



## **Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership**

### **Governance Arrangements**

**2023-2025**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP), in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, has been in place since 1 July 2019.

This Governance document replaces the initial governance transition document published on 1 July 2019 and sets out how the partnership arrangements have been adapted and strengthened, improving and enhancing our responses to keep children and young people to be as safe as they can in our county.

### NSCP Mission Statement:

***“For the children and young people of Northamptonshire to be as safe as they can be from harm, exploitation and neglect”.***

### NSCP Business Plan 2023-25

The NSCP Business Plan 2023-25 (See appendix 1) sets out the purpose of these local arrangements, which is to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- **Excellent practice is the norm**
- **Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively**
- **There is early identification of “new” safeguarding issues**
- **Learning is promoted and embedded**
- **Information is shared effectively**
- **The public can feel confident that children are protected from harm**

In addition, the Safeguarding Partnership’s values are:

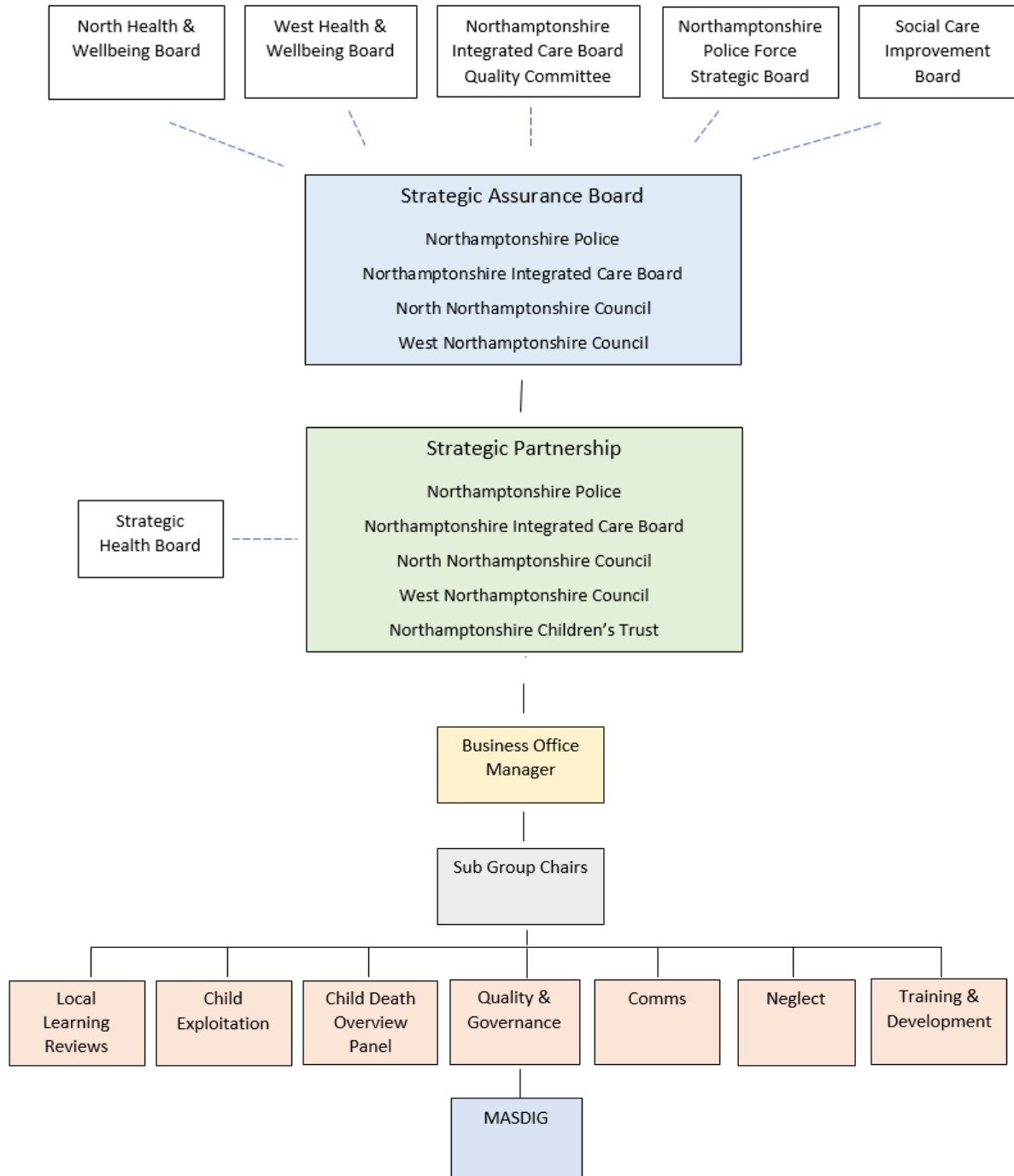
1. A child centred approach to safeguarding ensuring their voice is heard and understood;
2. Effective ways to identify and support children and families who would benefit from early help; A culture of continuous review and learning;
3. Embrace equality and diversity in everything we do; and
4. Constructive and mutual challenge between partners to keep children safe.

| Key Priority Themes for 2023-25 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1.                              | Neglect: Taking positive action early enough to protect children and young people   |
| 2.                              | Exploitation: Ensure those children, young people and families who are most at risk are supported through robust multi-agency co-ordination, assessment support |
| 3.                              | Domestic Abuse: Promote and implement a joined up multi-agency approach to protecting children and young people at risk of domestic abuse and violence          |

A NSCP Business Plan Action Plan has been developed to progress and monitor progress of the three priority theme areas.

