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## PART ONE: CONTEXT

### 1. Key principles:

The key principles of the NSCB Learning & Improvement Framework are drawn from those set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015). The framework is intended to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement across organisations, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promoting good and effective multi-agency practice, ultimately to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The main principles are that:

- Familiarisation with the NSCB Learning & Improvement Framework should be a component of a NSCB Board or Sub Groups induction into the work of the Board along with the other policies, guidance and procedures of the Board.
- Practitioners, Managers and organisations should take a reflective, non-blaming, systemic and analytical approach that focuses on achieving improvements and best outcomes for children and young people.
- Case reviews, Practitioner Forums and audits should provide regular opportunities to address multi-agency collaboration and practice through learning, reflection and development;
- Learning and reviewing methods recognise the complex circumstances in which professionals work together to safeguard children. The same effort that goes into the process of reviewing should go into both identifying and analysing areas of good practice and highlighting practice that requires improvement;
- Learning and reviewing methods are transparent in the way they collate and analyse data and make use of evidence based research to inform findings.
- The views of children, young people and families should be sought, recorded and used to inform service developments.

### 2. Background and Legislation:

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board's primary responsibility is to ensure the quality and effectiveness of partner agencies in Northamptonshire's arrangements to keep children and young people safe. This Learning & Improvement Framework is designed to strengthen the Board's ability to discharge this responsibility.

At the heart of this Framework is one simple question – **are children in Northamptonshire safe and how do we know?**

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*<sup>1</sup> has been explicit in stating that:

*'Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) should maintain a local learning and improvement framework which is shared across local organisations who work with children and families. This framework should enable organisations to be clear about their responsibilities, to learn from experience and improve services as a result.'*

It further states that in order to comply with Regulation 5 of the *Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006*<sup>2</sup> the LSCB should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help.

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government 2015. *Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006*: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/90/contents/made)

- Assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations set out in chapter 2 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)*.
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

A Safeguarding Performance Data Set Framework was released by the Department for Education in January 2015. This dataset sets out the nationally and locally selected data to help Local Authorities, LSCBs and Health and Wellbeing Boards to assess the performance of safeguarding services. Using this as a starting point, NSCB has developed local safeguarding performance datasets in order to assess and challenge local provision in line with agreed priorities.

The NSCB functions include developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. Finding the right ways to do this is a key challenge and requires commitment from all partners: agencies and services working to safeguard children and young people. Local data and information enhances any data and monitoring set, and any Learning and Development Framework.

This wider Learning & Improvement Framework provides a vehicle for the NSCB to meet statutory requirements and to go beyond these to ensure all sources of data, information and learning are considered, recognised and used to drive improved outcomes for children and families.

### **3. Purpose:**

The impact of safeguarding practice and services on improving the well-being of children, young people and their families is the central principle behind this Learning & Improvement Framework.

The focus is on exploring the impact of the work undertaken by Board partners, both jointly on a multi-agency basis, and also individually in the form of services provided by each of those agencies. Information about the quality of children and young people's experiences, as well as facts and information about young people's general well being and development, taken together can provide a narrative about the quality of local safeguarding. Lessons from this narrative inform service improvements.

Agencies and practitioners who work with children, young people and their families, benefit from reflection on, and learning from, their own practice and that of others. Knowing and understanding what works well can be gleaned from the sharing of good practice. Equally, when things go wrong a rigorous and objective analysis of what happened and why, supports agencies in learning lessons and making improvements in services, thereby helping to reduce the risk of future harm to children.

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Learning & Improvement Framework should be shared across organisations that work with children and families to enable organisations to be clear about their responsibilities, to learn from experience and improve services as a result.

### **4. Scope:**

The framework applies to Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board and all partner agencies working with children, young people and/or their families. That includes some adult services. It will inform single agency frameworks to ensure connectivity and compatibility.

## 5. The Commitment:

To fulfil its challenge role the NSCB must:

- Develop robust and rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of services on safeguarding, primarily through Section 11, Section 175, multi-agency and thematic audits.
- Collect and analyse performance information in relation to all aspects of safeguarding; identifying exceptions, themes and areas requiring action and reporting on these at agreed intervals each year.
- Be assured that relevant staff across all agencies working with children, young people and their parents/carers have the required knowledge, skills and competencies to enable them to fulfil their roles in safeguarding children.

## 6. Expectations of single partner agencies

While the NSCB is a multi-agency partnership, the Board places expectations upon each agency within that partnership to keep children and young people safe. Partners are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their workforce is suitably recruited, qualified and enabled to safeguard children;
- Providing appropriate reflective supervision and support for staff in regard to safeguarding children, including undertaking ongoing safeguarding children training;
- Ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children, promoting the welfare of children and creating environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
- Delivering mandatory induction to their staff, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities, where to access advice and support, and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare and integrated working processes;
- Ensuring that all practitioners have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time;
- Ensuring that all relevant staff have basic safeguarding training which is updated regularly at agreed intervals. Partners are also responsible for ensuring that accurate training records are kept;
- Providing qualitative and quantitative data to enable the Safeguarding Children Board to have an overview of safeguarding across the children and families workforce; and
- Providing regular assurance reports on their compliance with safeguarding protocols and the quality of single agency work.

