



**The FINAL Report for
Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board
(NSCB)**

April 2018 – June 2019



Introduction from Independent Chair, Keith Makin

This is my fourth and final report covering the work of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board.

In June 2018, the Government (informed by *The Wood Report* that they had commissioned) published *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*, which introduced new partnership arrangements to safeguard children and in doing so formally ended the statutory guidance that covered the roles and responsibilities of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.



Focus on building the new partnership started in August 2018 with an aim to publish the new arrangements by the end of June 2019 hence the period of this report being April 2018 to June 2019. These changes will help to further build on and strengthen existing partner agency safeguarding arrangements in Northamptonshire.

In my previous report, I highlighted a number of priorities for this year including reducing the number of tier 4 referrals by increasing the take up of Early Help. This continues to be a priority and as the new arrangements come into effect so will the creation of an Early Help Sub Group to monitor and review the partnerships proposals and services to address this key area.

- The timeliness of single assessments continues to be monitored by the Local Authority leading a significant piece of work to review and refresh Thresholds and Pathways and to transform the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- In terms of children and young people repeatedly being subject to Child Protection Plans the Local Authority has initiated a review of its Safeguarding Quality and Assurance Service.

Keeping Children and Young People safe is at the heart of our work and there has been a significant rise in the number of young people at risk of exploitation through organised criminal activity. Extensive work has been undertaken to identify the extent of this issue, which will remain the key priority for the new Safeguarding Partnership.

Managing the arrangements for the transition from Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership as set out in the [transition document](#).

Two high profile Serious Case Reviews were published in June 2019 which identified significant learning on behalf of various agencies. The new Safeguarding Partnership is committed to driving through changes in practice to increase the protection and outcomes for children and young people in the county.

Finally, as I step down from my role as Independent Chair in June 2019, whilst the partnership still has a long journey of improvement ahead of them, I would like to thank partner agencies and colleagues for their commitment and efforts to making a difference to the children, young people and their families of Northamptonshire.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Makin', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Keith Makin
Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board Chair, June 2019

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1. What is Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board?

Statutory and Legal Context

Up to June 2018, all Local Authorities are required to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in accordance with Section 13 and the objectives set out in Section 14 of the [Children Act 2004](#).

Regulation 5 of the [Local Safeguarding Board Regulations 2006](#) sets out LSCB duties.

The LSCB is not an operational body and therefore has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children and their families. The LSCB's responsibilities are to hold partner agencies to account for their safeguarding arrangements and ensure the quality of those arrangements through policy, guidance, setting standards and monitoring.

The delivery of services to children and their families is the responsibility of the partners – the commissioning and provider agencies, not the LSCB itself.

The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017. The Act will abolish LSCBs, replacing them with Safeguarding Partnerships. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was published in July 2018. Section 16 of The Children and Social Work Act 2017 amends the Section 16D of the Children Act 2004 Act.

These duties are further clarified in the statutory guidance: [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2018](#), Chapter 3 (WT 2018).

How the NSCB functions

The Board has a 24 month Business Plan usually refreshed each March for the start of the new financial year. The Business Plan sets out the Board's priorities for 2017-2019.

The Business Plan 2019-21 for the new safeguarding arrangements was developed in November 2018 to help inform and in readiness for the transition in July 2019.

The Board met on a monthly basis until February 2019. The final Board meeting took place on 27th June to present the new safeguarding arrangements.

The Sub Groups of the NSCB are:

- Child Death Overview Panel
- Serious Case Review
- Quality Assurance
- Child Exploitation
- Learning and Development



2. The Voice of Children and Young People

The safety and welfare of children and young people is at the heart of all our work and focused on hearing and understanding children and young people's own voices to achieve this. The NSCB has talked directly to children and young people through their educational setting. This will continue to be strengthened under the new partnership arrangements with more regular meetings with children and young people through a variety of settings.

The primary aged children spoken to were all very responsive and keen to talk about their concerns. They were extremely knowledgeable of "gangs" naming several who live in the same areas as them. They have a vivid description of "gang members" and said they are frightened when they see them.

