

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 9th February 2022

Subject: MSCP Annual Report 2020-21

Lead officer: Jane McSherry (Director of Children's Schools and Families)

Lead Member: Cllr Eleanor Stringer, Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Lead Officer: Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

Recommendations:

- A. To note the content of Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report 2020-2021.
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1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The MSCP is required to produce and publish a report on actions taken by statutory partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area to safeguard children and promote their welfare and outline how effective those arrangements have been in practice.
- 1.2 Like last year, the MSCP has produced a shorter report with a clearer outline of deliverables against the priority areas articulated in the business plan.
- 1.3 The report has had input from all statutory partners as well as local agencies and the MSCP sub-group chairs. It received formal sign off from the MSCP Exec partners in January 2022 and will report to the MSCP Full Partnership in February 2022. The MSCP's Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer have had the opportunity to review and comment.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 While the impact of the pandemic presented many new challenges to the MSCP's work during the business year 2020-21, agencies within the partnership helped to adapt to new ways of working together. During the reporting period, the partnership experienced some changes to its personnel and, due to a directorate-wide restructure of London Borough of Merton's Children, Schools and Families directorate, there was an interim nature to the Partnership Manager role.
- 2.2 During 2020/21, Early Help remained a priority for the MSCP. The partnership developed its Early Help Strategy and Effective Support Model following engagement with children, families and practitioners. The partnership is in the process of embedding the strategy and model and has a comprehensive training package in place. The MSCP also developed its contextual safeguarding strategy and action plan, to improve the partnership's response to harm which comes to children and young people from outside of the home.

2.3 During the business year 2020/21, the partnership further progressed local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs) involving two children (Jason and Baby Grace) and a local partnership review involving one child (Eddie). During the business year, the MSCP also notified the DfE of two further significant incidents involving Merton children; one of these children, 'Ananthi' resulted in the decision to undertake an LCSPR, while for the other child, 'Child I' it was decided that the incident did not meet the criteria for an LCSPR. The national panel agreed with these decisions. The MSCP annual reports sets out some of the steps the partnership has taken to respond to these reviews.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 The MSCP's annual report will be published on the MSCP's website.