

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board  
**Annual Report 2014/15**



## Foreword from the Chair

### Welcome to the 2014–15 Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB).

This is my second Annual Report as Chair of the NSCB and this report gives an overview of the work the NSCB and its partner agencies have delivered to ensure that the Children and Young People of Northamptonshire are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. The report provides details of the issues faced by partners this year, as well as the progress made by the NSCB in coordinating and driving safeguarding work.

This year the Board has continued to work alongside the Northamptonshire Improvement Board, which was established in November 2013. This Board was formed under the Department for Education's Direction Notice, to ensure that the necessary improvements required following the Ofsted Inspections are realised and maintained. The Improvement Board has three priorities, set around 1) Early Help, 2) Child Protection and Assessments and 3) Looked After Children Services. Within these objectives the impact and role of the NSCB is crucial in delivering change. Significant progress has been made but there is still more for the NSCB and its partners to improve upon and deliver against.

Last year I set out key priorities for the Board. I am confident that progress has been made in understanding these priorities and improving safeguarding activity in Northamptonshire, as this Annual Report demonstrates. Working closely with Northamptonshire's Independent Improvement Board Chair, I have identified the following as key areas of focus for the next 12 months (in some circumstances, these are a continuation of last year's themes simply because more work needs to be done). The priorities are:

- The continued engagement of all partners with Full Board, Executive Steering Group and Sub Groups of the Safeguarding Children Board;
- The ongoing strategic challenge around service developments to safeguarding children, with particular focus upon:
  - Child Sexual Exploitation;
  - Domestic Abuse;
  - Information Sharing mechanisms across the partnership;
  - Homelessness (children and families);
  - Understanding Neglect in Northamptonshire;
- The continuation of NSCB Young People's Sub Group;
- Raising education and awareness of privately fostered children; and
- Promoting the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer within Northamptonshire.

This year we have focused on improvements around how we communicate. A major part of this has been the development of the new NSCB website. The website includes a greater depth of information for professionals, parents/carers and in particular has a focus on young people. It has been designed to be interesting and informative, easy to navigate and has the flexibility to be updated at any time with topical information and news. I encourage you to visit the site and sign up to receive our monthly e-bulletin.

[www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk)



**Keith Makin**  
Chair of Northamptonshire  
Safeguarding Children Board

## Contents

<b>Chapter 1:</b>		
<b>Northamptonshire in Context</b>	<b>4</b>	
• Local Demographics	4	
• Vulnerable Groups	4	
• Children in Need	4	
• Children with a Child Protection Plan	5	
• Looked After Children (LAC)	5	
• Children who are Privately Fostered	5	
• Disabled Children	6	
• Young People who Offend or are at Risk of Offending	6	
• Children who are at Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children (CSE)	6	
• Young People with Mental Health Issues	6	
• Local Trends	6	
<b>Chapter 2:</b>		
<b>Governance and Accountability Arrangements</b>	<b>7</b>	
• What is the NSCB?	7	
• Our Objectives	7	
• Organisation of NSCB	8	
• Executive Support Group	9	
• NSCB Structure	10	
• Key Roles	11	
• Key Relationships	11	
• Communications	12	
• Measuring Performance	12	
• Financial Arrangements	13	
<b>Chapter 3:</b>		
<b>Overview of Progress over 2014-15</b>	<b>14</b>	
• Early Help and Prevention	14	
• MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)	15	
• Children's Centres	17	
• Work With Schools	18	
• Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	19	
• Young People who Self Harm	20	
• Interpersonal Violence	20	
• Licensing Applications	21	
• Safeguarding Disabled Children	21	
• Young People who Offend or are at Risk of Offending	21	
<b>Chapter 4:</b>		
<b>Progress Reports from Sub Groups</b>	<b>22</b>	
• Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing	22	
• Quality Assurance (QA)	22	
• Responding to Revised Statutory Guidance (Policy & Procedures Sub Group)	24	
• Workforce Learning & Development Sub Group	25	
• Young People's NSCB	26	
<b>Chapter 5:</b>		
<b>What Happens When a Child Dies or is Seriously Harmed in Northamptonshire?</b>	<b>27</b>	
• Child Death Reviews	27	
• Serious Case Reviews	27	
<b>Chapter 6:</b>		
<b>Challenges Ahead and Future Priorities</b>	<b>29</b>	
• National Drivers	29	
• Annual Safeguarding Children Conference – July 2015	29	
• NSCB Business Plan 2015–17	30	
<b>Chapter 7:</b>		
<b>What Next for Child Protection in Northamptonshire?</b>	<b>31</b>	
• Key Messages	31	
<b>Board Membership List</b>	<b>34</b>	

## Chapter 1 – Northamptonshire in Context



### Local Demographics

Northamptonshire is a county of average size (based on population). The current population estimate is 706,647, of which approximately 173,973 are children and young people aged 0–19 (25%), (Office for National Statistics, 2012 mid Year Estimates). Northamptonshire has a predominantly white ethnic population with 83.2% of children aged 0–19 of White British ethnicity and 95.5% of children aged 3–14 whose first language is English (Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census). The county is a mix of urban and rural populations, with areas of affluence and areas of significant deprivation. 57 areas in Northamptonshire are among the most deprived in the country (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010).

### Vulnerable Groups

This Annual Report starts by looking at the categories of children and young people in Northamptonshire who have been identified by the Local Authority and other agencies, as in need of protection as they are vulnerable. These categories are not exhaustive and many factors such as going missing from home and living in households where there is domestic abuse, substance misuse and/or parents with mental illness can place children at increased risk of harm from abuse and/or neglect.

### Children in Need

The Children in Need total caseload was 4,859 in March 2015, this compares to 4,709 in March 2014. Despite this increase, Social Worker caseloads are significantly lower than last year, with the majority of workers having 11–20 cases as at March 2015. There are plans to change and simplify access to Early Help support and there is now improved Early Help support in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It is expected that the strengthened Early Help support will help to stabilise the caseloads in 2015–16.

## Children with a Child Protection Plan

Children who have a Child Protection Plan (CPP) are considered to be in need of protection from either neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or a combination of one or more of these. The CPP details the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce these concerns and by whom, and how we will know when progress is being made. At the end of March 2014 the numbers reached 777 (a 63% increase from the previous year). At the end of March 2015 this figure was 993, which is an increase of 28% from 2014 and is significantly higher than comparable areas. It is recognised that the national and local trends may reflect greater pressures on families, however in Northamptonshire this increase is probably a direct consequence of the 'inadequate' rating the Council received for its Ofsted Inspection of Children who need Help and Protection in March 2013, and the ongoing improvements in Northamptonshire.

## Looked After Children (LAC)

Looked After Children are those looked after by the Local Authority. Only after exploring every possibility of protecting a child at home will the Local Authority seek a parent's consent or a Court decision to move a child away from his or her family. Such decisions, whilst incredibly difficult, are made when it is in the best interest of the child. There were 935 Looked After Children at the end of March 2015, compared with 827 at the end of March 2014; this represents a 13% increase in the year.

## Children who are Privately Fostered

Parents may make their own arrangements for their children to live away from home. These are privately fostered children. The Local Authority must be notified of these arrangements. At the end of March 2015 the Local Authority were aware of 13 privately fostered children. However, reported numbers remain low despite the efforts of the Local Authority and the NSCB to raise awareness of the need to notify the Local Authority of these arrangements. This remains a key focus and the NSCB have plans in place to improve awareness of this need to report private fostering arrangements. This will ensure that key staff are aware of the need, and that the Council complies with the statutory visiting requirement for this cohort of children.



## Chapter 1 – Northamptonshire in Context



### Disabled Children

There has been a small rise in the number of disabled children with a Child Protection Plan. On 31 March 2015, there were 36 disabled children subject to Child Protection Plans (3.6% of the total 993 CPP population) compared to 32 children at the end of March 2014.