## 2.0 Structure

The structure for the partnership is as follows:



- The Strategic Assurance Board meets three times per annum and is chaired by the partnership's Independent Chair.
- Strategic Leads Group meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the partnership's Independent Chair.

- Sub Group Chairs group meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the partnership's Independent Chair.

The Sub Groups of the partnership all meet on a bi-monthly basis:

- Child Exploitation – Chaired by a Police representative and is responsible for addressing and strengthening our response to themed priority two as outlined above)
- Communications – Chaired by a Police representative
- Local Learning Review – Chaired by an Integrated Care Board representative
- Neglect – Chaired by a West Northamptonshire Council representative
- Quality & Governance – Chaired by a Northamptonshire Children's Trust representative
- Training and Development – Chaired by a West Northamptonshire Council representative
- Child Death Overview Panel – Chaired by a North Northamptonshire Public Health Consultant

The Terms of Reference for each of the Sub Groups are reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis.

### 3.0 Governance

#### Strategic Assurance Board

The Strategic Leads, with equal legal accountability for safeguarding arrangements within the county, are:

- Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Council;
- Chief Executive, West Northamptonshire Council;
- Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police; and
- Chief Executive Integrated Care Northamptonshire.

The Strategic Assurance Board, includes elected members and members of the Strategic Leads Group and maintains oversight of agency safeguarding arrangements in the county and receives updates as reported to them by the delegated Strategic Leads of the Strategic Leads Group.

The Strategic Assurance Board receives updates on the partnership activity and reviews, written by the NSCP Business Manager and agreed by the NSCP Independent Chair.

#### Strategic Leads Group

The Strategic Leads Group consists of five voting members:

- Director of Children's Services, North Northamptonshire Council;
- Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director of People Services (DASS & DCS), West Northamptonshire Council
- Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police
- Chief Nursing Officer, Integrated Care Northamptonshire
- Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Children's Trust

In addition, the group consists of the following advisory members:

- Director of Safeguarding, Northamptonshire Children's Trust
- Director for Early Intervention, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
- Head of Safeguarding, Integrated Care Northamptonshire
- Assistant Director of Children Services, West Northamptonshire Council
- Assistant Director, Commissioning & Partnerships, North Northamptonshire Council
- Detective Superintendent, Northamptonshire Police

- Primary School representation
- Special School representation
- NSCP Independent Scrutineer

The Strategic Leads Group receives regular partner updates, Performance reports, Sub Group activity reports, Scrutiny reports and considers current challenges and issues in the county.

A Forward Plan is maintained by the Business Manager who develops agendas in discussion and agreement with the Independent Chair.

### **Sub Groups**

The Sub Groups of the partnership are required to work to their individual Terms of Reference, which are reviewed annually and in line with the Business Plan themed priorities.

Sub Group Chairs are responsible for writing an annual report on their groups activities and achievements over the year, along with evidence of impact, which supports the NSCP Annual Report.

### **Strategic Partnership**

Engaging with the wider partnership is crucial in strengthening the safeguarding arrangements in Northamptonshire.

Two Partnership Assembly's will be convened per annum. These meetings will be chaired by the NSCP Independent Chair and the agenda will focus on reflecting on the previous six months activities and looking forward to future plans.

### **Partnership Working**

The Partnership is working in conjunction with the North and West Domestic Abuse Boards as part of their work towards supporting young people experiencing domestic violence.

### **Risk Register**

The Risk Register is maintained by the NSCP Business Office and monitored by the Independent Chair. The Strategic Leads Group will receive this on a six-monthly basis.

### **Challenge Log**

The Challenge Log is maintained by the NSCP Business Office and monitored by the NSCP Independent Chair. The Strategic Leads Group will receive this on a six-monthly basis.

### **Annual Report**

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Strategic Leads will publish an annual report. The report will be a succinct resume of partnership activity over the previous twelve months.

Strategic Leads and partner leads are required to provide updates on their agency activity, including evidence of the difference agencies have made individually and collectively to improve the outcomes for the children and young people of Northamptonshire.

Each Sub Group Annual Report will feed into the annual report.

