



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 24th March 2021

To the Chair and Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

THEME: SAFEGUARDING AND A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Mayor Ros Jones	All	No

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(1.1) The purpose of this report is to provide the Chair and Members of the Panel with an overview of two key issues. How the partnership convened to safeguard children and manage demand throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and secondly the approach to recovery and resilience through the new Partnership Recovery and Resilience Board and Plan.

2. EXEMPT REPORT

(2.1) There are no exemptions.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

(3.1) It is recommended that the Panel note:

- i. The strength of the partnership response to the pandemic in Doncaster in keeping children and young people safe, and how it quickly mobilised to put in place robust and effective support, in extremely challenging times.
- ii. The role and scope of the Partnership Board and its commitment to improvement as part of recovery and resilience, and that by doing so, will effectively manage demand.

4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

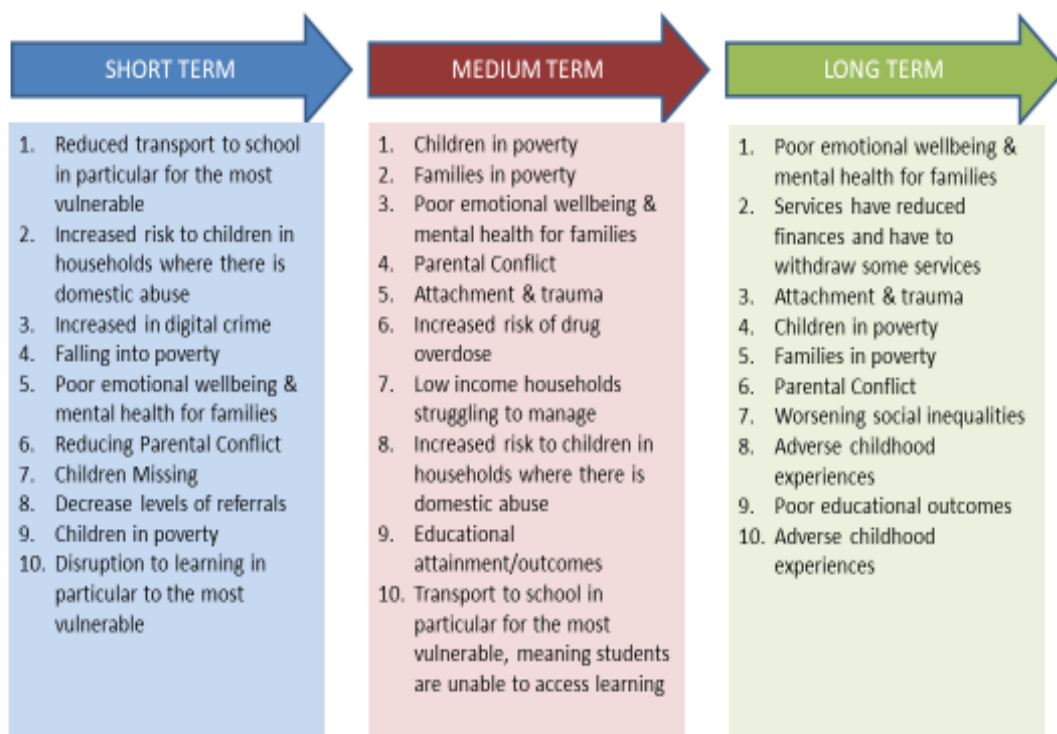
(4.1) The Covid-19 pandemic has had a notable impact on all people of Doncaster putting added pressure on all aspects of people's lives, from their health and livelihoods through to their relationships and childcare. In this environment it has been, and continues to be, vitally important that the partnership effectively

delivered services in a way that supports all its people, including its most vulnerable children, young people and families as effectively as possible.