### Young People who Offend or are at Risk of Offending

The young people who are involved with Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) usually have complex needs requiring significant support both in and out of custody. Their levels of vulnerability are high, as is their risk of harm to others. During 2014 there were 324 Court Orders and formal

pre-court interventions as compared to 287 in 2013, signifying a rise in workload in the main due to changes in the use of cautions and conditional cautions. The YOS also supervises Court Orders on behalf of other areas, especially Looked After Children who are placed in Northamptonshire. Performance has improved year on year, despite the behaviour and needs of the young people becoming far more entrenched and problematic to resolve, as well as the impact of reducing financial resources. Re-offending has risen slightly, however the use of custody has dropped from 29 in 2013–14 to 17 in 2014–15. The use of remand has shown a marked decrease too from 810 bednights in 2013–14 to 455 in 2014–15, while First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System continue to fall.

### Children who are at Risk of Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children

Multi-agency work to identify children and young people who may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northamptonshire is ongoing. During the year, 328 young people had a contact over the year with a CSE presenting issue (363 initial contacts) and 264 young people had their Initial Contacts converted to a referral (278 referrals). This was a significant increase from the previous year's figure of 162; this is due to increased awareness of the issue and a local communications campaign.

### Young People with Mental Health Issues

There were 3,450 cases referred to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in 2014–15. The average waiting time is now 7 weeks from referral to assessment and 80% of referrals are seen within 13 weeks.

### Local Trends

The NSCB Dashboard created this year is reviewed each quarter at the Executive Support Group meeting. This helps NSCB and partners to understand safeguarding activity in Northamptonshire and the review of local trends and patterns means that, where appropriate, actions are identified and directed by the Chair. Referrals have remained high throughout the year, finishing at 16,710; a 14% increase from March 2014. A high proportion of the referrals each month still go to Early Help and require no further action by Social Care. From April 2014, it was agreed that each agency would receive their referral data and subsequent outcomes, so they can challenge and improve the profile of referrals and reduce the amount that result in 'no further action' that come into the Social Care system. This has been working effectively and has improved the understanding of and the quality of referrals. It is expected that the improved tracking of referrals and the strengthened Early Help support will help to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals.

## Chapter 2 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

### What is the NSCB?

The NSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Northamptonshire will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring that this work is effective. The NSCB was established in compliance with The Children Act 2004 (Section 13) and The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006.

The work of the NSCB during 2014–15 was governed by the statutory guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013* and more recently by *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* (published in March 2015). This sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, along with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006 which sets out the functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

### Our Objectives

The NSCB co-ordinates and ensures the effectiveness of what is done by each agency on the Board, for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Northamptonshire. The aim is to do this in two ways:

1. To co-ordinate local work by:

- Developing robust policies and procedures;
- Participating in the planning of services for children in Northamptonshire;
- Delivering a comprehensive Learning and Development Strategy so that all professionals working with children are informed and able to safeguard; and
- Communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and explaining how this can be done.

2. To ensure the effectiveness of the work by:

- Monitoring what is done by partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Undertaking Serious Case Reviews and other multi agency case reviews and sharing learning opportunities;
- Collecting and analysing information about child deaths; and
- Publishing an Annual Report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Northamptonshire.



## Chapter 2 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

### Organisation of NSCB

The Board meets four times during the year and has a membership made up of representatives from all statutory partners and others concerned with safeguarding children. The Chair of the Board is Keith Makin, who has led the Board to implement changes in the structure and function of the Board, in order to drive improvements across the partnership. The Board membership has been reviewed and revised and is currently:

- BeNCH CRC Ltd (Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company);
- 2 Clinical Commissioning Groups – Nene and Corby CCG's;
- Horizons (formerly Connexions);
- 7 District & Borough Councils;
- East Midlands Ambulance Service;
- 2 Lay Members;
- Kettering General Hospital;
- NHS England;
- Northampton General Hospital;
- Northamptonshire County Council including, Adult Services, Children's Services and Public Health;

- Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Services;
- Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust;
- Northamptonshire Police;
- Northamptonshire Probation;
- Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre;
- Representation from schools and colleges;
- St Andrews Healthcare;
- Voluntary Sector Representative; and
- Youth Offending Service.

Improving the Board and its Sub Group attendance has been a priority this year and there has been a very positive, consistent membership throughout 2014–2015.

A list of current Board Members is provided at the end of this report.





## Executive Support Group (ESG)

The Executive Support Group of the NSCB meets on a monthly basis in order to drive the work of the NSCB and to ensure that the Board is delivering against the Improvement Board's actions. The membership of the group consists of:

- NSCB Independent Chair;
- Director of Children's Services, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Director of Nursing & Quality, Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups;
- Head of Nursing, Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups;
- Assistant Director – Early Help & Prevention, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Children's Service, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Assistant Director – Learning, Skills & Education, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Assistant Director – Quality & Performance, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Deputy Director of Nursing – NHS England; (left at end of 2014 and currently vacant);
- Assistant Chief Constable – Northamptonshire Police;

- Representative, Northamptonshire Probation Trust; and
- Representative, BeNCH CRC Ltd (Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company).

In addition to the core membership, the Chairs of each of the NSCB Sub Group attend planned meetings in order to provide progress updates, so the Executive Support Group can hear of challenges and issues facing the sub-groups. This ensures that there is sufficient pace and delivery of required improvements. Key items reviewed in the year have been:

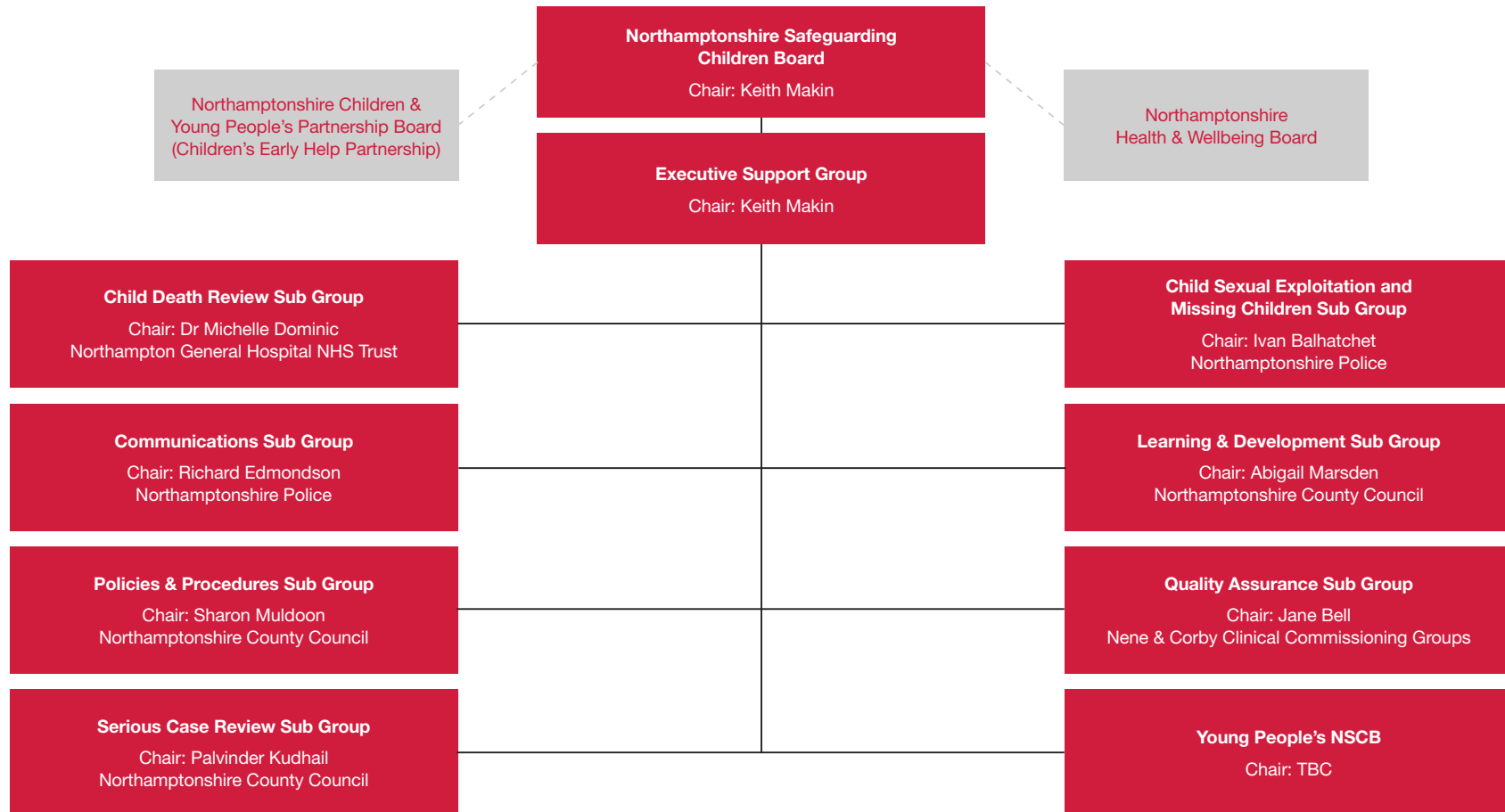
- A focus on performance data and improvements;
- Progress against the NSCB Northamptonshire Improvement Plan Actions;
- Development of the NSCB Business Plan 2015–17;
- Review of referrals and re-referrals into Social Care;
- Attendance and Reporting at Child Protection Conferences;
- Review of the NSCB Learning and Development Strategy;