The information is collated by the Business Manager, in agreement with the Independent Chair and presented to the Strategic Leads Group for agreement. Once agreed, the Annual Report is presented and then published on the NSCP website to:

- North Northamptonshire Council Cabinet – presented by Director of Children’s Services for North Northamptonshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet – presented by Executive Director of People Services (DASS & DCS), West Northamptonshire Council
- North Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board – presented by Director of Children’s Services for North Northamptonshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board – presented by Executive Director of People Services (DASS & DCS), West Northamptonshire Council
- Northamptonshire Police Force Strategic Board – presented by Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police
- Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board Quality Committee – presented by Chief Nursing Officer, Integrated Care Northamptonshire

### **Role of Independent Scrutineer**

An Independent Scrutineer will be commissioned to monitor and challenge the quality of agencies work to enable effective multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the county.

They will be required to work four days per month and their role will include:

- Attend the Strategic Lead 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.
- Develop a programme of scrutiny focused on the partnership’s three themed priorities and embed scrutiny as a positive process and measure throughout the partnership with learning as the outcome.
- Ensure informed challenge from elected Members takes place.

### **Role of Business Office**

The Business Office is hosted by North Northamptonshire Council, with line management and oversight by the Commissioning and Partnerships Directorate, overseen by the Director for Children’s Services.

All documentation created by the Business Office in relation to Business Office activity is approved by North Northamptonshire Council Line Management.

All partnership documentation created by the Business Office is approved by the Chair of the group the documentation is being presented to.

The team consists of four full-time members:

- Business Manager
- 2 x Project Officers
- Administrator

The role of the Business Office is to:

- Support the Strategic Assurance Board, Strategic Leads Group and Partnership Assemblies
- Support the Sub Group Chairs meetings and all Sub Group meetings (*this does NOT include the Sub Groups Working Groups*)
- Progress the management of Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Support training in liaison with the Training & Development Sub Group.
- Support statutory partnership audits.
- Review and update the NSCP Website in liaison with the Communications Sub Group.
- Create regular partnership newsletters.

### **Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

The Strategic Leads Group will consider all Rapid Reviews and recommendations and support the voting Strategic Leads in being able to make informed decisions on whether a case fits the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

The four Strategic Leads will make the decision on whether a Child Safeguarding Practice Review should be undertaken for any referred case from the information presented in the Rapid Review. The geographic residential location of the subject will determine the counting North Northamptonshire Council or West Northamptonshire Council vote. Any challenge by the council representative out of geographic area will be discussed by voting Strategic Leads and managed by the Independent Chair.

The same voting will apply to the publication method of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The Local Learning Review Sub Group is responsible for monitoring the progress of all Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and developing a realistic, achievable action plan (with identified required evidence for proof of impact), which will then be passed to the Quality & Governance Sub Group who are responsible for progressing actions through to completion.

### **Training**

Training is reviewed and monitored by the Training & Development Sub Group that has a partnership budget for creating and commissioning bespoke courses in line with current priorities and local review findings, along with a comprehensive package of on-line training courses.

Strategic Partners and agencies are responsible for promoting all training to their workforce.

### **Section 11 Partner Audits and Schools audits**

Section 11 Partner audits are undertaken on a bi-annual basis, administered by the Business Office, overseen by the Quality & Governance Sub Group and findings collated by the Independent Scrutineer and presented to the Strategic Leads Group.

Schools Audits are undertaken on a bi-annual basis, administered by the Business Office, overseen by the Quality & Governance Sub Group and findings collated by the Independent Scrutineer and presented to the Strategic Leads Group.



### Speaking to and listening to Children and Young People, Families and Carers

Children and Young People's voices are at the heart of this Safeguarding Children Partnership and therefore they and their families must be included when considering safeguarding and setting annual priorities. Existing arrangements will be strengthened to ensure a pro-active focus on seeking children, young people and their family's voices.

Public facing campaigns and other modes of raising awareness to children, young and their families and carers will be considered against the partnership's priorities and developed by the Training & Development Sub Group.

### Engaging Partners

A full Partnership meeting will be held twice per annum to reflect on the previous six months activities of the partnership and focus on the next six months.

It will be an opportunity for concerns and issues to be debated and good practice acknowledged.

Partners include *(but this list is not exhaustive)*:

- Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Northampton General Hospital
- Kettering General Hospital
- East Midlands Ambulance service
- St Andrews Healthcare
- Youth Offending Service
- Probation
- Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
- GP
- CAFCASS

*(Also see above section on Strategic Partnership).*

### Engaging Schools

Two education representatives are members of the Strategic Leads Group to strengthen education helping inform partnership safeguarding arrangements.

### NSCP website, newsletters and bulletins

A key element of the Partnerships approach to engaging with its partners will remain its commitment to digital media. This will include maintaining a website that partners should recognise as a one stop shop for safeguarding information including all policies, procedures and processes in place within the county.

The Strategic Leads through the Business Office will also produce regular newsletters and bulletins to convey messages and themes identified as important to the partnership in ensuring children are safeguarded.

In order to ensure these messages reach practitioners on the frontline it is imperative that managers and leaders in partner agencies cascade any communications to ensure all staff working within the county are aware of the messages being conveyed by the partnership