## 7. Confidentiality:

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* is clear about the necessity for information sharing between agencies and with the LSCB. Requests for such information must always be explained, and must be '*necessary and proportionate*', essential to safeguard a child/children and to enable the LSCB to carry out its statutory functions.

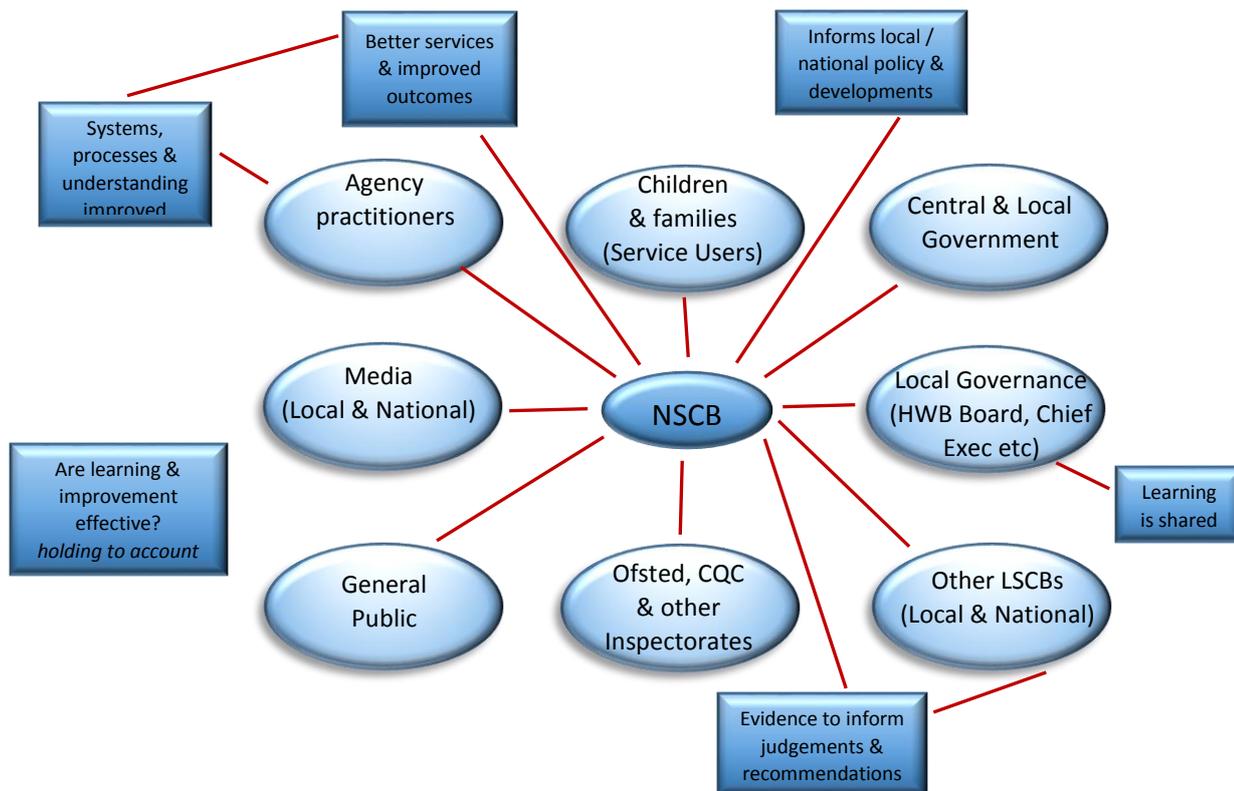
Most high level data and information scrutinised by the Board will not involve the identification of individuals' names or details of individuals which may make them identifiable. However, some of the methods used by the Board to facilitate learning and improvement, such as Multi-Agency Case Audits and Serious Case Reviews, do involve the disclosure of names of both practitioners and service users, and information about the processes and interventions involved. It is important therefore that the following principles are understood and adhered to by the Board and its members in relation to monitoring performance and improvement in safeguarding children.

- All identifying details and information about children, young people and their families or belonging to other individuals, obtained in relation to performance monitoring, learning and improvement, will be kept confidential and not disclosed unless necessary within the remit of the Learning & Improvement Framework.
- Information and data will be held, stored and/or destroyed by the Board in accordance with Data Protection laws and guidelines.

### 8. Stakeholders and Accountability:

No Safeguarding Children Board functions in isolation and the NSCB is no exception. There are a number of stakeholders to whom the Board may be accountable or to whom the Board provides support, challenge or information.

