



# Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

## Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)



## Annual Report April 2020 – March 2021

## Introduction from Tina Swain, Facilitator for and on behalf of Strategic Leads

Welcome to our Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report for 2020-21 and what a year it has been as the country and whole world continues to manage the impact of Covid-19.



The impact of Covid-19 has brought significant challenges and meant new ways of working for us all, notwithstanding the personal effects it has had on each and every one of us and will be a theme throughout this report.

NSCP Strategic Leads met weekly through the first lockdown to ensure a multi-agency co-ordinated approach was in place to safeguard the most vulnerable children and young people in our county and ensure they were seen and supported. Safeguarding arrangements continue to be monitored throughout this financial year and will be maintained through the next year as we continue to manage further waves and restrictions that Covid-19 continues to pose.

Children and young people's voices have become even more important, particularly through periods of lockdown and existing services and processes have been used to ensure their voices are heard, understood and acted on appropriately.

Individual and collective responses across the country have been overwhelming and professionals within Northamptonshire are no exception, working tirelessly and displaying amazing commitment and support to keep our children, young people, their families and colleagues safe.

In improving and strengthening the safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in our county, Northamptonshire Children's Trust was successfully launched in November 2020. Extensive work continues as the county prepares to become two unitary authorities from 1 April 2021 and the Director of Children's Services promotes safeguarding arrangements throughout these discussions and plans.

The Early Help Sub Group has focused on early help provision with the launch of an Early Help Strategy and three-year plan whilst the Child Exploitation Sub Group has targeted contextual safeguarding creating an information pack and toolkit to support professionals and create the Vulnerable Adolescent Panel for those deemed most at risk. Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group is creating Mental Health Support Teams to work with educational and health colleagues to support the needs of children and young people and this is due for rollout during the latter part of 2021.

Educational settings and professionals have diligently worked to ensure they could provide places not only for our vulnerable children and young people but also those of our key workers. Vulnerable students not attending school have been contacted and visited on a regular basis to maintain contact and support.

An online safeguarding week took place at the end of January 2021 updating colleagues on safeguarding provisions within the county, along with new initiatives around young people's videos and information and our own bespoke on-line training courses.

We have continued to develop 6 step briefings to learn from local reviews and national reviews, created more tea break guides to inform professionals on a range of relevant topics and create good practice briefings to celebrate and promote where professionals have gone above and beyond to improve an outcome for a child or young person.

Finally, over the last 12 months the pandemic has shown how we can effectively, in the most challenging of times, work together to meet the needs of children and young people. The examples of multi-agency working I have seen have been a credit to the partnership and our partners across Northamptonshire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Swain'.

**Tina Swain**

**Facilitator for and on behalf of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, March 2021**

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Demographics</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Governance and Accountability</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Statutory and Legal Context</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Progress through 2020-2021</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Covid-19</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Northamptonshire Children’s Trust</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Education</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Secure Establishments</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Early Help</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Contextual Safeguarding</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Domestic Abuse</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Missing Children and Young People</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Mental Health Support Teams</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Neglect</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Elective Home Education (EHE)</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Safer Sleeping</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Home Safety – Supporting National Campaigns</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Children and Young People’s Voices</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>4. Plans for 2021-2022</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – NSCP Structure</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Full Partnership</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Strategic Leads</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Independent Scrutineer</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – Child Death</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 4 – Partner Contributions for 2020-2021</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix 5 – Restraint in Rainsbrook STC and St Andrews</b> .....	<b>19</b>

## 1. Introduction

### Demographics

Northamptonshire is located to the south of the East Midlands region, and is a county of mixed urban and rural areas, with populations focused around its larger towns Northampton and Kettering.

The county encompasses a County Council and seven District and Borough Councils. As of 1 April 2021, Northamptonshire will become two Unitary Authorities, known as North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

The population of Northamptonshire is in the region of 747,000, of which approximately 25% are Children and Young People.

Since the previous Census in 2001 there had been an increase in non-white ethnic groups of 3.5%. It is also relevant to note a more rapid change in the number and proportion of those who describe themselves as 'White Other' becomes evident between 2001 and 2011. 'White Other' means not White British, Irish or Gypsy or Irish Traveller and therefore captures change within the predominantly 'White' EU population



## 2. Governance and Accountability

### Statutory and Legal Context

In July 2018, [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2018](#) was published. It replaced previous versions that set out the requirements for local authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards and is in accordance with Section 13 and the objectives set out in Section 14 of the Children Act.

Working Together 2018 was published in response to The Wood Report and sets out the requirements for a system that focuses on the needs and interests of children and families and not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area, regardless of where they are found; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The NSCP is not an operational body and therefore has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children and their families. The NSCP'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 NSCP itself.

[The Children Act 2004](#), as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), strengthens this already important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically, the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

### 3. Progress through 2020-2021

#### Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 in creating new ways of working cannot be underestimated. During the first lockdown many organisations found themselves having to enable remote working, in line with Government guidance, to protect staff and support them to work from home. There was a focus on maintaining critical front line services and plans were put in place to redeploy staff from less critical services if required. PPE was purchased and available to all staff who were required to continue with face-to-face meetings to the most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

All professionals have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. There have been staffing pressures with many professionals suffering from Covid-19 themselves, sadly losing loved ones or struggling with the wider consequences caused by the pandemic. Whilst resilience has and continues to remain high, senior managers have been concerned for their staff's wellbeing and a number of resources put in place to support general health and wellbeing.

The impact of this pandemic will continue to significantly affect organisations and individuals as we head into 2021 and for many months to come.

