

Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN) Annual Report 2013/14



Foreword from the Chair

Welcome to the 2013/14 Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN).

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

This year the LSCBN has worked alongside the newly formed Northamptonshire Improvement Board, which commenced in November 2013. This Board has been 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 LSCBN is crucial in delivering change. There is much for the LSCBN and its partners to improve upon and deliver against.

This Annual Report presents a number of challenges which have been faced in the past 12 months and in some areas, slow progress. However, I am confident that an unrelenting focus on the following will drive the improvement needed in 2014/15. My key priority areas are identified in this report in detail.

They are clustered around:

- The full and committed engagement across all sub-group structures from partners with the right people around the table to take actions and deliver the changes needed;
- The use of intelligence and detailed need assessments to drive strategic conversations with specific focus upon the Corporate Parenting Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the overall commissioning of services to support those children and young people who need safeguarding in Northamptonshire;
- Focusing upon Homelessness (key theme from the Children's JSNA);
- Partners appropriately engaging with early help services to ensure the right children are provided with the right support at the right time;
- An examination of the safeguarding needs of children with disabilities in the County;
- The wider partnership safeguarding improvements identified under the DfE Direction Notice and its associated Improvement Plan and;
- Engaging with children and young people so that their views can be listened to and acted upon.

I want to take this opportunity to say that, in the five months or so that I have been here, I have been impressed with the commitment and professionalism of staff in all of the partner agencies. There is a real focus on positive development and change. The LSCBN has a clear and important central role in these changes and I look forward to continuing the journey with partners, children, young people and their families included.

Keith Makin
Independent Chair,
LSCBN



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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 of whom 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 more 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 are mentally ill can place children at increased risk of harm from abuse and/or neglect.

Children in Need

The total social care caseload (covering Children in Need, Children with a Child Protection Plan and Looked After Children) was 4,709 in March 2014, this compares to 4,656 in March 2013; volumes in the overall caseload have not risen at the year end despite a peak in the caseload reaching 5,554 in July 2013. From January 2014 to March 2014, there was a concerted effort to review all cases within social care to ensure that children and families were receiving the appropriate level of support. In October 2013/14 a new ‘Step Down’ service was created which ensured that families stepping out of social care services were, if appropriate, supported. In total 412 families benefited from this service in the five months to year end.

Children with a Child Protection Plan

Children who have a Child Protection Plan 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 Child Protection Plan details the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns and by whom, and how we will know when progress is being made. During 2013/14 the numbers of children subject to a Child Protection Plan have significantly increased. At the end of March 2013, the numbers stood at 477 and at the end of March 2014 the numbers reached 777, this represents a 63% increase within the year. When looking at this rate per 10,000 population this means that Northamptonshire now stands at 50, versus our statistical neighbour profile of 34 and the England average of 38. It is recognised that the national and local trends may reflect greater pressures on families caused by the recession and poverty, 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.

The increase in Child Protection Plans creates pressures within services for all partners to support the multi-agency planning meetings and for children's social care in particular to maintain close oversight and visiting arrangements. Research undertaken in March 2014 which scrutinised the engagement of child protection processes at a county level identified issues around engagement and attendance at key points across partner agencies. This is now a priority area and is being addressed through LSCBN and partner action plans.



Chapter 1 – Northamptonshire in context



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 827 Looked After Children at the end of March 2014, compared with 728 at the end of March 2013 (13% increase). There has been a consequential increase in the rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the child population which has risen from 47 to 53. This compares to our statistical neighbour average of 49 and England average of 59.

During the year Northamptonshire's, Looked After Children Service was inspected. Ofsted judged the experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence as inadequate and set out a series of critical improvement areas for the Council and its partners. The inspection found improvements needed in both the strategic element of service planning alongside the overall quality of casework and outcomes for children and young people who are looked after.

These improvements are required across the partnership; within Council structures, Health structures, Schools and sit alongside the wider outcomes for our Looked After Children, such as our care leaver profile for accommodation and employment. Accordingly, action plans have been developed to address the findings of Ofsted. These are scrutinised both by the LSCBN and the Independent Improvement Board. All Looked After Children are subject to regular independent reviews of their care to ensure that their circumstances are reviewed and individual needs are met. Of particular emphasis was ensuring that the 'voice of the child' was central in case planning and that the Independent Reviewing Officers are providing appropriate challenge to drive improved outcomes. This has improved, but much more work needs to take place to achieve the required standard.

As at the year's end, the Council's profile for out of county placements is 14% this compares variably to 19% for statutory neighbours and the England average of 34%. This area will come under further scrutiny of the LSCBN, to ensure that the correct challenge is in place when placing children outside of the County borders. The LSCBN will ensure that if necessary, actions are undertaken to improve the quantity and quality of foster carers or residential settings.

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 2014 the local authority was aware of 18 privately fostered children, an increase from 2013 when the numbers were reported as 12. However, reported numbers remain low despite the efforts of the local authority and the LSCBN to raise awareness of the need to notify the local authority of these arrangements. During the last quarter of the year, the Council conducted a thorough review of Privately Fostered Children's service and is now working to implement improved practice across partners. This will ensure that key staff are aware of the need to report children who are being privately fostered, and that the Council complies with the statutory visiting requirement for this cohort of children.