5. BACKGROUND

- (5.1) In the prelude to lockdown, the Local Authority convened strong partnership governance structures, which brought together partners with a focus on Children and Families. Through the local resilience and emergency planning arrangements a Children and Families Safeguarding Partnership & Oversight Board (including statutory partners) was developed as the senior meeting to provide a more responsive and flexible forum. Reporting to the Partnership & Oversight Board, two Cells were created. The Children and Families Cell and Education and Skills Cell.
- (5.2) The purpose of the Children and Families Cell is to oversee the management of the children and family's portfolio response to the pandemic. The Cell has grown and continues to be attended by all partners, including statutory partners. The underlying principle of the Cell is to understand any issues and challenges across the partnership, sense check this data in real life terms, look at mitigations and any risks, and to shape service delivery to bring about positive impacts.
- (5.3) The purpose of the Education and Skills Cell is to oversee the management of the education and skills portfolio response to the pandemic. Like the Children and Families Cell, there is excellent attendance and there have been significant developments in how the education system works together.
- (5.4) One of the early tasks of the Cells was to develop a robust impact assessment, through a strong methodology. The purpose of the impact assessment was to allow the partnership to quickly understand what the possible impacts of the pandemic would be, and what needed to be done to mitigate these impacts. The impacts were split into short-term (0-3mths), medium term (3-12mths) and long-term (12mths+), which reflect the three-horizon framework, which is the agreed approach of Team Doncaster. The 'Three Horizons' framework is a foresight tool that can help to structure thinking about the future in ways that spark innovation. It describes three patterns or ways of doing things and how their relative prevalence and interactions evolve over time. The diagram below captures the top 10 impacts from the impact assessment.

Children and Young People Impact Assessment



- (5.5) Once the impact assessment was completed, the cells mapped out what services were already in place (to mitigate these impacts), and if there were any gaps in service provision. For all gaps identified, responses have, either already been put in place, and/ or are in the process of being established, these are captured in the text below. The impact assessment has proven to be very effective in so far that the suggested risks are the ones that have and are being realised locally, and as such, the partnership has been able to respond quickly to ensure support is provided in the right areas.
- (5.6) To allow the partnership to have a clear understanding of data and intelligence, a new children at risk dashboard was developed. This dashboard captures key information on a weekly basis, quickly highlighting any emerging issues and trends, that in turn allow the partnership to respond. A good example are the recent emerging issues around eating disorders, where the data quickly identified an increase in levels of acuity, and the Children and Families Cell mobilised partners to provide increased support.
- (5.7) Both Cells developed a plan on a page that outlined the key objectives for 2020/21 and have indicators in place to monitor progress.
- (5.8) There was a significant change in demand for services during the pandemic compared to the same period last year across, which were primarily a result of the pandemic. The data below is taken from key service areas, which offer a good temperature check on the system.
- (5.9) **Social Care** – there were a number of changes including (quarter 3 data):
- Referrals to Social Care increased by 339, an increase of 36%.

- Section 47 enquires increased by 146, an increase of 59%. (A Section 47 enquiry means that social care must carry out an investigation when they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. The aim is to decide whether any action should be taken to safeguard the child).
- The number of referrals that initiated an assessment increased by 273, an increase of 29%.
- Children entering Care increased by 2, an increase of 5.5%.
- Children in Need increased by 203, an increase of 14.4%.
- Children with a Child Protection Plan increased by 94, an increase of 27%.

(5.10) **Education** – there were changes in education and associated areas too. These included:

- Average attendance obviously reduced as only children deemed vulnerable and/ or the child of a key worker were advised to attend. Therefore, average attendance during this period was 950, which around 2% of the total pupil population.
- Children missing in education increased by 347, and children elective home education increased by 248, giving a combined increase of 220%.
- The number of children eligible for free school meals has increased by 1662 since March 2020. This equates to 24.26% of the pupil population in Doncaster are now eligible.
- The number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plans has increased by 12% to 2253.

(5.11) **Early Help** – there were changes in the number of families accessing Early Help support:

- The number of enquiries into Early help continues to reduce, with 638 children less in 2020-2021 compared to 2019-2020.
- A decline in the early help referral rate by 78, a decrease of 4.7%.

(5.12) **Social Emotional Mental Health** – there were changes in the number of young people experiencing mental health concerns, including.

- A significant increase in the number of young people, experiencing episodic periods of crisis resulting in an A&E attendance, with circa 100 presentations.
- An increase in the number of young people with acute eating disorders that require a hospital admission and/ or high level support in the community.

(5.13) **Domestic Abuse** – there were changes in the number of households experiencing domestic abuse, including.

- The number of referrals into the Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor service increased by 85, an increase of 38%.
- The number of referrals into the Domestic Abuse Hub increased by 30, an increase of 22%.
- The Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor service and Domestic Abuse Hub reporting up to 61% and 70% of referrals identify as having children or do not state whether they have children respectively.

