners' own offer and to consider whether to implement some form of charging policy.

#### **Performance & Quality Assurance**

The purpose the Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group (PQADG) is to:

1. Use the Performance Assurance Framework (PAF) to monitor the effectiveness of work undertaken by Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership and partners to keep children safe.
2. Analyse and explore the story behind the received data to advise on ways to improve on its presentation and dissemination; and on improving services by identifying gaps and challenging single and multi-agency services/organisations.
3. Plan and develop a schedule for multi-agency and themed audits in relation to relevant areas of interest. Ensure actions arising from the audit activity is completed in a timely

manner and learning themes or trends passed to the L&I Delivery Group for consideration.

4. Develop quality assurance mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the functioning of the RSCP in order to ensure continuous improvement.
5. Assist agencies in developing and monitoring local performance indicators.

As well as receiving and scrutinising the Performance data from the PAF, as detailed in the safeguarding snapshot data within this report, the RSCP considered several audits undertaken by the Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group over the year.

These included the **Education MASH Contacts Audit, Re-audit of Strategy Meetings** and **Joint S11 Joint Self-Assessment Adult and Children 2019/21**. The key findings from these are summarised on the pages following the analysis of the Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group activity against the RSCP Priorities.

## What is working well?

### Safe at Home

- The audits undertaken through the year are demonstrating partners understand the thresholds and are making appropriate contacts and referrals to MASH.
- Partner representation, contribution to meetings and multiagency working is good, an audit of 'achieving timely and best outcomes for children' is already well in progress.

### Safe in the Community

- The PAF is more focussed on the RSCP priorities and provides evidence of how well the partners are safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and has been jointly developed with the Child Exploitation Delivery Group.

### Safe Safeguarding Systems

- The PQA has refreshed its membership and streamlined its Terms of Reference and delivery plan, there has been improved attendance and participation by partners.
- Partnership stakeholders are fully engaged in the auditing process, from scope development to discussion of findings and action planning.
- The partnership Multi-agency audit schedule is in place to end of 2020/2021.
- Audit reports are comprehensive and reference effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, application of thresholds and evidence-based research.
- The Section 175 schools' and education settings safeguarding self-assessment and findings from practice audits are shared with the Education Forum.
- Completed self-assessments using the shared joint self-assessment with the Safeguarding Adults Board was reported to RSCP Executive Group in July 2020.

## What could we do differently or better?

- The capacity within organisations to participate in audit work within timescales is being impacted by factors intrinsic to their organisations e.g. internal audit work, COVID-19 response, Regulatory Inspections.

- Going forward into 2021, how best to utilise the partnership resources most effectively to deliver on the Performance and Assurance Framework.

### What do we need to change or do more of?

- An audit is planned for safeguarding infants where families have stepped down from Child Protection Planning, there is a scope drafted, and cohort identified.
- The audit schedule for 2020/21 needs to provide clarity regarding the audit work planned or each Quarter in 2021, whilst retaining flexibility to respond to emerging issues. A clear steer from the Executive and communication is required within organisations to ensure that there is resource commitment to achieve this.
- Organisations to share their audit schedule/findings with the RSCP P&QA Delivery Group when it is appropriate to do so to enable added value from partnership working.



### Education MASH Contacts Audit - Summary

The audit was commissioned by RSCP to consider why there had been an overall increase in contacts to MASH, as well as a low conversion rate from contact to Social Care referral. There was a concern that the MASH was receiving a number of 'inappropriate' contacts. In total **69** contacts to MASH from across education settings were audited from early years through to college provision. **Eight** site visits were completed to undertake audit work with designated safeguarding leads in schools and collate qualitative data

### What's working well?

- Education professionals make appropriate and timely contacts to MASH.
- Education settings are completing lots of diverse and creative prevention work with children and families; this does not always fall under the formal remit of Early Help but plays a part in prevention of escalation of cases within a universal arena.
- Professionals working in the safeguarding remit of schools are passionate and committed to the children and young people they are working with.
- Education professionals involved in the audit report a positive, supportive working relationship with MASH and the duty and assessment and locality teams.
- Education professionals involved in the audit reported feeling very supported by the MASH Education Representative and Education Safeguarding Coordinator, via the education safeguarding forum.

### What do we need to do differently or better?

- Professionals making contact to MASH should complete the 'worried about a child' form wherever possible following telephone contact with MASH.
- The RSCP online procedures need to be updated to accurately reflect the name of the online referral form – previously e-MARF, now '*worried about a child*' form.

- Professionals making contact with MASH should always seek consent in line with Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures. This should be recorded clearly by MASH in the contact record.
- All contacts to MASH should be recorded onto a child's CYPS records; if information is not being recorded, this needs to be clearly articulated to the professional making contact and a reason offered as to why.
- Clarity is needed with MASH around the expectations with regards to feedback, and the online multi-agency procedures updated to reflect this accordingly.
- When a case is open to Early Help this needs to be communicated back to education provisions and they need to be involved in any assessment and plan.
- Referrers to reference in the 'worried about a child' form any preventative or early intervention work that has been completed with children and families

## **Next Steps/Future Plans 2020/21**

- Partners to develop action plan with clear timescales for completion.
- The action plan to be monitored via the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group.
- The timescale for a re-audit to be agreed.



## **Re-audit of strategy meetings**

### **What's working well**

- Partner representation, contribution to meetings and multiagency working is good; representatives from across the partnership provide good quality, relevant and appropriate information to meetings, even if they are not the allocated worker.
- A wide range of professionals (outside of the 3 key agencies) attend strategy meetings and contribute to decision making for children.
- Social Workers and Team Managers have good knowledge of the children and families they are working with.
- Thresholds for convening strategy meetings and undertaking s47 enquiries are understood and effectively applied.
- There were no cases within the audit sample that identified any concerns around the safeguarding unit declining a request for an ICPC.

### **What are we worried about?**

- Some Strategy Meetings were not held in a timely manner.
- Action planning from strategy meetings was not always SMART.
- There were a few cases where the outcome was for a single agency s47 investigation and it was reflected that a joint investigation should have been considered.
- Minutes from strategy meetings are not always shared with partner agencies or are sometimes not shared in a timely manner.

## **Next Steps & Future Plans 2020-21**



- Partnership to develop an action plan with clear timescales for completion.
- The action plan to be monitored via the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group
- A clear escalation route is to be utilised where there is any drift and delay in implementation or improvements are not achieved.
- The timescale for a re-audit is to be agreed with the Performance and Quality Assurance Delivery Group.



### Joint S11 Joint Self-Assessment Adult and Children 2019/21

#### What worked well?

- All partners engaged with Section 11 safeguarding self-assessment process. There were detailed and well evidenced returns with some clear identified actions which highlighted the comprehensive use of Section 11 self-assessment
- Both RSCP and RSAB acknowledged that the overall process was beneficial in understanding the Section 11 standards better and identifying actions required for further improvement.
- There was evidence that agencies referenced their evidence sources against the standards.
- Comprehensive version control is evidenced within most self-assessments which provided a level of rigour and assessment.
- RSCP and RSAB have made a commitment that the joint Section 11 process is ongoing rather than a standalone event.