Disabled children

There has been a rise in the number of disabled children with a Child Protection Plan. At the end of March 2014 there were 32 disabled children with a Child Protection Plan compared to two at the end of March 2013 (0.4% to 4%).

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. The YOS has continued to see the number of young people they work with decrease from previous years. During 2013/14 there were 286 Court Orders and formal pre-court interventions, as compared to 335 in 2012/13. The YOS also works many orders for other areas, especially looked after children. 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. Reoffending has continued to reduce, and the use of custody has dropped dramatically from over 100 young people in 2008/09 to just 29 in 2013/14. The use of remand has shown a marked decrease too, while first time entrants to the Youth Justice System continue to fall. The reduction in numbers is in line with national reduction in young people entering the Criminal Justice System.

Children who are at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE) and missing children

The LSCBN has formally adopted a CSE and missing children sub group. The group has been operating in a shadow role for over a year responding to the national action plans and supporting the development of a multi agency CSE and missing team. Throughout the year the sub group has benefited from strong partnership attendance. The Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation multi agency team known as RISE is now in place and its development and the quality assurance of its work have been initial areas of focus. This group is working with the CSE National Working Group using its benchmarking tool and has commissioned a peer review to support the sub groups' operational business development. Key priorities set out in the action plan for the next year includes a focus on single and multi agency training, multi agency case audits, staff development and the development of the on line and E safety support.

Chapter 1 – Northamptonshire in context



CSE continued...

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 162 referrals were made where children were suspected of being at risk of sexual exploitation. This was a significant increase from the previous year's figure of 56. Given this significant increase it was agreed in February 2014 that a new sub group for this area would be formed in order to ensure that the partnership works together to safeguard these children and young people. A detailed Action Plan is being developed for children at risk of sexual exploitation; this will include a profile and locality assessment to inform the partnership as to its key areas of attention.

Young people with mental health needs

During 2013/14 emotional wellbeing and mental health services commissioned by the Northamptonshire Young Healthy Minds Partnership (YHMP) NHS Nene CCG and NHS Corby CCG, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire CCGs and Northamptonshire County Council supported c11, 000 children and young people (6.5% of the 0–18 population of Northamptonshire. Provision included:

- tier 1 Universal Services e.g. The Anti-Stigma Programme focusing on promotion of positive emotional wellbeing;
- tier 2 Early Help Services e.g. Youth Counselling;
- tier 3 Targeted services e.g. play therapy and;
- tier 4 Specialist Services (88% of the budget) e.g. Psychology provision of traditional Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS).

There were c3500 cases referred to CAMHS in 2013/14. The average waiting time has reduced from 13 weeks to 6 weeks from referral to assessment. For specialist assessments for suspected Neurological Developmental Delays (NDD) e.g. autism or ADHD, the waiting times have reduced from 2 years in some specialisms to 8–12 months.

There has been a steady rise in referrals across all areas of the services. To address this, the YHMP is engaged in a children and young people community health transformation programme to include a central referral management system, better quality management information and integration of multi-agency/multi-specialist locality teams. Underpinning this has been a £30,000 investment in a website to better advise on behaviours, concerns and conditions on www.asknormen.co.uk and continuing to enhance areas of prevention and early intervention as outlined in the current draft “Northamptonshire’s Strategy for the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children and Young People 2014 to 2017”.



Chapter 2 – Governance and accountability arrangements

What is the LSCBN?

The LSCBN 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 LSCBN was established in compliance with The Children Act 2004 (Section 13) and The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006.

The work of the LSCBN during 2013/14 was governed by the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013. This sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006 which sets out the functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Our Objective:

To co-ordinate and ensure 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. We aim 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 that 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 LSCBN

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 for the main part of 2013/14 was Kevin Crompton who led the development of the LSCBN through the early stages of improvement in Northamptonshire, focusing in particular on the number of Serious Case Reviews that were in progress to ensure they reached a conclusion. Keith Makin, the current chair of the LSCBN took over as chair in March 2014 and has started to look at the structure and function of the LSCBN and driving further improvement. The Board Membership at April 2014 was:

- 2 Clinical Commissioning Groups – Nene CCG and Corby CCG;
- Connexions;
- 7 District and Borough Councils;
- East Midlands Ambulance Service;
- 2 Lay Members;
- Kettering General Hospital;
- NHS England;
- Northampton General Hospital;
- Northamptonshire County Council including, Adult Services and Children's Services;
- 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.

The Board and its sub-groups have suffered from mixed attendance through 2013/14, an issue which has been addressed as a priority by the new Chair from March 2014. A list of current Board Members is provided at the back of this report.