- The most common age brackets of children and young people living in households with domestic abuse are 1-3 years (21.43%), 6-9 years (35.71%) and 10-13 years (21.43%).

(5.14) In addition to the changes in requests for support, there were changes across the partnership in other areas too. The partnership experienced significant staffing changes and difficulties within their respective organisations/agencies, including changes at a senior level across statutory agencies, changes to the Safeguarding Board and several vacant social work posts, which impacted on caseloads.

(5.15) The partnership experienced a decline in safeguarding performance, which identified a weakness in the strategic 'line of sight' to practice.

6. DONCASTER RESPONSE

EARLY HELP

(6.1) Throughout the lockdown period, the council supported school leaders to provide school meals for 11,429 eligible children. This included vigorous lobbying of Department for Education on schools' behalf to ensure that vouchers were provided throughout lockdown and especially over the summer holiday period and Christmas holiday period. Doncaster made an early decision to fund free school meals prior to the Government's decision to do so.

(6.2) The Early Help offer has been vitally important throughout lockdown. Staff across the Early Help partnership showed great ingenuity to engage with families and children within the Covid-19 restrictions, using a mix of virtual and physical visits. Families reported the value of these visits. Families reported the value of these visits. Between March and December 2020, vulnerability levels from start to the end of an early help case have improved for 155 families (51.3%), and 223 families have improved family resilience and reduced risk (63.4%).

(6.3) During Covid-19, it has been crucial to have the ability to deliver accessible evidenced-based parenting support virtually, in a range of different languages. Solihull Parenting has been purchased to support all residents, regardless of role in the family unit to access this support. The courses are easy to access, available in all languages and developing all of the time. A total of 130 Antenatal and Pre and Post Questionnaires (based on Douglas and Bateso, 2017) have been completed. These evidence a reduction in anxiety for 58 (45%) parents, 46 (35%) reported an increase in closeness to their baby. A large majority of parents 94% (122/130) reported they found the course helpful and enjoyable and 90% (17/130) would recommend the course to others. Most recently, a course for teenagers and parents of teenagers has been produced, to support understanding of child development and support needs of teenagers.

(6.4) The current pandemic has simultaneously increased the strain on families and reduced some school's capacity to manage Early Help cases, in particular step-downs from social care, which places a potential risk in the system for vulnerable children and young people, especially any not in an educational setting. Therefore, significant investment in Early Help was needed to reduce

the risk. Additional funding has been secured to introduce new Family Lead Practitioners into the current model. Adding in these extra resources will mean that educational settings can be better supported, ensuring children, young people and their family's needs are identified and supported. The Family Lead Practitioner will also more effectively catch the step-downs and ensure support is provided to prevent escalation of need and therefore, further reduce the pressures on statutory social care.

EDUCATION

- (6.5) It is important to note that schools retained and effectively implemented their roles and responsibilities around safeguarding. Teams from across the council and social care supported schools with safeguarding updates and welfare calls particularly over the Summer holiday period. The school system in Doncaster has responded in a collaborative and coordinated way to the challenges posed by this lockdown, and the overwhelming majority of schools remained open throughout this period providing childcare for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. A single point of communication was established called Edulog. Edulog is a two-way channel of communication where school leaders can ask for advice and support and has worked really well.
- (6.6) Doncaster adopted a place-based approach to wider reopening following regular discussion with school leaders, and with due regard to the latest advice from the Director of Public Health. The principle throughout has been that schools should only open when it is considered safe to do so. During June and July, schools worked closely with officers from Doncaster Council and external partners on a range of critical issues. This included ensuring sufficient Personal Protective Equipment, robust risk assessments, contingency plans for any outbreaks, blended learning offer and planning for the full September opening.

ATTENDANCE AND WELFARE

- (6.7) A dedicated welfare team from across the partnership was set-up, that quickly developed a single list of children and young people deemed vulnerable. Doncaster again took a place-based approach to broaden the criteria from just those shielding/ clinically extremely vulnerable) to include other vulnerabilities including children with special educational needs, those with complex care issues, elected home educated, children missing education and those known to the Family Hubs. Professionals who knew the child or family the best (often the lead practitioner) led on the welfare calls as they already had the relationships in place. There are two points to lift out of this comprehensive piece of work, the first being that schools were supported throughout the school holidays where they requested it, and any child or family at risk had a robust contingency plan in place regarding the flood risks in January 2021.
- (6.8) In line with the national picture, Doncaster saw a steep increase in the number of parents electing to home educate children, from September 2020. Following changes in working practices from before the start of Covid-19 and a re-shaping of service structure in March in order to anticipate the needs of the system, locality officers have been able to work with each case