**Figure 1: Accountability**



The Board is accountable both to service users and to the general public – often via the media, and as a result of this accountability service users benefit from better services and improved outcomes. Information from service users and from individual agencies is fed back to the Board, and informs its subsequent actions, learning, challenges and support. In turn, learning informs both local and Central Government policies, enabling all Local Authorities and LSCBs to benefit from each other’s learning. In addition, information provided to the Board is used to evidence progress to Ofsted and other inspectorates.

The NSCB chair reports to the NCC Chief Executive, Director of Children’s Services and Cabinet Member for Children & Families. NSCB works in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board.

## 9. Learning and Improvement Cycle:

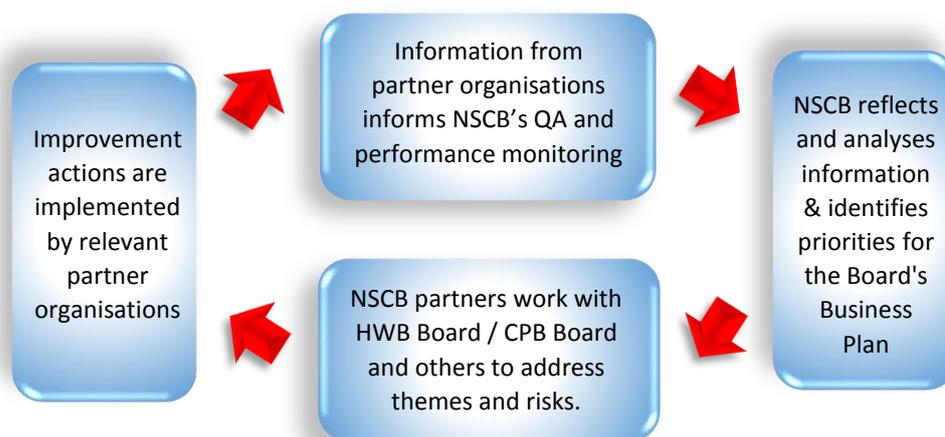
Learning and improvement is informed by a learning cycle which enables the Safeguarding Children Board Business Office to report regularly on progress, trends, and outcomes, and to present recommendations for the Board to consider, so that meaningful action can be taken to address any issues of concern and to promote best practice.

Quality and impact is best understood when information is received from different sources. Information from a single source is likely to be partial and a whole picture will only be obtained when the information is triangulated.

The Safeguarding Children Board Business Office will regularly:

- Confirm progress against the Board's business plan;
- Highlight areas of concern;
- Highlight good news and areas of effective practice and multi-agency integrated working;
- Support the Board's feedback to agencies; and
- Support the Board to set the direction of travel and future priorities.