#### What could we do differently or better?

- Joint challenge meetings were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. These discussions are an opportunity for organisations to reflect on the comments made within the challenge meeting and update their submission, which would really enrich the current information and would also provide a useful baseline for next year. This needs to be considered in undertaking the next round of self-assessment
- Further assurance was required from some agencies on standards 4 & 7.

#### What more do we need to do or change?

- Organisational action plans for Standards 4 & 7 will be reviewed in 2021.
- The self-assessment tool has been re-opened so users can continue to populate and evidence organisational safeguarding arrangements.



### Safeguarding Practice Review Group

The purpose the Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) is:

- To consider referrals for Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) and to receive notifications and referrals from the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.
- To ensure Rapid Reviews are undertaken



- To discuss the local implications of recent national practice reviews and learning from other reviews nationally to identify any actions to be taken locally.
- To prepare reports to be agreed by the safeguarding partners which are to be sent to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- To commission, and quality assure SGPR's as required and consider and disseminate learning from reviews in accordance with the Local Case Review guidance.
- To track the timeliness of SGPRs ensuring they are completed within timescales and that any barriers to this are reported to the safeguarding partners.
- To commission, and quality assure SGPRs as required and consider and disseminate learning from reviews.

In recognition of the transition to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and requirements for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews a session took place in December 2019 with the SPRG members to reiterate the changes in notifiable incidents and agencies duty to notify and the duty of the Local Authority to notify the national review panel of a serious child safeguarding incident.

### **What is working well?**

#### **Safe at Home:**

- The Safeguarding Practice Review Group has received referrals for considered as to whether the case meets the criteria for Child Safeguarding Practice Review and undertaken a rapid review. As a result of this consideration it has identified cases where there is local learning to be gained. As a result, they have undertaken practice appraisal in cases where neglect, cumulative harm and trauma are factors in order to learn from what has happened in the and to improve practice in similar cases in the future.
- The Safeguarding Practice Review Group has received learning from a single agency serious incident report around physical harm to an infant and the importance of effective information sharing. As a result, they commissioned a thematic review regarding injuries to non-mobile babies. The learning from this review was presented to the RSCP and challenge has been established regarding practice improvements. As an outcome of this, multi-agency training regarding the identification and prevention of abuse and neglect in non-mobile babies is to be coproduced and delivered cross agencies.

#### **Safe in the Community:**

- The RSCP has received assurance through the Safeguarding Practice Review Group that recommendations from legacy Serious Case Reviews have been completed and shown impact in improving practice. The Safeguarding Practice Review Group has also provided 7-minute briefings on learning from legacy SCRs commenced by the RLSCP, these have included adolescent neglect, contextual safeguarding and trauma informed approaches. The RSCP has also utilised national resources regarding injuries to non-mobile babies called the ICON approach.

### Safe Safeguarding Systems

- There has been a commitment to regular attendance at meetings from partners and other relevant agencies at a senior level including strategic safeguarding leads.
- There has been a review of the Terms of Reference for the meeting and streamlining of the agenda and an increase in frequency of meetings to ensure that objectives within the delivery plan are progressed and any rapid reviews can be conducted efficiently and within timescales.
- There has been a better overview of whole of the safeguarding agenda by regularly reviewing the Serious Case Review / Child Safeguarding Practice Review tracker, to ensure following up on recommendations and seeking assurance of impact.
- Actions from legacy Serious Case Reviews and recent learning reviews are complete.
- There has been a swift shift of learning points to the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group to take forward and ensure a complete learning loop.

### What could we do differently or better?

- Moving forward from previous practice within Serious Case Reviews so as to improve the quality, impact and number of recommendations from local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- There is a need to ensure full partner attendance from the wider safeguarding partnership so that all service areas for children and families can contribute to learning from practice both in individual cases and thematically.
- There is a need to ensure ongoing and effective links to the other delivery groups so as to ensure actions have meaningful impact.

### What do we need to change or do more of?

- To continue with the current agenda and delivery plan format in line with the revised Safeguarding Practice Review Group Terms of Reference and requirements within Working Together 2018.
- To seek to raise partner attendance from the wider safeguarding partnership.
- To continue to quality assurance recommendations so they are achievable and effective learning is gained and the improvements sought demonstrate impact.

### Summary Conclusion

The RSCP Executive has been proactive and robust in its approach to progressing the priorities and objectives of its safeguarding plan. In ensuring the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Rotherham it has established stronger and more streamlined systems for scrutiny, performance management and quality assurance. Partner agencies have shown that the leadership, drive and direction provided by the RSCP has resulted in a more confident and outcome-oriented wider safeguarding partnership. Good use is being made of the RSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding

Arrangements to improve the effectiveness of partnership functions and to respond to key safeguarding risks.

There appears to be good confidence in the ability of the RSCP, through its processes, to have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in safeguarding in Rotherham and to be able to take early action with partners to tackle any emerging gaps in practice or performance in any of the partner agencies.

There is clear evidence in this Annual Report that the progress made during the last year to ensure the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children has been far reaching despite the challenges experienced over the year, particularly in the later six months of operation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The RSCP has, from the strong foundations laid by the RLSCB, met its full range of its statutory responsibilities including those for assurance of safeguarding effectiveness across its three priorities.

However, there is still further work to be done in delivering on its strategic priorities and objectives. This includes strengthening the alignment between the partnership's strategic activity and the priorities and concerns of young people and frontline practitioners. In addition, in assuring themselves regarding Early Help delivery and the Front Door and the embedding of contextual safeguarding across the partnership.



Public Report  
Improving Lives Select Commission

---

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission – 15 December 2020

**Report Title**

Update report regarding children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

Ailsa Barr, Assistant Director Social Care

[ailsa.barr@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:ailsa.barr@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This briefing paper is by way of update following the briefing papers presented to the commission on 4 June and 22 October 2020. The report aims to provide an overview and assurance of the current situation in respect of delivering children's social care services in the context of the current national crisis.

Please refer to the previous briefing papers for further background.

**Recommendations**

That members note the information contained within the report.

**List of Appendices Included**

N/A

**Background Papers**

Briefing paper on Children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic – 4 June 2020

Briefing paper on Children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic – 22 September 2020

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
N/A

**Council Approval Required**  
No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**  
No

Error! Reference source not found.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This briefing paper is by way of update following the briefing papers presented to the commission on 4 June and 22 October 2020. The report aims to provide an overview and assurance of the current situation in respect of delivering children's social care services in in the context of the current national crisis.
- 1.2 Please refer to the previous briefing papers for further background.