proactively. They have worked all potential Elective Home Education notifications with schools and related agencies wherever possible and over 51 Elective Home Education cases (19%), have since returned to school, with many more prevented through early conversations with all parties. Welfare calls were made to these cohorts during the first lockdown and at intervals since. The numbers of Children Missing Education also rose from September with an increasing number of families becoming mobile over this period. Again, Local Authority officers have prioritised these cases and have used welfare calls to maintain contact where necessary, with a case closure rate of 89% (186 cases) over the autumn term. This meant that many of the most vulnerable and transient young people have been able to access a suitable education and safeguarding support within school settings.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

(6.9) Due to the restrictions of being able to observe children and young people performance in meeting the statutory 20-week deadline has fallen, due to a number of factors, including the difficulty of getting consultation responses from partners, in particular health, albeit that is understandable considering their current challenges. However, agencies are working well remotely and resourcefully to identify alternative means of consultation and engagement across agencies and with families, including the establishment of socially distanced face-to-face assessments. Regular conversations and meetings are being held with schools and providers to follow up consultation responses. Any continued delays are being discussed at a management level to ensure appropriate escalation and action. Some delays have been due to parents not being able to visit settings and are therefore hesitant to make preferences; the service is working with parents, young people and schools to ensure they can support them in having all the information available, including holding virtual reviews. The decline in performance continues to be a concern however, there has been a recent upturn in this with as the new approaches are having an impact.

SOCIAL CARE

(6.10) The increase in demand has led to an increase in caseloads. In recognition of this, increased capacity has been put into the system via additional funding agreed by Doncaster Council, in particular a fifth assessment team in the Front Door, which has added capacity for staff to complete robust assessments, commit to practice developments and reduce caseloads.

(6.11) As Doncaster entered into lockdown, every open case in the Trust was reviewed and RAG rated. This was to ensure they understood all their cases and could identify those children and families that may be most vulnerable. The Trust have been consistent in their planning for, reviewing of and completing statutory visits for Children in Care, including maintaining the usual visiting patterns, with the exception of those children in isolation and/or shielding, although these children were seen virtually. The Trust have maintained high levels of physical visiting by ensuring staff have adequate personal protective equipment and that social distancing was adhered to. Staff have been innovative in how they have engaged with children and families and have actively encouraged children to attend school where it is safe to do so, resulting in above national average attendance. At the start of

lockdown, fewer than 65 vulnerable children attended school, by mid-July and just prior to the summer holidays this had risen to 787. This meant more vulnerable children were accessing additional services, were being seen regularly by professionals, and families had respite from the long-term impact of national lockdown restrictions.

- (6.12) Multi-agency meetings continued but quickly became virtual, included Children in Need, Team around the Child and Core Groups, reviews.
- (6.13) Care leavers have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19. The Trust maintained contact virtually and through physical visits. Practical support was offered, including, the establishment of a food and provisions store in the early stage of lockdown. The Trust have decided to make this a permanent feature of their support and widened this, so it is accessible to all families receiving targeted or specialist support. An additional 7 Personal Advisors have been employed, which has helped to reduce average caseload from 28 in April 2020 to 23 in October 2020, with a target to reduce this further.
- (6.14) Prior to Covid, the Trust were quick to place children in Early Permanence Placements/adoption placements and are performing better than both the national and regional comparators at 36.3 days. However, indicator performance has been severely affected by Covid and the challenges are securing medical assessments and information, accessing drug and alcohol testing, carers being unwilling to meet prospective adopters.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH

- (6.15) Since the start of the pandemic last year, The Children and Adolescents Mental Health Team have continued to operate and provide their usual range of services. Young people accessing the service have been given the option of physical or virtual appointments, and home visits have taken place for the most vulnerable. The Looked After Children Team have continued to maintain the established Care Pathway for referrals; providing consultations, systemic interventions, and direct work.
- (6.16) During the pandemic the Mental Health Support Team 'With Me in Mind' service changed the way consultations, interventions and training were delivered to schools, The service quickly established a virtual platform to continue to offer consultations and interventions via a multitude of virtual platforms. In order to meet the needs of children/young people and their families they extended the trailblazer offer to all schools, even though it is specifically linked to certain schools as a wave one trailblazer site. This was extremely helpful in supporting schools around emerging issues and giving them support mechanisms. It was also recognised that the usual evidence based therapeutic interventions needed to be extended from 4-6 sessions to 8/10 sessions, due to increased anxiety in children/young people linked to continued isolation.
- (6.17) In response to Covid 19, the Clinical Care Commissioning Group formed a Children's Health Subgroup across the Health System to understand the pressures on the systems within health. Discussions were had around presentations of children and young people presenting with Social and Emotional Mental Health in A&E and it was agreed that a formal group would

be developed to lead on this area of work moving forward. The group has been established since May 2020 and continue to meet on a weekly basis in order to support children and young people across Doncaster. The role of the group is to review children and young people with social emotional and / or mental health needs who are at risk of hospitalisation or placement breakdown. For those children and young people that are in hospital, the group review discharge planning as a means of reducing any potential risk within the community and prevent further hospital admission. The group provides clear accountability and focus that supports Case Managers in risk assessment and care planning. There is excellent partnership involvement in this group.

- (6.18) A separate broad multi-agency group has been convened to prepare and deliver the 'Young People's Mental Health in Schools' strategy. This group has consisted of all health agencies parents and young people's groups, children's social care, Early Help, commissioning teams, school nursing, outreach, psychology, early years, school improvement, special needs and inclusion teams. This group is developing further resources to support school responsiveness, developing communication strategies and ensuring further join up and removal of barriers. This group has done an excellent job in connecting mental health support services to schools.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

- (6.19) The Domestic Abuse Chief Officers Group leads on domestic abuse for the partnership and the membership was reviewed and bolstered with children and young people representatives from across the partnership. The group are in the process of reviewing the strategy and have commissioned the development of a new dashboard, that is still emerging at the time of writing. The dashboard is able to provide intelligence on the developmental age ranges of children and young people and their place of residence. There are 7 priority areas for the group, with 2 having a specific focus on children and young people. These are to understand the emerging data and intelligence, around children living in households experiencing domestic abuse, and if there are any gaps in service provision.
- (6.20) A working group was established to look at the priority areas and have completed a significant amount of work to understand the data, and are now confident that partners know where all children are and that the process for referring these into services is working. The process has recently been improved through developments at the Social Care Front Door and better partnership working and sharing of information.
- (6.21) The working group identified that there is a gap in providing support to the whole family, and in particular trauma informed practice. Funding has been agreed through the Mayoral Sprint Plan and services will be put in place to fill this gap. The services include extra Domestic Abuse Navigators to provide whole family, trauma informed support, extra training sessions to increase workforce knowledge and the development of community champions.

LOCALITY DELIVERY – Going Forward

- (6.22) Within Team Doncaster, there is a notable strategic drive towards implementing a multi-agency locality delivery model in the borough. This

would mean an integrated approach to service delivery across the borough, with priority given to providing services within communities and tailoring offers to meet need at a hyper local level. The current plans include 4 strands of work that are at different stages of development and will be layered into one another to create the final model. Those strands are centred on social isolation, frailty, town centre management, and finally vulnerable children and families.

- (6.23) This last strand is central to managing demand on statutory services within children’s social care and providing quick access to holistic early intervention and prevention services at a community level to meet need earlier and manage vulnerability more effectively. The vulnerable children and families strand, currently being piloted in areas of the South locality builds on learning and experiences of the Local Solutions Model that the borough has used to, among other things, respond to flooding in 2019 and the pandemic in 2020. This evolution of the model incorporates work from the community safety agenda; so, alongside working with teams such as children’s social care, early help, education, child and adolescent mental health services, health visiting service, and family hubs the vulnerable families’ pilot also incorporates representatives from the Communities Team, St. Leger Homes, and South Yorkshire Police.
- (6.24) Combined into community based “local solutions teams” covering Edlington, Mexborough, and Conisbrough and Denaby, these practitioners are working together to identify children and families who need support and to develop community level responses to meet those needs and manage those vulnerabilities effectively. This incorporates cases that range from providing information, advice, and guidance, through to supporting complex cases that require a holistic multi-agency response. It also enables practitioners from all disciplines to play an integral role in developing and informing community plans to address endemic and acute place-based issues. By combining both of these functions into one, the partnership will have a better understanding of the people and the places they are employed to support and will be able to make better use of the staff and resources in those communities to provide integrated, multi-disciplinary support that address the needs of a family and the context which they are operating in.
- (6.25) As the pilot progresses and the learning and experiences of the practitioners involved are taken on board, this approach will be rolled out across the borough. This will then act as the foundational piece of our Locality Delivery Model and have the other elements layered on top of it as they are developed.

RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

(6.26) The Improvement Board – Established in November 2020

During the autumn term it became evident that vulnerable children were less well served by Team Doncaster children’s agencies in comparison to a year ago. The November floods followed by the Covid-19 pandemic have created additional needs in the communities Doncaster serves, and complex partnership challenges have been exacerbated. Immediate action was taken by the partnership and established the **Partnership Improvement Board to oversee the Recovery and Resilience Plan** for the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership. It is independently chaired and aims to:

- reset the partnership approach to improvement,
- holding each organisation and agency to account, with the goal of getting the basics right,
- buy time for the Doncaster Children’s Safeguarding Partnership to re-establish itself in a post COVID-19 climate.

(6.27) It is envisaged that the Improvement Board will be in place for 12 months. These are the priorities agreed by the Partners for this time limited Improvement Board with a clear exit strategy and handover to the DSCP as sufficient progress is being made:

- **The Partnership Front Door** – To ensure CYPF receive the right service at the right time, through accurate assessment and strength and relationship-based approaches
- **Partnership Early Help** – To ensure the Doncaster’s early intervention and prevention offer is effective, local, visible and easily accessible, and works collaboratively with children, young people, their families and communities
- **Front line safeguarding practice** – To ensure there is an established system to Establish a clear line sight, communication and reporting cycle between frontline practitioners to the IB so that practice experiences, concerns, challenges and innovations can be promptly identified and acted on. To support staff across the partnership to provide effective front-line practice, that is underpinned by quality assurance systems and processes. The partnership is committed to being a learning one that supports staff development and excellence.
- **Performance and Continuous improvement framework** – To ensure the establishment of a unified performance and quality framework will allow senior leaders to assess system efficacy, streamlines monitoring arrangements, and sets standards for practice, leadership, and accountability. It will embed and inform a unified understanding of need and vulnerabilities in communities and empower staff at an operational and strategic level to drive improvements and shape services to meet those needs and vulnerabilities.
- **Effective Leadership and Governance fit for and responsive to a COVID recovery climate** – To ensure a coherent, streamlined, multi-agency governance structure that enables a culture of collaboration, innovation, transparency, and accountability for all aspects of the system and at all levels of the partnership. This is accompanied by a commitment to leadership, at both the operational and strategic levels, that works across organisational barriers to create and drive a vision for the future and models the behaviours required to embed cultural improvements and embrace positive change.

(6.28) Children’s Partnership agencies have remained committed to mobilising and ensuring quick responses to emergent issues arising from the Boroughs challenges. The Partnership has acted quickly to implement adaptive and transitional improvements to a number of the priorities areas identified above.

(6.29) There is a real commitment across the partnership towards recovery and response, and an acknowledgement that some things may either take a long time to return to how they were, or that some things may never return. The

impacts on children and young people may be long lasting and the best approach, is for the partnership to stay responsive and pro-active in identifying need and providing support at the earliest possible stage.

7. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

(7.1) This section is not applicable

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

(8.1) This section is not applicable

9. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Implications
<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>The continued availability of education during the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled key workers to access childcare to continue with their vital roles in Doncaster's key services.</p> <p>The recovery curriculum approach and stronger partnership working between key agencies aims to provide local children and young people with the skills and competencies to access local employment and/or ignite interests that allow them to access further education locally.</p>
<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>Improved outcomes along with early access to high quality multi agency services help all children and young people make the most of opportunities offered by the borough.</p>
<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in 	<p>The recovery curriculum approach aims to ensure children access meaningful education opportunities that exercises and promotes life-long learning.</p> <p>The further development of The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 will ensure that every child and young person is well prepared to meet future challenges.</p>

<p>Doncaster Schools that are good or better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Effective multi agency working will ensure that the most vulnerable children and young people have opportunities to thrive and learn.</p>
<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Improved outcomes help children to make the best possible start in life.</p> <p>The emphasis on equity and diversity will ensure that no section of the borough's population is left behind.</p> <p>Joint partnership working will ensure that the most vulnerable children and young people receive the support they need</p>
<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The work contained within this report relating to safeguarding and wider partnership working will enable all our children and young people to benefit from improved outcomes and opportunities.</p>

10. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

(10.1) **Reputational Risk:** There is a risk to the council that not safeguarding and supporting our most vulnerable children and young people would result in a lack of opportunities and prevent this group of children and young people from meeting their full potential. The added pressures on schools and settings caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic further compounds this risk. The collaborative approach across the school system will help to mitigate these risks.