The first lockdown saw IT being a particular challenge in trying to find a common platform for all agencies to access to enable multi-agency partners to continue to meet on a virtual basis. Initially, the impact on partnership activity saw a slowdown in momentum, however; Strategic Leads remained united and met weekly to drive forward safeguarding arrangements and the three strategic agencies have provided a collaborative robust response.

In an immediate response, all children and young people known to Children's Services were risk assessed in terms of vulnerability. A cohort of 5,200 were identified with 400-500 being actively reached as being vulnerable and not attending school. All children and young people deemed to be high risk and therefore risk assessed red were visited whilst those deemed medium and low risk were all contacted virtually.

In working with schools to cross refer those deemed most vulnerable, Locality Forums consisting of professionals from relevant agencies, were created to discuss those identified and agree robust multi-agency plans to support the individual's needs. The quality of these forums and decision-making processes were overseen by Strategic Leads and Terms of Reference for the meetings monitored and reinforced throughout the first lockdown. These Locality Forums have continued as required.

A survey to schools to understand their response to the first lockdown allowed an informed picture on the status across the county. Data has confirmed that Northamptonshire schools had a slightly higher attendance of students through this period compared to the national average.



#### Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Northamptonshire Children's Trust was launched on 1 November 2020 and delivers children's early help and social care services on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council.

The Trust has an independent Trust Board made up of Independent Directors, Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors. The Council has retained statutory responsibility for children's services under the leadership of the Director of Children's Services. This will be shared by North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils from 1 April 2021.

The Trust's vision is to become a centre of practice excellence where outcomes for improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people are achieved and children, young people and families are at the heart of all they do.

## Education

Northamptonshire education staff and settings have continued to ensure that the most vulnerable children and families remain protected during the periods of Covid-19 restrictions, with an emphasis on a robust multi-agency joined up approach to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people.

Schools have responded fantastically to the rapidly changing circumstances created by Covid-19 and this is commended by Strategic Leads. Some examples of where staff in education settings have gone the extra mile in Northamptonshire include:

- Delivering food parcels to vulnerable families
- Undertaking home visits to families to check welfare during lockdown periods
- Remaining open throughout the pandemic for children of key workers and vulnerable children even in school holiday periods
- Responding with flexibility and humour to each change in government guidance
- Ensuring “eyes on” the most vulnerable children
- Maintaining regular contact with children and young people not yet able to return to school
- Keeping channels of communication open with parents /carers and picking up welfare concerns
- High vigilance and identification of concerns by staff

## Secure Establishments

### Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC)

In response to Rainsbrook’s Ofsted Assurance visit report in December 2020 and Urgent Notification, NSCP Strategic Leads are working closely with the new Interim Director and Youth Custody Service in supporting improvement plans.

A dashboard has been developed to allow Strategic Leads to have oversight of safeguarding data and trends including:

- Use of Restraint
- Health and wellbeing issues of the children and young people in placement
- Notifications and safeguarding
- Education provision

NSCP will continue to work closely with Rainsbrook STC through 2021 to support improving the young people’s experiences and provisions.

### St Andrews Healthcare

St Andrew’s Healthcare, monitored by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England and Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has undergone structural and provisional changes to the care management of its young people following a poor CQC Inspection in December 2019.



Following an inspection in Autumn 2020, the setting has been taken out of special measures and is now assessed as requires improvement. The NSCP has worked with St Andrews Healthcare to develop a dashboard of safeguarding data that will inform the partnership of key safeguarding statistics and help inform trends including:

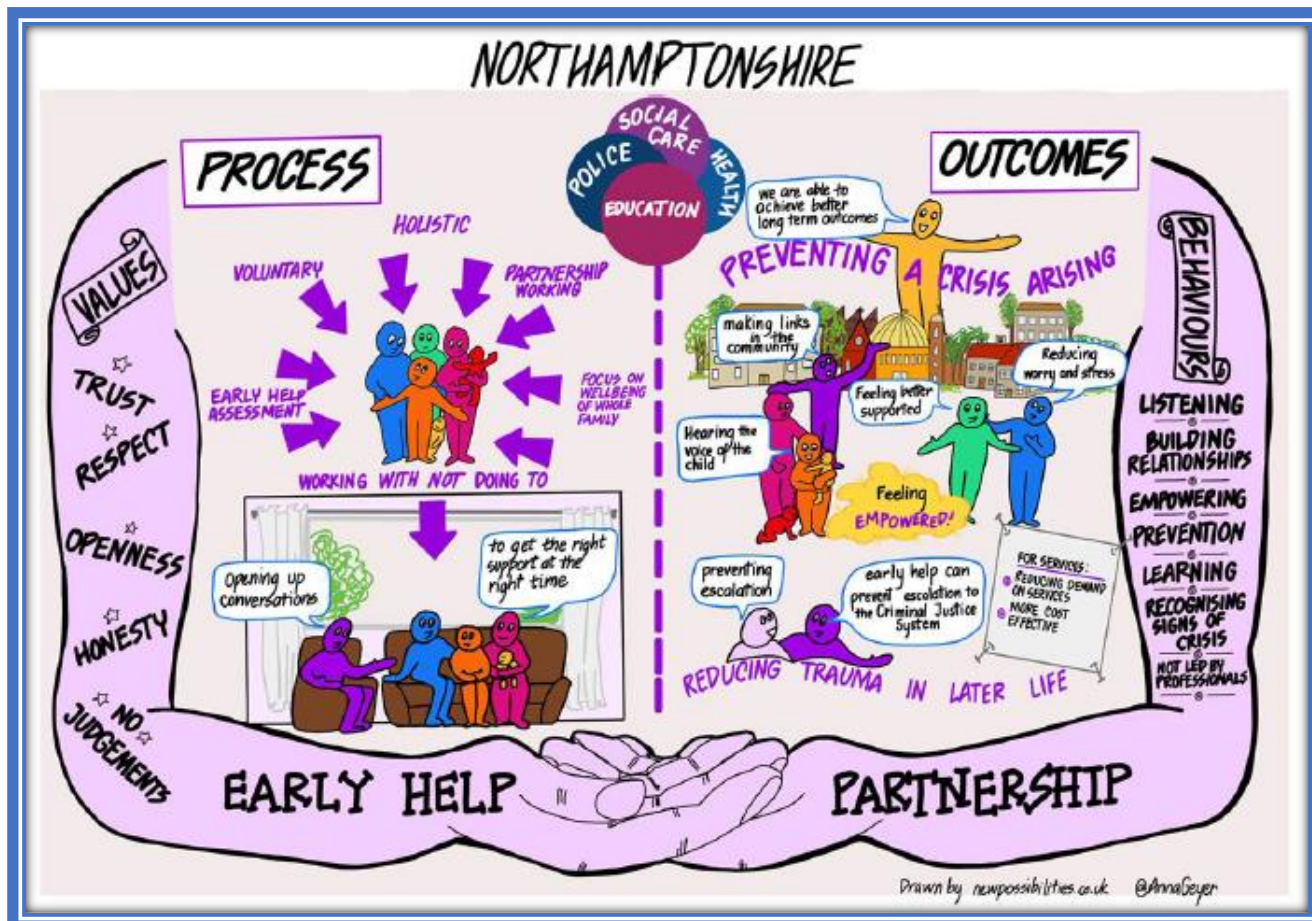
- Use of Restraint
- Health and wellbeing issues of the children and young people in placement
- Notifications and safeguarding
- Education provision