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 Social workers continue to undertake their work with the children allocated to them. Most children are still being seen person. A pre-visit risk assessment process is in place, in the event that there are risks highlighted then a decision is made in conjunction with the team manager as to whether the visit needs to go ahead with the worker using personal protection equipment (PPE) in the form of a mask, apron and gloves, or whether the visit can be safely delay with virtual contact being provided instead.
- 2.2 The timeliness in relation to visits, assessments and plans has remained good with October's performance figures indicating the following:
  - Child protection visits 90.6% within statutory time frames
  - Visits to looked after children 96.6% within statutory time frames
  - Assessments 96.9% completed within the 45-day timeframe
  - Timeliness of plans:
    - CiN plans – 90.5% within time
    - CP plans – 88.3% within time
    - LAC plans – 93.3% in time
- 2.3 Our staff continue to use different technologies to engage with children, young people and their families, and staff. This offers flexibility and allows for different ways to maintain communication in between physical visits.
- 2.4 We have reviewed our services in the light of the second national lockdown and do not consider that there is a need to step any of the services down as the service has adapted well to some of the new ways of working and the guidance and risk assessments in place means that we can continue to deliver some essential activities which were previously moved to virtual delivery (i.e. family time (contact) for looked after children with their birth family).
- 2.5 Our case holding social workers have continued to have some access to working in an office base (namely Riverside House), however, we did reduce the frequency of the rota in the light of the second national lockdown and this will remain under review.
- 2.6 The use of technology has meant that we have been able to re-start our learning and development offer for staff which is key to their ongoing professional development. We have a full programme of training all of which is

being delivered virtually and ranges from small workshop style events through to whole service events where we have had over 200 staff in attendance

- 2.7 Ofsted undertook a Focused Assurance Visit 20th – 22nd October, which was part of the re-start of inspections of children's service that had been suspended from March – September 2020. The purpose of the visit was to examine the quality and impact of key decision-making across help and protection, children in care and services for care leavers, together with the impact of leadership on service development.
- 2.8 The team of four inspectors had access to a significant level of statistical information about the children that the service is engaged with. The inspectors then spent three days exploring in detail the work of our practitioners, the inspection was managed virtually but nonetheless the inspection team virtually met with early help workers and social workers as well as representatives from the education sector across the borough.
- 2.9 The findings of the focused inspection visit are summarised in a letter which is published on the Ofsted website. The letter is positive in respect of the work undertaken by the service and some of the highlights include:
- 2.10 Rotherham children's services reacted rapidly and effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic in the early months of 2020.
- 2.11 Strong and effective multi-agency partnerships enabled the early identification of vulnerable children. Senior leaders, managers and staff have effective oversight of children and young people who need to be safeguarded and supported.
- 2.12 Dynamic assessments of COVID-19 risks have allowed children to be seen directly where it is safe to do so. Detailed children's assessments enable proportionate decisions to be reached, ensuring that families receive an appropriate level of support. The voice of the child is a strength in assessments and influences care planning. However, the quality of written plans is not consistent for all children.
- 2.13 Effective pre-proceedings planning enables children to remain living with brothers and sisters or with extended family wherever possible. Children are supported to maintain contact with their families, utilising digital technology if required. Additional support to meet the emotional needs of children in care is available via the in-house therapeutic service.
- 2.14 Feedback from the Ofsted team has also provided areas for ongoing development, it was positive that these areas closely linked with areas that as a service we were already aware of.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 We will continue to monitor the flow of work and demand for the service to ensure that we are maximising opportunities for early intervention whilst also ensuring that services are engaged with those children/young people that

require it. Regular interrogation of data and performance will continue to inform us in terms of demand and flow of work.

- 3.2 We continue to work hard to support the children/young people and families that our social workers are working with. Social workers are working with families to help them to feel confident to access education, which will ensure that families aren't dealing with the additional pressures of children being at home for extended periods of time.
- 3.3 We continue to support our staff, who are working hard in the ongoing difficult work context. We will review our staff access to office-based accommodation when the national guidance regarding working from home wherever possible has been further updated. In the meantime, we are encouraging teams to meet regularly via virtual means and continue with regular communication with staff to ensure that we fully understand the pressures of their current working arrangements.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 N/A

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 N/A

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no HR implications.

#### **9. Risks and Mitigation**

- 9.1 The increase in relation to the number of contacts received by the MASH continued throughout September as compared to the same time period in 2019. However, during October numbers of contacts stabilised to a comparable level with figures from 2019. Because of a busier than usual summer and September the service has been busy but workflow in terms of assessments, and children requiring an ongoing social work service is within manageable limits.



- 9.2 We are concerned about the impact of the ongoing pandemic both for the families that we work with but also for our workforce who continue to work hard to prioritise the needs of those children that they are working with.

**10. Accountable Officer(s)**

Ailsa Barr, Assistant Director Social Care

<b>BRIEFING</b>	<b>TO:</b>	<b>Improving Lives</b>
	<b>DATE:</b>	Meeting – 4 June 2020
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Ailsa Barr Assistant director children's social care
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic

## 1. Background

- 1.1** The purpose of this briefing is to provide an overview and assurance of the current situation in respect of delivering children's social care services in the context of the current national crisis. The paper sets out the work undertaken to date and provides an overview and reassurance of how essential work to support planning in relation to children in need, child protection and looked after children is being progressed
- In the weeks following the decision regarding the national emergency we have worked hard to ensure that measures were in place to ensure that essential children's safeguarding work would continue. This has included the following:
- Developed a RAG rating tool to assist managers and social workers identifying the children they are most worried about to prioritise support and home visits. This is a dynamic process and is regularly reviewed. We have embedded the RAG rating into liquid logic so as the level of concern is visible to all with access to Liquid Logic case management system to support service continuity.
  - Developed a pre-visit risk assessment tool to guide social workers in how to establish with families prior to a visit whether a visit is safe or not in the light of coronavirus this is also embedded in Liquid Logic and is completed prior to every visit.
  - Social workers have visited all children RAG rated as red or amber and many children rated as green as long as the household isn't symptomatic, deferred visits can only be approved by a manager and social workers are maintaining phone/video call contact with all families even if they can't visit.
  - Stepped all meetings into virtual arrangements (using skype, MS teams, telephone conferencing) these include:
    - Strategy meetings
    - Case conferences
    - Looked after children reviews
    - Legal gateway planning and pre-proceedings planning meetings
    - Adoption and fostering panel
  - Moved to a position where all social workers are working from home with 1 duty team based in Riverside on a rota basis, when working from home staff are still physically visiting families in line with the RAG rating and the pre-visit risk assessment tool.
  - Stopped providing direct supervised family time (contact) for looked after children and their parents/families but instead supported virtual arrangements e.g. phone calls/video calls etc.
  - Obtained corporate approval for WhatsApp to be available on all social workers' work mobiles to support them in communicating with families more effectively. WhatsApp has video calling functionality which supports staff maintaining more

- 'real' contact with children/parents/carers
- Obtained a stock of personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff. Hand sanitiser is available for everyone doing community-based visits and gloves, face masks and aprons are available in the event that the pre-visit risk assessment tool indicates that this is needed.
- We are working closely with colleagues in education/inclusion services and key multi-agency partners health/police etc to ensure that the usual routes for escalation and referral of new information is being maintained. The assistant director (Ailsa Barr) has been chairing a twice weekly meeting with partners which has been positively working to identify and unblock problems in service delivery.
- Ailsa also contributes to weekly conference call with Isabelle Trowler (chief social worker for children) and other children's social work practice leaders from across England, this has enabled a sharing of good practice and ensures some national consistency.

