

# Annual Report 2017 - 2018 Safeguarding Children in Northumberland

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## 1. Foreword by Independent Chair

Welcome to the Fourth Annual Report published since I became the Independent Chair of Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB). Changes to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements delivered through LSCBs, as outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, means that this will be my final report. I would like to thank all those involved in the progress the LSCB has made over my four-year tenure.

During this year all member organisations have continued to work in partnership across the safeguarding agenda and it is to the credit of the partners in Northumberland that they have continued to fully support the work of the Board and maintained a clear focus on the work we need to do during this transition period, while at the same time managing the changes to come.

This annual report provides local people with an account of the LSCB's work over the past year to improve the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people across Northumberland.

The report reflects the activity of the LSCB and its sub-committees against the agreed priorities for 2017/18. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities and safeguarding work we will take forward into 2018/19.

The LSCB is a strategic body; much of the detailed work of the Board is taken forward by our various sub-committees/task and finish groups. These are the real workhorses for safeguarding and I must take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to recognise all members of these Groups for their continued commitment.

It has been a busy year for the Northumberland LSCB with two Serious Case Reviews published and another completed and awaiting publication. During the year the Sarah Domestic Homicide Review was also published, and the Northumberland LSCB also embedded the learning from a number of National Reviews such as the Joint Serious Case Review on Sexual Exploitation undertaken in Newcastle upon Tyne.

I would like to thank the many partner agencies for their hard work and dedication during a time of huge demand and whose commitment and motivation helps deliver our shared priorities. I would also want to place on record my appreciation of the work by our Business Manager; without his skills, knowledge and commitment to ensuring continual improvement, the Board would not be as effective as it is. I would also like to thank and recognise the contribution of our Lay Members and the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder who bring another layer of independent scrutiny to the work of the NSCB.



Paula Mead NSCB Independent Chair



## 2. Introduction

The NSCB has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which analyses and assesses how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people. Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure that they do so effectively.

Section 3 of the report highlights some statistical information about Northumberland and provides a local context for our work.

Section 4 describes the local governance arrangements and structure of NSCB. It also provides preliminary information on the Safeguarding Arrangements that were introduced in 2018/19 through the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Section 5 highlights some of the achievements and the progress that has been made in the last year as well as reporting on the work undertaken against the 2016/19 priorities.

Section 6 covers our Performance Framework and describes the multi-agency audits we have undertaken. It also provides an overview of Serious Case Reviews, Child Death Reviews and the use of restraint in Kyloe House National Secure Children's Home.

Section 7 outlines our multi-agency training provision and describes the marketing and communication activity undertaken by the NSCB.

Section 8 describes how children and young people are being safeguarded in Northumberland.

Section 9 sets out the priorities for the NSCB in 2018-2019.

The Annual Report 2017/18 demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the NSCB, as set out in the national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (March 2015) are being effectively fulfilled.



*The information presented in this Annual Report is drawn from a wide range of sources from across the Partnership. These include the Health & wellbeing assessment (JSNA); Lessons Learned from Local Serious Case Reviews; the Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report;*

### 3. Local Data

Northumberland is the most northern county of England; it borders Cumbria to the west, County Durham and Tyne and Wear to the south and the Scottish Borders to the north. To the east is the North Sea.



Northumberland is home to 319,030 **people** and covers an area of 5,013 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 96.7% is classed as rural.



In 2016 Children and young people aged 0 – 18 years, made up 16.4% of the population



The County has **11 major centres of population** including Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth and Prudhoe



Northumberland is ranked the 120th **most deprived area** out of 326 local authorities in England. 13.2% of the population live in one of the 10% most deprived areas of England compared to 16.98% in the North East and 9.9% across England (2015).



**Child poverty** in Northumberland is slightly better than the England average of 19.6%, with **18.4% of children** under 16 years living in poverty.

Data source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Northumberland is the most sparsely populated county in England, with only 163 people per square mile. The county has a very diverse combination of communities ranging from some of the most sparsely populated rural areas in the country through to the larger towns; each area with its own needs and aspirations.



## Northumberland Safeguarding Snapshot 2017/18



**5** Children were being looked after in a private fostering arrangement e.g. living with a family friend

There were **467** incidents where children were reported as missing from home

85% of schools inspected by Ofsted achieved good or outstanding for safeguarding

Children were present in 42% of all domestic abuse

52% placed on a Child Protection Plan under the category of neglect

**59,002** Children under 18, 18.5% of the total population

18.4% of children are living in poverty

100% of Children's Homes were rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

There were 97 Domestic Abuse incidents where the victim was aged 16/17

2234 referrals made to the four locality early help hubs compared to 1158 the previous year

85% of eligible two year olds are in free early years provision

161 children identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation

13393  
Contacts  
made with  
Social Care  
34% of these  
leading to  
Social Care  
Involvement

1954  
were  
Children  
In Need  
(March  
2018)

391  
Children  
had a  
Protection  
Plan

193  
Children  
left care

175  
Children  
came  
into care

29  
Children were  
adopted



## 4. Governance and Structure

### Local Safeguarding Children Board

Each local authority area is required by law to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board. The LSCB is a statutory body established in legislation (Children Act 2004) and works according to national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'.

The Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board is chaired by an independent person and meets bi-monthly. It also has two development sessions, taking the total number of meetings to 8 per year.

Northumberland LSCB is supported by the LSCB Business Manager who is hosted by the Local Authority.

	 Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board	
<b>What is safeguarding?</b> Safeguarding is about keeping children and young people <b>safe</b> and <b>protecting</b> them from <b>harm</b> , while making sure they grow up in a safe environment.	<b>What does the LSCB do?</b> We promote the <b>welfare</b> of children and young people, <b>safeguarding</b> them from harm and <b>protecting</b> those children who are at significant risk of <b>harm or neglect</b>	<b>What does it mean for me?</b> Agencies including the Councils' Children and Young People's Services, the Police, Schools and Colleges and Health Services such as GPs, Hospitals and Health Visitors are <b>all here to help</b>

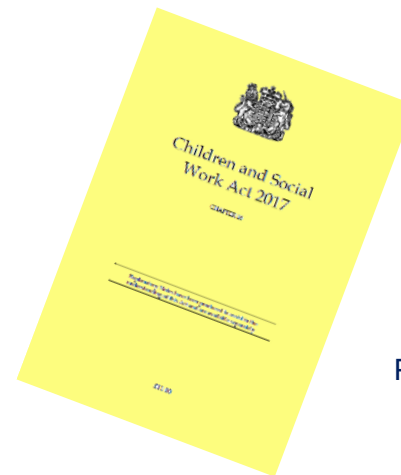


The functions of the NSCB are:

- *To coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of what the member organisations do individually and together.*
- *To develop and agree inter-agency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, consistent with Working Together to Safeguard Children, including:*
  - *The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention.*
  - *Training of those working 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 working with children.*
  - *The safety and welfare of privately fostered children.*
  - *Cooperation with neighbouring children's social care services authorities and their Board partners.*
  - *Participate in the planning of services for children in the local authority area.*
  - *Communicate the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.*
  - *Develop procedures to ensure a coordinated response to unexpected child deaths.*

- *Monitor the effectiveness of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*
- *Undertake reviews of serious cases and ensure lessons are understood and acted upon.*
- *Collect and analyse information about child deaths.*