Details on restraint from both secure establishments can be found in Appendix 5.

The NSCP is committed to developing and strengthening relationships with both secure establishments in the county to ensure continuing improvement and monitoring of these vulnerable young people and that they are considered first and foremost as children and that their needs are met.

## Early Help

Early help is a collaboration not a service. In its simplest terms *everyone* is involved in the delivery of early help. This includes families, communities, voluntary groups, “universal” provision, schools, health and targeted support and this has been a priority area for NSCP this year.



The NSCP developed an Early Help Strategy that was launched in December 2020. This three-year strategy expects Early Help in Northamptonshire to be offered to all children and young people who need it. This ranges from the antenatal period to adolescents age 19 years (and up to 25 for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN)).

A three-year action plan supports providing the right support at the right time to enable shorter intervention, prevent escalation and promote long term benefits. The 0-19 service provide a pivotal role in identifying health needs and, working with Locality Connectors facilitate intervention before issues escalate.

Since development, significant steps have already been taken to improve on and strengthen existing services and address gaps in practice:

- Working to the Signs of Safety model, a multi-agency steering group is being developed to further embed this model of working. Children’s Social Care has developed briefings for all staff and these will be available across the partnership to ensure a level of consistency.
- Early Help Co-ordinators and Early Help Connectors are now based in one collective team to allow a more cohesive, joined up approach. This will be developed further in 2021-22 as agencies across the partnership are keen to acknowledge and integrate their work within their own processes. This will promote and strengthen collaborative working around early help.
- A Locality Hub is being developed, however; the restrictions of Covid-19 have meant this is yet to be established and launched and will remain a focus for the next year.

- Work has begun on reviewing the Early Help Assessment with a view to simplifying it and making it easier for professionals to complete. Front line practitioners will be included in these discussions and there are plans to drive this forward in 2021-22.
- It has been identified that Thresholds and Pathways need to be reviewed. Considerable work has already been undertaken and a robust proposal developed to be taken forward in the new financial year.

Work around engaging with families is underway with a view to creating guidance and support to practitioners in 2021-22.

## Contextual Safeguarding

Traditional safeguarding practice has focussed on the reduction of harm within familial structures. Contextual safeguarding is a way of addressing the harm which young people may be vulnerable to from external environments such as schools and the communities they socialise in as well as online. Examples include the targeting of young people for sexual exploitation or recruitment into gangs/county lines activity.

Contextual safeguarding is a key factor when seeking to protect young people of an age that they can start socialising independently from parents/guardians and the influence of peers and external factors becomes more pertinent.

To support and improve outcomes for this vulnerable cohort we have created the Vulnerable Adolescent Panel (VAP). The Vulnerable Adolescent Panel was established in December 2020 to provide a partnership forum which ensures that children and young people at risk of exploitation in Northamptonshire have the necessary support to improve their outcomes and life chances. It aims to ensure that members of all agencies have oversight of the most complex and vulnerable adolescents in Northamptonshire and to inform multi-agency and strategic priorities for tackling child exploitation. The Panel facilitates focused multi-agency discussion and information sharing for each young person to reach an assessment of risk, primarily concentrating on what disruptive and diversionary measures can be implemented to address the identified risks of exploitation.

The Vulnerable Adolescent Panel ensures that children and young people have timely access to support and high quality interventions in order to reduce the risk of exploitation and to improve their outcomes and life chances, for example, by recognising their status as victims through referral to the National Referral Mechanism, supporting them to engage with positive activities and by having their needs recognised across the multidisciplinary team. The panel also identifies themes and locations of concern which allow agencies to respond to these concerns, for example through disruption tactics, peer mapping and awareness raising, to reduce risk of exploitation to a wider group of young people than those identified at panel.