## 2. Key Issues: What's Working Well / What are we worried about?

### 2.1 What's Working Well?

- Social workers have been supported to continue their work in a safe way ensuring both the safety of the both children/young people and staff. Most visits to children have remained physical visits by social workers – performance in this area for week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> May is:

	Total Visits	Physical		Virtual	
CIN	438	387	88.36%	51	11.64%
CP	342	318	92.98%	24	7.02%
LAC	147	116	78.91%	31	21.09%
All	927	821	88.57%	106	11.43%

- The timeliness in relation to assessments has remained high at 95% assessments completed in 45 working days.
- Using different technologies has helped to open different ways of engaging children, young people and their families and much of this has been positively received.
- The multi-agency partnership working relationships have been strengthened and there has been a real commitment to work collaboratively to ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm. An example of this positive multi-agency work is attached which has been developed and distributed across the partnership to remind all partners of the importance of working together and sharing information to safeguard children.



May 2020 Covid  
Safeguarding latest.

- The service has maintained a focus on progressing work wherever possible, it has been acknowledged that especially within the pre-proceedings area of work this has been identified as good practice and we have received some positive feedback from legal colleagues as Rotherham's practice in this area is proactive as opposed to stepping down this area of work we have maintained the progression of work to support families on the edge of legal proceedings.
- There have been amendments to some of the legislation underpinning the

delivery of some element of children's social care. The changes have allowed some relaxation of some regulations. Because of the early decisions that we have made to RAG rate our work and to move key processes (i.e. panels and review meetings) into virtual delivery we have not so far needed to utilise the relaxations available via the amended legislation. The report presented to the tactical and gold RMBC groups is attached for further information.



RMBC response to  
The Adoption and C

- The Department for Education has also published guidance for children's social care services. It is reassuring that many of the recommendations within this guidance was already in place in Rotherham when the guidance was published on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020. A link to the guidance is below for further information.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>

## 2.2 What are we worried about?

- The number of referrals has reduced since the end of March, this makes us worry that some children or young people may need help but that this is not being identified early enough because less professionals are having physical contact with children and young people meaning that there are less opportunities to gather information in an incremental manner.
- Although most children and young people are having physical contact with their social worker, it is hard for workers to effectively intervene and progress plans when many of the support services have reduce their offer of support or have shifted to a virtual delivery model. This means that although we are confident about the safety and welfare of children and young people, we are less confident that work to positively intervene and progress the plan is being completed. This could mean that some children will require work lead by a social worker for a longer period.
- The combination of the above and a potential surge of referrals as schools re-open and other professionals recommence more direct contact with families could put a lot of pressure on the social work system and this could affect our effectiveness in working with families.
- Our looked after children have mostly not been having physical contact with their birth family, this is hard for many of our looked after children and their families.
- Our social workers have been working at home since the end of March this is not a usual set of arrangements for social work delivery. Our staff are missing the day-to-day contact with colleagues and the informal opportunities to share issues and collectively problem solve.

## 3. Key Actions and Timelines

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 3.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work with the multi-agency partnership to ensure that children's safeguarding remains a top priority for all – weekly multi-agency meetings will continue.</li> <li>• Social workers and managers to continue to review all casework and ensure that all opportunities to progress plans are considered and where work needs to be extended it will be explicit to all that the delay to progressing plans relates to Covid-19.</li> <li>• Social work managers will continue to work closely with the performance service</li> </ul> |
|-----|--|

	<p>to ensure that plans are in place to respond to any surge in demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options to be developed to consider safely progressing contact for looked after children with their families, these options will need to consider all risks and mitigations and take into account individual circumstances – options to be presented to tactical and gold groups during w/c 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020</li> <li>Options to be developed to consider how we can enable our social work staff to safely undertake some of their work from their work bases to allow them to benefit from face-to-face connection with their manager and colleagues – options to be presented to DLT during w/c 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020</li> </ul>
<b>4. Recommendations: What are we going to do about it?</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That members note the information contained within the report and seek further assurance from the assistant director for children's social care at subsequent meetings of the improving lives select commission.</li> </ul>

<b>BRIEFING</b>	<b>TO:</b>	<b>Improving Lives Select Commission</b>
	<b>DATE:</b>	22 September 2020
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Ailsa Barr Assistant Director Children's Social Care
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Update report regarding Children's Social Care Service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic

## 1. Background

- 1.1** This briefing paper is by way of update following the briefing paper presented to the commission on 4 June 2020.
- The briefing paper presented to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. Key Issues: What's Working Well / What are we worried about?

### 2.1 What's Working Well?

- Social workers have been supported to continue their work, whilst most workers have worked from home most of their visits to children have been in person. Since 23 March until end August the performance relating to visits is as follows:

	Total Visits	Physical		Virtual	
CIN	10173	9266	91.1%	907	8.9%
CP	6931	6498	93.8%	433	6.2%
LAC	2987	2485	83.2%	502	16.8%
All	20091	18249	90.8%	1842	9.2%

Below is the performance for August only which shows that most visits are now taking place physically as opposed to virtually.

	Total Visits	Physical		Virtual	
CIN	1728	1716	99.3%	12	0.7%
CP	1183	1177	99.5%	6	0.5%
LAC	479	465	97.1%	14	2.9%
All	3390	3358	99.1%	32	0.9%

- The timeliness in relation to visits, assessments and plans has remained good with July's performance figures indicating the following:
  - Child protection visits and visits to looked after children were both 93%

within statutory time frames

- Assessments 95% completed within the 45-day timeframe
- Timeliness of plans is good
  - CiN plans – 95% within time
  - CP plans – 90% within time
  - LAC plans – 94% in time
- Our staff continue to use different technologies to engage with children, young people and their families, and staff.
- We have successfully re-commenced face-to-face family time (contact) for looked after children and their birth families. We are not able to facilitate as many sessions as previously as the risk assessment of the building has meant that some rooms are not useable and the number of people that can use the building in a day has also been reduced. Therefore, we continue to compliment the physical family time with virtual family time through phone call or video call.
- The close multi-agency partnership working has continued with a weekly meeting bringing senior staff from across the partnership together with a focus on problem identification and resolution.
- The service has continued to progress work in key areas, and this has meant that some significant legal decisions for children have been able to be made in the last few months. Some legal decisions have been delayed (i.e. final adoptions orders) due to lack of court time to hold these hearings, we have worked closely with staff at the court and now have hearing dates scheduled throughout the Autumn which will ensure that these children have the right legal permanency in place.
- The authority has worked within the amendments to the legislation which allowed for some relaxation of some regulations. However, we have not needed to utilise most of the relaxations as we have been able to adjust the way that we do our work, for example moving to holding virtual fostering panels as opposed to using the regulatory relaxations.
- The Department for Education has updated its published guidance for children's social care services. As reported previously Rotherham has worked effectively within this guidance.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>
- On 3 August we started a pilot meaning that more of our social workers could have some office-based time. Case holding social workers from First Response, Locality/Disability and the Looked after Children's service have been able to take part in accessing an office-based environment at Riverside on a rota basis. We have sought feedback via a survey from our staff to further inform next steps.
- The survey for the staff involved in the pilot closed on 7 September and the initial high-level results are shown below. A total of 120 responses were receiveds with 56% of respondents being usually based in Riverside House and 44% usually based elsewhere.
- The following questions are based on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is a lot:

Question	Average answer
How much have you valued the opportunity to work from home over the past few months?	7.51
How important is meeting with your team physically to support your professional practice?	7.13
How important is meeting with your team physically to support your emotional wellbeing?	7.4
How satisfied are you with the current amount of time that you are able to spend working in Riverside House?	6.03
How important is it for you and your team to work from your usual work base?	6.64

- Staff were also asked to identify what was most important to them in relation to the location of where they are able to work from:
  - 42% of respondents stated that they were happy to work from any office base if it means they can spend more time with their team.
  - 58% of respondents felt that working from their usual office base was important.
- The free text comments which staff provided indicate that the locality based workers are finding it more of a challenge to be based at Riverside as their work out of the office is not always easy to time plan, and being centrally based means time can be lost when returning to the office.
- When asked about looking to the future and the style of working that staff would prefer the following responses were received:
  - 76% of respondents would prefer a mixture of office based and home working
  - 13% of respondents would prefer full time office-based working
  - 12% of respondents would prefer full time home working
- In summary from the responses received there is evidence to suggest that a further return to office working would be seen positively, but a blended mixture of home and office working will be important and valued by staff. There is also some evidence to suggest that some staff do have concerns about individual health risks which need to be supported appropriately on an individual basis.
- Overall there is a sense that staff understand the need to undertake any further return to office working slowly and with caution but having some sense of trajectory would be helpful to manage expectations. Within children's social care we are continuing to work with the wider CYPs directorate and corporate colleagues to plan next steps in terms of social workers using office bases.

**What are we worried about?**



2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of contacts received by the MASH increased during June, back to similar rates to the same time last year, during July and August the contact rate was higher than the same period last year. It is reassuring that the level of information being passed to MASH has increased, however, this causes operational challenges and we are working hard to respond to these.</li> <li>• A proportion of support work for children, young people and their families continues to be delivered virtually. Whilst it is positive that support services have found innovative ways to continue to offer some support to vulnerable families during the past few months it is important that families are able to receive some face-to-face support in order that we can be more assured that work to intervene and support families is in place to progress plans forwards in a positive way.</li> <li>• Schools re-opening is likely to cause a rise in contact with MASH which increase the flow of work to children's social care and early help.</li> <li>• The ongoing presence of coronavirus in the population means that children's school offer may not be consistent meaning that more children may need to self-isolate during the Autumn term than in the Summer term, this could impact on the demand for children's social care in that families where there are already identified vulnerabilities will have their children at home for extended periods (if there are several children in the family they could be required to self-isolate for different 2 week periods). If children are required to self-isolate due to contact with someone with coronavirus at school this could also affect social worker's children and then could impact workers' ability to attend work.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Key Actions and Timelines</b>	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work with the multi-agency partnership to ensure that children's safeguarding remains a top priority for all with a focus on the return of children to school settings.</li> <li>• Social workers and managers to continue to review all casework and ensure that all opportunities to progress plans are considered and where work needs to be extended it will be explicit to all that the delay to progressing plans relates to Covid-19.</li> <li>• Social work managers will continue to work closely with the performance service to ensure that plans are in place to respond to any surge in demand.</li> <li>• Further options to be developed to consider how we can extend the offer of office based working to enable more of our social work staff to safely undertake some of their work from their work bases to allow them to benefit from face-to-face connection with their manager and colleagues.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Recommendations: What are we going to do about it?</b>	
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That members note the information contained within the report and seek further assurance from the assistant director for children's social care at subsequent meetings of the improving lives select commission.</li> </ul>

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission – 15 December 2020

**Report Title**

SEND Peer Challenge Outcomes and Progress Update

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

Jenny Lingrell

Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion, Children and Young People's Services

[jenny.lingrell@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.lingrell@rotherham.gov.uk)

Mary Jarrett

Head of Service, Inclusion

[mary.jarrett@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:mary.jarrett@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Peer Challenge process was developed for Children's Services across Yorkshire and the Humber; it builds on the peer review model that was developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). The process is designed to help local areas prepare for a Local Area SEND Inspection which is a joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection of local areas to see how well they fulfil their responsibilities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The SEND Peer Challenge took place in Rotherham between 28 February and 3 March 2020. The findings of the Peer Challenge were summarised in a letter which was structured to identify headline strengths and areas of consideration.

**Recommendations**

Improving Lives is asked to note the findings of the SEND Peer Challenge and note the activity to address all areas for consideration, and the progress made since March.

Improving Lives is further asked to note the governance arrangements in place to oversee the SEND agenda.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 SEND Performance Summary Outcome Measures Indicators August 2020

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

N/A

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **SEND Peer Challenge Outcomes and Progress Update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Peer Challenge process was developed for Children's Services across Yorkshire and the Humber, it builds on the peer review model that was developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). The SEND Peer Challenge took place in Rotherham between 28 February and 3 March 2020.
- 1.2 A SEND inspection reviews how local areas support these children and young people to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, such as being able to live independently, secure meaningful employment and be well prepared for their adult lives. The inspection process is designed to hold local areas to account, but also to assist local areas in improving and developing their processes and support systems in order that local areas become more effective and deliver better outcomes for children and young people. It is important to note that a SEND inspection will evaluate how effectively the local area meets its responsibilities, and not just the local authority. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early year's settings, schools and further education providers.
- 1.3 Rotherham invited the peer challenge to help assess its readiness for a SEND inspection, particularly in the context of the following areas:
  - Voice
  - Joint commissioning and the engagement of health, including a focus on Autism
  - Strategy and governance
  - Outcomes
- 1.4 The Peer Challenge in Rotherham was provided by a team led by John Macilwraith, Executive Director of People Services, Sheffield City Council, Bernie Dawson, Strategic Lead for Children, Young People (CYP) and Maternity, NHS Hull Clinical Commissioning Group and Clare Linfitt, SEND Services Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council. The Challenge was managed and coordinated by Rob Mayall, (Sector Led Improvement Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber). The Peer Challenge process involved desk-based analysis of documentation provided, together with a wide range of on-site and some off-site activities, including discussions with over 70 people.
- 1.5 The findings of the Peer Challenge were summarised in a letter which was structured to identify headline strengths and areas for consideration.

## **2. Key Issues**

2.1 The Peer Challenge Team noted the following headline strengths in the feedback letter:

- Children and young people are at the heart of what you do. There is a collective ownership of the Rotherham child. This was evidenced across the system in conversations with leaders and managers in the Council, CCG, school leaders and parents.
- There is a long-standing and collective ownership of the SEND agenda, evidenced in part by commitments to jointly funded posts from 2015.
- Senior leaders, from across the system, know their services well. They understand strengths, areas for improvement and what needs to be done to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- There is an ambition to continuously improve, evidenced in part by an openness to scrutiny, by the commissioning of external organisations to support improvement activity and by internal and system strategies and plans, which demonstrate a commitment and drive for better services.

