

## SSCP Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Time:** 1pm- 4pm

**Chair:** Melanie John- Ross- Independent Chair/ Scrutineer

**Minutes:** Debbie Hulme, Senior Business Support Officer, SSCP

**Venue:** Salford Suite, Civic Centre

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### **1. Welcome and Apologies Lead: Chair**

Melanie John-Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made and apologies recorded.

Documentation pertaining to today's meeting has been shared in advance.

#### a. In attendance

**Melanie John-Ross, Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership**  
**Kate Pollard, Head of Business & Impact, Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership**  
**Melissa Caslake, Executive Director of Children Services, Salford City Council: People**  
**Jane Slinger, Head of Safeguarding Children, Salford City Council: People**  
**Karen Armfield, Head Teacher, Boothstown Methodist Primary**  
**Elizabeth Walton, Assistant Director: Safeguarding & Quality, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care**  
**Audrey McCoy, Acting Assistant Director, Northern Care Alliance**  
**Yanica Weir, Detective Chief Inspector -Partnerships, GMP**  
**Tim Rumley, Children's Services Senior Manager, Salford City Council: People**  
**Sarah Riley, Head of Cared for Children, Salford City Council: People (attended for items 10 and 12)**  
**Claire Baddley, Domestic Abuse Operational Lead, Salford City Council: People (attended for item 9)**  
**Debbie Elsheikh and Parents for Positive Change Group (attended for item 4)**

#### b. Apologies received from:

Sayma Khan, Director of Children's Social Care, Salford City Council: People  
Rebecca Bibby, Director of Early Help & School Readiness, Salford City Council: People  
Debbie Blackburn, Director: Public Health Nursing and Wellbeing, Public Health  
Diane Kinsella, Designated Nurse: Safeguarding Children & Looked After Children, NHS Greater Manchester  
Danielle Buckley, Head of Probation Delivery Unit, Salford Probation  
Michelle Warburton, Voice and Influence Manager, Salford Community & Voluntary Services  
Simon Moyles, Detective Superintendent (Cluster Vulnerability), GMP  
Elaine Burfitt, Designated Doctor (Safeguarding Children), NHS GM Integrated Care

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting Lead: Chair**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### **3. Action Tracker Lead: Chair**

The action tracker was reviewed and updated at the meeting. All closed actions will be transferred to the closed action tracker after the meeting.

#### **4. Parents for Positive Change Panel (P4PC)**

The Chair extended a warm welcome to the P4PC and thanked them for attending today's meeting to give an update on work being undertaken.

The P4PC comprises of parents and professionals who work in partnership to implement change to improve the lives of children, young people and families.

The Panel have been involved/contributed to the following work streams:

- Development of Salford Standards for listening to children, young people and families
- Development of Support and Safeguarding guidance
- Co-produced a training package to influence social work practice. A pilot session was held with 11 social workers, feedback was extremely positive. Course delegates particularly welcomed hearing the lived experiences of parents, their views and ideas.

The parents informed SSCP members that they had also found the training session beneficial, they enjoyed the reciprocal learning, sharing resources and they look forward to continuing with this work.

A repeat training session has been organised and will be held week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The P4PC reported that future plans are in place to develop a domestic abuse awareness campaign in partnership with Claire Baddley (Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator).

It was noted that Salford are the pioneers for this initiative and it is hoped that further authorities will be adopt this collaborative approach going forward.

**Q:** Have P4PG Panel noticed any difference to systems?

**A:** Yes, a new 'Coming Home Checklist' has been approved for children who are returning to their parent's care.

The SSCP Business Lead reassured the panel that Jo Horton is monitoring the checklist and the partnership will support in developing this; Jo Horton has liaised with the Service Manager for the Stepping Stones Cared for Children service to understand how the checklist is being used in practice.

The Chair informed the group that an assurance report has been requested in respect of the checklist. Once received the P4PG will receive feedback on the impact.