Executive Support Group (ESG)

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

- LSCBN 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 and Prevention, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Children's Service, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Assistant Director – Learning, Skills & Education, Northamptonshire County Council;
- Improvement Director – Northamptonshire County Council;
- Deputy Director of Nursing – NHS England;
- Assistant Chief Constable – Northamptonshire Police;
- Director – Northamptonshire Probation Trust;
- Director of Public Health – Northamptonshire County Council and;
- Operational Director – BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company.

In addition to the core membership, the Chairs of each of the LSCBN sub-groups attend the monthly meeting in order to provide progress updates so that the Executive Support Group can hear of challenge and issues facing sub-groups.

This ensures that there is sufficient pace and delivery of required improvements. Key items reviewed in the year have been the:

- Implementation of an effective MASH;
- Revision of the LSCBN Scorecard and a high level dashboard;
- LSCBN Learning and Improvement Framework;
- Progress on the LSCBN Northamptonshire Improvement Plan Actions;
- Development of the LSCBN Business Plan 2013–16;
- Review of referrals and re-referrals into Social Care;
- Attendance and Reporting at Child Protection Conferences;
- Commissioning of a Peer Review of the LSCBN;
- Review of the LSCBN training plan and;
- Delivery of a Barriers and Issues to Safeguarding workshop with supporting action plan.

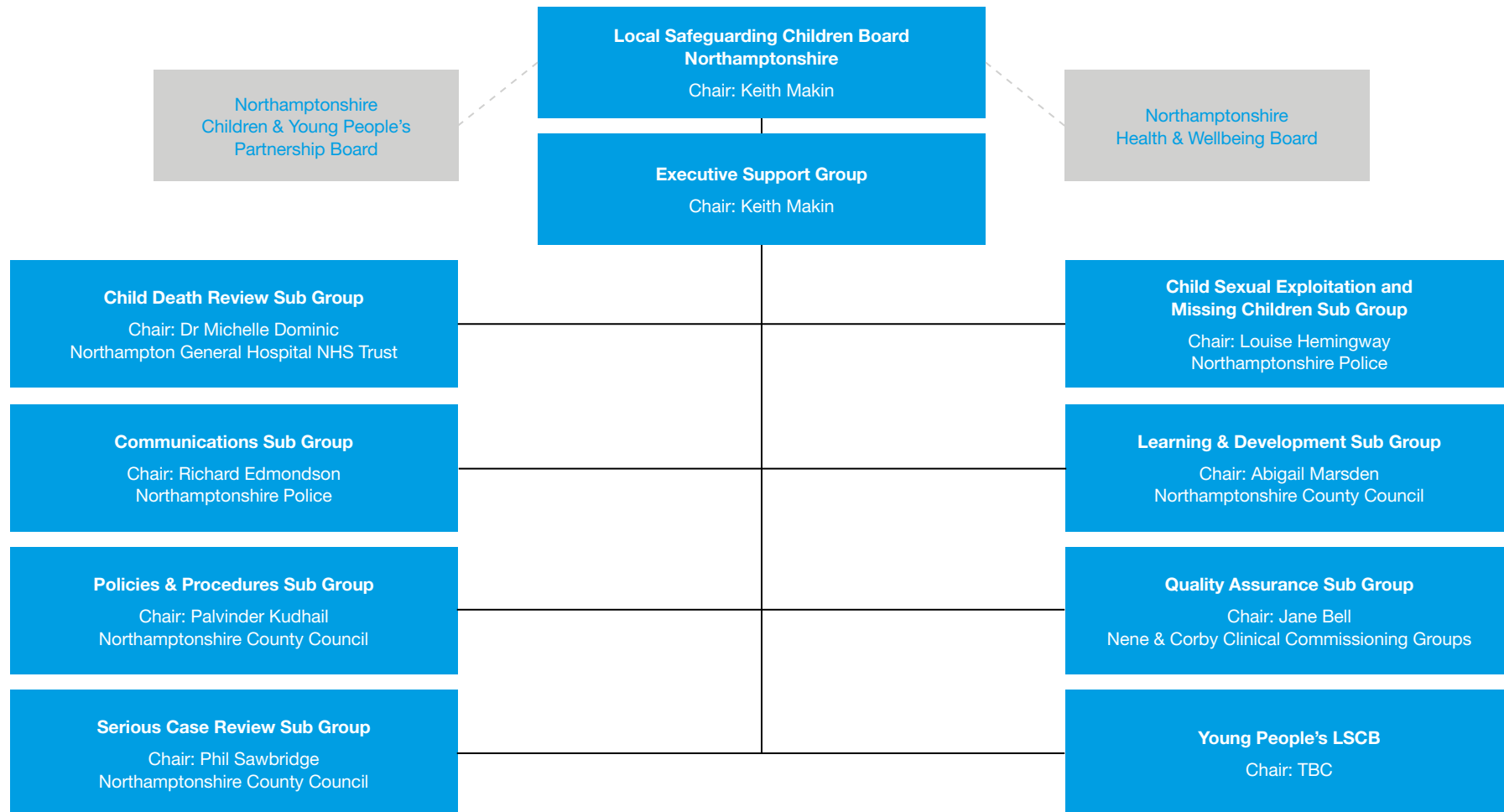


Chapter 2 – Governance and accountability arrangements

LSCBN Structure

The main Board is supported by a range of sub-groups that enable its functioning.

