

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>The Annual Report of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership 2022/2023</b>
Meeting date	23 January 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PDSCP) is the statutory body which oversees multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and covers the local Dorset and BCP council areas.</p> <p>This report contains a background and introduction to the statutory functions of the partnership and the council's responsibilities which includes the requirements to publish an annual report.</p> <p>The annual report of the PDSCP is therefore provided as an attachment for consideration by cabinet. The annual report details reflections on partnership work in 2022/23 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outlining the findings from a review of the safeguarding arrangements.</li> <li>- Summarising local and national learning including in relation to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.</li> <li>- Providing an overview of multi-agency training.</li> <li>- Outlining the funding arrangements for the partnership.</li> <li>- Providing information from the Child Death Overview Panel.</li> <li>- Detailing work across the partnership linked to the priority areas for 2022/23.</li> <li>- Outlining other key developments by the statutory safeguarding partners.</li> </ul> <p>The report also outlines the agreed revised priority areas for 2023 to 2025.</p> <p>The report has been approved by the PDSCP Executive who are the representatives of the Safeguarding partners as outlined in Working Together Guidance. The Executive group is chaired by an Independent Chair and Scrutineer who provides support and challenge to the partnership.</p>
Recommendations	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b>

	<b>That the Cabinet note and approve the overall report, suggesting any further considerations</b>
Reason for recommendations	The production of an annual report is a statutory responsibility. This has been endorsed by the four statutory partners (Dorset Council, BCP Council, NHS Dorset, Dorset Police) and is being shared with cabinet as part of those governance arrangements.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton – Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children’s Services
Report Authors	Laurence Doe – PDSCP Business Manager James Vaughan – PDSCP Independent Chair and Scrutineer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

## Background

1. The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP) is the statutory body which oversees multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements covering the Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) footprints. It was introduced in 2019 in line with the statutory guidance Working Together 2018 (updated 15th December 2023 Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))) The guidance outlines the legislative requirements placed on individual service and provides a framework for how partners are required to work together. This requires three local safeguarding partners (local authority, integrated care boards, and chief officer of the police) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.
2. The Executive team of the partnership maintains oversight and responsibility for the partnership’s statutory functions, provides strategic leadership and seeks assurance about the effectiveness of the safeguarding system and provides strategic leadership and has an independent chair. The partnership operates at a Pan-Dorset level, and place based operational delivery arms serve each local authority area to allow for both authorities to meet the needs of their children. This is to enable the delivery of multi-agency safeguarding delivery in a way that is responsive to local community needs and in line with local service provision.
3. In BCP, the place-based arrangements are driven through the multi-agency BCP Safeguarding Children’s Partnership meeting, chaired by the Director of Children’s Services BCP. These arrangements have enabled the partnership to deliver timely responses to local safeguarding priorities and offer strong alignment with other local partnerships such as the Community Safety Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

## **Functions of the Partnership**

4. The partnership undertakes a number of key roles including:
  - i. Learning from practice: the partnership facilitates learning from practice through multi-agency case audits and when required the commissioning of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and the implementation of any learning.
  - ii. Child Death Overview Panel: arrangements for reviewing child deaths are through a panel that covers the Pan-Dorset and Somerset local authority areas. The aim is to identify any patterns or trends that can be used to systematic or local changes to prevent future deaths.
  - iii. Delivering and evaluating multi-agency safeguarding training.
  - iv. Undertaking multi-agency quality assurance activity including single agency and multi-agency audits and gaining the views of practitioners, children and families with the aim of improving practice.

## **Annual Report**

5. In order to bring transparency for children, families, and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners are required to publish a report at least once every 12 months. The report must set out the work that have been undertaken and as assessment of the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements.
6. This is the fourth annual report under the 2018 multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The report reflects the safeguarding commitments and hard work of all executive partners, professionals and volunteers alike, as we work together to address shared priorities. The priorities are shaped by the issues facing children and their families across the areas of Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.
7. The draft report is provided as an appendix to this report. This report will highlight a number of key areas of activity.
8. The report outlines the findings of the PDSCP Executive review of the PDSCP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including the geographical area, covered by the partnership. This concluded that the partnership could work most effectively when they worked together across the Pan-Dorset area, and changes to the geographical area covered by the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were not required to ensure that the partnership was able to effectively meet its functions. The review also identified areas of development for the partnership arrangements, and these were addressed.
9. During 2022/2023 the PDSCP training and development team delivered 156 safeguarding courses to over 2876 multi-agency practitioners.
10. The partnership reviewed and updated its quality assurance activity. They responded to national learning including reviewing practice, policies and procedures in relation to the findings from National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews such as the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and the

national review in relation into Safeguarding Children with Disabilities in Residential Settings.