- Delivery of a 'Barriers and Issues to Safeguarding' workshop with supporting action plan;
- Review of Annual Reports – Child Death, Private Fostering and LAC;
- Pre Birth Assessment;
- Formation of Young People's LSCB;
- Development of relationship with Safeguarding Adults Board;
- Review of Domestic Abuse provision;
- Delivery of the Section 11 Audit;
- Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan;
- Scoping Report on Injuries to Pre Mobile Babies;
- Complaints Review;
- Protective Behaviours in schools; and
- Children and Young People in Custody.

## Chapter 2 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

### NSCB Structure

The Main Board is supported by a range of Sub Groups that enable its function. This is shown in the structure chart below.



## Key Roles

### Independent Chair

The Board continues to be led by an Independent Chair, ensuring a continued independent voice for the Board. Keith Makin joined the Board in March 2014. The Independent Chair is directly accountable to the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council and continues to work closely with the Director of Children's Services to discuss safeguarding challenges. *Whilst the direct accountability of the Chair is to the Local Authority, the role is independent, with an equal emphasis being given to all partners on the Board, including the voluntary and independent sectors, the lay members of the Board and increasingly, the voices of children and young people in the County.*

### Local Authority

Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for establishing an LSCB in their area and ensuring that it is run effectively. The ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the NSCB rests with the Leader of Northamptonshire County Council. The Chief Executive of the Council is accountable to the Leader. The Lead Member for Children's Services is the Councillor elected locally, with responsibility for making sure that the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibilities to safeguard children and young people. The Lead Member contributes to the NSCB as a participating observer and is not part of the decision-making process.

### Partner Agencies

All partner agencies in Northamptonshire are committed to ensuring the effective operation of the NSCB. This is supported by the NSCB constitution which sets out the governance and accountability arrangements. Members of the Board hold a strategic role within an organisation and are able to speak for their organisation with authority, commit their organisation on policy and practice matters and hold their organisation to account.

### Designated Professionals

Health commissioners have a Designated Doctor and Nurse to take a strategic, professional lead on all aspects of the health service contribution to safeguarding children across the local area. Designated professionals are a vital source of professional advice on safeguarding children matters to partner agencies and the NSCB; these professionals sit on a number of the Sub Groups of the NSCB and inform decision-making.

## Key Relationships

### Northamptonshire Improvement Board

The NSCB has a key role in the delivery of a range of actions from Northamptonshire's Improvement Plan. In order to ensure this happens, the NSCB Chair is a member of the Improvement Board, along with all public sector partners in the county. This arrangement ensures that the changes required to ensure children are safeguarded which require partner actions are co-ordinated, delivered against and that partners are held to account for their role in improving safeguarding.

### Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB)

The NSCB has a working relationship with the CYPPB. The CYPPB is responsible for developing and promoting integrated front line delivery of services which safeguard children. The Chair of the NSCB is a member of the CYPPB and the Chair of the CYPPB sits on the NSCB. The CYPPB has produced a Children and Young People's Plan which sets out the CYPPB priorities, importantly, this includes a focus upon Early Help which is essential in driving safeguarding improvements in Northamptonshire. In 2015-16 this Board will change to become the Children's Early Help Partnership. The Children's Early Help Partnership will drive forward the following 3 strands of activity across the partnership:

## Chapter 2 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

1. The Early Help Development programme encompassing Phase 2 of the Troubled Families Programme;
2. Commissioning activity to support the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Early Help and Prevention Strategy, through multi agency Sub Group and requesting information from partners and others; and
3. The development and monitoring of the work of the Locality Forums.

The Children's Early Help Partnership will produce and oversee the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Early Help and Prevention Strategy. These documents will be informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), national and local evidence for interventions and other relevant local data and reports.

### **The Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) was set up in Northamptonshire during 2013. It brings together leaders from the County Council, NHS and District and Borough Councils to develop a shared understanding of local needs, priorities and service developments. The NSCB Chair is an advisor to the HWB and the NSCB reports annually to the HWB to ensure that it tackles the key safeguarding issues for children in Northamptonshire.

### **Clinical Commissioning Groups**

There are now 2 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) operating across Northamptonshire; they have been important contributors to the NSCB during 2014-15.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is an elected official charged with securing efficient and effective policing in the area. The NSCB presents its Annual Report to the PCC outlining key safeguarding challenges and any action required for policing in the area.

### **Northamptonshire Schools**

The engagement from schools in Northamptonshire is key to ensuring the safeguarding of children. Much work has been undertaken throughout this year with schools. The NSCB has worked with education leads to ensure that all schools completed their Section 11 audits. Schools are also represented on the NSCB Board.

### **Communications**

In February 2015, the LSCB re-branded to Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) with a new modern logo and new website. The website includes a greater depth of information for professionals, parents/carers and in particular has a focus on young people. It is designed to be interesting and informative, easy to navigate and has the flexibility to be updated at any time with topical information and news. [www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk)

Monthly newsletters are now disseminated across the partnership with links to informative articles and news on the website. E-bulletins regarding specific subjects are targeted to relevant audiences as and when required and relevant.

Representatives of the NSCB attend relevant events and conferences across the county to promote the NSCB and its business plan priorities.

### **Measuring Performance**

The NSCB has a performance framework in place that is used to measure progress and identify areas of concern across the partnership. A high level Performance Dashboard is in place containing 42 indicators. The indicators have been identified as being central to understanding safeguarding patterns and progress. The dashboard is reviewed at each NSCB Full Board and quarterly at the ESG. Alongside the Dashboard there is a further detailed Scorecard. This is reviewed at the Quality Assurance Sub Group and the ESG. Each partner is responsible for the timely reporting of the information with supporting narrative and details of what actions need to be taken in order to improve or address performance.

## Financial Arrangements

Board partners continue to contribute to the NSCB's budget in addition to providing a variety of resources 'in kind'.

Contributions from partners for 2014–15 reached £328,242. An under spend of £77,245.61 was carried forward from the previous financial year making the total income available to the Board £405,487.61.

This income ensured that the overall cost of running the NSCB was met. Existing costs around Serious Case Reviews will be carried forward to 2015–16. The Board has agreed to carry forward the under spend from 2014–15 into the 2015–16 budget.