In the 4 months since its launch, 35 young people have been heard at the fortnightly panel, 18 of whom have been assessed as high risk, 14 as medium and 3 as low risk. Young people continue to be reviewed regularly by panel until discharge criteria are met. Referral to panel can be made by any agency working with the young person. To date, referrals have primarily been made by police, youth offending service and social workers.

It is recognised that the panel is in the early stages of its development and that ongoing evaluation of effectiveness will be required, however; early feedback from lead professionals presenting young people for discussion at panel has been positive in terms of the expert advice and support provided.

A workshop is planned for June 2021 which will review panel outputs against key performance indicators and identify themes arising in referral data and intelligence. Reporting to Strategic Partners will be via the Child Exploitation Sub Group which provides oversight and governance of the panel.



Under the broad remit of Child Exploitation, the RISE Team (Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation) is a dedicated multi-agency team tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. It comprises staff from Police, Safeguarding and Children's



Services, and Health agencies and continues to proactively support those young people at risk. The team moved to be part of the Adolescent Support Service from 1 September 2020 in order to combine the teams and strengthen their resources and responses. The number of active cases is in excess of 40.

A Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Specialist Nurse continues to ensure that the emerging and unmet health needs of young people open to the team are identified quickly, expediting referrals and signposting to appropriate health agencies. The School nursing teams continue to offer an up to date In-depth health assessment to young people open to the team. Due to the ongoing restrictions caused by Covid-19, this continues to take the form of telephone consultations in most cases.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Throughout the reporting period, Northamptonshire Police have seen a relatively consistent 10% increase in reported Domestic Abuse incidents. The impact of Covid-19 has led to higher levels of close proximity living, anxiety and alcohol consumption within the home.

As the restrictions of Covid-19 continue through 2021, this increase in incidents is expected to remain and will remain a Force priority for /next year, focusing on providing domestic abuse victims with the service that they deserve and bring offenders to justice.

Children are directly present in approximately one quarter of all domestic abuse incidents within the county and the negative impact on them by this issue is widely recognised. To help mitigate the risk to children, a dedicated team (MADRA) was established during the summer, based in the county's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to concentrate on those referred cases identifying domestic abuse. This is allowing a more joined up approach in providing clear support to children and young people.

In anticipation of a further increase in domestic abuse over Christmas, a very proactive month-long festive public campaign took place. Reviewing social media comments in response to this campaign it was well received by the public and helped reinforce the clear intent to tackle this type of crime.

December saw Northamptonshire Police make the highest number of domestic abuse arrests for 18 months - making a total of 330 domestic abuse arrests, equating to over 10 per day. An arrest was made in 75% of high risk domestic abuse cases. This was coupled with obtaining 35 Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's), a record for our county and by far the highest in the East Midlands region. National research and our survey results are clear that taking positive action improves public satisfaction as well as safety.

Since lockdown, there has been a worrying increase in online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including the distribution of indecent images of children. Northamptonshire Police has a dedicated Paedophile Online Investigation Team comprising 14 staff who, in a trend mirrored nationally, have seen a doubling of their work since April last year. To help manage this concerning increase, capacity within the team has been bolstered to ensure enforcement action is taken against paedophiles posing a risk to the safety of children.

## **Missing Children and Young People**

The number of children and young people being reported missing has been on a steady upward trend for the past five years. This levelled out slightly in 2020 with fewer people being reported missing during the Covid-19 "lockdown" periods.

In 2020 a total of 3,491 missing episodes were reported.

There has also been an increase in the percentage of missing persons being assessed as high risk. In 2020, 41.4% of all cases were considered high risk, which is an increase of 13% compared to 2019. This increase can be attributed to the significant efforts of Northamptonshire Police in increasing their resources around identifying and addressing the vulnerabilities of children and young people going missing and therefore categorising them as high risk.

The proportion of missing children being assessed as high risk has doubled from 15% in 2019 to 30% of all HRMP reports in 2020.

This has been achievable due to The Philomena Protocol, proposed by Northamptonshire Police and adopted by the partnership, which is designed to assist Partnerships in preventing missing episodes and sets out how to respond and manage them when they do occur. Missing children and young people are categorised as high risk and remains a high a priority for the partnership moving forward.

## Mental Health Support Teams

The MHST are a new service, additional to those already in place, that will:

- deliver evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health issues in children and young people
- carry out interventions alongside established provision such as counselling, educational psychologists, and school nurses building on the menu of support already available
- support the designated senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school or college approach
- work as part of an integrated referral system with community services to ensure that children and young people who need it receive appropriate support as quickly as possible

The Mental Health Support Teams in Schools project will ensure that children have access to early, evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health difficulties at the right time and in the right place. This will prevent problems from escalating and maximise the chances of a positive outcome for children and young people, enabling them to remain in education, rather than having to take time out to seek more specialist support. This should also tackle the stigma of seeking support, showing young people that support can be provided in school without differentiating them from their peers.

## Neglect

The issue of neglect appears to have become more prominent through lockdown and is a significant theme from current Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Some analysis undertaken by the University of Northampton has suggested approximately one quarter of assessments undertaken by social care included neglect as an area of concern.

The Neglect Strategy is being reviewed and strengthened by a multi-agency group in consultation with colleagues from Adult Mental Health and includes a focus on drug and alcohol misuse. The review includes consideration of the use of the Neglect Toolkit and available training.