**Figure 2: Learning and Improvement Cycle**

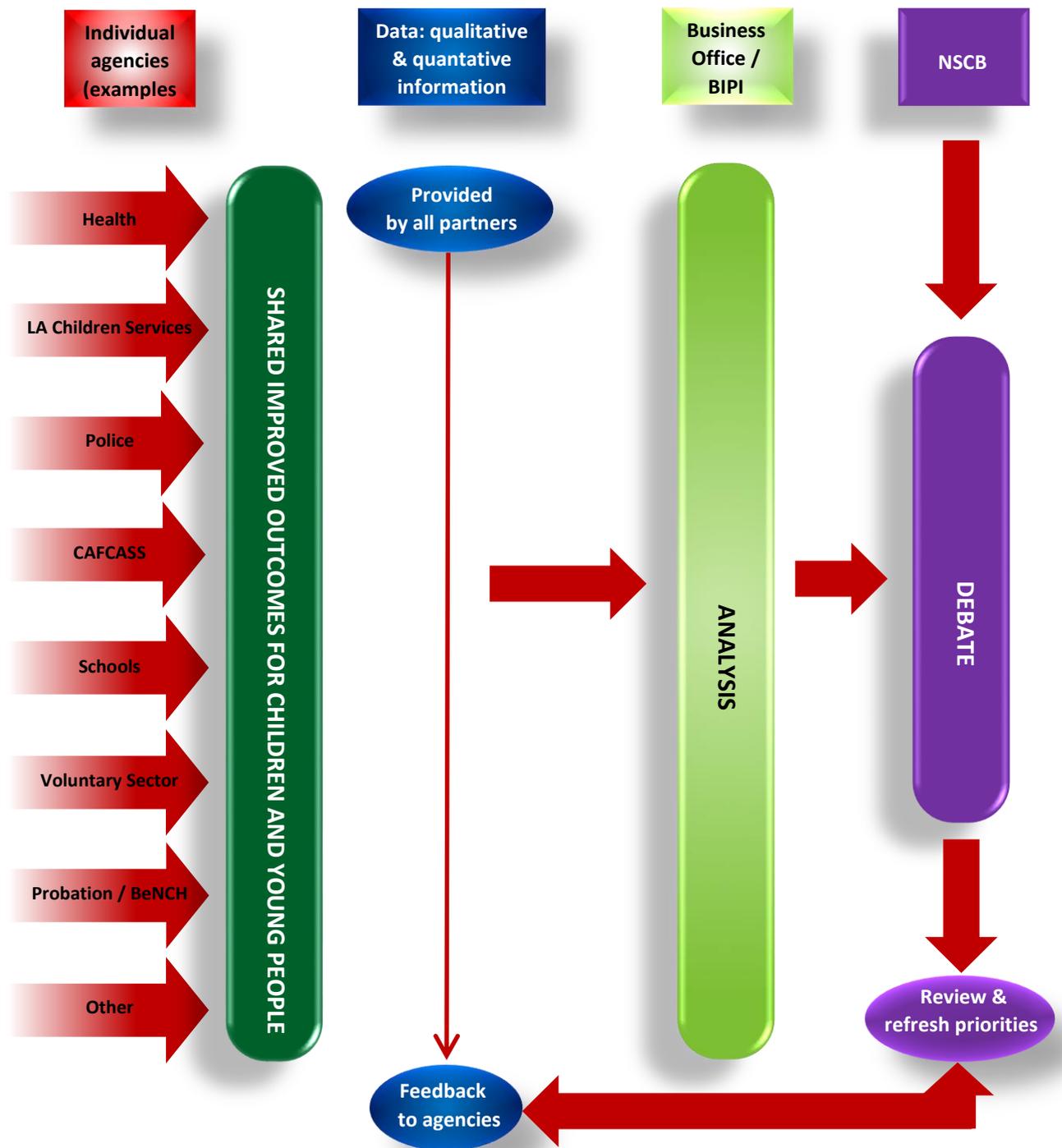


A performance cycle requires information and data from partner organisations to inform a central dataset or a multi-agency audit. A cycle of single agency reports on developments, data and audits, is also helpful in determining progress against actions and in order for the Board to support individual agency progress and their challenges. Data and information needs to include outcomes, not just the nature and number of services provided. It also needs to include feedback from service users including children and young people and from practitioners i.e. those delivering the services. The NSCB and Sub Groups, supported by the NSCB Business Office, will consider and analyse the information and identify priority trends and themes which may require further investigation or action. Partner agencies are encouraged and challenged to address actions and themes and to report back to the Board on the outcomes.

Information which the Board will use to analyse impact and identify themes and trends for action will effectively come from three areas:

- |                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Data</b>                    | - | informing on progress against the Board's priorities  |
| <b>Qualitative Information</b> | - | derived from surveys/user voice/case file audit/Serious Case or Learning Lessons Review and other individual and multi agency auditing activity |

Figure 3: Outcome Focused Learning and Improvement Cycle



Agencies do not work with children, young people and their families in isolation, so individual agency data and information contributes to a shared outcome in terms of keeping children and young people safe. Named leads from each agency provide data and information for analysis by the Safeguarding Children Board Business Office, which enables the Board to debate, revise and refresh its priorities, in turn will strengthening those shared goals and outcomes.

## 10. Key aspects of the framework:

The Framework comprises of the following key aspects:

- Collection and analysis of performance data and information;
- Case Reviews including Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and other 'learning lessons' reviews;
- Audits (Single and Multi Agency and Section 11);
- Training and learning events, including evaluations;
- Surveys;
- Agency Annual Reports, NSCB Sub Group Annual Report and Inspection Reports.

## 11. Learning and development:

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* states that:

*'... (LSCBs) should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, for all professionals in the area. Training should cover how to identify and respond early to the needs of all vulnerable children, including: unborn children; babies; older children; young carers; disabled children; and those who are in secure settings.'*

NSCB has oversight of the quality and provision of single and multi-agency safeguarding children training. For this reason, training provision within agencies is a key aspect of the annual Section 11 audits.

Training through NSCB has a key role in promoting local guidance, procedures and processes and in providing feedback from practitioners on what works well and what could improve in single and multi-agency work.

Learning needs across the safeguarding workforce are assessed by the NSCB Sub Groups, aided and supported by the Learning and Development Sub Group. The Training Return submitted by partners and evidence from Serious Case Reviews and Case Mapping Exercises informs the planning and commissioning of multi-agency training/learning events. The quality of this training is evaluated by the Business Office through participant feedback immediately following an event which is then collated and reviewed by the Learning and Development Sub Group, informing future training delivery.

An automated system has been developed to ensure that user feedback from the NSCB's commissioned training is collected again three months after the course is completed, assessing the impact of training on learning and practice. NSCB commissioned training or learning events could include:

- Face to face sessions and briefings to managers and frontline staff;
- Sharing of findings from reviews;
- Briefings on issues or trends which could result in changes to policy and practice;
- Multi-agency seminars;
- Master classes and awareness raising conferences; and
- Other learning events.