It was noted that the Salford is an aspirational partnership which is totally committed to engagement, co-production and working with children, young people and families.

The Chair proposed that when appropriate, future P4PG campaigns/work streams should be extended to the multi-agency workforce.

It was agreed that the Chair will write to the P4PG on behalf of the partnership to show appreciation for taking the time to attend today's meeting to give an update on positive work being rolled out.

The SSCP Business Lead stated that it would be beneficial for fathers to be involved with the P4PG and proposed a recruitment campaign be undertaken.

**Action: Melanie John-Ross to write a formal letter of thanks to the Parents for Positive Change Group.**

## **5. SSCP Business Manager Report – Kate Pollard**

Key areas were emphasised:

The 'Right Care Right Person' model has been added to the risk register. An assurance report will be requested for the June Partnership meeting to update on progress and implementation of the model.

The SSCP funding arrangements remain uncertain. At the January Exec meeting it was agreed that Melanie John Ross and Tom Stannard would write a further formal letter to GMP and ICB, this has been actioned.

The Department for Education have published The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 Guidance. In response to the publication, Partnership/Boards will undertake a review of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the update arrangements should be published December 2024.

To support the review the Government has issued a one-off grant payment of £47,300 for each partnership/board. This money will provide additional resource to review the arrangements.

The Chair has developed a summary report in respect of the updated Statutory Guidance and partners have been requested to consider ideas for the allocation of the grant in advance of today's meeting. This item will be discussed in more detail under item 7.

The report highlights the current position in relation to Working Together compliance. The SSCP Business Manager is in the process of developing an action plan which will track the current position and to identify future improvements to strengthen services for the children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Business Manger's update also details the Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Partners. Please can members review and provide any feedback/comments or confirm they agree to the membership to [Kate.pollard@salford.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.pollard@salford.gov.uk). This will be published once reviewed and agreed by the partnership.

An annual report will be prepared and published September 2024. It has been proposed that a task and finish group be established to work collectively to co-ordinate, track progress, update the action plan and to ensure there is no drift and delay in respect of implementing and embedding changes. This proposal was agreed by SSCP members and Melanie John- Ross will lead this new group.

### **Subgroup Activity**

The SSCP Exec approved the recommendation to disband the Safeguarding Babies subgroup as all objectives have been met.

At the February SEG meeting Nicki Dugdale provided a comprehensive Practice Review annual spotlight report.

The joint SSCP/SSAB CSPPR is near conclusion; it has been agreed not to publish the report due to the sensitive nature. An action plan will be developed to respond to identified learning and a joint briefing session will be arranged for June 2024.

### **Any other business**

The SSCP Business Manager has updated the formal SSCP Information Sharing Agreement, this has been circulated to the statutory safeguarding partners for annual review. This will also be circulated to internal legal departments before being presented at the SSCP Exec meeting for sign off.

The Independent Scrutineer will no longer be expected to chair the SSCP meeting and it was agreed to identify a safeguarding partner to take up this position. This was discussed at the SSCP Exec meeting and it was decided that Melissa Caslake (Executive Director for Children's Services) will be the new Chair; Melissa will commence in this role as of June 2024. Melissa, Melanie John-Ross and Kate Pollard will meet to ensure an efficient transition and to be clear on each other's roles.

A Section 11 audit will be undertaken. Please can SSCP members consider questions for the self-assessment section and provide suggestions/feedback to [jane.maguire@salford.gov.uk](mailto:jane.maguire@salford.gov.uk).

Liz Walton informed SSCP members that GM are proposing to undertake a combined Section 11 audit across Greater Manchester NHS. This proposal is in its infancy however Liz will keep members updated on progress. Kate will feedback this information to Jane Maguire.

It was noted that there have been challenges in respect of Salford Academy's sharing of information and challenges in relation to Section 11 Audits and compliance.