2.2 The following areas were highlighted for consideration and further improvement:

- Further consider SEND and the broader system, notably public health, early help, adult services and social care.
- Further consider autism and its place in the broader system; whilst there is an appropriate focus on addressing lengthy waits for autism diagnosis, this needs to be set in the context of ensuring that children's needs are met appropriately without the necessity for diagnosis, as well as providing support for those who are diagnosed, reducing waiting times and ensuring that post diagnostic services are able to address need
- Develop a clear exposition of the impact of activity and capture this more systematically; this will help to remind and reassure you and others of the value of what you are doing, but also provide a platform on which further work could be built, or might inform the broadening and replication of activity.

2.3 The more detailed findings and activity to address the findings are identified in Appendix 1. The Council's Strategic Leadership Team and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group's Operational Executive have both received a report and have approved the identified actions.

- 2.4 The Terms of Reference for the SEND Strategic Board have been refreshed; this Board will oversee development on all key actions. The SEND Strategic Board meets bi-monthly. SEND is a key priority identified through the Place Board who receive spotlight updates and provide whole system oversight, support and challenge.
- 2.5 Health Select Committee receive an annual update focused on Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. The next update will be presented on 10 December 2020; the Deputy Leader and Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission have been invited to attend.
- 2.6 Health Select Commission have also provided scrutiny to the All-Age Autism Strategy and its implementation.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Improving Lives is asked to note the findings of the SEND Peer Challenge and note the activity to address all areas for consideration, and the progress made since March.
- 3.2 Improving Lives is further asked to note the governance arrangements in place to oversee the SEND agenda.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 N/A

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The activity required to address the findings of the peer challenge are set out in three key action plans:
- Neuro-Developmental Pathway Action Plan
  - SEND Service Plan
  - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Strategy Action Plan

Each plan includes a clear action plan with timescales and action owners so a decision was taken that it would not be helpful to create a stand-alone action plan in response to the Peer Challenge. The SEND Strategic Board will keep progress under continuous review with a focus on the impact on children and young people using the SEND outcomes scorecard.

- 5.2 The feedback letter identified areas for immediate action and these have all been addressed, as identified in Appendix 1.

**6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 There are no financial implications

**7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 There are no Legal implications.

**8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no HR implications.

**9. Accountable Officer(s)**

Jenny Lingrell

Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance & Inclusion, CYPS

Mary Jarrett

Head

of

Service,

Inclusion

## Appendix 1

	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
	<b>Headlines</b>			
1.1	There is a long-standing and collective ownership of the SEND agenda	More links to the broader system including public health, early help, adult service and social care are required.	Ensure that commissioning arrangements & operational service plans identify opportunities to support SEND agenda.	<p>The terms of reference and attendees for the SEND Board have been reviewed.</p> <p>There is a proposal to created a Designated Social Care Officer for SEND (from January 2020).</p>
1.2	Senior leaders, from across the system, know their services well. They understand strengths, areas for improvement and what needs to be done to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people	There is a need to ensure that the needs of children with neuro-developmental difficulties are met.	Implement the re-designed neuro-developmental pathway and ensure it is well understood across the system.	<p>Rotherham CCG has invested an additional £500k in the pathway (£250k recurring) and a new pathway has been designed. Implementation has commenced. Rotherham Place Board received an update at their November meeting; a presentation is also scheduled at Health Select Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020.</p>
1.3	There is ambition to continuously improve	There is a need to develop a clearer exposition of the impact of activity	Ensure the SEND outcomes are evidenced through robust data and performance	The new SEND Strategy focuses on outcomes. A scorecard has been



			information and that this is owned by SEND Strategic Board.	developed and the SEND Strategic Board will continue to develop this to ensure there is appropriate visibility of impact. The Board will review performance indicators and outcomes quarterly.
<b>Strategy &amp; governance</b>				
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
2.2	Political leadership of the SEND agenda is strong. There is robust governance of SEND. From the Health and Well Being Board through to the Place Board, Children's Partnership, SEND Strategy Board and through groups such as RESP, there is consistent support for this agenda, with different groups owning their own part in continuously improving services and outcomes.	There is a need to ensure that governance arrangements meet current need and context; they may be 'over-engineered' in some areas.	Review Terms of Reference for SEND Strategic Board, Preparation for Adulthood Board, (All-Age) Autism Partnership Board.	<p>Terms of Reference have been reviewed and proposals are in place to merge the SEND Strategic Board and Preparation for Adulthood Board, whilst retaining pace and accountability for the preparation for adulthood agenda through a dedicated task and finish group.</p> <p>The membership of SEND Strategic Board, SEMH Strategy Delivery Group have been reviewed.</p>
2.3	A wide range of well-connected services, actively improving outcomes for children with SEND (Early Years, Youth	There is a need to provide assurance that the resources of the Designated Clinical Officer are sufficient to meet	Ensure that commissioning arrangements & operational service plans identify opportunities to support	The Designated Clinical Officer arrangements have been benchmarked with other areas and against national

	Offending, Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment Teams all noted)	<p>the needs of Rotherham and comply with national expectations.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that strategies are operationally understood.</p>	SEND agenda.	<p>expectations; this was reported to the Clinical Commissioning Group's Operational Executive.</p> <p>The Designated Clinical Officer now has two days a week allocated to the role (an increase of 100%).</p> <p>There is a new monthly joint resourcing panel to consider shared arrangements, funding and planning for children and young people with multiple complex needs. This is now well attended by health, inclusion, social care, commissioning and finance colleagues and provides an opportunity to further embed best practice.</p>
2.4		There is a need to ensure that the broader system (Early Help, social care and public health) is engaged in the SEND agenda - it might meet needs earlier, prevent escalation and address pressures in other parts of the SEND system	Review Local Offer website	<p>Local Offer website is under continuous review and has been updated in response to Covid.</p> <p>The vulnerabilities of the SEND cohort have been brought into sharp focus during the Covid pandemic,</p>

				and there have been opportunities for the system to work together to meet the needs of children with complex needs (for example, supporting the return to school). This whole system engagement will be an ongoing area for development.
<b>Joint Commissioning Arrangements and Health</b>				
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
3.2	There is evidence of co-production in the commissioning cycle. Work with parents is very strong and they are genuinely involved in co-production.	Ensure that strategic plans are sufficiently informed by appropriate data; data related to length of waits for ASD diagnosis need to be available; including waits beyond 52 weeks.	Specify data requirements in all contracting arrangements.	A trajectory for the neuro-developmental pathway has been agreed.
3.3	There is a long-standing commitment to joint commissioning and there are well established, mature partnerships which are helping to make a difference.	There is a need to develop stronger joint commissioning arrangements in relation to transitions to adulthood.  Ensure that there is appropriate representation at Joint Commissioning Resource Panel.	Review ToR for Preparation for Adulthood Board; consider establishing joint commissioning task and finish group.  Review ToR and Membership for Joint Commissioning Resource Panel.	A panel to focus on transitions to adulthood has been established and will feed into Joint Resourcing Panel.