Other useful ways the NSCB communicates learning to its workforce include 6 Step Briefings, the bi-monthly NSCB newsletter, e-bulletins or information posted on the NSCB website; findings publicised in the NSCB Annual Report; or any other media which has proven effective.

More details of the NSCB's standards and commissioned provision are on the NSCB website and within the separate '*NSCB Learning and Development Strategy*'.

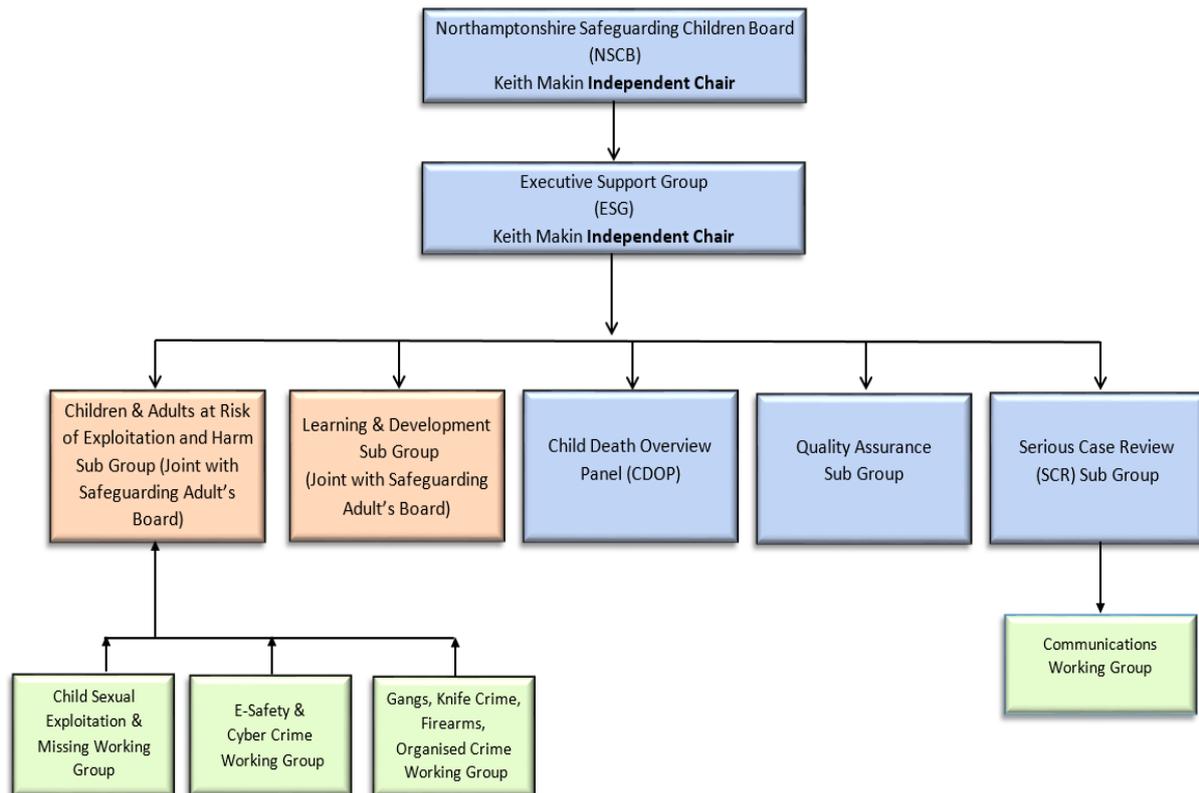
## PART TWO: CONTENT

### 12. How the Board knows what it knows:

There are a variety of means by which the Board is kept informed of what is happening across the children's and adults' partnership in the county, some of which are outlined below, although this is by no means an exhaustive list, the Board is adaptive and flexible when it comes to receiving and accessing data and information.

### 13. The structure of the Board

**Figure 4: Structure of the Board as of April 2017.**



### 14. Key Performance Indicators, Score Card and Data Sets:

Performance indicators represent a useful mechanism for monitoring trends and quantitative information. Their primary function is to raise questions and identify issues requiring further assessment.

The Board may seek new information and data to be collected for the following purposes:

- To support an understanding of outcomes;
- To quantify achievement through indicators (e.g. % Percentage of children immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, Hib (by age 2 years)); and
- To measure how well a particular service/agency is working – How much? How well? What impact on child/family?

The main NSCB dataset and performance indicators are based around the Board's priorities. These are currently:

- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing;
- E-Safety & Cyber Crime;
- Gangs, Knife Crime, Firearms & Organised Crime;

- Alcohol and Substance Misuse;
- Child Sexual Abuse;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Elective Home Education;
- Housing and Homelessness;
- Female Genital Mutilation;
- Mental Health;
- Modern Slavery;
- Neglect; and
- Radicalisation.