As mentioned earlier in the report during 2013/14 a sub-group set up to implement a local strategy to tackle missing, trafficked and children at risk of sexual exploitation became a formal subgroup accountable to the Board, this is reflected in the below structure.



Key Roles

Independent Chair

The Board continues to be led by an Independent Chair, ensuring a continued independent voice for the Board. The LSCBN welcomed a new independent Chair, Keith Makin 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 LSCBN in their area and ensuring that it is run effectively. The ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the LSCBN 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 LSCBN 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 LSCBN. This is supported by the LSCBN 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 LSCBN, these professionals sit on a number of the sub-groups of the LSCBN and inform decision making.

Key Relationships

Northamptonshire Improvement Board

The LSCBN has a key role in delivery of a range of actions from Northamptonshire's Improvement Plan. In order to ensure this happens, the LSCBN 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 improved safeguarding.

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

The LSCBN has a working relationship with the CYPPB. The CYPPB is responsible for developing and promoting integrated front line delivery of services which serve to safeguard children. The chair of the LSCBN is a member of the CYPPB and the Chair of the CYPPB sits on the LSCBN. 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.

Chapter 2 – Governance and accountability arrangements



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 LSCBN and the HWB have now established a protocol for the working arrangements between the two Boards, with the Chair of the LSCBN participating at all HWB Boards, thereby being informed of and able to contribute and challenge any commissioning proposals regarding safeguarding children made by the HWB. The LSCBN reports annually to the HWB and will hold the HWB Board to account 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 LSCBN during 2013/14.

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 LSCBN presents its Annual Report to the PCC outlining key safeguarding challenges and any action required of 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 through this year with schools. The LSCBN has worked with Education leads to ensure that their specific needs regarding the Section 11 audit tool were acknowledged and acted upon. Schools are represented on the LSCBN Board. Further work is planned in 2014 such as the Safeguarding in Schools Events and changes to sub-group structures through additional school representation. 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 ensure that opportunities are not missed, as such this will be a key priority area for the forthcoming year.

Financial Arrangements

Board partners continue to contribute to the LSCBN's budget in addition to providing a variety of resources 'in kind'. Contributions from partners for 2013/14 reached £264,212. An under spend of £86,630 was carried forward from the previous financial year making the total income available to the Board £350,842.

This income ensured that the overall cost of running the LSCBN was met. Existing costs around Serious Case Reviews will be carried forward to 2014/15. The Board has agreed to carry forward the under spend from 2013/14 to the 2014/15 budget.

Income (partner contributions)		2013-14
Northamptonshire County Council	LSCBN	£69,375.00
Northamptonshire Probation Trust	LSCBN	£2,056.00
Nene & Corby CCGs	LSCBN	£69,375.00
CAFCASS	LSCBN	£550.00
Connexions	LSCBN	£2,569.00
St Andrews Healthcare	LSCBN	£3,289.00
Northamptonshire Police	LSCBN	£30,833.00
District & Borough Councils	LSCBN	£12,333.00
Further Education Colleges	LSCBN	£822.00
DSG Funding	LSCBN	£71,725.00
Rainsbrook STC	LSCBN	£1,285.00
Total		£264,212.00

LSCB Expenditure	2013-14	Notes
Staffing Costs	£161,282.00	
Consultancy	£160,012.00	Includes; LSCB Chair, SCR Authors, SCR Independent Chairs and training provision
Room Hire	£6,170.00	Includes any catering
Tri-x (LSCBN website)	£5,340.00	
Total	£332,804.00	

Chapter 3 – Progress over 2013/14

The Child's Journey

The Northamptonshire Children and Families Early Help and Prevention Strategy was updated in November 2013. The strategy is aligned with the broader Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan and provides a clear framework for the ongoing development of the early help offer in Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan 2013/15 identifies Early Help as 'the area of care and support where we have the greatest opportunity to make an impact as a partnership'.

The Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways document was approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire, and the Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership Board in July 2013 and distributed to partners. This forms the basis for consistent identification of needs. A Pocket Child Protection Guide has been produced and distributed widely to managers and practitioners to support them to identify risks and levels of need. Multi-agency Common Assessment for Families (CAF) training has taken place in relation to the revised CAF assessment process. Over 1,000 practitioners and managers received CAF training between July 2013 and April 2014.

Central to the new model is working alongside services who offer early help across the 0–19 age range, including Children's Centres, health, schools, targeted prevention teams, youth provision, the voluntary sector, local and district borough councils and social care. There are 7 locality forums in place.

During 2013/14 there were 1,565 Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF) completed compared to 671 in 2012/13. A review of the CAF process was undertaken to ensure that the form and process was fit for purpose. Based on findings, alterations were made to ensure that partners' views were acted upon. In the last year Targeted Prevention Teams have worked with 1,807 individuals providing early help interventions. The Priority Families initiative has identified 1,491 families and is working with 1,200.