Income (Partner Contributions)	2014–15
CAFCASS	£550.00
Clinical Commissioning Group – Corby	£8,699.80
Clinical Commissioning Group – Nene	£78,298.20
Horizons (formerly Connexions)	£3,222.00
District & Borough Councils	£15,466.00
Further Education Colleges	£1,031.00
Northamptonshire County Council	£86,998.00
Northamptonshire Police	£38,666.00
Northamptonshire Probation Services	£2,578.00
Rainsbrook	£1,611.00
Schools Consultative Forum (DSG)	£86,998.00
St Andrew's Healthcare	£4,124.00
	<b>£328,242.00</b>

NSCB Expenditure	2014–15	Notes
Staffing Costs	£116,813.04	
Consultancy	£193,951.64	Includes; NSCB Chair, SCR Authors, SCR Independent Chairs and training provision and any project work
Room Hire	£3,943.79	Includes any catering
Tri-x (NSCB website)	£5,879.33	Procedure Manual & Website
Other	£4,377.14	e.g. Central IT/Finance support, Stationary, etc
<b>Total</b>	<b>£324,964.94</b>	

## Chapter 3 – Overview of Progress over 2014/15

### Early Help and Prevention

Between April 2014 and March 2015, 10 Phase 3 'Making Children Safer' events were held for practitioners working with children and families. The events focussed on: the consistent application of thresholds; the importance of good quality assessments; how the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) works; and how to access support through the Complex Case Meeting process where cases are 'stuck' or the need is escalating. Participants worked in groups on learning from good and poor examples of cases. Over 900 practitioners and managers attended one of the Phase 3 sessions, this is in addition to the 1500 practitioners and managers who attended Phases 1 and 2 Making Children Safer events in 2013–14. Feedback showed that participants felt these events increased their confidence in dealing with families' issues.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of CAFs initiated both by the Council and across the partnership to 2,747 for the year, which exceeds the target of 2,300 and compares favourably to the previous year out-turn figure of 1,565. Multi agency CAF training has taken place in relation to the CAF assessment process. Over 800 practitioners and managers received CAF training between April 2014 and March 2015 across the partnership.

The Complex Case Meeting process, which was launched in the final quarter of 2013–14 to help professionals with cases that have become 'stuck', has been increasingly used by partners. In 2014–15 there were 1,087 requests received for discussion. 645 of these were resolved without the need for a meeting. 442 meetings took place. Of these, 124 resulted in a referral to the MASH due to needs escalating.

The Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways document, which forms the basis for consistent identification of needs, was updated in May 2014 and was approved by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board, before being placed on the website and distributed to partners.

In the last year Targeted Prevention Teams have worked with 1,220 individuals providing Early Help interventions. In addition there have been 948 cases stepped down from Social Care to Early Help. The Troubled Families Programme successfully 'turned around' 1,087 families up until February 2015.

During 2014–15, the Early Help Offer was enhanced through the recommissioning of Children's Centres. The model was based on the principle of 'helping people to help themselves' at the earliest opportunity and directing and using available resources in the most efficient manner. Children's Centre Services were split into 10 Lots, were aligned with the Locality Forum geographical areas and focussed on activity for families who need extra support. The universal components of Children's Centres are being delivered through the Northamptonshire Library Plus Service.

In addition, a number of Supporting Services contracts were put in place to support NCC's Children & Families Early Help & Prevention Strategy, with the intention of helping families to help themselves and to reduce the demand for specialist support services.

The 'Supporting Services' contracts were also awarded in 10 Lots. The Early Help and Prevention Supporting Services contracts support children and younger people aged 5 to 19 (also those up to the age of 25 years with special educational needs and/or a disability) and their families, and focus on interventions responding to domestic abuse, adolescents with challenging behaviour (in particular anti-social behaviour and low level offending), and parenting support at Levels 2 and 3, with the aim of helping families to access support as early as possible, preventing problems from getting worse.

A team of CAF Co-ordinators, made up of CAF and Troubled Families Co-ordinators are based in localities and support professionals to undertake Early Help Assessments to identify needs, and provide mentoring, advice, guidance and support to professionals about children and families needing Early Help, and support the Early Help pathway and processes.

Work is underway to replace the CAF with a simpler Early Help Assessment.

Due to the above changes, the Early Help Strategy is currently being revised and is out in the partnership for consultation from 1 June 2015.

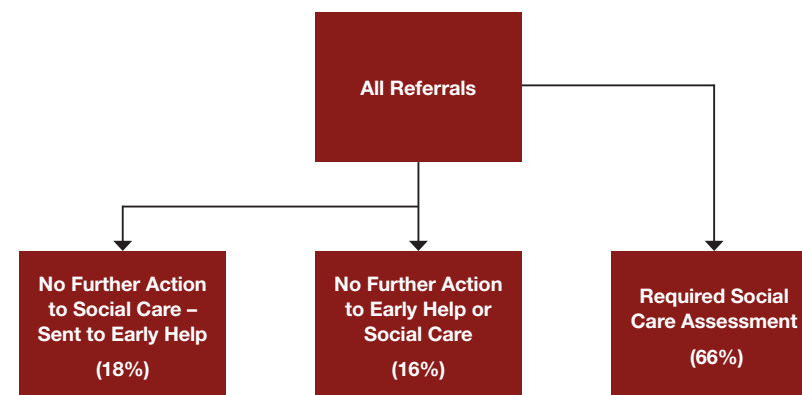
### MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

The MASH became operational in October 2013. The co-located MASH team consists of Children’s Social Care, Police, Education and Health professionals and a number of virtual partners such as Probation, East Midlands Ambulance Service and the Crime Reduction Initiative. The MASH triages all incoming referrals to Children’s Services and shares information to ensure children and families receive a responsive, proportionate service that enhances the safeguarding of children.

There has been a significant rise in the number of referrals to Children’s Services during 2014–15. The number of referrals received has risen from 14,601 during 2013–14 to 16,710 during 2014–15, an increase of 14%.

As well as seeing a significant rise in the number of referrals to Children’s Services during 2014–15 there has been a continued high level of re-referrals into Social Care within 12 months, from 33.8% in 2013–14 to 36.7% in 2014–15. This remains considerably higher than our statistical neighbour average of 24.5% and England average of 25%. As such, the amount of re-referrals is contributing to the increased pressure within the Child Protection System. It is anticipated that the enhanced Early Help Offer will help to reduce the number of referrals and re-referrals during 2015–16.

The following gives an example of the work the MASH undertakes, looking across Quarter 4 of 2014–15;



## Chapter 3 – Overview of Progress over 2014/15

Below is a full year breakdown of referrals into MASH by agency 2014–2015:

Contact by	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Anonymous	143	203	131	99	576
Domestic Abuse Protocol	11	0	2	3	16
Education – Other (Children's Centre, Nursery)	128	113	94	86	421
Education – Schools	640	524	804	798	2766
Family member	191	283	244	226	944
Fire and Rescue	4	2	1	1	8
Friend/neighbour	27	41	27	12	107
Health	755	948	782	775	3260
Housing (Borough Council or housing association)	46	68	33	54	201
LA Services – Other Local Authority	89	131	95	94	409
LA Services – NCC	332	333	281	278	1224
Other	203	279	289	245	1016
Other Legal Agency (court, immigration, CAF/CASS, prison)	85	82	74	63	304
Police	1263	1272	1064	1282	4881
Probation	68	86	102	89	345
Self Assessment	50	45	21	19	135
Third Party	31	42	23	1	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>4066</b>	<b>4452</b>	<b>4067</b>	<b>4125</b>	<b>16710</b>

A number of enhancements to the Early Help Offer are planned for 2015–16. A team of Social Workers will be deployed in the MASH to work alongside the Customer Service Advisors, to undertake professional discussions with referrers about their referrals as part of the triage process. The purpose of these discussions is to gain a fuller understanding of the nature of the referral and determine whether an Early Help response should be attempted rather than a Social Care one. This will include providing support to access a range of interventions that are available as part of the Early Help Offer.

A team of Early Help Co-ordinators will also be based in the MASH to provide support for those cases where Early Help is identified as a more appropriate response to a referral. Early Help Co-ordinators will actively follow up discussions with professionals about how to put in place an Early Help response, and provide practical advice, thus diverting them away from requiring a Social Care response at the point of referral.

The focus on domestic abuse will be strengthened in the MASH to enable a more robust Early Help risk assessment, intervention and service to be provided. There will be 2 domestic abuse workers in the MASH as part of the Early Help Team.