Data is collected and collated from a number of different agencies in relation to all of these priorities, and considered quarterly by the Quality Assurance Sub Group and Board in order to respond to exceptions and trends. The scorecard adapts and evolves as new areas within priorities are identified or as new priorities emerge from local, regional or national issues. This in turn enables the Board to use new priorities to inform the Board's Business Plan.

Data should place an increased focus on trends over an agreed period, with the underlying information usually being averaged over a quarter although a snapshot figure is sometimes used. Comparisons can be made against national benchmarks, and against geographical and statistical neighbours. However, data in isolation needs to be treated with caution and scepticism as it is the trends, issues and exceptions which tell the story. Each agency – and indeed each Board member – may have a different interpretation of the story that the data tells and it will be for the Board, ESG and the Board's Sub Groups to reach a consensus about what is or is not significant and what might require further attention.

Where the analysis of data and information has been undertaken by the NSCB Sub Groups supported by the Business Office, recommendations are made to ESG and thereby to the Board for further enquiry or for challenge and action.

The Local Government Group (*Improving Local Safeguarding Outcomes: Developing a Strategic Quality Assurance Framework to Safeguard Children*) recommends that reports to the Board should comprise of:

- A summary of why the subject is important;
- Graphs setting out the priority quantitative, qualitative and outcome information – with any relevant comparative information, and year-on-year figures to show the trends;
- The story explaining the information – the analysis; and
- Actions to achieve improvements.

## **15. Audits:**

### **Section 11 Audit:**

Section 11 of the *Children Act 2004* places a specific duty on named agencies to comply with standards set out in the Section 11 Guidance. Whilst many of the standards are common to all agencies, the guidance also outlines standards specific to individual agencies. A key element of the Learning and Improvement Framework is the Section 11 audit, a tool which assists the NSCB in ensuring that specific agencies comply with their statutory requirements, and that other Board agencies have adequate safeguarding arrangements in place. The audit tool is a review process based on self-evaluation with partner agencies helping to identify areas of good practice and areas that need to be improved. The audit facilitates the identification and sharing of good practice across Northamptonshire.

Following submission of responses from partners, a 'S11 challenge event' takes place during which Board members challenge each other to expand on agency responses.

**Section 175 Audits / Schools Audits:**

Section 175 of the *Education Act (2002)* and *Keeping Children Safer in Education (2015)* places specific duties on schools as well as those set out in the Section 11 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*. A key element of the Learning & Improvement Framework is the Schools Audit, a tool which assists the NSCB in ensuring that all schools comply with their statutory requirements. The audit tool is a review process based on self-evaluation by schools helping to identify areas of good practice and areas that need to be improved. Like Section 11, the audit facilitates the identification and sharing of good practice across Northamptonshire.

**Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACA):**

Regular monitoring of case files from Early Help through to Statutory Intervention is carried out by a multi-agency panel under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Sub Group. Four audits are carried out each year, on specific themes identified by the group.

Multi-agency case audits look at the involvement of different agencies in a selection of cases, and identify the quality of practice and lessons to be learned in terms of both inter-agency, single agency and multi-disciplinary practice.

The MACA process may also be used to ascertain the long term impact of other learning events, such as Case Mapping Exercises and Serious Case Reviews. Once the initial review has been completed and the learning extracted and circulated, a MACA may be requested by one of the Sub Groups to determine whether further work is needed to ensure that the lessons learned from the review have become embedded into practice.

The findings and recommendation from audits are shared via a 6 Step Briefing which goes initially to the QA Sub Group and then to the Board. The 6 Step Briefing and findings are then disseminated by QA members within their own agency, and by the Board by means such as e-learning, NSCB newsletter or e-bulletin and the Annual Report.

**Early Help Assessment (EHA) audits:**

Audits of EHAs take place as an ongoing process carried out by Children's Services. A more formal annual EHA audit gives information about the quality of assessment and planning which is ongoing across Early Help Services (i.e. services to those children and families who do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention or intervention for complex needs). Issues and concerns are addressed through management briefings, practitioner briefings, single agency briefings and support to individual practitioners where this is indicated.

**Workforce development/Training/Learning audits:**

The Learning and Development Sub Group commissions a variety of organisations to deliver training on behalf of the NSCB including both e-learning and face to face sessions. The Business Office then evaluates all training, immediately after the course and 3 month later to assess impact. NSCB also request that agencies complete a Training Return as part of the Section 11 audit indicating the number of staff who have undertaken single agency safeguarding training in the previous 12 months on a series of subjects requested by the Learning and Development Sub Group. This data then informs future training opportunities and ensures that lessons learnt from reviews and audits are being embedded into practice.