...wear black clothes and balaclavas and have their hoods up ... they ride motorbikes and hang out about where we live and in the underpasses...I am scared of walking past them...

...my mum said people can come up to you and be nice and offer you nice things ... that is how they get you to join them...

...they shout and swear and play loud music ... they go in my park and I am too frightened to go and play there with my friends...

...I'm scared – I went to the shop with my Grandad and there was a group drinking, smoking and smashing glasses – I told my Grandpa I didn't want to walk down there..."

Another significant concern for the children is litter and they are worried younger children may pick it up and the effect litter has on the environment and animals. All the children enjoy playing in their local parks, but they are strewn with litter and it is left on the play equipment.

...can I pick up the plastic bottle daddy as the whale might eat it...?

...I once saw a dirty nappy on a roundabout in the park and we didn't want to play on it...

...in the town centre there is rubbish everywhere and I don't like it...

...I've seen 20 people go round picking up rubbish but everyone in the county needs to do it...

The children said they get upset and worried about people smoking and the damage it can do to them and to younger children if they walk past someone smoking. They recognised when people smoke drugs due to seeing drugs paraphernalia in litter.

When talking about on-line safety and social media all the children clearly understood the risks posed. Most had their own mobile phone and understood it was for use to play games and keep in touch with their family or friends. None of them would answer their phones from a withheld or unknown number.

The children were asked what could help them feel safer:

"...more police officers ...there are not enough to go around ...I have only ever seen two ..."

...everyone in Northamptonshire picks up litter...

... security guards at the parks we like to play in ... they would keep us and our parents safe from gangs with knives who threaten us ...

...more security cameras...

...making smoking illegal...

We spoke to secondary aged children from year 7 through to Sixth form who expressed their thoughts and fears.

They acknowledged how younger children felt about gangs and the descriptions they had given. Sixth formers reflected that being much older than the primary aged children, they perceive "gangs" very differently and described there being two very different groups – those young people "just wanting to hang out" and those who pose a danger. They spoke of particular locations within the county where they would not feel so safe suggesting some of these areas are less affluent than others. They echoed the primary aged children's observations of the volume of litter in the county and highlighted fly-tipping as being unsightly and an increasing problem.

The older students now spend time in the town centre of an evening but felt, at times, in vulnerable situations. They acknowledged the police initiatives and campaigns to reduce crime and tackle drink driving.

I like going into town with my friends of an evening ...but not when we are approached by drunk men...

"There are some dark alleyways off the town centre that I would not feel safe walking down".

The students use social media, particularly YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat, to learn about topics such as radicalisation and how to look after themselves. They do not consider Northampton to be very multi-cultural with few activities accessible to young people who are not Christian.

In general, they felt summer activities for young people are limited – particularly free activities and those not centred on usual common sports. They felt they would be more inclined to take up new activities and different sports if they were available.

...The police used to put on martial arts groups...

...going to the cinema ... dance sessions ... photography classes ... are all just too expensive".

There appeared to be a general feeling that there is no point in approaching professionals as "they don't listen and don't help..."

...you contact the police and they don't do anything...

...you go to hospital and wait for hours for nothing...

...you go to the doctor and just get given antibiotics...

Speaking to the children and young people, it is clear "gangs" is a huge concern for the younger children but can also leave older students feeling vulnerable. Chapter 3 details the initiatives taken so far to understand and address this increasing problem in the county and as the NSCB transitions in to a safeguarding partnership there will be a full day conference in September 2019 focusing on child exploitation and organised crime involving children and young people. The event will also support the launch of the Youth Offending Services campaign around "Knives Save Lives" and the work of the Community Initiatives Reducing Violence (*page 7*).

Northamptonshire Police are advised of the children and young people's views regarding their service and the Community Safety Partnerships are asked to consider their comments about litter and fly-tipping.

Engaging young people is core to all professionals and health colleagues are advised of the young people's feelings and asked to look at how they work with young people to ensure they feel listened to, supported and provide assurance of their own internal processes to ensure young people are engaged.