The review is due for conclusion early in the new financial year and will be launched at the earliest opportunity to support professionals in identifying neglect and help inform assessments.



## Elective Home Education (EHE)

There continues to be a steady increase in the number of children and young people whose parents or carers choose to electively home educate them (EHE) and these numbers have been impacted by the restrictions imposed by Covid-19.

There has been a significant rise in pupils being deregistered from school during August 2020 with parents or carers opting to EHE them from September 2020 (the start of the new school year).

This figure has also seen a clear shift in the cohort with larger numbers of primary pupils becoming EHE, whereas usually this would have been secondary pupils.

Parents and carers are citing fears around Covid-19 as a reason for choosing to electively home educate their child/ren.

This increase and change in cohort has led the EHE Team to change their service delivery model and there are now two dedicated EHE officers for the North and West which means they can entirely focus their work on EHE children and young people and therefore improving the service in ensuring children and young people and their families are contacted.

The change has led to the EHE Team being able to offer a better response to EHE parents, carers and the young people themselves. A monthly newsletter around EHE has been created and is available on dedicated web pages and includes resources to support home learning, as well as information around safeguarding and wellbeing.

To further strengthen this resource two virtual Online Safety sessions have been facilitated to EHE parents and carers. Several parents have thanked the team for the EHE newsletter, only one parent has opted out of receiving it. Cases are being dealt with more expediently and parents are getting to talk to an officer much more quickly on being deregistered from school. Annual reviews are being opened on time and dealt with in the same manner. There is a clear and consistent message going out to parents that we support home education and where a suitable education is not being received, parents are engaged to either provide this or to return the child to school.

## Safer Sleeping

Since the initial Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, there has been a reported increase both nationally and locally in the number of tragic infant deaths in which co-sleeping has been identified as a contributing factor.

In Northamptonshire, a Call to Action across partner agencies and the formation of a multi-agency task and finish group, including the views of parents, led to the development of a Safer Sleeping campaign titled '*Plan a Safer Sleep Every Sleep*'.

- The first wave of the campaign was launched 21 December 2020 through social media using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- The target audience was for families with children aged 0-5 parents, grandparents and any other care givers with three key messages:
  - Safe Sleep;
  - Safe Sleep for Shorter Periods (such as going out and when using prams, car seats etc.); and
  - Unsafe sleeping environments.
- The first key message reached 21,848 through the Public Health Facebook page.
- The second key message, published as a boosted post, reached 15,504 people and received the most interactive comments and likes on Facebook.
- The third message, published as a sponsored post, reached 180,642 people due to a lot of sharing on Facebook.
- The second wave of the campaign will reflect on the first wave and consider how to support the public, how the messages can be monitored and how the messages can be given out in newly created assets and how information can be saved through resources, along with strengthening professionals awareness and will take place early next year.

Alongside the safe sleep campaign, *Baby Talk* has been created and is an animation in which the "voice of the child" explains the vulnerability of young babies to accidents within the home and is available for health and care professionals to show the video to expectant parents to encourage health promotion. The content of *Baby Talk* is strong and unequivocal in clear messages to parents.

The Safe Sleeping campaign supports parents and carers to understand and provide a safe sleeping environment for their babies and in doing so protects babies from the risks of unsafe sleeping practices which can lead to Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy.

## Home Safety – Supporting National Campaigns

Covid-19 lockdowns have resulted in more people spending more time at home now than ever before. With children spending more time in the home, there is a significant increase in the risk of accidental poisoning from household chemicals / medications.

Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), as part of a national campaign to reduce accidental poisoning, hospital admissions and keeping families' accident free and out of emergency departments, have been looking at how they can work with local partners to provide advice and information to families during these difficult times with lockdown conditions and the difficulties that social distancing brings and Public Health Northamptonshire has been keen to take part and promote their safety messages.

ROSPA launched their campaign launched on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and colleagues from 0-19 Services, Strong Start, Oral Health Promotion and Northamptonshire Children's Trust were in attendance. All campaign documentation and resources have been distributed to attendees to promote and raise awareness within the county. Agencies involved are recording progress and monitoring activity on a monthly basis to ROSPA.

### Children and Young People's Voices

One of our initiatives for this year has been to launch our NSCP YouTube Channel and work with educational settings and allow students to create and film their own short videos around safeguarding topics that are of concern to them, providing information and support to other students that would be shared through Tutor time or PHSE lessons, but also available for individuals to access.

These videos will also be available to all professionals across the partnership to enhance their knowledge and skills in hearing children and young people's voices and understanding their concerns.

We initially focused on children and young people's mental health, particularly in light of the impact of Covid-19 and young people's feedback through various survey's about they are feeling, however; Covid-19 restrictions have also meant we have not been able to launch this as we had hoped.

Prior to our third lockdown we were working closely with Simon Aston, the local authority's e-safety officer and Rushden Academy and their fantastic drama team who were very keen and excited to support this great initiative. Once lockdown restrictions are lifted and schools have had the opportunity to settle back into their daily routines, this project will be re-ignited and we will be looking to engage more schools with a forward plan of activities and topics informed by the young people themselves.

## 4. Plans for 2021-2022

The partnership has now been in place for nearly two years and now is the opportunity to consider current safeguarding arrangements and forward plans, particularly relevant with the launch of Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the implementation of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils.

Sir Alan's Wood's review of local safeguarding partnership arrangements, commissioned by the Government, is due for publication in 2021 and the findings will be included in our considerations.