11. The findings from local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other learning events can found on the PDSCP website Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Learning Reviews. These led to key areas of activity for the partnership to improve the lives of children and families.
12. Key areas of activity for the partnership included:
  - i. Working with the system and practitioners to improve identification and interventions with children and families where there was intra-familial child sexual abuse including this being subject of a Conference in 2022.
  - ii. The partnership also worked with practitioners to improve their understanding and knowledge of working with children where parents are sex workers. This included developing policies and procedures and was the theme of a Conference in 2022.
  - iii. The partnership has also been focusing work on the experience of older children/young people including in relation to their experience of neglect and domestic abuse, extra-familial harm including knife crime and working with gender identity. These areas were covered in a Conference in October 2023.
  - iv. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children was an area of focus in 2022/23. This included the need to ensure there was an effective system to: undertake age assessments, assess and intervene with young people including providing effective education and placements.
  - v. The partnership developed key-principles for organisations in relation to developing trauma-informed practice, provided tools for organisations and has now developed further training.
13. The report contains updates from partners on their work on the priority areas for 2022/23:
  - i. Tackling Child Exploitation, early intervention and effective disruption.
  - ii. Sexual Abuse - intrafamilial, link to violence against women and girls and sexual abuse in schools - peer on peer.
  - iii. Recognising and responding to the impact of domestic abuse involving children and young people (including under 1's and unborn safety and wellbeing)
  - iv. Supporting children to maintain positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, understanding the longer-term impact of Covid-19.
14. In 2022/23 the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership reviewed their priorities and agreed. This was undertaken in consultation with both BCP and Dorset Community Safety Partnerships and both BCP and Dorset Safeguarding Adult Boards. The following priorities were agreed for 2023-2025:
  - i. Priority 1: Violence experienced by children and young people including sexual violence and abuse, domestic abuse, physical violence and knife crime.
  - ii. Priority 2: Children's mental health and emotional well-being.

iii. Priority 3. Neglect.

## **Options Appraisal**

15. The Cabinet have been asked to approve the Annual Report.

## **Summary of financial implications**

16. Safeguarding partners are required to provide equitable and proportionate funding to cover all elements of their multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements.
17. 5.2 There is a dedicated Business Team to support the work of the partnership across the Pan-Dorset area. Following an external efficiency and effectiveness review of the Business team in 2022, a proposed restructure introduced a new single Business Manager across the Pan-Dorset area and introduced further administrative support. Both new roles have been successfully recruited and the remaining roles in the team made permanent.
18. 5.3 In February 2022 the Executive approved a recommendation from the review for the need for all partners to contribute an equal share into the PDSCP budget and agreed for 2023/24 that this would be £75,785 per partner. This would mean a total budget of £303,140. It was noted that this would be an increase for the police of £26,940, for Dorset Council of £6,853 and for Health of £785 with a reduction for BCP Council of £7,639.
19. 5.4 At the end of 2022/23 the PDSCP carried forward a small surplus of £21,697, due to the unpredictability of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which fluctuate from year to year.

## **Summary of legal implications**

20. It is a statutory requirement that the PDSCP publishes an annual report.

## **Summary of human resources implications**

21. No specific implication.

## **Summary of sustainability impact**

22. No specific impact

## **Summary of public health implications**

23. The Partnership's work is designed to impact positively on the well-being and health of BCP's children and young people, by keeping them safe, by reducing the risk of harm and through raising awareness of child safeguarding issues so that children are protected from harm and provided support when they need it.

## **Summary of equality implications**

24. None completed or required for this report. The Partnership's core business is to reduce the impact of inequalities, both on individual children and young people and on groups, cohorts of children and young people.

## **Summary of risk assessment**

25. Whilst there are no specific recommendations within the report. BCP Council continue to be committed to delivering effective services that ensure children and young people feel safe and secure within a stable family. This report provides an overview of safeguarding across the Pan-Dorset area.

## **Background papers**

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Website: [Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](https://pdscp.co.uk)

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Reports (Historic): [Annual Reports - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](https://pdscp.co.uk)

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - PDSCP Annual Report 2022-23