

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board

Business Plan 2017-18

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1. Introduction

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Business Plan outlines the key priorities for 2017-2018. The decision for an interim one year plan is intentional to allow the NSCB to refocus its activities following Northamptonshire County Council's inspection and improvement journey and the subsequent review and restructure of the Board and its Sub Groups.

This Business Plan enables improved strengthening of partnership working and information sharing across the county in order to identify children and young people at risk of harm and exploitation, ensuring they receive early and effective support and care from all agencies.

To further strengthen partnership working, in March 2017, the NSCB agreed to work more collaboratively with the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB), and to merge the Business Office functions and a number of Sub Groups. This will enable a much greater impact on safeguarding by adopting a 'Think Family' approach to a number of cross-cutting priority issues.

The Board has also received assurance from key leaders to renew the energy, drive and commitment to Board activities that was apparent with Northamptonshire County Council's Improvement Board. This will ensure an improved level of scrutiny of local arrangements involving senior leaders and decision makers.

In the context of the Children and Social Work Act and the proposed changes to LSCBs, partner agencies will continue to commit to engaging in robust arrangements that coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of how children and young people are safeguarded in the county. The Act is permissive in nature, rather than directive. This will enable the positive cross-partner relationships which underpin the Board's work to continue.

Board partners want to ensure that everyone providing services across Northamptonshire has a commitment to protecting vulnerable children and young people from harm and exploitation. The aspiration of the Board is to ensure child protection practices and procedures meet or exceed 'good', and that staff in every agency and at every level, know what they need to do to keep children protected from harm and to communicate and share information effectively to ensure this happens. Therefore, there is a desire for the NSCB and partners to successfully deliver against the Business Plan and associated Sub Group actions plans and to evidence how the partnership successfully protect children and young people from harm.

The NSCB will demonstrate continuous development following the Ofsted Review in March 2016 and provide evidence of the positive outcomes for children, young people and their families across the county of Northamptonshire. In this regard, the Business Plan will be reviewed quarterly against progress as outlined in the priorities below.

The work of the Board will be underpinned by two key principles as outlined in Working Together 2015:

1. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
2. **A child-centred approach:** for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

In addition, the Board will:

3. Adopt a think family approach to meet the needs of children, young people and their families;
4. Adopt an approach of constructive professional challenge;
5. Adopt a culture of continuous review and learning; and
6. Capitalise on the unique opportunities presented by the cross-cutting safeguarding priorities for children, families and adults.

2. Statutory Objectives

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the Local Authority) that should be represented on LSCBs.

The statutory objectives and functions of LSCBs as outlined in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 are:

- (a) to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's Regulations 2006 sets out the functions of the LSCB under section 14 of Children Act 2004 as:

1. Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including the following:
 - The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
 - Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
 - Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
 - Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered; and
 - Co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their board partners.
2. Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
3. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
4. Participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority;
5. Undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their board partners on lessons to be learned;
6. Undertaking reviews of all child deaths.

3. Principles

The overarching values and principles listed here are common to both the NSAB and NSCB. They translate into different outcomes and expectations for adults and children but are core to the purposes of both Boards.

Key Principles		Description
1.	Empowerment	People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions (with informed consent).
2.	Prevention	Take action before harm occurs.
3.	Proportionality	The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4.	Protection	Support and representation for those with the greatest need.
5.	Partnership	Solutions through local services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
6.	Accountability	Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.
7.	Think Family	The importance of ensuring a joined up approach to family need. Ensuring the earliest identification of children in need of protection, and an increased understanding of the impact of adult's problems on a child's life.

4. Priorities for 2017-18

This strategic plan for 2017-18 outlines the key priorities for the NSCB. It should be noted that whilst the Board has not defined neglect as a specific requirement, Board members agreed that neglect runs through each and every priority. Therefore, partners will ensure that their staff are aware of this when working with children, young people and their families, and that they are using the neglect toolkit to help identify the level of risk.

The NSCB has also agreed, by way of a revised format to Board meetings, which partners will utilise this dedicated time at the quarterly meetings to present their engagement activities with children and young people, to ensure Board have a wider perspective of initiatives and events across the partnership.

Over the coming year, the Board will continue to strengthen its governance arrangements between NSCB members and other local partnership Boards including the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

A number of key documents work alongside the Business Plan and help influence the work needed to meet objectives. These include:

- The Learning & Improvement Framework;
- Information Sharing Agreement;
- Learning & Development Strategy;
- Neglect Strategy; and
- Previous year's Annual Report priorities.