This has been identified as a risk on the Academy Agenda and relevant parties have been encouraged to participate in Salford specific safeguarding training.

It was reported that the partnership will be able to engage education colleagues in response to the Working Together changes and strengthening of services. Briefings will be held to outline the plan and education settings will be invited to the briefings regardless of their status.

The group discussed information sharing amongst Academy schools and the Business Manager reported that there is no formal information sharing agreement. She informed the group that she has reviewed the statutory guidance and educational settings are not included. This will require further consideration as operationally this could give rise for concern.

It was noted that there is strong commitment from Salford academies to engage however it was proposed to consider one example which has triggered information sharing concerns. It was agreed that Karen Armfield will explore a specific example with Amanda Taylor.

Melissa Caslake volunteered to contact Cathy Starbuck re information sharing arrangements with education in the absence of a formal Information Sharing Agreement and whether there are any associated risks.

**Action: Melissa Caslake will discuss education information sharing agreements with Cathy Starbuck**

## **6. How are we doing update Q3 2023/2024**

Key areas were highlighted

- Increase of CP Plans compared to the previous year which correlates with the rise in contacts to the Bridge. A high rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences were completed within timescale. Previously there were issues with partner agencies attending ICP meetings in person however this has now been resolved.

- Despite the demand of contacts, the performance data for the last quarter indicates that 91% of MASH episodes were completed within timescale.
- As of the end of December 2023 there were 442 children subject to a CP plan, 19 of these children (this equates to 8 families ) have been on a plan for longer than 2 years. A review of this cohort will be undertaken
- A reduction in children becoming subject to a subsequent CP plan. This demonstrates the positive impact of intervention work
- Demand for Early Help has remained consistent however recent data indicates an emerging upward trend and this will be monitored. There is improved family engagement with early help services and targeted health services. There is lots of collaborative work being undertaken between the 0-19 teams and further early help services and there will be opportunity to review and revisit this partnership working in light of the new WT guidance.
- A rise in LADO referrals, the main referrers from education
- Persistent absence from school remains higher than the northwest average for cared for children and children in need but lower for children subject to a CP plan
- Four children subject to CP/CIN plans are home educated
- The percentage of NEET 16–17-year-olds has increased

It was noted that an abundance of work has been undertaken at the Early Help threshold to identify appropriate support packages and to encourage family engagement.

It was also noted that the early help school co-ordinators/attendance officers are integral in completing appropriate reports, monitoring school attendance and supporting families.

Q: Is it the responsibility of the 0-25 Board/school leaders to address school attendance and drive forward this agenda. Also is an assurance report developed?

The school representative responded and gave an overview of mechanisms in place:

- Persistent absence is monitored and thorough scrutiny of data is completed
- There are various support packages in place for headteachers and risk assessment are completed
- Support for families to address this issue and encourage children to re-engage with school
- Multi-agency attendance strategic meetings are held
- Assurance reports are presented at the Safeguarding Effectiveness Subgroup

Highlights in respect of the GM QA data were provided:

- Increase in the number of CP case conferences attended, full reports were provided including recommendations for meetings when a GM representative was unable to be present
- More scrutiny in respect of CP; weekly meetings are being held with the Assistant Chief Constable
- A new Sergeant has been appointed who will focus on CP crimes
- Development of child centered policing and applying a whole system approach
- Pilot scheme to build relationships between GMP, young people/children and their families

The Chair thanked representatives for their updates on the QA report. It was noted that the data is reported in a very statistical fashion and there is minimal narrative and analysis to capture learning and areas for scrutiny and robust challenge.

At the February SEG it was stressed that the QA meeting has a packed agenda and due to time restrictions, the last meeting focus was on activity rather than performance. Going forward it has been agreed that meetings will be extended by 30 minutes and will alternate between QA activity and Performance to ensure a balanced perspective.

The group discussed the duplication of data at strategic and operational meetings; it was noted that it is important that each meeting has oversight of this information however it was proposed that each Partner comes prepared to highlight issues/concerns in respect of their own agency's intelligence.