As we progress through 2019-20, we will continue to seek children and young people's views and also challenge our partners as to how these challenges can be addressed within the services provided in the county and through new initiatives that will be monitored and updates will be provided in our report – that will be the first as a Safeguarding Partnership.



3. What the NSCB has done to support agencies to keep children safe

Scrutiny, evaluation and monitoring of safeguarding data

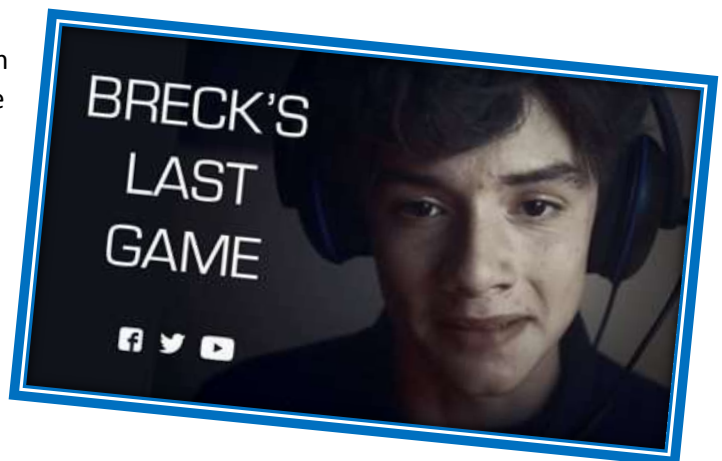
- The NSCB Scorecard and Dataset has been reviewed and simplified to allow better interpretation, scrutiny and challenge of data. Further revision is required to ensure the capture of data is relevant
- The process for Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACAs) now follows the Signs of Safety model to identify good practice as well as areas for improvement. During the period, three MACAs have been undertaken.
- The Section 175 Schools audit was distributed in June 2019 for completion by September 2019. Additional questions for the key priorities of concern in the county (child exploitation) have been added to allow a holistic picture of the concerns to be identified.
- An audit was developed and distributed to the Voluntary Sector and Faith Organisations utilising Survey Monkey as a tool to complete a short questionnaire. The initial response has been poor so the questionnaire is being re-sent during 2019-20.
- A new Learning and Improvement Framework template has been developed using the Signs of Safety methodology which helps provide focused responses and a solid base for partner agencies to reflect on within their organisations. This tool will be completed on a bi-annual basis.

Elective Home Education

- There number of children and young people who are home educated has doubled in the past four years. Various reports have been requested and considered to understand this vulnerable cohort of children and young people with the findings disseminated across the partnership and discussed within various agency safeguarding forums including GPs and Designated Safeguarding Leads for education.

Child Exploitation

- The volume of crimes with a child victim saw an increase in the last quarter with March 2019 recording 588 offences.
- There has been a significant increase in gang activity across the county and is a key priority for the safeguarding partnership through 2019-20. Various reports have been requested and considered to develop an understanding of the issues and advise agencies.
- Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group has created a very successful training course regarding child exploitation with a focus on serious crime and gang related activity. This has been very positively received by health professionals and is now rolled out in kind across the partnership through the facilitation of the NSCB.
- This issue remains a focus as the NSCB transitions into a safeguarding partnership and is the focus of the conference scheduled for September 2019.
- The NSCB has supported a Child Exploitation assessment by the Local Authority and Police which has helped inform
- A Child Sexual Exploitation referral form has been developed with RISE to ensure appropriate cases are referred.
- A Child Exploitation Assessment was commissioned by the Local Authority and included Northamptonshire Police to provide an update on the previous partnership assessment on Child Exploitation.
- The NSCB has promoted and supported the roll out of 'Breck's Last Game' across schools in the county.



Learning from Serious Case Reviews

- The NSCB continues to disseminate learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), in the form of 6 step briefings available on the NSCB website [here](#), across the partnership. These bite size briefings are discussed in team

meetings and are available on the NSCB website. Examples of good practice include discussion 6 step briefings at Designated Safeguarding Lead Forums and GP Forums with positive and robust debate.