To facilitate Board priorities, Sub Groups will meet on a regular basis and develop high level Action Plans to evidence the work being undertaken on core activities across the partnership. These plans will be reviewed quarterly and will report to the Executive Steering Group of the Board.

The Board's activities will be supported by the following operational groups:

NSCB Structure		
	Group / Sub Group	Frequency
1.	Executive Support Group	Bi-monthly
2.	Child Death Overview Panel	Bi-monthly
3.	Quality Assurance Sub Group	Quarterly
4.	Serious Case Review Sub Group	Bi-monthly
5.	Learning & Development (joint NSAB)	Quarterly
6.	Children & Adults at Risk of Exploitation and Harm Sub Group (joint NSAB)	Bi-monthly

In order for business planning processes to lead to improvement, the priorities will be realistic and specific to the local area, and have a clear alignment to overall annual reporting processes and future planning. The agreed strategic objectives within this Business Plan are drawn from themes arising over the previous year and any emerging issues. Both of which have been discussed and agreed at the Executive Support Group and Board.

For 2017-18, the NSCB has agreed the following ten key priority areas:

Key Priorities for 2017-18		Agency Responsibility tbc
1.	Alcohol and Substance Misuse (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	Northamptonshire County Council
2.	Child Sexual Abuse	Police
3.	Domestic Abuse (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
4.	Electively Home Educated Children	Northamptonshire County Council
5.	Housing and Homelessness (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	District & Borough Councils
6.	Female Genital Mutilation	Health Economy
7.	Mental Health (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	Health Economy
8.	Modern Slavery (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
9.	Neglect	Northamptonshire County Council
10.	Prevent (<i>joint priority with NSAB</i>)	Northamptonshire County Council

The expectation from the Board is that the partnership leads for each of these priorities areas will report to Board bi-annually to highlight the work being undertaken across the partnership by adopting the six core principles; see schedule below. Board will seek assurance that:

1. There is a multi-agency approach to reduce exploitation and harm to children and young people across these key areas, and that information is shared across the partnership to ensure the earliest intervention is undertaken to support those at most risk;
2. That partners make the best use of the data available to include demographics, locality, patterns and trends;

3. That partners clearly identify:
 - a. what has worked well;
 - b. what has not worked so well; and
 - c. how can this be improved including gaps and barriers.
4. That partners provide information on all services being provided to those most at risk; and
5. That partners are accountable to evidence the positive outcomes achieved for those children, young people and their families identified from the data provided.

Key Priorities for 2017-18		Board Schedule	
1.	Alcohol and Substance Misuse	August 2017 – joint Board	April 2018 – joint Board
2.	Child Sexual Abuse	October 2017	April 2018
3.	Domestic Abuse	October 2017 – joint Board	July 2018 – joint Board
4.	Electively Home Educated Children	October 2017	April 2018
5.	Housing and Homelessness	October 2017	January 2018
6.	Female Genital Mutilation	April 2018 – joint Board	October 2018 – joint Board
7.	Mental Health	January 2018 - joint Board	October 2018 – joint Board
8.	Modern Slavery	January 2018 – joint Board	July 2018 – joint Board
9.	Neglect	Partnership update – August 2017	Partnership update – Jan 2018
10.	Prevent	August 2017 – joint Board	April 2018 – joint Board

Additional ongoing strategic objectives will include:

1. Evidencing the direct engagement work with children, young people and families being led by key partners. This will be reported to Board on a quarterly basis.
2. A local Learning and Improvement Framework will be adopted by the partnership to support the quality of safeguarding practice and will include:
 - a. A continuous programme of learning and development opportunities for practitioners to include e-learning and face to face training.
 - b. Analysis of training returns to inform the future planning of the training programme.
 - c. A multi-agency approach to learning from case audits and reviews will be disseminated and embedded across all local organisations and will include learning from:
 - i. serious case reviews;
 - ii. child death;
 - iii. case mapping;
 - iv. thematic reviews;
 - v. single and multi-agency reviews; and
 - vi. a review of the use of restraint for the secure establishment.

- d. In line with Working Together 2015 guidance, a thorough audit programme to include Section 11 partnership audit and Section 175 early years and education setting audits will be undertaken.

Keith Makin
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Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board