There has been a significant rise in the number of referrals to Children's Services during 2013/14. The number of referrals received has risen from 10,516 during 2012/13 to 14,601 during 2013/14, an increase of 39%. As well as seeing a significant rise in the number of referrals to Children's Services during 2013/14 there has been a continued high level of re-referrals into social care within 12 months, from 36.6% in 2012/13 to 33.8% in 2013/14.

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.

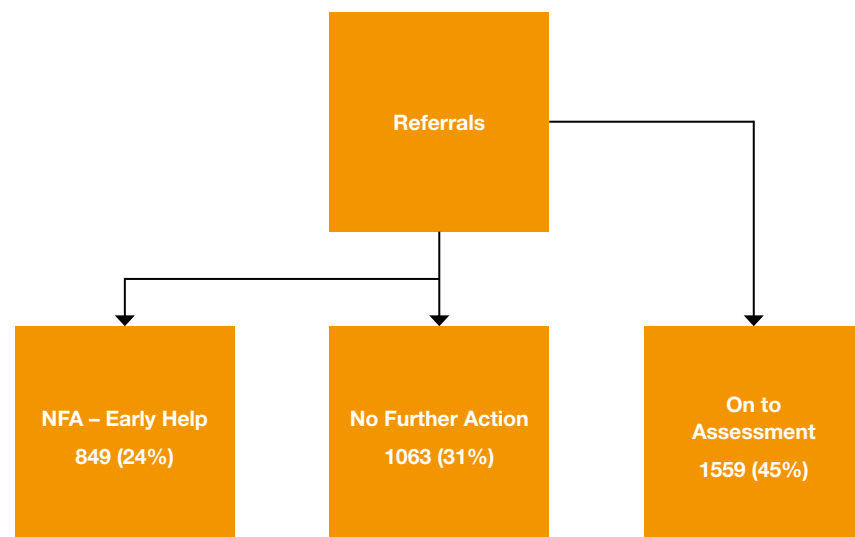
The rise in referrals reflects the greater numbers of families under stress and in need but also greater recognition and response to signs of abuse and neglect following awareness campaigns delivered through the Making Children Safer events and the Ofsted inspection findings. Northamptonshire County Council has invested an additional £10.9 million in front-line social work services in 2013/14 in recognition of the increasing demands and its Improvement Plan.



Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Northamptonshire

The LSCBN had considerable oversight of the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which became operational with Children's Social Care, Police and Health in August 2013. The co-located MASH team now consists of Children's Social Care, Police, Education and Health professionals. There are established links with 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.

The following gives an example of the work the MASH undertakes, looking across Quarter 4 of 2013/14;



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

Contact by	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Police/Probation/Court/Immigration	1276	1162	1324	1145	4907
Family Member	309	384	262	184	1139
Education Professional	699	355	772	662	2488
Health	538	590	629	565	2322
Other Local Authority	67	87	73	79	306
Anonymous	129	169	127	138	563
NCC Social Services Dept	69	61	68	85	283
Other NCC Department	56	36	46	101	239
Friend/Neighbour	34	98	45	39	216
L.A. Housing Dept & Association	10	44	25	59	138
Other	497	564	525	414	2000
Total	3684	3550	3896	3471	14601

Initial Assessments

There has been an improvement in the timescales within which children are assessed. The 2013/14 year end position was 44.9% of initial assessments in timescales, but with significant improvements being made in the final months of the year. Initial Assessments authorised within 10 days in March was 75.2%. In comparison, this was at its lowest in August 2013 at 35.9%.

Chapter 3 – Progress over 2013/14

Local Trends

A new LSCBN scorecard was created during the year in order to understand activity in safeguarding. This is now reviewed each quarter at the Executive Support Group meeting. Reviewing local trends and patterns means that where appropriate, actions are identified and directed by the Chair. Further, in January, senior managers from across statutory services met to discuss future reporting needs. From April 2014, it has been agreed that each agency will receive their referral data and subsequent outcomes so that they can challenge and improve the profile of referrals and reduce those that result in 'no further action' into Social Care. This will of course help to ensure that agencies are appropriately engaging with the Early Help services in place.

Key Priorities

In August 2013, the Executive Support Group of the partnership met to identify its key improvement areas. This has resulted in four areas of immediate priority for the next two years:

- For the LSCBN to function effectively and focus on ensuring that partners keep children and young people safe;
- To ensure that frontline child protection is strengthened across agencies;

- To embed early intervention approaches to prevent safeguarding issues escalating and;
- To deliver a trained workforce with an embedded culture of safeguarding.

Quality Assurance (QA)

The LSCBN Quality Assurance committee met on six occasions in the year, however progress has been slow. In the early part of the year focused on the Section 11 audit analysis, following the return of audits in March 2013 (discussed below). A review of activity regarding case audits and multi-agency reviews identified significant weaknesses; this was addressed during the last quarter, where a multi-agency case audit system was agreed. For 2014/15, case audits will focus on the priority areas of Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Violence, Self Harm and Neglect. Further, a new Chair has been appointed to this sub-group and meetings will be conducted on a monthly basis until sufficient progress has been made.