However, it should be noted that usually the "How are we doing" report would be summarised by the SEG chair- who sent apologies for today's meeting.

Observation: The narrative states the QA Scorecard continues to evolve and it was suggested to reframe to: The QA Scorecard is a work in progress. This was agreed and Kate will action.

The full data report provides more in-depth detail and has been shared in advance of today's meeting.

## **7. Revised and New Statutory Guidance**

A briefing report has been circulated in advance which includes reference to the National Framework 2023.

The Chair reported that Salford are in a good position and this review will be an opportunity to strengthen further arrangements. Key areas were highlighted:

- A time limited subgroup will be established to work collectively to co-ordinate, track progress, update the action plan and to ensure there is no drift and delay in respect of implementing and embedding changes on behalf of the partnership (as discussed under item 5)
- Consider the allocation of the one-off grant, this needs to be spent by the end of this financial year (March 2024). The SSCP Business Lead will be required to submit a return to the DfE to evidence where the money will be spent

The Business Lead updated members on current progress:

- Action plan is under development to track ideas and identify gaps
- The DfE has developed a self-assessment maturity health check tool, this can provide guidance when considering areas of strength/gaps and areas for improvement
- Warrington SCP have approached Salford to undertake a peer review. The SSCP Business Lead suggested that this should be considered to allow for additional scrutiny following the self-assessment
- Spending during this financial year which can be captured in the return
  - Two multi-agency Neglect events have been held to drive forward and strengthen practice
  - Practitioner learning event
  - Quality assurance and individual audits

The Chair invited comments/suggested from members in respect of the one-off implementation grant:

- Commission an internal/external colleague to co-ordinate the self-assessment
- Undertake a peer review so partnerships can share knowledge/learning/ideas
- Consultation with colleagues

- Strengthen the roles of schools and education within the local safeguarding arrangements
- Strengthen the Section 17 arrangements, co-relationships and lead professional role. It was noted that there are anxieties in respect of the lead professional role and it was suggested that a half day multi-agency workshop be organised
- Strengthen partnership working with the community and voluntary sector
- Strengthen diversity/ethnicity work
- Identify further joint working/engagement (where appropriate) for the SSCP/SSAB

The DfE self-assessment framework was shared and incorporates the following:

- Voice and influence
- Partnership working
- Leadership
- Governance
- Impact and scrutiny

The Partnership will consider the above themes in more detail.

The SSCP Business Lead will develop a report in respect of the above suggestions/ideas and this will be presented at the next SSCP Exec meeting.

#### **8. Funding Arrangements**

This has been discussed earlier in this meeting. The SSCP Business Lead has set out the current position in her report and this will be taken to the SSCP Exec meeting for discussion.

#### **9. Children affected by Domestic Abuse Spotlight Report – Claire Baddley**

Highlights were provided via a presentation:

- The budget this year has increased by 50% through grants to address demand across Salford
- OFSTED Inspection gave good overview in respect of the LA and commissioned service approach to domestic abuse
- Reduction in repeat MARAC cases involving children. Salford is the only area across Greater Manchester where this has been achieved. Every survivor has a pathway and safety plan
- Salford was chosen to pilot a crisis worker in custody suite; this has had positive outcomes
- KPIS agreed to Domestic Abuse Commission service
- Relevant DA courses have been developed for the workforce and are facilitated by Safe in Salford commissioned service
- The DA subgroup has aligned with the partnership priorities
- 20% decrease in re-referrals
- The Early Development of the MATAAC which continues learning from the DRIVE Panel
- Introduction of the CARA (cautioning and relationship abuse) across GM
- Introduction of the DAPA in October 2024
- 2-year commission of the LOTUS Hub
- Development of DA action plan
- Development of the DA Strategy

Current concerns were highlighted:

- MATAC
- DAPOs
- No established school healthy relationships provision
- No provision for couples who remain together
- Implementation of Safe and Together model – this is due to launch in April. This is a vast piece of work and will require embedding across the partnership
- Reviewing multi-agency capacity

The Chair thanked Claire for her update and requested that the presentation be circulated to members.  
**Debbie to action.**

Questions/comments were invited from the panel.