(10.2) **Financial Risk:** There is a risk of increasing pressure on other council resources due to limited educational and social opportunities for this group of vulnerable children and young people. Extra Funding provided during the pandemic will help mitigate this risk.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: SRF Date: 26/02/21]

(11.1) There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Focused legal advice can be provided to the panel on any matters arising.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: DB Date: 26/02/21]

(12.1) There are no specific financial implications arising as a direct result of this report. All budget pressures identified within the council throughout 2020/21, including as a result of Covid-19, have been captured and reported throughout the year and included within the quarterly finance and performance improvement cabinet reports. Identified future years budget pressures have been included within the 2021/22 council budget setting process and will continue to be monitored and reported as part of ongoing financial monitoring by budget holders and directorate leadership team, with the support of financial management.

13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: JC Date: 26/02/21]

(13.1) There are no HR implications associated with this report.

14. TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: NR Date: 26/02/21]

(14.1) There are many existing technical solutions within Doncaster's Digital solution that could assist in the objectives above, it's paramount that wherever technical requirements are identified the appropriate process is followed to ensure we first utilise the existing technologies and investments to their maximum, reduce duplication, increase integration and data sharing opportunity. A small example of these technologies would be:

- DIPs – Synergy (Schools integration and Educational Modules)
- Local Covid-19 case management solution with integration to Citizens, Central Government and PowerBI for reporting.
- Early intervention (Multi Agency Access) development underway with Localities to create an integrated response.
- MS teams and O365 for Secure collaboration (including Document management) and virtual meeting with Citizens, staff and partners.
- Complex Live (Multi Agency Access / view) Awarding win solution that is used across partners.
- Stronger Family existing solution for managing cases.
- IDCR (Integrated Digital Care Record) used across all the main Doncaster Social Care and Health Care Partners.
- DIPS (CPIS integration and NHS number integration)

(14.2) In addition, Security/Information Governance must be applied with a particular focus around Social media engagement, due to the nature and potential sensitivity of the conversations and the information within them.

15. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: CW Date: 26.02.21]

(15.1) The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health and wellbeing of children and young people may not be fully realised for years to come, but early indications are that poor mental and emotional health has also most certainly increased during the pandemic. Children have been forced to be at home in potentially volatile situations without usual support systems. The pandemic has created additional stresses on families which may lead to them requiring additional support. Previous, existing and emerging safeguarding issues are

of particular concern for our most vulnerable children.

(15.2) The report describes how vulnerable children have been supported throughout the pandemic with welfare calls and support with free school meals. Support to return to education settings since the lifting of restrictions is also described. Improving accessibility and attendance to education is likely to have a protective effect and support the educational attainment and health and wellbeing outcomes of these children.

(15.3) The Covid-19 pandemic has placed an enormous strain on our health services. Despite this, the report describes the effective partnership working with health services throughout, and the support partners have provided for each other to ensure vital services for children and families have continued. Moving into the recovery phase, it is important to consider the expectations and ask on our health services. Whilst there is no doubt of the importance of endeavours such as the Local Solutions Groups, care must be taken to ensure that health services have the capacity to partake in such asks and are not diverted away from other important functions.

16. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: PR Date: 21 /02/21]

(16.1) Improved provision in all services will ensure that all children's education and development continue to benefit; this will increase and strengthen our Local Offer and support our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

(16.2) The Council's duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising its functions to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic, ensures fair access to learning, opportunities and support for all Doncaster's children and young people.

17. CONSULTATION

(17.1) During the Covid-19 pandemic, all services have continued to work together in consultation with officers across the council; including Finance and key officers from the Learning Organisation: Children and Young People.

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

(18.1) This section is not applicable

19. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

(19.1) None

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