As mentioned within the Local Trends section, the LSCBN performance scorecard was reviewed and revised in the year. All agencies were involved in this review from across agencies. Attendees reviewed the scorecard and identified areas across the partnership which required improvement. A new scorecard and dashboard is now in use and supports the wider Improvement Plan objectives.

Schools Safeguarding Audit

In early March 2013, a Section 11 audit process was undertaken. In total 51 schools responded from 323 in Northamptonshire. The findings told us that schools in Northamptonshire rated themselves as effective or exceeding expectations in delivering safeguarding. Following these findings and with these being in direct contrast to the Ofsted inspection findings, the Section 11 audit process has been revised. During 2014, schools will be expected to participate in a new Section 11 audit tool based on best practice tools. The results of the audit will be known in the Autumn of 2014.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO should be informed of all allegations against adults working with children and provides 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;
- ensure the referral pathway process is consistent in the application of threshold;
- ensure the recordings of the allegation against adults are secure; and
- ensure more streamlined processes and prevent duplication and drift.

The Northampton County Council LADO service has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of strategy meetings undertaken in 2014 compared to the previous year. Between April 1st 2013 and March 30th 2014 there were 538 strategy meetings.

Responding to revised statutory guidance (Policy and Procedures Committee)

The Policy and Procedures sub-group works to ensure that the partnership reviews and meets any changes needed. During the year this sub group progressed a number of items to ensure compliance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, including;

- Publication of the local Learning and Improvement Framework;
- 14 LSCBN online procedures updated;
- A review of 26 policies for the LSCBN to ensure they are Working Together 2013 compliant and;
- A revised Multi-Agency referral form.

There is an ambitious plan to address the outstanding procedures which are due for review and then the focus for this sub-group will be to ensure that procedures are used to support safeguarding.



Chapter 3 – Progress over 2013/14

Young people who self-harm

The total number of young people in Northamptonshire who self-harm as a coping mechanism is unknown, but remains a concern for those working with them. Northamptonshire is perceived as a national outlier for self-harm according to Public Health England CHIMAT data. However, this is not necessarily due to the numbers of presentations (c25 per month – average for the region). It is due to the fact that Northampton General Hospital (NGH) and Kettering General Hospital (KGH) admit all children who self-harm for mental health assessment in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidance to ensure children and young people are safe. Very few authorities in the United Kingdom fully adhere to this guidance and therefore Northamptonshire appears to be an outlier where in fact the numbers admitted to hospital over the last 4 years have reduced (though there is a concerning increase in children aged 11–16 presenting). At the same time there have been large increases reported nationally.

Acute self-harm and suicidal ideation must not be confused with behavioural self-harm (cutting, self-punching etc.). There have been reported instances locally and nationally suggesting that 50% of teenage girls (vs.10% in 1984) in exam years use behavioural self-harm as a coping mechanism (in the 2013 survey of 775 Northamptonshire CYP, and 65% of young people think that self-harm is used as a way of coping with stress). A number of LSCBN training events took place in 2013/14, and there is a working group that is developing a refreshed toolkit for all professionals and families concerned about self-harm, the acute pathway and a guide for young people, written by young people. All staff working in safeguarding have access to resources available at www.asknormen.co.uk/cutting-self-harm/

The Kettering and Northampton Locality Forums are working closely with the Children and Young People's Commissioning Manager for Emotional Health and Wellbeing to develop local action sets to reduce the incidences of self-harm and ensure more cohesive approaches to assist children and young people who require support. There is also an audit and review of the acute pathway being undertaken as a part of an urgent care pathway review for children and young people.

Interpersonal Violence

A needs assessment for interpersonal violence commenced in 2013 as part of the work to re-commission interpersonal violence services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse. The assessment was based upon a similar assessment undertaken in 2010. The key headlines so far are:

- Domestic abuse is still significantly under reported, particularly for males;
- Reports of domestic abuse are increasing, mirroring the national trend, a possible indicator of an increase in public confidence;
- Women aged 20–29 are the biggest age group of domestic violence victims;
- Sexual violence is increasing both in absolute terms from data from the Police, and from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and;
- Sexual assaults among females over age 23 and rape among females over 16 are the fastest growing specific crime codes within sexual violence.

From the 1st April 2014 supporting services contracts were re-commissioned to provide vital support to vulnerable families and young people in the county. The services delivered through the contracts include work with victims of domestic abuse to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing; work with perpetrators of domestic abuse to reduce risks; and work with children affected by domestic abuse to minimise the impact of their experiences. The services also include interventions for children and young people to help build resilience against emotional and behavioural problems as well as diversionary activities to reduce low level offending and anti-social behaviour among young people. Individual parenting support packages and a programme of peer support for parents will also be provided through the contracts.

Children's Centre Commissioning

Children's Centre services provide a range of services to families with young children (aged 0–4 years). The new model for children's centre services (agreed by Northamptonshire Cabinet in October 2013) is an important part of the council partner plans 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 where they live.