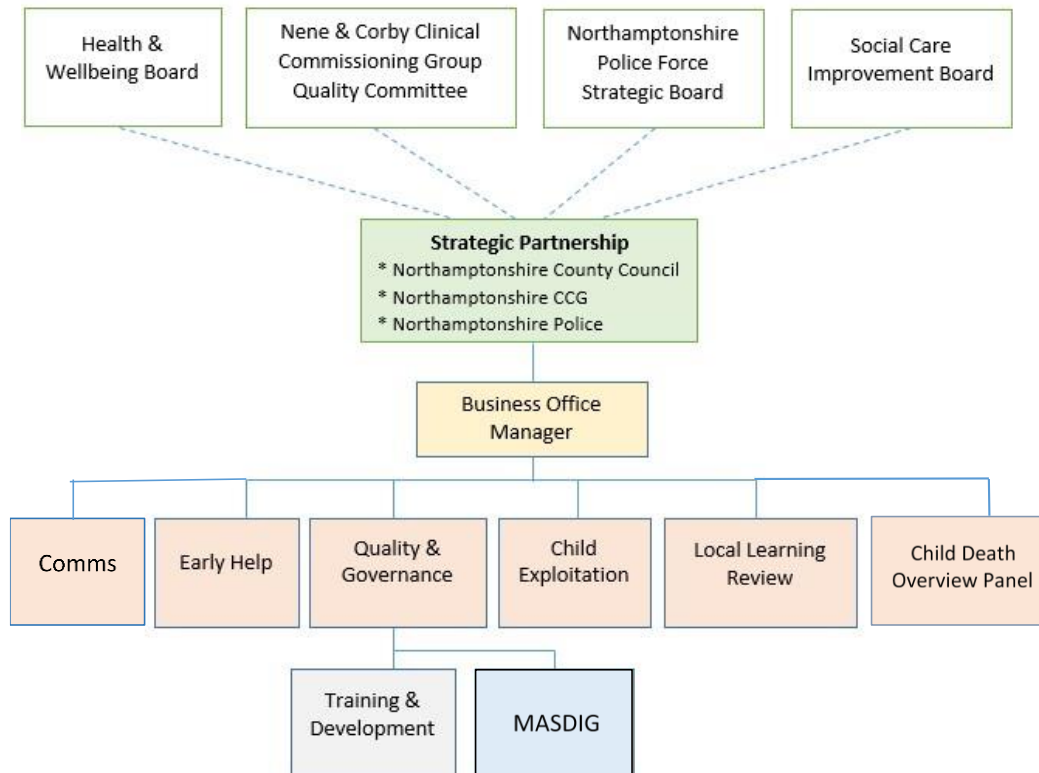
A 12-month project is planned to initially focus on the partnership's current arrangements, structure and priorities with a second phase to promote and strengthen relationships with other key safeguarding bodies within the county, including Northamptonshire's Health and Wellbeing Board and the newly created North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Community Safety Boards.

A focus on strengthening and embedding safeguarding arrangements around Contextual Safeguarding will continue, along with strengthening arrangements around Domestic Abuse and Neglect.

A Covid-19 Recovery Plan is in development to assess the impact lockdown restrictions have had on our children, young people and their families and, as the country comes out of lockdown restrictions, prepare to manage an increase in demand on services as potential hidden concerns may emerge.



## Appendix 1 – NSCP Structure



### Full Partnership

It was agreed that the full Partnership would meet twice yearly to review the previous six months of activity and look to the next 6-12 months to set priorities.

Due to lockdown caused by Covid-19, there have been no full partnership meetings in this period. This has been acknowledged as a clear gap that could impact on the strength of the partnership and plans are in place for the next year to undertake a full review of the partnerships arrangements with discussions with the wider partnership and a meeting is scheduled for May 2021.

### Strategic Leads

Strategic Leads have continued to meet on a monthly basis.

During the first lockdown this increased to weekly to ensure a joined up partnership response was in place to safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people.

Additional attendance at Strategic Leads meetings has continued to be consistent including:

- Strategic Lead delegates and their deputies.
- School representation as a fourth non-voting agency. This is a Head Teacher from a special school and Head Teacher from a primary school (representation will be rotated on an annual basis).
- Representation by the Office for Police and Fire Crime Commissioner.
- Independent Scrutineer
- With the launch of Northamptonshire Children's Trust in November 2020, the Chief Executive and Director for Safeguarding have attended Strategic Leads meetings to develop a robust link with the Trust and support embedding of the arrangements.

### Independent Scrutineer

David Goosey was commissioned as Independent Scrutineer in March 2020 and provides assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Northamptonshire, including arrangements to identify and review Child Safeguarding Practice Review cases. His role is objective, and acts as a constructive critical friend to promote reflection to drive continuous improvement.

The NSCP established the areas of activity for scrutiny in its initial Governance Document as follows:

- Attend the Strategic Leads Group and Strategic Partnership Group.
- Review the Partnership's annual report.
- Review audits and performance data, including Section 11 and Section 175 audits.
- Determine the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review local child safeguarding reviews.
- Involvement in the escalation and conflict resolution process.
- Have regular direct contact with frontline practitioners to receive frontline practice feedback.
- Ensure the voice of the child is at the heart of all aspects of safeguarding and receive direct feedback from children, young people and their families to monitor the effectiveness of their voice and experiences with performance and practice.
- Embed scrutiny as a positive process and measure throughout the partnership with learning as the outcome.
- Ensure informed challenge from elected Members takes place.