## Children's Centres

Children's Centre Services provide a range of services to families with young children (aged 0–4 years). The model for Children's Centre Services is an important part of the Early Help approach, to ensure children in the county are effectively safeguarded and that specifically families with a child under 5 are provided with effective help and support to achieve good outcomes, whatever their circumstances or wherever they live. In 2014–15 66.7% of all children 0–4 years were registered with a Children's Centre.

Children's Centre Services have two main components: Universal access through Libraries and targeted Commissioned Children's Centre Services.

Northamptonshire County Council's Library Plus service provides the enhanced universal services part of Children's Centre Services for children under five and their families. Universal services are those that can be accessed by all families, and do not require specialist expertise, including:

- Quick connection to a range of information and advice, resources and support to access further Children's Centre Services;
- Promotion of free early years entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds;
- Children's Centre registration services;
- Activities such as stories, song and rhyme times; and

- Recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers for Children's Centre Services.

Children's Centre Services are delivered by external organisations and continue to support the delivery of some universal services to all families (such as Health services and Jobcentre Plus advice). Their primary focus will be activities for families who need Early Help and targeted support. Contracts were awarded across Northamptonshire in September 2014, and are in place until March 2017, with scope for extension up to two further years, subject to performance.

Providers for each are as follows:

- Daventry District – Action for Children;
- East Northamptonshire District – Spurgeons;
- Kettering Borough – Action for Children;
- Northampton Central – Action for Children;
- Northampton East – Action for Children;
- Northampton North – Spurgeons;
- Northampton West – Spurgeons;
- South Northamptonshire – Action for Children; and
- Borough of Wellingborough – Action for Children.

All activity is underpinned through an integrated pathway. The integrated offer to families also includes Health services such as Health Visitors and Midwifery services, links to Early Years Provision and Jobcentre Plus too. This approach will be evident for all families where there is a child from pre-birth to five.



## Chapter 3 – Overview of Progress over 2014/15

### Work with Schools

The engagement from schools in Northamptonshire is key to ensuring the safeguarding of children. It is acknowledged that improved and consistent engagement with schools is imperative if the safeguarding of children in Northamptonshire is to continue to improve and to ensure that opportunities are not missed. Much work has been undertaken through this year with schools. All schools have now completed their Section 11 audits.

Multi agency training has been provided for schools through a conference on how to work with children and young people displaying self harming behaviours. Contributors to the training included the Headteacher of the Hospital & Outreach Service, Educational Psychologists' and the Educational Entitlement Team. The aim of the training was to show professionals how to use the new Northamptonshire Self Harm Toolkit.

Early Years & Early Years Portage settings have been supported by:

- Regular safeguarding updates and monthly information in the EY Bulletin;
- E-safety feature focus in the EY Bulletin;
- Initial safeguarding training for those new to the workforce;
- Safeguarding Refresher for all EY providers (recommended they refresh every 2 years);

- Lead designated practitioner training;
- Safer recruitment training for recruiting managers; and
- Safeguarding audits given to all settings, and specifically targeted for Requires Improvement/Inadequate settings.

Specific training events were organised aimed at Early Years Practitioners and Partners from Health and Social Care to consider the effects of trauma on Looked After pre school children. These events helped practitioners to develop an understanding of the impact of trauma on the emotional development of children before the age of 5 years and to learn more about how to engage effectively with carers and other professionals with reference to pre-school Looked After Children. There was positive feedback from the event; comments included: "Excellent partnership working and delivery. Smooth and efficient conference, well done and thanks to all!" and "fascinating and informative training, I have no doubt that this will impact on practice in my school". There has also been the launch of 'five to thrive' across the county for all age groups which will serve as a useful support to improve parenting and solid relationships and will have a role in the prevention of safeguarding incidents.

Northamptonshire County Council's Educational Psychology & Education Entitlement Services have been working on promoting Protective Behaviours. Protective Behaviours is an approach designed to enhance the resilience of children and young people, so that they are better able to recognise inappropriate approaches by others, to increase feelings of self-worth and esteem and so be better able to practice behaviours that protect them from bullying, abuse and exploitation. A county-wide initiative will begin in Autumn 2015 to promote Protective Behaviours, in support of our work to reduce incidents of Child Sexual Exploitation.

This year a new procedure has been agreed between Northamptonshire Police and the County Council, where incidents of domestic abuse have been reported to the Police concerning households in which there are school-age children, information that Domestic Abuse has occurred will be passed to the County Council and this, in turn, will be passed on to the schools on whose roll the children are. Information should be with schools as soon as possible and within 48 hours of the incident, so that the school can better understand the context of pupils' behaviour and needs.

## Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO should be informed of all allegations against adults working with children and provide advice and guidance to ensure individual cases are resolved as quickly as possible. The purpose of this function is:

- To ensure the Local Authority Designated Officer is notified promptly of an allegation;
- To ensure the referral pathway process is consistent in the application of threshold;
- To ensure the recordings of the allegation against adults are secure; and
- To ensure streamlined processes and prevent duplication and drift.

There has been a 6% increase in referrals to the LADO in the last twelve months. This relates to 575 referrals in 2013–14 and 615 in 2014–15. This increase may be explained by work in developing and sustaining relationships with partner agencies, to ensure they are provided with the opportunity to have access to advice and consultations with the Designated Officers. A single referral pathway through the MASH ensures a more structured service.

Work to increase awareness is an ongoing process, and the coming year will include a focus on a comprehensive training and awareness raising programme put together in partnership with the NSCB. This is included in the action plan for the Learning and Development Sub Group for 2015–16.



## Chapter 3 – Overview of Progress over 2014/15

### Young People who Self Harm

The number of children and young people admitted to the general hospitals has continued to increase over the last 2 years. An audit was undertaken and demonstrated that all the cases adhered to admitting the children and young people for a minimum of 8 hours. 10 of the cases were known to CAMHS, 2 were known to the Children in Need Team and one was Looked After. There was one case that required admission to an inpatient unit and one was identified as possibly at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The recommendations of the audit are to: review the admission criteria to the paediatric ward; link the CSE and Self Harm Pathways; re-visit the strict adherence to the National Institute of Clinical Excellence guidance; and to repeat the audit in 12 months. A working group has been established, led by the Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Commissioner, to look at 3 pathways: low level behavioural self harm where the pathway should be the same as the community; patients that require clinical interventions; and high risk/aroused behaviours presentations that are currently admitted on to clinical paediatric wards causing potential risk to the patient or other children.

There has been continued awareness raising with agencies. The Self Harm Toolkit has been presented to 5 conferences, the Strategic Head Teachers' Forums and GP Protected Learning Events. In total, the content has been delivered to more than 750 professionals across Northamptonshire, and the resources on [www.asknormen.co.uk](http://www.asknormen.co.uk) have been accessed more than 6000 times. Northampton Academy and Kettering Bucleuch Academy have embedded the policies and toolkits across their entire workforce. Reports among young people appear to remain high, and therefore Youth Healthwatch, working with the Young Leaders and the Talk Out Loud Anti-Stigma Group are reviewing the potential to create a peer produced toolkit using the professional toolkit as a basis.

### Interpersonal Violence

During 2014–15 there has been increased attention to partnership working to address interpersonal violence, aiming to reduce incidents, and in particular to reduce repeat incidents. From July 2014, a partnership Interpersonal Violence Strategy Group has been re-established to agree common priorities and joint partnership investment, where appropriate. The Health and Wellbeing Board supported this increased focus and prioritisation with reports presented at two of its four meetings in the year.



During 2014–15, partnership pooled budget arrangements hosted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner supported the provision of Sexual Assault Referral Centre Services, independent Domestic Violence Advisor Services and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements. Feedback from victims relating to support services in the county has been positive, particularly in relation to the emotional support given; however, there is a need to improve awareness of and access to services. The Strategy Group also supported the development of a single countywide bid for refuge funding. This was successful and gained Department of Communities and Local Government funding of £434,276 up until March 2016, with elements of the bid strengthening support for women with children.