Q: The 20% reduction in the repeat MARACs, does evidence suggest that this is due to effective intervention with survivors and children?

A: The reduction is due to strong family focused partnership working (e.g., Children’s Social Care, Safe in Salford, Harbour). Engagement is positive and there is a robust DA pathway in place. There is also engagement with perpetrators in respect of de-escalation plans, inventories and perpetrator DASHs.

Q: Is there an increase in referrals at the early intervention stage or does data suggest that there is a reduction in referrals?

A: Referrals continue to be submitted and there are higher numbers of children subject to CP/CIN plans in respect of DA. There is good support in place for victims, trusting relationships are being formed with professionals and victims are more confident to access support packages independently.

It was noted that the number of MARACs for adult victims have not decreased, it is the repeat cases involving children that have reduced.

Q: What are number of referrals at low/medium level

A: The numbers remain consistent. It was noted that the medium level of support is effective and data shows that that cases are not being re-referred for higher level intervention.

It was proposed that data be collected to evidence the impact in practice. Claire informed the group that the MARAC review will be undertaken; intelligence and learning will be collated and this will be shared once finalised.

The Chair confirmed that the Partnership will fully support/commit to the DA action plan; further Partnership support was highlighted:

- Implementation and embedding of the Safe and Together Model across the Partnership
- Introduction of the MATAC (Multi-agency Task and Co-ordination Group) – this will replace the DRIVE model.
- MARAC – a report will be developed on the effectiveness/data and this will be circulated to members once finalised
- Introduction of DEPO and CARA and embedding these models across the partnership

The Partnership will fully support the above recommendations.



## **10. Safeguarding Adolescents Spotlight Report – Sarah Riley**

Key areas were reported:

- The Adolescent Strategy has been launched
- Posters have been designed to raise awareness of the Strategy and have been distributed across Salford City Council buildings including the Gateways
- Work is being undertaken in respect of transitional safeguarding and a robust understanding of what is known and used within organisations. It was noted that transitional safeguarding covers a vast range and there is a re-focus on this area
- Review of subgroup membership
- Review of workstreams to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication

The Chair stated that Adolescents is a key priority for the Partnership and it was noted that this is an ideal opportunity for collaborative working/alignment across children and adult services especially with regard to the strategy and transitions. An update on progress of the Adolescent Subgroup will be brought back to a future SSCP meeting when members will consider a plan to embed the work across partnership.

The Chair stated that the partnership fully endorse/support the report and thanked Sarah for her update on progress.

## **11. Children with Disabilities National Review Update – Jane Slinger**

A national review in respect of safeguarding arrangements for children with disabilities in residential settings has been undertaken. The review considered harm and abuse suffered by over 100 children with complex needs and disabilities.

Following the review 9 recommendations were cited; in principal the Government have agreed to the recommendations.

Key areas/actions were reported:

- Consider the new Working Together Guidance and strengthening safeguarding arrangements
- OFSTED and CQC joint inspections
- Implementation of a new standard of non-instructed advocacy for children with complex communication needs
- Introduction of professional registration for children's homes workforce and consideration for residential managers to undertake a national leadership programme
- Improved information sharing and joint working for multi-agency partners/local authorities
- Joint commissioning
- Consultation in respect of the LADO role, particularly in relation to children with complex needs
- Review of legislation for disabled children

It was noted that there are no specific timescales for the implementation of the above recommendations, this will be monitored.

An update on progress will be brought to the June SSCP meeting.