David has provided constructive challenge and scrutiny that has been particularly helpful with Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and identifying relevant and constructive learning to strengthen services in the future. His suggestions and observations will continue to support Strategic Leads through 2021-22 and as NSCP arrangements are reviewed and reinforced to be more effective to support our children and their families.

### **Sub Group Chairs**

The intention has been for all Sub Group Chairs to meet on a bi-monthly basis to strengthen the work of the partnership and understand each other's Sub Groups work. This has proved very difficult and little momentum has been established. 2021-22 will see a review of the partnerships arrangements and structure with a view to creating a robust Delivery Group, that includes all Sub Group Chairs to focus on priorities and strengthen arrangements.

### **Sub Groups**

Whilst NSCP Sub Groups have continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis, the regularity and effectiveness of meetings through the early part of the first lockdown were hampered by IT issues.

Quality & Governance – aims to develop a culture of open, honest and meaningful challenge and scrutiny, in order to identify areas of good practice and areas of concern and to make recommendations for action and improve safeguarding and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency safeguarding processes incorporating audit, performance analysis and views of children, families and practitioners.

The Sub Group has developed a robust plan to review various aspects of its remit through 2021 including:

- Section 11 and Section 175 processes
- Multi-Agency Case Audit processes
- Dashboard

Training and Development is a working Group of this Sub Group. There has been no partnership funding for training during this year. In-kind agency face-to-face provision has stopped due to the lockdowns and there has been a reliance on NSCP online training. Nearly 15,000 e-learning licenses have been used during this year compared to previous years that have averaged at approximately 5,000 per annum.

The uptake of e-learning this year has been a very positive consequence of Covid-19 restrictions with many professionals taking the opportunity to update and broaden their safeguarding knowledge, particularly education professionals.

This group also builds bespoke local online training for professionals to access. This was launched in January 2020 with an initial three courses and a forward plan of topics being created for 2021.

Local Learning Review – is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and protect children through individual Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, ensuring dissemination of lessons learned, and monitoring implementation of actions arising from case learning.

The Sub Group has developed a comprehensive guide around managing Rapid Reviews and CSPRs, which includes guidance and support for practitioners involved.

Focus on learning has been changed from being per review to thematic and this is reflected in a newly designed composite Action Plan and is reflected in the Learning from Review training presentation.

Early Help – aims to understand the current Early Help Offer across the Partnership and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating strengths and gaps in the system which will inform the revision of the Early Help Strategy and work focus for the next three years.

This year the sub group has focused on developing an Early Help Strategy with a three-year implementation action plan. The strategy was launched in December 2020 and will remain a focus for the group through 2021.

Neglect is a priority for the partnership and this has been highlighted further through the Covid-19 lockdowns. A Neglect Strategy is underway and due for sign-off very early in the new year.

Child Exploitation – aims to understand and reduce the prevalence of child exploitation in Northamptonshire and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating responses to tackling child exploitation by meeting the aims and objectives set out in the Northamptonshire Child Exploitation Strategy.

The Sub Group's aim was to focus on understanding Contextual Safeguarding. It was hoped that the previously created handbook, processes and toolkits would have been rolled out through this year but it has been delayed as the Sub Group has struggled with the consequences created by Covid-19 and the vast remit of this topic and how to manage it effectively. A strategy will be developed through 2021, that includes critical Boards, such as Community Safety Partnership Boards to ensure Contextual Safeguarding can be taken forward with a joined up consistent approach.

#### Communication Sub Group

This Sub Group has been reinitiated to focus on working with schools and students to develop videos for young people, made by young people focusing on topics they want to learn more about. This fantastic initiative has been well received but unfortunately, the lockdown and immense pressures on schools has meant this has not been able to be launched.

The group has created a NSCP YouTube Channel in readiness for when schools have re-opened and settled to pick this great opportunity up again and a forward plan of topics has been created.

In going forward, this group will also focus on developing content for regular NSCP newsletters, theme based, that can be disseminated across the partnership.

Child Death Overview Panel – will gather and assess data on the deaths of all children and young people from birth (excluding those babies who are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law - Abortion Act 1967) up to the age of 18 years-old who are normally resident in the local area.

As meetings have become virtual due to lockdown, this group has reduced attendance to a core membership and continued to review all deaths. All members contribute robustly to group discussions.

In addition, Joint Agency Review meetings have taken place for all unexpected child deaths.

## Appendix 2 – Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

For the period April 2020 – March 2021

<b>Number of Serious incident Notifications</b>	<b>9</b>
Number of Rapid Reviews carried out	10
Number of Rapid Reviews completed within 15 working days of date of notification	7
Number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews initiated	2
Number where learning was identified and taken forward as an outcome of the Rapid Review	2
No further action	2
Any outstanding as of 31 March 2020	2

<b>Number of requests for consideration of a review</b>	<b>5</b>
Number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews initiated	0
Number where learning was identified and taken forward as an outcome	1
No further action	1
Any outstanding as of 31 March 2020	3

The progress of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews has been impacted on by Covid-19 consequences;

- Review meetings have been delayed due to initial IT issues with setting up virtual meetings
- Court processes have been delayed which impacts on publications being able to take place
- Professional illness
- Lack of professional capacity due to Covid-19 commitments

The CSPRs that have been undertaken during the year have exceeded six months, however; the quality of the meetings undertaken have gathered momentum and robustness and there have been several very successful Practitioner Events mid-process where practitioners have openly discussed learning which has proved very valuable to Independent Reviewers.

Face-to-face Learning from CSPR Reviews stopped due to national lockdowns and has not taken place virtually through the year, however; the training is being reviewed to be theme based rather than per review and this will be available again early next year and will be initially facilitated virtually.