	<b>Autism</b>			
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
4.2	Funding has been allocated by the CCG to address challenges in relation to ASD waiting lists. Parents have been part of the development of these plans.	Provide assurance that all children waiting for diagnosis have their needs met through appropriate services. You might also want to ensure that there is regular contact with those on waiting lists	Communicate new pathway across the system  Share trajectories for improvement and monitor progress	Communication plan has commenced and will continue throughout this term.  The new multi-agency team is meeting weekly to review children and young people who are on the waiting list.  Further work has been identified to provide a differentiated approach to children who are waiting for a diagnosis of ADHD.
	<b>Education, Health &amp; Care Plans</b>			
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
5.2	Health contribution to EHCPs is evidenced as improving; the appointment of an EHCP Nurse and input of the DCO are positive.	There is a need to explore the links between early help assessments and EHCP processes. There would be value in reflecting on how EHAs are contributing to EHCPs to reduce duplication and inform thinking.	Continue to deliver training to workforce.  Consider joint task and finish group reporting to SEND Strategic Board and Early Help Steering Group.	Workforce development Action Plan now drafted to go to SEND Board in November 2020 for approvals and next steps.
5.3	Workforce development on EHCPs is planned and is already being delivered.	Monitor engagement from partners in annual review process	Implement IDOX case management system and use this to drive improvement in quality and understanding of impact.	IDOX case management system launched September 2020 with full 'go live' for Annual reviews from January 2021 with all cases on and
5.4	CLA reviews and Annual reviews	Ensure that social care and		

	of EHCPs are undertaken together where possible,	health information is included in EHC when children are known to these services.		Annual reviews held by January 2022. The IDOX system will also look at progress towards individual child-led outcomes as part of the Annual Review process.
5.5	The EHCP team have a strong relationship with schools and there are good relationships between mainstream schools and special schools	Consider the accessibility and personalisation of EHCPs (particularly use of professional language)		
<b>Voice</b>				
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
6.2	The reach of the Parent Carer Forum, to just over 2000 parents through its social media presence is to be recognised and celebrated. The voice of the PCF is valued and is strong and constructive.	Despite the reach of the PCF there are still families whose voice is not being captured.	Ensure commissioning arrangements for PCF and Genuine Partnerships address the need to engage harder to reach families and develop parent voice in a sustainable way.	Genuine Partnerships are undertaking innovative work with Clifton learning partnership to develop inclusion services for eastern European families in Eastwood. BAME parents group continues to meet and is supported by EPS.
6.3	The SENDIASS service provide a wide range of services is valued and has impact			
<b>Outcomes</b>				
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Consideration</b>	<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
7.2	The annual POET survey provides valuable data, including trend data, which can inform intelligent conversations.			Annual POET survey was suspended due to need to respond to Covid and will be undertaken in February 2021

7.3	<p>Young people at KS4 who receive SEND support have seen improved Progress 8 scores, which are now above the national average.</p>	<p>Focus on raising the attainment of children with EHCPs in line with the national average, supported through the effective use of data to inform your current position (beyond attainment data) and audit. This remains a challenge for Rotherham.</p> <p>Further develop support for young people in transition to support better outcomes.</p>	<p>Ensure that all commissioning and contracting arrangements specify clear performance reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Commissioning arrangements will specify that performance information provides outcome data as well as activity data.</p>
-----	---	--	---	---

**Work programme – Improving Lives Select Commission UPDATED: 16 NOVEMBER 2020**

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Purpose/ Outcomes	Recommendations
16 June	Response to Domestic Abuse during the pandemic	To receive an update on the Council's work regarding domestic abuse during the pandemic.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That up to date figures on Domestic Abuse Incidents, Domestic Abuse Response (referrals) and Domestic Abuse Commissioned Service Caseloads be circulated to the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission in four weeks' time.</li> <li>3) That information on the number of Domestic Abuse incidents and referrals for support services relating to male victims of Domestic Abuse during the pandemic. be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>
	Performance Monitoring	<p>To receive briefing paper addressing areas of poor performance identified previously e.g. rereferrals into Child in Need/Child Protection Plan.</p> <p>To agree a method and frequency of performance monitoring based on the CYPS tracker.</p>	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That the Children and Young People's Services Vision Tracker continues to be circulated on a monthly basis.</li> <li>3) That the Children and Young People's Services Vision Tracker, along with the monthly scorecards be circulated to all members of the Council.</li> <li>4) That after receiving the Children and Young People's Services Vision Tracker and the monthly scorecards, members of the Improving Lives Select Commission should, if required, request a meeting with lead officers to undertake a performance clinic type discussion based on the particular measures or interest or concern.</li> <li>5) That the revised methods of monitoring performance be reviewed at the June 2021 meeting of the</li> </ol>

			Improving Lives Select Commission.
	Re-referrals and repeat child protection planning - Progress report	To provide a progress report on actions that had been taken regarding re-referrals and repeat child protection planning	<b>Resolved -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That a progress report on re-referrals and repeat child protection planning be provided at the December 2020 meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>3) That information on the outputs and development opportunities highlighted by the audit work completed in relation to re-referrals be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the Work Programme be updated as discussed.</li> <li>2) That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved.</li> </ol>
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the update be noted.</li> <li>2) That the scope for the review of Early Help be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission once completed.</li> </ol>



	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  That the Governance Advisor makes the required follow up activity as required for the outstanding actions.
--	------------------------	--	--

<b>28 July</b>	Update on LAC Sufficiency	To monitor progress and to assess any impact on capacity due to Covid-19.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the progress made in delivery of the LAC Sufficiency Strategy be noted.</li> <li>2) That the risk that demand for placements will increase as lockdown eases be noted, and, that in addition to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission monitoring performance in this area using the established performance monitoring procedures, that managers proactively raise any concerns that they have with the Improving Lives Select Commission if they arise.</li> <li>3) That a summary of the meeting with the National House Project be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>
	Youth Offending Team – Progress report	<p>To monitor progress and highlight an area for further scrutiny.</p> <p>Specifically, to check progress of recommendations made last year and to seek assurances around a changing demand due to the apparent decrease in numbers of first-time young offenders and the increase in the complex nature of this reduced cohort of young offenders.</p>	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That a further report be brought to the 22 September 2020 meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission to provide assurances around changing demand for Youth Offending Services due to the apparent decrease in numbers of first time young offenders and the increase in the complex nature of a this reduced cohort of young offenders.</li> <li>3) That further information on the Mentors in Violence programme be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>4) That a more detailed narrative in regard to table 13a of the Youth Offending Performance Report, as included in the agenda pack, be circulated to the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>

	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the Work Programme be updated as discussed.</li> <li>2) That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved.</li> </ol>
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the update be noted.</li> <li>2) That the scope for the review of Early Help be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission and that members of the commission contact the Governance Advisor with expressions of interest for taking part in the review.</li> </ol>
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <p>That the Governance Advisor makes the required follow up activity as required for the outstanding actions.</p>

<b>22 September</b>	Youth Offending Team	To seek assurances around a changing demand due to the apparent decrease in numbers of first-time young offenders and the increase in the complex nature of a this reduced cohort of young offenders.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  1) That the report be noted.
	Children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic – Progress Report	To provide a progress report on activity detailed in the briefing to members received on 4 June 2020.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  2) That the report be noted.  3) That a further progress report be brought to the December 2020 meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission.
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  1) That the Work Programme be updated as discussed.  2) That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved.
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  That the update be noted.
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	<b>Resolved: -</b>  That the Governance Advisor makes the required follow up activity as required for the outstanding actions.