Partners (including the eight Local Authorities in the County, the Police and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Probation Services and the Clinical Commissioning Groups) agreed pooled funding arrangements to support Interpersonal Violence services for 2015–16, and to develop plans for pooled funding arrangements for the subsequent two years. Key actions for 2015–16 which will form part of the workstream are:

- Improving communication and promoting awareness of support services available;

- Developing prevention, early intervention and stopping the escalation of interpersonal violence; Developing clear pathways of support interventions, including better sharing of data across partners, where appropriate, to allow better evaluation of the outcomes for victims;
- Increasing perpetrators' recognition and taking of responsibility for the harm they cause, reviewing the effectiveness of and access to current perpetrator programmes and then recommissioning as necessary; and
- Developing sustainable safe accommodation across the county, so that crisis accommodation is available when necessary but only used when appropriate, and victims do not have to remain in crisis accommodation longer than their needs require.

### Licensing Applications

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 there were 82 copies of licence applications received. Oversight of the Licence Application process will be delivered by the Designated Officer in Northamptonshire County Council Safeguarding Quality Assurance Services from June 2015.

### Safeguarding Disabled Children

This year a dedicated countywide Disabled Children's Team (DCT) has been established within NCC Safeguarding and Children's

Service, this includes all disabled Looked After Children and Young People. This team also now provides support and guidance to other teams including MASH for Special Education Needs (SEN) and disabled children that sit outside of DCT eligibility. There has also been more work between agencies including: joint commissioning arrangements with Education and Health for disabled children; revision of the Needs Panel; and joint work with Early Help and Prevention Services and Transitions Services to ensure effective support and commissioned services for children and families. There has also been processes established to ensure the effective implementation of Education Health Care Plans.

### Young People who Offend or are at Risk of Offending

The Youth Offending Service was subject to a national Inspection in March 2015 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. The outcome of this Inspection was very positive with the report identifying good work by staff who engaged well with young people and their parents/carers; and work to manage risk of harm to others and to protect children and young people was assessed as being done well. The report also highlighted that the YOS had developed effective local policies and that there was good partnership working with key organisations such as the Local Safeguarding Board.

## Chapter 4 – Progress Reports from Sub Groups

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing

The NSCB CSE & Missing Sub Group met on a monthly basis throughout the year having been formalised during 2014–15. Northamptonshire Police Assistant Chief Constable, Ivan Balhatchet was appointed as Chair in October 2014. The CSE and Missing Sub Group has developed and has been working to an action plan that will allow the NSCB Business Plan priorities to be achieved.

Northamptonshire Police have recently completed a Problem Profile to identify the nature and extent of CSE in order to assess its threat and risk within Northamptonshire.

A powerful countywide communications campaign to raise awareness of CSE was launched on 18 March 2015 by Northamptonshire Police. Throughout the three-month campaign, compelling images will be on display in key locations across Northamptonshire and adverts will be broadcasted on Heart FM. In addition, the campaign directly targets young people via social media and Digital Audio Exchange (DAX), so that young people using Facebook, Twitter and Spotify are exposed to the adverts.

A Training Needs Analysis is in progress with the Learning and Development Sub Group to assess the CSE training requirements locally. This will range from specific training for frontline staff to short briefing sessions.

A toolkit has been developed for practitioners and will be launched at a large multi agency conference in May 2015. This document is available on the Ask Normen <http://www.asknormen.co.uk/> and NSCB websites <http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/> and will be implemented into future training and awareness around CSE.

A new risk assessment tool has been developed for Northamptonshire. This tool has been developed using best practice from across the Country in line with the findings from the Alexis Jay Independent Report into CSE in Rotherham.

### Quality Assurance (QA)

The NSCB Quality Assurance Sub Group met on a monthly basis throughout the year, and progress has improved considerably. Jane Bell, Head of Nursing for Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups, was appointed in August 2014 to support group members to drive forward the NSCB Business Priorities as set out in 2013–14.

One of the main achievements for the group this year has been the response to the schools Section 11 audit analysis. Delivery against the 5 recommendations set out for Section 11 in 2014–15 is now being achieved:



- Section 11 completion guidance was developed and circulated to partners to ensure consistency in the quality and completion of Section 11 audits;
- To add quality checks to the audits, it was recommended that all those who rate themselves as less effective for any item were required to provide an update of the work undertaken to address the issues they identified within a six-month period;
- A dip sample from the returns received was selected where partners were challenged to produce relevant evidence;
- Intelligence was used to highlight schools with safeguarding issues and focus Section 11 audits at these institutions rather than the blanket analysis of all schools; and
- Organisations ensured that training and internal policies effectively safeguarded children.

The response to the Section 11 audits in this period was excellent with 324 full responses from schools across the county compared with 49 in the previous year.

Overall the response to the Section 11 audits was very positive highlighting many areas of good practice. Examples of good practice included:

- Safeguarding and the curriculum – the response was very strong in the county with 80% of schools ensuring opportunities through PSHE and other contexts; and
- For child protection procedures, 64% of schools across the county have procedures in place which are known to all establishment staff, governors, regular visitors and volunteers.

It was acknowledged that improvements need to be made in: record keeping and information sharing around parental responsibility and private fostering arrangements; and more schools need to have a Code of Conduct for Safe Practice in place.

During 2014–15, the QA Sub Group undertook two Multi Agency Case Audits (MACA) as part of a planned programme of audits set out in the NSCB Business Plan, looking at Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Domestic Violence. The learning summaries from each MACA were shared across the partnership and made available through the NSCB website under a dedicated section for practitioners, to ensure the learning can be taken and embedded into practice.

A number of single agency case audits and individual agency reports have been presented to the Sub Group this year, giving the members an opportunity to learn and scrutinise practice in other authorities and share information across Sub Group and/

or the partnership. A quarterly Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Audit report is presented to the Sub Group and learning from National Serious Case Reviews is shared. Additional papers that have been discussed include the following:

- Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust, Northampton General Hospital Quality Report March 2014;
- Annual Report of the Virtual School for Looked After Children and Young People Academic Year 2013–14;
- Northamptonshire University Research “Children’s Social Care Thresholds & Referrals Review” August 2014;
- Rainsbrook STC “Use of Physical Restraint in the Secure Estate for Children and Young People” 2013;
- Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Quality Report, November 2014;
- CAFCASS Report Care Application Duration in the last 6 months (September 2014 – February 2015);
- NHFT Safeguarding Quality Assurance Report;
- LAC Health Quality Assurance Report;
- Findings from Oxfordshire Serious Case Review; and
- Kettering General Hospital Dog Bite Audit.

## Chapter 4 – Progress Reports from Sub Groups

### Responding to Revised Statutory Guidance (Policy & Procedures Sub Group)

This Sub Group was chaired by Palvinder Kudhail with Sharon Muldoon becoming Chair from April 2015.

The Policy and Procedures Sub Group works to ensure: that the partnership reviews and implements policies and procedures; that it meets statutory requirements; and enables the partnership to have effective processes in place. During the year this Sub Group revised and developed a number of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with a variety of revised legislation and statutory guidance.

The NSCB Procedures Manual currently contains 82 chapters. The below table details the number of revisions and reviews that took place during 2014–15 as well as the number of new policies and procedures added to the Manual following an identified need.

Number of existing NSCB Policies and Procedures reviewed in 2014–15.	43
Number of Policies and Procedures updated following review.	34
Number of new Policies and Procedures approved and added to the Manual during 2014–15.	12

The main policies that the Sub Group have worked on include:

- NSCB Neglect Policy;
- Bruising/Marks in Non Mobile Infants;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Pre Birth Assessments; and
- The Missing from Home or Care Joint Protocol.

During the coming year an ambitious plan is in place to ensure that all documents contained in the procedures manual are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure compliance with the latest guidance and

legislation changes. A series of factsheets for key policies and procedures will also be produced to give practitioners a quick reference guide to the key points contained in policies and procedures.

The focus of the group will now revert to ensuring practitioners are making use of NSCB policies, procedures and toolkits when working with children, young people and their families, to ensure the best outcomes are being delivered for all in supporting safeguarding in Northamptonshire.