- Two high profile SCRs were published in June 2019 and caused considerable media interest. The publications were handled very sensitively with careful consideration given to the children and families involved who were fully informed of the findings. Practitioner de-briefs were held immediately prior to publication to inform professionals of the findings.
- A Learning from SCRs presentation is available and training is facilitated across the partnership by members of the SCR Sub Group. Practitioners are encouraged to discuss and feedback on learning from the individual cases presented.
- A further SCR was concluded but due to the vulnerabilities of the children involved the decision was taken not to publish the review. However, a 6 step briefing was created to inform practitioners of the learning.

Rapid Review process

- In accordance with Working Together 2018, a Rapid Review process was implemented in December 2018.
- Whilst every referral received for consideration of a review is managed by collating information from all agencies and then a recommendation being made by the SCR Sub Group to the NSCB Independent Chair, this was extended to include all Local Authority Serious Incident Notifications (SIN).
- Due to the increase in cases requiring a Rapid Review, these were conducted by the three strategic lead representatives sitting on the SCR Sub Group.
- Since 1st December 2018, 14 requests for consideration of a review have been received – six of those being SIN notifications.

Training opportunities

- 2018/19 has been a challenging year in terms of the training offered by the Board. A suite of e-learning courses has been available and there continues to be a good uptake with over 6,500 learners completing one of the courses offered. Education colleagues are very pro-active in undertaking the courses available.
- Face-to-face training has not been available partly due to budget constraints and also a shift in approach to provide face-to-face training from identified need. The NSCB supported the roll out of Signs of Safety in the county and will continue to support this as we head into the next year.
- There has been a focus on looking at what in-kind training can be offered by key partners in moving forward through 2019-20 and an extensive training programme has been developed and agreed.
- The NSCB has supported facilitation an external provider to deliver on-line training across the partnership with particularly good representation by schools.

Neglect

- Of the 12,000 single Assessments undertaken in a year period (2017-19), 2,000 identified neglect as a feature and was the 3rd issue ranking in prevalence.
- Those young people with Neglect identified are twice as likely to have socially unacceptable behaviour, twice as likely to suffer from substance and alcohol misuse. They are three times as likely to have a parent or carer whom suffers from alcohol misuse and four times as likely to have a parent or carer whom suffers from drug misuse.
- They are also twice as likely to have missing episodes, more than likely to be in the 13-17 years old age group. They are also twice as likely to suffer from CSE, twice as likely to be female and twice as likely to have mental health concerns. They are also three times more likely to have mental health issues within their household, twice as likely to self-harm and twice as likely to have domestic violence concerns within their household.
- Since the launch of the new Neglect Toolkit using the Graded Care Profile, the NSCB has continued to promote and monitor the use of the toolkit by all partner agencies.

Tea Break Guides

- The NSCB has continued to create and build upon its suite of tea-break guides to give practitioners a summary on a range of prominent safeguarding issues. There are now currently 20 available to view [here](#).

4. Supporting Initiatives

Reducing Parental Conflict

Supporting the work of Troubled Families Programme to undertake a review of understanding of the impact of reducing parental conflict on children. Following receipt of a strategic grant, the NSCB has circulated the Early Intervention Foundation survey relating to the strategic position of partners to gather information to support the use of the EIF Planning Tool. This has been followed by a partner-wide workshop, supported through the L&D Sub Group to gather further information regarding partnership commitment to reducing parental conflict.

Transformation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- Following identification of concerns, including those raised by partners, and a critical Ofsted focussed visit in October 2018, accelerated actions were put in place to implement a new MASH model with associated changes to the First Response Teams (FRTs).
- Whilst there remains a considerable journey to improve these arrangements, significant measures have already been taken to refresh and roll out the threshold document, supported by NSCB and informed by Working Together 2018, to 'champions' who will cascade the training within their own organisations.
- 2019-20 will see ongoing monitoring for a more consistent application of threshold.
- As of 4th January 2019, there were no unallocated cases. Workers continue to have high caseloads but they are being managed better with a future goal to reduce caseloads per worker.
- The Early Help Assessment has been updated to incorporate the Signs of Safety terminology.
- Access to Early Help advice is now available through a 'self-serve' online form, available to both professionals and families.