27 October	Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership	<p>That a report detailing key timelines, milestones and outcomes to reflect the difference that RESP is making be submitted to this Commission in December 2019. December meeting cancelled.</p> <p>To assess the impact that the service is having.</p>	<p><b>Resolved: -</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That it be recommended that Elective Home Education be a priority area for the Rotherham Education Partnership.</li> <li>3) That information on the revised priorities for the Rotherham Education Partnership and the timeline for their implementation be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>
	Elective Home Education	To seek assurance that children who are elective home educated are being effectively safeguarded/educated	<p><b>Resolved: -</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted.</li> <li>2) That the recent Department for Education briefing on Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>3) That the structure chart and the procedural process document for the Elective Home Education Service be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>4) That once completed, the detailed analysis of the current cohort of children in Elective Home Education in Rotherham be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>5) That the most up to date information on exam entry and progression to further education of children who have received Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>

	Domestic Abuse Strategy – Progress Report	To provide a progress report of the strategy and assurance around procedures around stalking and harassment.	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the report be noted</li> <li>2) That information on the number of non-molestation orders issued in 2020 be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission</li> <li>3) That members of the Improving Lives Select Commission are involved in the development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy.</li> </ol>
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme	<b>Resolved: -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the Work Programme be updated as discussed.</li> <li>2) That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved.</li> </ol>
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	<b>Resolved: -</b> That the update be noted.
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	<b>Resolved: -</b> That the Governance Advisor makes the required follow up activity as required for the outstanding actions.

15 December	Children's social care service in the light of Covid-19 pandemic – Progress Report	To provide a progress report on activity detailed in the briefing to members received on 22 September 2020.	
	Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the SEND Peer Review conducted in March 2020.	Peer review circulated to members April 2020.	
	Rotherham Children's Safeguarding Partnership – Annual Report	To receive and consider the annual report.	
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme.	
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC	

<b>26 January</b>	CYPS Directorate workforce strategy	Progress report	
	YOT Inspection Report	To provide information on the recent inspection of the YOT and to advise of the Council's response to the recommendations. Representatives of delivery partners to be invited to the meeting.	
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme.	
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	
	Adult Safeguarding Annual Report	To receive and consider the annual report.	
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	



9 March	School Performance	Annual item – Focus to be discussed with Assistant Director.  Invitation to Regional Schools Commissioner to attend meeting	
	Re-referrals and repeat child protection planning – Progress report	Resolved at June 2020 meeting to receive a progress report at December 2020 meeting.  Nov 2020 – Rescheduled to March 2021	
	Work Programme	To consider the committee's work programme and to reflect on work programme for 2020/21	
	Project group updates	For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the work of the project groups.	
	ILSC Monitoring Report	To monitor the progress of recommendations made by ILSC.	

## Items pending schedule or removal

Item	Details	Status
Missing from Home/Education (Update from Strategic Missing Group)	Progress report	To be scheduled
Counter extremism in schools	<p>Resolved in September 2019</p> <p>That a report be submitted to this Commission as part of 2020/21 work programme outlining how the local authority was meeting its Prevent duty.</p> <p>That an update on its counter extremism work be submitted to this Commission as part of 2020/21 work programme.</p> <p>That this update includes an evaluation of the work in schools and further details of the work with adults and neighbourhoods and any specific work with parents and carers.</p> <p>Focus to be on work being done in schools.</p>	To be scheduled
Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership	Resolved in June 2019 - That the evaluation of the Early Years Home Visiting Project be submitted to this Commission.	To be scheduled December 2021 meeting.
Pause Progress report	Resolved in March 2020 to bring a further report after May 2021.	To be scheduled
Youth Offending Team – Service Provision	To look at the processes and journey that young people go through who are accessing YOT services	To be scheduled

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS – IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING SCHEDULE**  
**UPDATED: 28 OCTOBER 2020**

Decision Date	Item	Scrutiny Recommendation	Completion date for actions	Action/Response Completed	Further action required by Scrutiny
27 October 2020	Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That it be recommended that Elective Home Education be a priority area for the Rotherham Education Partnership.</li> <li>2) That information on the revised priorities for the Rotherham Education Partnership and the timeline for their implementation be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>	TBC		
27 October 2020	Elective Home Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the recent Department for Education briefing on Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> <li>2) That the structure chart and the procedural process document for the Elective Home Education Service be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</li> </ol>		Information circulated to members 27 November	

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS – IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING SCHEDULE**  
**UPDATED: 28 OCTOBER 2020**

		<p>3) That once completed, the detailed analysis of the current cohort of children in Elective Home Education in Rotherham be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</p> <p>4) That the most up to date information on exam entry and progression to further education of children who have received Elective Home Education be circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--	--

## Sub and Project Group Work

Updated: 3 December 2020

Project	Details	Status
One off spotlight review involving the Youth Cabinet and off camera to understand the impact of school closures due to COVID19 on Rotherham pupils.	To specifically involve and look at the impact on those who would have sat exams this year and bring back the YOT specifically to check progress of recommendations made last year and to seek assurances around a changing demand due to the apparent decrease in numbers of first time young offenders and the increase in the complex nature of a this reduced cohort of young offenders.	<b>December 2020</b> – Survey circulated with closing date in January 2021
CSE – post abuse support (task and finish to feed into commissioning process)	Task and finish group established. Interviews undertaken with 3 local authorities (July/August 2019)	<b>December 2020</b> - Authorities selected for conversations with officers and members on post CSE support selected. Questions drafted. Contact details for discussions collated.  Subgroup to be comprised of Councillors Cusworth, Clark and Andrews.
Liquid Logic	One off spotlight review to provide assurance to members on how the system is working in CYPS.	<b>December 2020</b> - Meeting held with CYPS to agree how the review meeting will function. Review session with members of ILSC to be scheduled early 2021
Domestic Abuse	Referral from OSMB and January 2019 ILSC	To schedule (awaiting update from Home

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Homicide Review</li> <li>• Stalking and Harassment</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Service Principles</li> </ul>		<p>Office on domestic homicide).</p> <p>To agree actions to complete the review.</p>
Lifestyle Survey	Report to subgroup in January 2020	To arrange a meeting for January 2021 to receive the latest survey.
Food Poverty/Holiday Hunger		<b>December 2020</b> – Update meeting with Policy being scheduled
Early Help Offer	<p>Resolved in October 2019</p> <p>That a sub-group be established to undertake further scrutiny of the early help offer.</p>	Scope completed
Court Procedures (pre-proceedings)	Resolved on 30/04/19 - To scrutinise if progress/milestones are being reached – follow on from earlier work	Spotlight review to be scheduled
<p>Safeguarding Adults report</p> <p>Safeguarding Children report</p>	Deferred from December 2019	<p>Reports being circulated. Once received to determine further action.</p> <p>Safeguarding Adults report circulated 22 June 2020</p>