Northamptonshire has been able to maintain children's centre services budgets unlike many local authorities across the country.

The new Children's Centre services model has two main components:

1. Libraries

2. Commissioned Children's Centre services

1. Libraries:

Our LibraryPlus 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;
- Children's Centre registration services;
- Universal activities such as stories, song and rhyme times and;
- Recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers for children's centre services.

2. Commissioned Children's Centre services:

The 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) but will primarily focus on activities for families who need extra support or early help.

Contracts were tendered in 10 procurement lots covering 10 geographical areas within Northamptonshire. Nine of the contracts have been awarded 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
- Borough of Wellingborough – Action for Children.

Contracts have now been awarded and are in place until March 2017, with scope for extension up to two further years subject to performance. The contracts with existing providers in Corby have been extended.

Chapter 3 – Progress over 2013/14

Licensing Applications

Between April 1st 2013 and March 30th 2014 there were 97 copies of applications made under the licensing act 2003 received.

A review of the service and processes in place to support this activity is planned for Quarter 1 2014/15.

Safeguarding Disabled Children

The Early Help for Disabled Children Team was integrated with the Targeted Prevention Teams to strengthen the early help offer this year. This is a priority area that will be addressed further in the forthcoming year.

Workforce Learning and Development

The principles and values of workforce development for LSCBN safeguarding is 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;
- To demonstrate the value placed on workers and the importance of the contribution they make in achieving positive outcomes for children and;
- Be a demonstration of working together in action, bringing people together and working collaboratively.

During the year the LSCBN delivered 58 learning & development opportunities with 1,337 people attending these sessions. It should be stated that this figure does not include the 1,000 professionals attending the Making Children Safer events mentioned earlier in this report.

‘Working Together 2013’ requires that LSCBs monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, for all professionals in the area. The LSCBN has recognised that further work is required by the Board and partner agencies to understand what difference training is making on frontline practice. During the year, the LSCBN delivered a revised Learning and Development Strategy utilising the guidance set out in Working Together 2013. A detailed





needs assessment took place, this will ensure that safeguarding awareness and processes are understood and delivered against. A new training provider will commence this work during Autumn 2014.

Early Help and Prevention

Between October 2013 and March 2014, 18 'Making Children Safer' events have been held for practitioners working with children/families, to re-enforce the need to ensure safeguarding concerns are dealt with appropriately and that early help needs are identified and addressed. Over 1,500 practitioners and managers attended one of these sessions. Feedback provided has shown that participants felt these events increased their confidence in dealing with the families' issues. CAF co-ordinators have been working with 43 targeted schools since January 2014. These schools were identified due the high number of contacts that they made to the MASH that did not convert to a referral.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of CAFs initiated both by the Council and across the partnership to 1,565 for the year which exceeds the target of 1,006 and

compares favourably to the previous year out turn figure of 671. A full time CAF Help Desk operates for professionals or parents to contact regarding any queries about a CAF, to request support to set up a CAF process or support a team around the child meeting. CAF Co-ordinators and targeted prevention team staff have a full time presence in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) front door to respond to relevant enquiries/referrals where early help provision may be appropriate.

Chapter 4 – What happens when a child dies or is seriously harmed in Northamptonshire?

Child Death Reviews

The Child Death Review Committee (also known as Child Death Overview Panel) is a sub group of the LSCBN. It undertakes a systematic review of all child deaths to help understand why children die. By focusing on the unexpected deaths in 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.

The rate of child deaths has reduced in the latest child health profile (ChiMat) from 11.3 (2009–11) to 10.2 (2010–12) per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years, this is not significantly different to the England or Regional Averages.

Child deaths expected and unexpected are also reviewed, there is currently a backlog of these reviews which require completion and this is currently being worked through with real drive and progress within the sub-group. It is anticipated that all outstanding reviews will be completed by November 2014. Northamptonshire received 40 child death notifications this year of which 11 of these were unexpected. Reviewing the unexpected deaths within Northamptonshire no factors have been identified that could help prevent deaths in the future. However, safe sleeping arrangements for babies, teen suicide, deaths caused by dangerous driving and drowning 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 LSCBN 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.

During 2013/14, 17 cases were brought to the attention of the LSCBN Serious Case Review Committee. Of these, two serious case reviews were commissioned, one smaller case mapping exercise (CME) was undertaken, there are also two further cases waiting for a CME to be undertaken, and 12 led to no further action by the Board. One serious case review is awaiting conclusion (Brad Ingram) following the conclusion of criminal proceedings, and the remaining reviews are due for completion in 2014/15.

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 babies;
- Little, if any, evidence of the child's voice – i.e. what was it like to be a child in that family;
- Lack of assessment of fathers or recognition of the role they play in the family – even if “absent”;
- Disguised compliance and focus on adult needs;
- Assumptions about professionals' roles made and not challenged;
- Vulnerability of young mothers not addressed;
- Lack of risk assessment of “family” members and;
- Child Protection plans not SMART

During the year, 3 events were held to promote learning around our Serious Case Reviews with professionals attending from across 15 agencies. Alongside this information, an Action Plan is in place to ensure all recommendations made from Serious Case Reviews are acted upon.