Previously the Partnership undertook a 'True to Us' exercise in respect of safeguarding children with disabilities and the findings assured the Partnership that robust systems are in place. As already discussed,

the partnership will consider strengthening safeguarding arrangements in line with the new Working Together Guidance. A further assurance report will come to the next SSCP.

## **12. Placement Stability – Sarah Riley**

September 2023 an audit was undertaken in respect of children subject to care models at home, following on from this audit the partnership agreed that assurance should be brought to the SSCP meeting in relation to placement stability.

It was recognised that there are sufficiency difficulties in identifying suitable placements for children and young people and it was agreed that the approach required strengthening. This matter is not only a local challenge but is nationwide.

A new Placement and Disruption policy has been developed and the aim of this policy is to increase placement stability for cared for children.

A summary of procedures was given.

Stability meetings are routinely held to align with the Family Partnership model. This meeting will consider what is working well and what can be improved to support the child/carer and to ensure that early help is put in place to avoid placements becoming vulnerable.

Unfortunately, some children's placements do end despite relevant support being put in place. In these circumstances Disruption meetings are convened to consider why the placement did not succeed, the impact on stability and inform future planning for the child and carer.

Reflect Reviews are also convened with relevant Head of Service to consider young people who have had two or more placement moves in a 12-month period. This meeting will explore whether previous placements were the most appropriate to meet the young person's needs, lessons learnt about the child and the carer, to identify further suitable placements and to mitigate future breakdown.

All the above meetings are led by appropriate professionals and are formally minuted to ensure a clear record of discussions, plans and actions.

**Q:** How can the Partnership support children/carers to minimise disruption?

A: All partners working with this cohort can request a stability meeting be convened if they have concerns about disruption. Appropriate multi-agency partners will attend the meeting to discuss concerns, support packages and future stability plans.

**Q:** Are there any emerging trends in respect of disruptions?

A: The policy has only recently been launched and official data is yet to be collated however early intelligence indicates that there is an increase in placement disruption as carers do not feel they have the correct skill set to manage behaviours. The aim is for placement disruption to decrease with early help intervention and the implementation of appropriate support packages.

It was suggested that future intelligence be brought to the Partnership meeting, however it was acknowledged that the data will be scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel and the role of the Partnership is to support the protocol/arrangements.

## **13. OFSTED Outcome: Discussion**

The overall rating was good with outstanding for leadership/management and for the leaving care services. The report also acknowledged the strength of the partnership and multi-agency working.

Melissa informed members that there are areas of focus, which comprise of:

- Public Law outline and pre-proceeding work
- Permanency tracking
- Staff retention

A development day has been arranged for Children’s Services which will incorporate some of the learning from the inspection.

The Chair officially stated that the Partnership are delighted with the conclusion of the ILAC Inspection and Melissa Caslake formally thanked the partnership for their contributions and role played in the successful outcome.

**Key Information: Items Circulated for Information**

- 14. **Re- referrals audit undertaken by Independent Scrutineer (discussed at P&QA on 30.01.24)**
- 15. **CWD Audit undertaken by Independent Scrutineer (discussed at P&QA on 30.01.24)**
- 16. **Inter-board Protocol (agreed by inter-board exec on 01.12.23)**
- 17. **GM MAPPA Annual Report 2022/23**
- 18. **Home Office Child Safeguarding Update**
- 19. **SSCP Executive Minutes 11.01.24**
- 20. **SEG Scorecard Q3 Data**

The above papers have been amalgamated, presented in a PDF document and circulated in advance of today’s meeting.

**21. Any Other Business**

The SSCP Business Lead informed members that Melanie John Ross was awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours list for her service to children and families and will attend the awards ceremony Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

SSCP Members acknowledged that this is a well-deserved award and warm congratulations were extended to Melanie.

Date	Reports expected	Leads
03.06.2024	Right Care Right Person assurance report	

<b>Minutes Approved by:</b>	Melanie John-Ross, Independent Chair/Scrutineer
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024