6 Step Briefings continue to be created for each Rapid Review, internal review and CSPR. The majority of these are accessible on the NSCP website and it is the responsibility of Local Learning Review Sub Group members to ensure they are disseminated through their organisations.



## Appendix 3 – Child Death

April 2020 - Mar 2021 saw a total of 37 deaths

Of these, 14 deaths were considered unexpected:

Category of death	
Unsafe Sleeping	2
Suicide	1
Accidental	3
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy	3
Other medical cause / Unascertained	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

Of these, 7 deaths have Post Mortems currently outstanding and have been recorded as per our initial understanding of death. Due to Covid-19, Post Mortems have been severely delayed.

Gender of unexpected deaths:	
Male	7
Female	7

Ethnicity of unexpected deaths:	
White British	10
Mixed	1
White Other	2
Black British	1

## Appendix 4 – Partner Contributions for 2020-2021

<b>Northamptonshire CCG</b>	<b>48,949</b>
<b>Northamptonshire County Council</b>	<b>48,949</b>
<b>Office Police, Fire &amp; Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire</b>	<b>23,931</b>
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
Sodexo (BeNCH CRC)	725
National Probation Service	725
Moulton College	290
Schools Consultative Forums (Dedicated Schools Grant)	72,000
<b>2019-20 Partner contributions total</b>	<b>207,000</b>

## Appendix 5 – Restraint statistics at Rainsbrook STC and St Andrews Healthcare

### Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC)

The below table sets out the number of restraint incidents at Rainsbrook STC during the report period:

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
<b>MMPRs *</b>	61	32	13	16	28	30	30	39	54	26	28	39
<b>UOF **</b>	21	40	35	13	73	46	53	45	55	44	34	26

\* MMPR – Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint incidents

\*\* UOF – Incidents requiring Use of Force

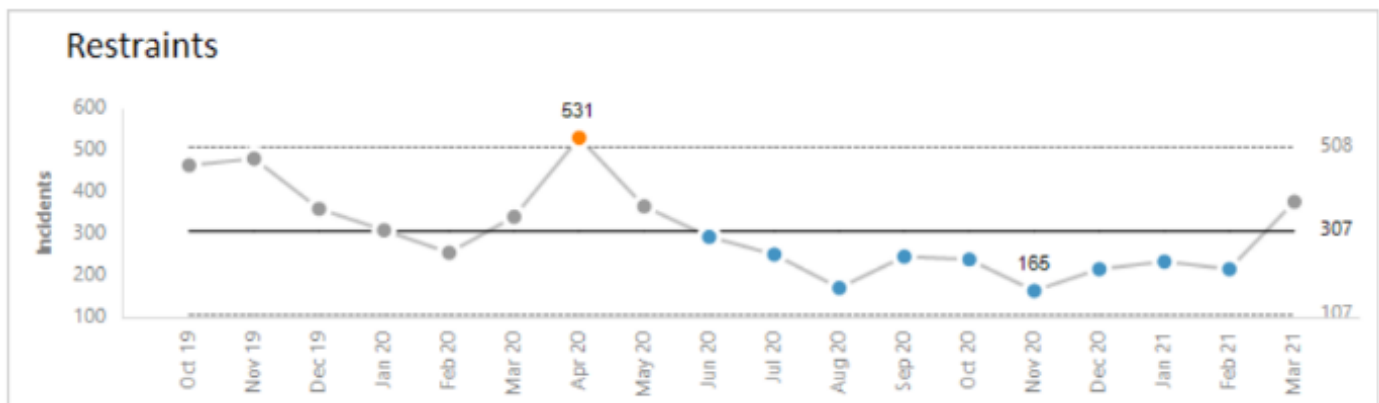
Figures from the beginning of the year reflect when the STC was in lockdown and in accordance with national guidance, there were fewer incidents between young people due to less interaction. A small increase in incidents towards staff was noted.

The third quarter of the year saw a higher number of incidents and Rainsbrook STC has reported that they believe this to be due to the regime being reinstated in the STC and young people being reintegrated back into education, following months of restrictions and movements being limited due to Covid-19.

In addition, there has been an increase in the use of handcuffs over the same period and Rainsbrook STC believe this indicates incidents are 'lower level' and therefore more manageable.

### St Andrews Healthcare

The below graph sets out the number of restraint incidents at St Andrews Healthcare during the report period:



The number of restraints seen within the CAMHS service has somewhat stabilised following a significant increase in April 2020 (531 incidences), following COVID restrictions being implemented and significant staffing difficulties at the beginning of the pandemic.

The number of patients within CAMHS was intentionally reduced from December 2019 to 'right size' the service and this resulted in a significant number of young people being discharged and a reduction in the number of wards to three. CAMHS decided to pause all admissions early in 2020, following the publication of a CQC inspection report.

In September 2020, the three new wards moved into a new building, Smyth House and the CAMHS service re-opened to admissions. Since then, the wards have slowly been filled and 13 new patients have been admitted.

All of the young people admitted have been acutely unwell and distressed, which has seen an increase in the number of incidents of self-harm (549 incidents recorded in March 2021), and subsequently an increase in restraint to prevent self-harm (as indicated for March 2021 on the above graph).

Due to an increased acuity on the wards, in March 2021, admissions have been temporarily paused to prevent a situation where the wards cannot be safely managed due to high levels of patients who are experiencing acute levels of distress. As the patients begin to stabilise in their mental health and engage in treatment, admissions will be recommenced.