Chapter 5 – Challenges Ahead and Future Priorities

National Drivers

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

- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Improving the effectiveness of ‘early help’ services;
- Implementing new statutory safeguarding guidance;
- The focus on safeguarding across inspection frameworks;
- A focus on 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 service.

For the Improvement Board

The LSCBN and its sub-groups:

- Progressing actions to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation, working with partners to raise the profile and safeguarding requirements;
- Embedding robust and rigorous quality assurance activity;
- Continued multi-agency working through contributions to the MASH and continual improvement of engagement and commitment of Board and sub-group members to make a difference;
- Ensuring the new training provider delivers the improvements required (Learning and Development);

- Ensuring that the appropriate needs assessments take place and inform future commissioning requirements;
- Understanding the safeguarding needs of children with disabilities and ensuring the necessary actions are in place to support this cohort of children and young people and;
- Developing a robust and targeted communications strategy incorporating the use of the LSCBN Newsletter and other channels to ensure that all professionals are aware of their duty to safeguard and the systems in place to do so in Northamptonshire.

For the LSCBN, working with other Boards and partnership structures – Health & Wellbeing Board, Corporate Parenting Board, Children & Young People’s Partnership.

- Understanding and prevention of Self Harm;
- Safeguarding those Northamptonshire children who are living outside of Northamptonshire within residential, educational and secure settings;
- Ensuring there is sufficient provision of ‘early help’ and improving the effectiveness and engagement of ‘early help’ services and;
- Working with the Borough and District Councils around Homelessness.

Key Priority Areas

Reviewing the challenges ahead the Board remains committed to responding to the following key priority areas:

- Strengthening partnerships to make a difference;
- Missing, exploited and trafficked children;
- Safeguarding disabled children;
- Maintaining a Quality Assurance Framework and driving improvements from such reviews;
- 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 Peoples LSCBN).

Chapter 6 – 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

- 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 LSCBN safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events;
- Your agency's contribution to the work of LSCBN must be categorised as the highest priority. Every agency must ensure that it takes into account the priorities within the LSCBN Business Plan and the agency's own contribution to the shared delivery of the LSCBN'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 LSCBN's work programme with appropriate resources and personnel and;
- The LSCBN needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on your capacity to safeguard children and young people in Northamptonshire.





Chapter 6 – What next for Child Protection 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 LSCBN 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 LSCBN and you are ideally positioned to help do this and;
- The work of LSCBN 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 LSCBN plans to develop better ways of hearing children and young people’s voices.

Board Membership List

Mark Ainge

Head of Community Services,
Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Helen Aird

Head of Service, Connexions,
Northamptonshire

Rufia Ashraf

Lay Member

Jane Bell

Head of Nursing, Nene and
Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups

Cllr Catherine Boardman

Portfolio Holder for Children,
Families and Education, Northamptonshire
County Council (as an observer)

Ann Bodsworth

Chief Executive,
Northampton Women's Aid

Peter Boylan

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

Jane Bradley

Acting Director of Nursing and Quality,
Northampton General Hospital

John Campbell

Chief Executive,
Borough Council of Wellingborough

Cathy Chaplin

Lay Member

Robin Chapman

Deputy Principal,
Moulton College

Andrew Cheal

Assistant Director,
Learning, Skills and Education,
Northamptonshire County Council

Dr Jamie Clarke

Headteacher, Sponne School

Laura Clarke

Headteacher, Rowangate School

Clare Culpin

Director of Nursing and Quality,
Kettering General Hospital

Liz Elgar

Head of Service, CAF/CASS

Russell Foster

Specialist Crime & Professional Standards,
Northamptonshire Police

Satinder Gautam

Assistant Director

Safeguarding & Children's Service,
Northamptonshire County Council

Louise De Groot

Local Quality Manager,
East Midlands Ambulance Service

Phillip Headley

Centre Director,
Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre

Alex Hopkins

Director of Children,
Families & Education,
Northamptonshire County Council

David Howell

Headteacher
Danetree & Southbrook Learning Village

Palvinder Kudhail

Assistant Director Early Help and Prevention,
Children, Families and Education,
Northamptonshire County Council

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 the Protecting Vulnerable Persons
Dept, Northamptonshire Police

Keith Makin

Independent Chair of LSCBN (Chair)

Denise Meylan

Director,
Northamptonshire Probation Trust

Sharon Muldoon

Improvement Director,
Northamptonshire County Council

Jon O'Byrne

Youth Offending Service Manager

Catherine Pelley

Deputy Director of Nursing,
NHS England

Cathy Sheehan

Head of Safeguarding,
East Midlands Ambulance Service

Julie Shepherd

Interim Director of Nursing,
Northamptonshire Health Foundation Trust

David Thomas

Director of Quality & Governance,
St Andrews Healthcare



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