## Workforce Learning & Development Sub Group

The principles and values of workforce development for NSCB safeguarding are that all training should:

- Place the child at the centre, never losing sight of his or her needs;
- Actively demonstrate respect for diversity and acknowledge the wide range of individuals and organisations involved in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare;
- Promote partnership with parents and carers, not purely focusing on problems and failings, but identifying strengths and encouraging respect;
- Demonstrate the value placed on workers and the importance of the contribution they make in achieving positive outcomes for children;
- Be a demonstration of working together in action, bringing people together and working collaboratively.

During the year, the NSCB have commissioned a national leading organisation Barnardo's, to deliver face-to-face multi agency training on behalf of the Board. This has allowed the NSCB to deliver training based on the needs of the workforce and respond dynamically to the training required through the delivery of action learning sets on topics identified by partners.



During 2014–15, training was delivered on Disguised Compliance and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The NSCB have also commissioned a leading provider, the Virtual College, in e-learning provision to provide its 'Introduction to Safeguarding' course via this method.

**The NSCB offered a total of 60 face-to-face training courses, which delivered 1,101 learning & development opportunities to people attending these sessions; this is an increase of 54% (714) from 2013–14. A total of 1,393 people also completed an e-learning course, which is an increase of 337% (319) on the previous year. In addition to this a further 900 professionals attended the Making Children Safer events in 2014–15.**

## Chapter 4 – Progress Reports from Sub Groups

In order to ensure the NSCB remains up-to-date with the needs of the workforce, it commissioned a detailed Needs Assessment in February 2015. The outcomes of this will ensure that the NSCB training offer is fully reflective of the needs of all agencies. This includes identifying training needs in relation to CSE, Domestic Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Sub Group also ensures that learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and all other types of review undertaken by the Board are incorporated into the training provision.

‘Working Together 2013’ and ‘Working Together 2015’ requires that we monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi agency training, for all professionals in the area. The NSCB has recognised that further work is required by the Board and partner agencies to understand what difference training is making on frontline practice.

### Young People’s NSCB

A key priority for the NSCB during 2014–15 was engaging with Children and Young People, so that they can shape the provision of services and tell us how we are doing.

This has been achieved through the creation of a Young People’s NSCB that is a direct Sub Group of the Board. This means that issues and concerns from the young people involved can be fed back directly to the Board.

The group held its first meetings in October 2014 and subsequent meetings in January and March 2015. To date a total of 36 young people have been involved in attending meetings. These young people were identified and recruited from a range of existing youth fora within the county.

During the initial meeting young people were asked to identify what they felt were the priorities for the Board and what they would like to discuss going forward. The following key issues were identified:

- Police Interaction with Young People;
- Self Harm;
- Bullying including Cyber Bullying and e-safety and;
- Substance Misuse.

Subsequently young people have discussed each topic in depth and informed the Board of actions they would like to be taken to safeguard young people on each topic. This has been reported back to the Board and relevant agencies with young people receiving feedback through ‘you said, we did’ exercises at each meeting.

During 2015–16, the NSCB plan to further engage with young people by continuing to hold Young People’s LSCB meetings, as well as conducting a series of secondary school events to promote the work of the group and encourage young people to join the group. The NSCB will also hold a Young People’s Safeguarding Conference in 2015 and engage with primary age children through a series of targeted events and consultations.

## Chapter 5 – What Happens When a Child Dies or is Seriously Harmed in Northamptonshire?

### Child Death Reviews

The Child Death Review Sub Group (also known as Child Death Overview Panel) is a Sub Group of the NSCB. It undertakes a systematic review of all child deaths to help understand why children die. By focusing on the unexpected deaths of children, it can recommend any interventions it considers appropriate to help improve child safety and welfare to prevent future deaths. When a child dies unexpectedly, a process is set in motion to review the circumstances of the child's death, which includes the support in place for the family, within 3 working days, which allows time to collate relevant information for the Early Professionals Meeting.

Child deaths expected or unexpected are reviewed and in Northamptonshire, the majority of child deaths are reviewed within six months.

Northamptonshire received 58 child death notifications this year of which 12 were considered unexpected. Reviewing the unexpected deaths within Northamptonshire did not identify any factors that could help prevent deaths in the future. However, safe sleeping arrangements for babies, teen suicide, homicide and non-intentional injuries have been key messages both locally and nationally.

### Serious Case Reviews

A Serious Case is one where; (a) abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and (b) either – (i) the child has died; or (ii) the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the Authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child. LSCBs must always undertake a review of these cases. These reviews are called Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). The purpose of a SCR is to establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The NSCB has also been committed to undertaking smaller scale multi agency case reviews for instances where the case does not meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review but it is considered that there are lessons for multi agency working to be learnt.

This Sub Group was chaired by Phil Sawbridge, with Palvinder Kudhail taking over as Chair at the beginning of 2015. During 2014–15, 21 cases were brought to the attention of the NSCB Serious Case Review Sub Group. Of these, four Serious Case Reviews were commissioned, two Case Mapping Exercises (CME) were undertaken (each covering two cases), one Scoping Exercise that covered six cases, one Learning Review and one multi agency review. Six led to no further action being taken by the Board.



## Chapter 5 – What Happens When a Child Dies or is Seriously Harmed in Northamptonshire?

As a partnership we have identified key themes around SCRs. These reflect the national picture of SCRs:

- Lack of analysis of historical information;
- Lack of robust planning and ineffective communication within and between agencies;
- Lack of recognition of the vulnerabilities of unborn and very young babies;
- Lack of recording of the voice of the child or what it was like to be a child in that family;
- Disguised compliance and focus on adult needs;
- Assumptions about professionals' roles made and not challenged;
- Vulnerability of young mothers not addressed;
- Quality of Strategy Meetings and Child Protection Conferences has been of considerable focus recently and historically in this County;
- Promote and ensure escalation procedures are understood when disagreement between professionals and the ability to challenge professional colleagues;
- Adequate supervision of staff; what are the barriers?
- Effective sharing of information between partner agencies across borders;
- Are current assessment and referral processes effective in considering the "holistic" picture?
- Professionals should carefully review and consider a father's dominance;
- The importance of accurate, complete GP records;
- Lack of professionals' curiosity and challenge to families;
- Lack of professionals' curiosity and challenge to other professionals and agencies;
- Lack of considering mental health issues in parents in the context of their parenting capacity;
- Low attendance at Child Protection Conferences; and
- Accurate and informative record keeping across all partner agencies.

Multi agency learning events are held following the completion of each Serious Case Review and an action plan is completed following the conclusion of each review to ensure all recommendations made from Serious Case Reviews are acted upon.

## Chapter 6 – Challenges Ahead and Future Priorities

### National Drivers

Horizon scanning tells us that the NSCB needs to continue to focus upon the following:

- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Improving the effectiveness of 'Early Help' services;
- Implementing new statutory safeguarding guidance;
- Safeguarding across inspection frameworks;
- Neglect; and
- Ensuring that the potential risks to safeguarding practice and arrangements are kept under review, in response to increasing demand for services and on-going reshaping of public services.

### Annual Safeguarding Children Conference – July 2015

An Annual Safeguarding Children Conference took place in October 2014. The event was attended by 76 professionals from statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies across Northamptonshire. At this event the Northamptonshire's Annual Report of 2013–14 was presented. This identified a number of critical improvement areas following a detailed review of Northamptonshire's performance data. This has been reflected in the NSCB Business Plan for 2015–17.

The Annual Safeguarding Children Conference this year will include: an update on progress in 2014–15; priorities for 2015–16; and focused workshops on priority themes. These include; Domestic Abuse, Neglect, Radicalisation, CSE and Female Genital Mutilation.

There is also a major Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Conference in May 2015.



## Chapter 6 – Challenges Ahead and Future Priorities

### NSCB Business Plan 2015–17

The Business Plan for NSCB has been developed, taking into account priorities from:

- National drivers;
- Annual Safeguarding Children Conference; and
- Improvement Board priorities.