Thresholds and Pathways

Whilst there remains a considerable journey to improve these arrangements, significant measures have already been taken to refresh and roll out the threshold document, supported by NSCB and informed by Working Together 2018, to 'champions' who will cascade the training within their own organisations.

Community Initiative Reducing Crime (CIRV)

The NSCB is supporting the work of CIRV that has links to communities, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and other such services to provide a co-ordinated support offer specifically focussing on prevention of violence and drug dealing offences. A 24/7 self-referral line is available. Data from this new initiative will be part of the dataset analysed in the coming year.



Missing Children and Young People

There has been a significant increase in the recorded volume of missing children on COMPACT with March recording the highest ever volume of 189 reports. Changes to the force policy have led to more children being identified as MISPERS and will be responded to as medium risk or above. There has been considerable focus on improving the number of Independent Return Interviews (IRI), an area that will require ongoing focus and review.

5. Plans for July 2019-March 2020

The three Key Priorities for the Safeguarding Partnership to be taken forward are:

Taking positive action early enough to protect children.

- Ensure a greater understanding and consistent application of Thresholds cross the partnership with a particular focus on Tier 2.
- Revise current Thresholds and Pathways document to reflect Signs of Safety approach.
- Ensure Thresholds training is available across the partnership.
- Strengthen the partnership response in implementing an information process for young people caught up in Domestic Abuse at an earlier stage (within 72 working hours).

To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation.

- Support the partnership to develop an Integrated Adolescent offer and develop a process to scrutinise the offer.
- Promote and encourage a roll out of appropriate gang training across all schools. Commission a review of the partnership response to Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Support and promote intervention to prevent young people from joining gangs.
- Proactively support initiatives to reduce harm to children and young people caused by knife crime.

To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff.

- Promote the work of the NSCP.
- Clarify and strengthen how different partnership groups work together and relate to one another.
- Strengthen and encourage in-kind training across the partnership. Support staff to know how to escalate issues effectively and promote the NSCP Escalation Policy.
- Employ an Independent Scrutineer who will Chair the Quality & Governance Sub Group.
- Hold every Strategic Lead meeting in a different school and include the School Council to hear and listen to the voice of young people.
- Promote examples where agencies have effectively worked together for a positive outcome.
- Continue to promote and facilitate Learning from Serious Case Reviews.



Appendix 1 – SCRs and other types of review

A number of referrals have been considered for a type of review over the period covered by this report:

Number of referrals received April 2018 – June 2019 = 18	
Number of Serious Case Reviews initiated	1
Number of Case Mapping Exercises / Learning Reviews initiated	2
No further action	8
Number to be processed and considered	7

Appendix 2 – Child Death figures

April 2018- June 2019 saw a total of 53 child deaths.

Of these, 9 deaths were considered unexpected:

Category of death	
Road Traffic Collision	1
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy	2
Medical reasons	3
Homicide	3
Unknown	1
Total	9

Gender of unexpected deaths:	
Male	4
Female	5

Ethnicity of unexpected deaths:	
White British	7
Mixed	1
Asian	1

Appendix 3 – Financial Contributions

Partner contributions for the period April 2018-March 2019

Balance of partners' funds brought forward from 2017-18	136,998
Nene CCG	61,054
Corby CCG	4,895
Northamptonshire County Council	48,949
The Police & Crime commissioner for Northamptonshire	23,931
Northampton Borough Council	2,749
Kettering Borough Council	1,173
Borough Council of Wellingborough	942
South Northamptonshire Council	1,031
Daventry District Council	913
East Northamptonshire District Council	1,067
Corby County Council	826
St Andrews Healthcare	2,320
Rainsbrook STC	906
CAFCASS	309
BeNCH CRC	725
National Probation Service	725
Moulton College	290
Schools Consultative Forums (DSG)	14,518
2018-19 Partner contributions total	167,323
Total funds available in 2018-19	304,321