Quarterly data on the uptake of Safeguarding Training, and the findings of specific course evaluations, is provided to the Learning and Development Sub Group by the Business Office. This information is then fed into a further report, which the group delivers to the Board.

Further details of the Board's standards, delivery and monitoring of training are available in the NSCB *'Learning and Development Strategy'*

**Single agency audit:**

All partner agencies – Section 11 or otherwise - will conduct internal audits. Where relevant, the findings of these audits can provide valuable learning opportunities for all partners.

Section 11 agencies are expected to have an audit framework in place to ensure the quality of child safeguarding practices. Under Section 11 there is an expectation that the auditing of child safeguarding standards should not be considered a one off process, rather a continual process of monitoring and improvement. Consequently, all Section 11 agencies should routinely measure and audit the quality of safeguarding practice and processes.

The findings of internal single agency audits will enhance practice within the agency when the findings are disseminated via supervision and training. Agencies will be asked to present the findings of their internal case file audits - which may serve to enhance practice and safeguarding across the wider safeguarding workforce - to the QA Sub Group and the Board.

Whilst the responsibility for assuring quality and identifying areas for audit rests with the individual agencies, the Board may at times request that specific safeguarding audits are undertaken, and receive a copy of the findings and any actions arising. At the very least, information in regard to audits undertaken will be provided by individual agencies in their regular assurance reports to QA.

Within the areas of responsibility of the Board, issues relating to an individual agency may arise which may lead to a request by the Board for that agency to undertake a review or audit. In such cases, the NSCB will outline the area to be audited along with the timescale. Action plans arising from the audit should be considered by the relevant Sub Group, along with an implementation timescale.

**Findings from single & multi-agency audits:**

The outcomes, learning and findings from audits will be disseminated through training, 6 Step Briefings, other learning opportunities and publicity. However, every Board member is responsible for ensuring that staff in their own organisation are aware of, and respond to, these findings.

**16. Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and other forms of learning reviews:**

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are required to undertake a Serious Case Review when abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and either:

- the child has died or
- the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the authority, the LSCB partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

The final decision on whether to conduct the SCR currently rests with the LSCB Chair, although the decision making process, is currently under review following the Wood Report, with changes which will impact on the NSCB outlined in the *Children and Social Work Bill* currently going through parliament.

SCRs can provide valuable information on how organisations are working together to safeguard children. Since 2010 the Overview Reports and Executive Summaries of all new SCR's must be published, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so relating to the welfare of any children directly concerned. This facilitates a level of transparency and accountability needed to enable lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible.

Valuable learning and information can also be gained from SCRs on cases not only within the local authority boundaries but from neighbouring authorities and high profile cases nationally. Where neighbouring LSCBs have made recommendations for policy and action it is also helpful for Northamptonshire to consider these, particularly in the light of some partners e.g. health commissioners and providers, and police, working across boundaries and having to adapt to different working practices and policies as a result of different SCR recommendations.

Chapter 4 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* is clear about the processes for carrying out Serious Case Reviews. Professor Eileen Munro recommends a systems approach to SCRs led by 'a lead reviewer trained in systems methodology' who 'works with local professionals, to collect and analyse data'<sup>3</sup>. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* endorses this approach along with any 'learning model ...consistent' with its guidance.

Although designed for drawing learning from a tragic event or negatively impacting outcome, an SCR can be viewed as a performance monitoring process that assesses single and interagency practice and identifies strengths as well as shortfalls. Importantly SCR recommendations lead to actions designed to improve and change practice and thus improve outcomes for children.

The NSCB or partner agencies may also conduct reviews of cases which do not meet the criteria for an SCR but where issues may have arisen. These reviews may be conducted either by a single organisation as Single Agency Reviews (SAR) or as a Case Mapping Exercise (CME) for a number of organisations working together. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) may also provide valuable learning opportunities.

All of these reviews can provide important lessons about how organisations are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where the lessons learned from SCRs or other reviews identify necessary improvements in practice, the NSCB will ensure that lessons learned are embedded in practice to improve outcomes for children. Findings will be disseminated via 6 Step Briefings, learning events or other means – e.g. workshops, presentations, e-learning, via supervision and team meetings – and the improvement sustained through regular monitoring and follow up to ensure that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children in the long term.

The Board's Serious Case Review Sub Group makes recommendations about whether a case merits an SCR, Case Mapping Exercises (CME) or other form of review or if themes and issues have been identified for further audit and investigation. The SCR Sub Group also monitors and audits actions and outcomes from recommendations from such reviews.

## **17. The Voice of the Child**

The voice of the child or young person merits particular attention for the Board. Feedback from children and young people can inform learning and drive actions and service improvements. Children and young people can tell their own agencies and the Board whether services and interventions have made a difference to their lives and whether their lives have improved as a result. They can give feedback on the quality of their relationships with their practitioner.