#### Key Priority Areas

The key priority areas for 2015–16 are:

#### Board

- Strengthening partnerships to make a difference;
- Maintaining a Quality Assurance Framework and using this to drive improvements;
- Delivering against the Learning and Improvement Framework;
- Delivering a clear Workforce Strategy;
- Using outcomes from Serious Case Reviews to drive learning & development across the partnership; and
- Engaging with Children and Young People so that they can shape the provision of services and tell us how we are doing (Young People's LSCB).

#### Board and Partnership

- The full and committed engagement with the Board across all Sub Groups from partners, with the right people around the table, to take actions and deliver the change needed;
- Partners to appropriately engage with Early Help Services, to ensure the right children are provided with the right support at the right time;
- The use of intelligence and detailed assessments to drive improved outcomes for vulnerable children, with a specific focus on the Corporate Parenting Board, Health and Well-Being Board and the overall commissioning of services;
- Quality Assurance – reviewing the impact and efficacy of safeguarding services across the partnership, ensuring that the voices of children are central to service improvements and delivery; and
- Communication – raising the profile of the work of the Board and ensuring that all key stakeholders are able to engage with the Board and are informed of its work.

#### Themes

- Engaging with children and young people so that their views on safeguarding are understood and prioritised;
- Domestic Abuse – understanding the current service and development need to support families;
- Understanding neglect in Northamptonshire – how all partners identify and support children and families at the earliest opportunity;
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children – delivering a comprehensive Action Plan to safeguard children and young people at risk;
- Female Genital Mutilation – reviewing the preventative work, support, access to help and services available to Children and Young People and targeted responses to safeguarding concerns; and
- Radicalisation – developing a plan to ensure the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism is effectively embedded in safeguarding practice and that professionals across the children's workforce are engaged and signposted.

## Chapter 7 – What Next for Child Protection in Northamptonshire?

### Key Messages to:

#### Local Politicians

- To continue to support the work of the Improvement Board and the Children's Services Improvement Programme, in order to raise the standard from inadequate to good; and
- When you scrutinise any plans for Northamptonshire, keep the protection of children at the front of your mind. Ask questions about how any plans will affect children and young people.

#### Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG)

- CCGs in the Health Service have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning across a range of organisations; and
- You are required to discharge your safeguarding duties effectively and ensure that services are commissioned for the most vulnerable children.

#### The Police and Crime Commissioner

- Ensure that the voices of all child victims are taken notice of within the Criminal Justice System, particularly in relation to listening to evidence where children disclose abuse; and
- Monitor what Police and Probation staff do to share information regarding high risk MAPPA and MARAC cases and the risks that some adults present to children.

#### Chief Executives and Directors

- Ensure your workforce is able to contribute to the provision of NSCB safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events;
- Your agency's contribution to the work of NSCB must be categorised as of the highest priority. Every agency must ensure

that it takes into account the priorities within the NSCB Business Plan and the agency's own contribution to the shared delivery of the NSCB's work. This includes meeting the duties of Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and ensuring that agencies are able to contribute to the NSCB's work programme with appropriate resources and personnel; and



## Chapter 7 – What Next for Child Protection in Northamptonshire?

- The NSCB needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on your capacity to safeguard children and young people in Northamptonshire.

### Head Teachers and Governors of Schools

- Ensure that schools are compliant with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (DfE, 2014) which outlines the processes which all schools, in the maintained, non-maintained or independent sector, must follow to safeguard their pupils.

### Messages for the Children’s Workforce

- Ensure you are booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses and learning events required for your role;
- Be familiar with, and use when necessary, Threshold and Pathway procedures to ensure an appropriate response to safeguarding children and young people; and
- Use your representative on the NSCB to make sure the voices of children and young people and front line practitioners are heard.

### The Community

- You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them; and
- We all share responsibility for protecting children. If you are worried about a child, call Northamptonshire’s Children’s Services on 0300 126 1000.

### Local Media

- Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility is crucial to the NSCB and you are ideally positioned to help do this; and
- The work of NSCB will be of great interest to your readers and listeners.

### Children and Young People

- Children and young people are at the heart of the child protection system. Your voices are the most important of all. The NSCB plans to develop better ways of hearing children and young people’s voices.





## Board Membership List

### **Mark Ainge**

Head of Community Services,  
Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

### **Akeem Ali**

Director of Public Health & Wellbeing,  
Northamptonshire County Council

### **Ivan Balhatchet**

Assistant Chief Constable – Crime and Local  
Policing, Northamptonshire Police. CSE and  
Missing Children Sub Group Chair

### **Jane Bell**

Head of Nursing  
NHS Nene and NHS Corby Clinical  
Commissioning Groups  
Quality Assurance Sub Group Chair

### **Anne Birch**

Assistant Director Learning Skills and  
Education, Northamptonshire County  
Council

### **Ann Bodsworth**

Voluntary Sector Representative, Chief  
Executive Northampton Women's Aid

### **Peter Boylan**

Director of Nursing & Quality, Nene and  
Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups

### **Cindy Brewster**

Deputy Director & Head of Resettlement,  
Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre

### **Paula Bright**

Senior Executive, Horizons (Formerly  
Connexions)

### **John Campbell**

Chief Executive, Borough Council of  
Wellingborough

### **Cathy Chaplin**

Lay Member

### **Dr Jamie Clarke**

Headteacher, Sponne School

### **Laura Clarke**

Headteacher, Rowan Gate School

### **Rachael Corser**

Interim Director of Nursing, Midwifery and  
Patient Services – Northampton  
General Hospital

### **Louise De Groot**

Local Quality Manager, East Midlands  
Ambulance Service

### **Teresa Dobson**

Volunteer Representative, Healthwatch  
Northamptonshire

### **Michelle Dominic**

Named Doctor for Safeguarding,  
Northampton General Hospital Child Death  
Review Committee Chair

### **Richard Edmondson**

Head of News and Communications  
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner  
Communications Committee Chair

### **Satinder Gautam**

Assistant Director – Safeguarding &  
Children's Service, Northamptonshire County  
Council

### **Mary Geaney**

Operational Director, BeNCH Community  
Rehabilitation Company Ltd

### **Cllr Matt Golby**

Cabinet Member for Learning Skills and  
Education, Northamptonshire County  
Council

### **Leanne Hackshall**

Director of Nursing and Quality, Kettering  
General Hospital

### **Jen Helm**

Head of the Protecting Vulnerable Persons  
Department, Northamptonshire Police

### **Alex Hopkins**

Director of Children, Families & Education,  
Northamptonshire County Council

### **Ann Jackson**

Deputy Director of Nursing and Quality for  
NHS England

### **Palvinder Kudhail**

Assistant Director Early Help and Prevention,  
Northamptonshire County Council. Serious  
Case Review Sub Group Chair

### **Carolyn Kus**

Director of Adult Social Care Services,  
Northamptonshire County Council

### **Ben Leach**

Head of Safeguarding and Dementia,  
Northampton General Hospital

### **Steve Lingley**

Head of Crime, Northamptonshire Police

**Keith Makin**

Independent Chair of NSCB

**Abigail Marsden**

Strategic Manager for Corporate Parenting,  
Northamptonshire County Council  
Learning and Development Sub Group Chair

**Denise Meylan**

Director – Northamptonshire Probation Trust

**Sharon Muldoon**

Assistant Director, Quality & Performance  
Northamptonshire County Council  
Policies and Procedures Sub Group Chair

**Jon O'Byrne**

Head of Service, Youth Offending Service

**Cathy Sheehan**

Head of Safeguarding, East Midlands  
Ambulance Service

**Julie Shepherd**

Director of Nursing, NHFT

**Cllr Heather Smith**

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for  
Children's Services. Northamptonshire  
County Council

**Name TBA**

Director of Quality & Governance, St  
Andrew's Healthcare

**Sharon Toyer**

Deputy Director Operations – Children and  
Ambulatory Services, Northamptonshire  
Health Foundation Trust



Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board  
**Annual Report 2014/15**