

Annual Report of the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership

Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1 Recommendation

- 1.1 That the Committee be asked to note and comment on the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (Devon SCP) Annual Report 2023-24

2 Background / Introduction

- 2.1 In July 2023, Cabinet agreed the recommendations proposed by the Chief executive for the discharge of the Council's duties as the lead safeguarding partner to:

(i) co-ordinate safeguarding services in conjunction with the Integrated Care Board and Chief Officer of Police in Devon;

(ii) be part of a strategic leadership group supporting and engaging with other agencies; and

(iii) to implement local and national learning (including from serious child safeguarding incidents); as required by S16E of the Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2018

and that the decision about whether to appoint an independent chair or scrutineer for the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools, if the Executive Group recommends that an independent chair should be appointed, and funding can be identified.

- 2.2 In conjunction with the clarification of these arrangements, the former Devon Children and Families Partnership executive had agreed to re-focus the scope and remit of the Partnership in line with the requirements of Working Together 2018 to enable the Partnership to focus on safeguarding and child protection, less risk of duplication and more efficient use of resources for the statutory partners. Subsequently, the partnership has been known as the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 2.3 The Lead Safeguarding Partners are the Chief Executives of the Local Authority, the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board and the Chief Officer of police force. They have each identified a Delegated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for the local partnership. In Devon, the Delegated Safeguarding Leads (the executive) are:

- **Roy Linden**, Policing Commander for South Devon, Devon and Cornwall Police and Chair of the Devon SCP Executive Group.
- **Julian Wooster**, Interim Director of Children's Services, Devon County Council.
- **Darryn Allcorn**, Chief Nursing Officer, Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB), followed by **Penny Smith** (Interim) in January 2024
- Newly implemented from April 2024, is the Executive position for Education taken by **Helen Casson**, Director of Education, Wave Multi-Academy Trust
- Keith Perkins – Independent Scrutineer

2.4 In December 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) Published Working Together 2023 which introduced a requirement for every local safeguarding partnership to publish an annual report which should also be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel by the end of September each year.

2.5 The Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership is not a Devon County Council service, but rather a statutory partnership arrangement made up of children social care, education, health and police as well as other agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sectors working with children and families across Devon.

3 Main Body / Proposal

3.1 The DSCP is required to publish the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which must include:

- arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area
- arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangement

3.2 The local safeguarding arrangements have been published on the DSCP web site.

3.3 The DSCP must also publish an annual report by the end of September of each year and submit a copy of that report to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The DSCP Executive agreed, in conjunction with their Local Safeguarding Partners, the annual report for 2023 / 2024, which has now been submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and was published on the DSCP website by the end of September 2024.

3.4 The annual report is required to include reference to the criteria set out in paragraphs 106 to 108 of Working Together 2023 which include:

- Priorities for 23/24
- Arrangements for Strategic Leadership and Accountability
- Governance and Structure – 2023-24
- Achievements During the Last 12 months
- Serious Incident Notifications, Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Learning and Development Opportunities and Training

- Key decisions on workplan and priorities
- Financial Arrangements
- Feedback and Key Priorities from Statutory Partners
- Reports from Partners
- Next Steps

3.5 A copy of the annual report can be found [here](#).

4 Options / Alternatives

4.1 This is not applicable to this report.

5 Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

5.1 This is not applicable to this report.

6 Strategic Plan

6.1 As a multi-agency partnership, the Devon SCP must follow the legislative guidance within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and must implement these requirements each year by 31st December. The Devon SCP prioritise their activities through a collaborative process involving key stakeholders:

- **Consultation with Partners:** The Devon SCP Executive consults with various safeguarding partners, including local authorities, health services, and educational institutions, to gather insights and identify pressing issues affecting children in the community.
- **Assessment of Needs:** Local needs and challenges are assessed, often using data and feedback from previous safeguarding activities to inform decisions.
- **Setting Priorities:** Based on this consultation and assessment, the Devon SCP establishes specific priorities.
- **Sub-Groups and Implementation:** Sub-groups within the Devon SCP are tasked with driving these priorities forward, exploring development opportunities, and ensuring effective safeguarding practices are in place.
- **Monitoring and Review:** The Devon SCP continuously monitors the effectiveness of its strategies and may adjust priorities as needed based on ongoing evaluations and emerging issues. This structured approach helps ensure that the Devon SCP's efforts are aligned with the most critical needs of children and families in their area.

6.2 The current Devon SCP priorities until 31st March 2025 are:

1. Improving outcomes of pre-birth services and for infants
2. Improving partnership working in compliance with Working Together 2023, focusing on areas of shared responsibility and multi-agency responses to families
3. Improving response to adolescent need through developing multi-agency contextual safeguarding approaches

4. improving the partnership response to domestic abuse to prevent harm to children.

6.3 These priorities align with the vision and priority of the Devon County Council in respect of “**Being Ambitious for Children and Young People**” with the aim of providing the right support, at the right time, in the right place for children, young people and families across Devon.

7 Financial Considerations

7.1 The Partnership annual costs for 23/24 are stated within the report.

8 Legal Considerations

8.1 This is not applicable to this report.

9 Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

9.1 This is not applicable to this report.

10 Equality Considerations

10.1 This is not applicable to this report.

11 Risk Management Considerations - not applicable

11.1 This is not applicable to this report.

12 Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

4 12.1 Scrutiny are asked to note and comment on the [Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2023-24 - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

Jackie Colby - Devon Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Manager and
Steve Liddicott – Deputy Director, Children’s Health and Well-Being
on behalf of Julian Wooster, Director for Children and Young People’s Futures

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Schools: Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

The Devon SCP yearly report aligns with the requirements of:

- [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)
- [B0818 Safeguarding-children-young-people-and-adults-at-risk-in-the-NHS-Safeguarding-accountability-and-assuran.pdf](#)
- [Policing guidance | College of Policing](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)
- [Children's social care national framework](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

Yearly Report is published on the Devon SCP website:

[Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2023-24 - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)