There are a variety of methods for hearing the voices of children and young people including:

- Surveys for children who are in the care of the Local Authority;
- Audits of the 'child's voice' in assessments from Early Help through to statutory Single Assessments;

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<sup>3</sup> Munro, E. 2011. *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report: A child-centred system*

- Involving young people in interview panels for recruitment of staff; and
- Liaising directly with youth groups and forums established within Northamptonshire such as the County Councils Young Leaders or Young Health-Watch group.

There is a variety of media which can be used to engage and involve children and young people in expressing their views.

Case file audits will ascertain where children and young people are being actively involved in assessment and planning for intervention which will impact on them as individuals.

The Board must be certain that practitioners across the Children's Workforce are knowledgeable and equipped to hear the voice of children and young people. The Section 11 Audit and other audits and surveys can ask questions about how agencies are ensuring that this happens and ensure that outcomes inform the commissioning of training or other learning opportunities to enhance this further. Particular attention needs to be given to how agencies are hearing the voices of children who are pre-verbal or who have communication difficulties because of either disability or language.

The Board seeks the best way to engage directly with children and young people and for ways in which children and young people may contribute to the Board's Annual Report and Business Planning process.

#### **18. Inspection activity:**

In addition to the Ofsted inspections of services for children and *Reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards*<sup>4</sup> and of the LSCB itself, partners will each experience their own inspections by their own Inspectorates such as the CQC and YOT. The outcomes, learning and action plans from these inspections can enhance the Board's capacity for support and challenge in order to improve outcomes. Partners are asked to inform the Board of any inspection activity and its outcomes.

#### **19. Child Death Overview Panel:**

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* states that:

*'The LSCB is responsible for ensuring that a review of each death of a child normally resident in the LSCB's areas is undertaken by a Child Death Overview Panel'*

Northamptonshire Child Death Overview Panel meets regularly to make recommendations on action to be taken at single or multi-agency level. Recommendations are monitored by the NSCB. A CDOP Performance Framework is used and key themes and trends are identified and may lead to specific work. An annual CDOP report is written each year from which NSCB can extract further information in regard to themes and trends in Northamptonshire.

#### **20. Individual Agency Assurance Reports:**

Each partner agency is expected to submit an individual agency assurance report to the QA Sub Group at least once every 2 years. The assurance report is submitted on a standard template and covers areas such as:

- Identified improvements
- Areas for development
- Key evidence of impact

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<sup>4</sup> Ofsted 2015. *Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and reviews of local safeguarding boards*

## 21. Action plans:

NSCB recommendations resulting from the information and data collected and analysed lead to actions designed to improve and change practice. To be effective, action plans, once agreed by the Board, are recorded and formatted as 'SMART' objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and with a Timescale) and the progress and effectiveness monitored by the NSCB.

## 22. Other sources of data and information:

NSCB may wish to use other sources of information to inform action and challenge in regard to learning and improvement. This could include:

- **'Deep-dive' reviews** of a content area as agreed by the Board.
- **Thematic reviews** of a specific area identified either nationally or locally as a priority.

and will always be based on evidence based research.

Any of these can take place in tandem with the Health & Wellbeing Board and could be informed by findings from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

All of these would be followed by dissemination of the findings through workforce training and workshops, and at individual agency and practitioner level through team meetings and supervision with a further follow up through, for example, case file audit or practitioner survey to ascertain the impact.

Of absolute necessity, will be an exercise by the Board on a regular (e.g. two yearly) basis to measure and reflect on their own impact again using practitioner surveys and other appropriate methods.

## 23. Summary:

NSCB needs to ensure that it has all the information and data it needs in order to ensure that children and young people are safe and that services are meeting their needs and achieving good outcomes. Where they are good, the Board must be in a position to acknowledge, commend and disseminate. Where issues, concerns and negative trends emerge the Board and its Sub Groups must be in a position to prioritise and recommend action; following this up with support and challenge and further scrutiny to assess the impact of these actions.

For this Learning & Improvement Framework to be embedded in practice and effective:

- The framework needs to be understood and congruent with agencies' own arrangements and planning cycle Agencies need to:
  - be clear what their responsibilities are and committed to them;
  - provide the necessary resources and commitment to deliver learning outcomes; and
  - provide assurance and evidence to NSCB that learning has been embedded effectively and is achieving good/improved outcomes.
- NSCB needs to:
  - provide visible and strategic leadership to sub groups and to agencies for learning and improvement to take place;
  - regularly seek assurance and evidence that learning is effective and embedded in practice;
  - regularly seek evidence that improved learning leads to improved knowledge and skills;
  - ensure that a model of continuous improvement is implemented;
  - ensure that sub groups routinely report on learning needs; and
  - achieve the above by agreeing a regular and enforced timetable for the reporting cycle.

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