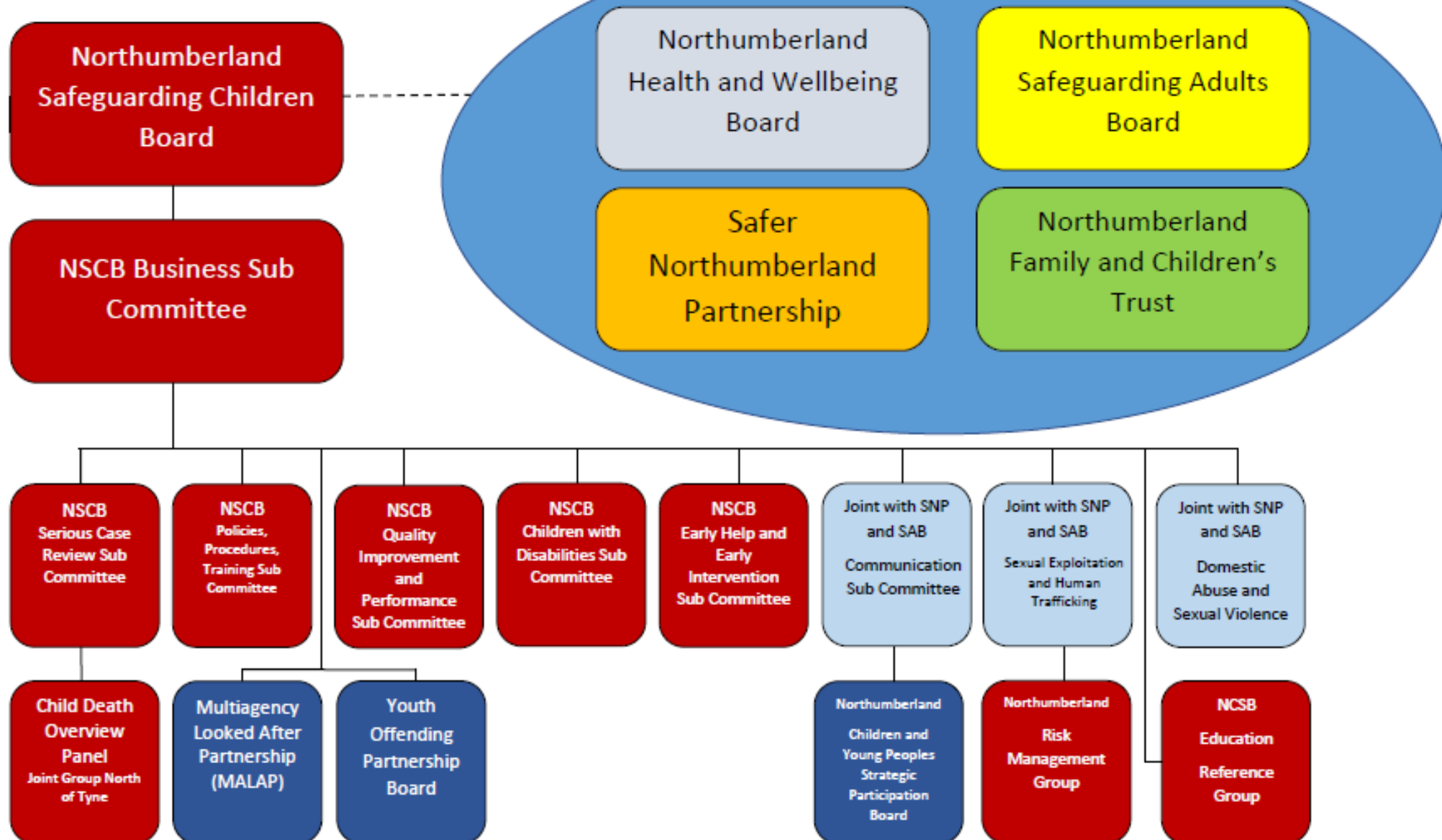
The Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal Assent in April 2017 and sets out a new framework for improving the organisation and delivery of multi-agency arrangements to protect and safeguard children. In Northumberland, the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Police and the Local Authority will investigate safeguarding models throughout 2017/18.



Please click image to open the Act



## NSCB Sub Committees Structure



## 5. Achievements in 2017-2018

**Three Serious Case Reviews (SCR's)** that were undertaken during 2016-2017 have now been published. The learning has been embedded through the prompt delivery on the action plans and through a series of roadshows across the County to over 600 front line staff.

**Impact:** This contributes to the professional development of staff and their understanding of local safeguarding concerns and themes.

The NSCB undertook a **Child Sexual Abuse Audit** to further drill down into the themes from the Olivia and Molly SCR's. **Impact:** The audit identified 26 actions for the NSCB Partners to address the action plan is now complete and the actions taken will ensure the safeguarding arrangements have been reviewed and improved.

**Engaging with Fathers, Male Partners or Carers** following the Molly SCR and earlier reviews the NSCB developed this guidance: *'The lack of an accurate record of the status of mother's partner by both GP practices is an important oversight; he was variously referred to as "father", "husband", "boyfriend" and "partner". The first practice also assumed that he was Molly's birth father. If accurate baseline information is not collected at the point when patients register, then inaccuracies can assume the status of facts'*. **Impact:** This provides front line workers guidance to identify all the significant men in a child's life early on. Assess male parenting and, where appropriate, encourage fathers to take responsibility for meeting the needs of their children.

The **Child Protection Procedures** were reviewed by a multi-agency task and finish group. **Impact:** Providing an up to web based solution that is fully searchable and allows the user to access content from a wide range of devices.

Following a Serious Case Review which has not yet been published, joint work has been undertaken by the CCG safeguarding children leads and NHCFT safeguarding and midwifery leads, to introduce a process to ensure relevant information regarding **fathers of unborn babies** is shared for safeguarding purposes whether or not they are registered at the same practice or not. **Impact:** The fathers of unborn babies will be known and any protective or risk factors held within the fathers health records shared if appropriate.

Re-established the **Responsible Authorities Group**. **Impact:** This group brings together intelligence regarding the Night time economy and licensed activities. The group has shared information about Sexual Exploitation, County Lines and Modern Day Slavery. It also contributes to the police intelligence picture and calls strategy meetings when there are concerns to agree disruption.

**Specialist Briefings** – Serious Case Review Carousel Events, Operation Encompass Briefings for schools Sexual exploitation briefings for 118 taxi drivers, Child development training for Northumbria Police Radicalisation training in schools and GP practices Neglect Toolkit, Anxiety Management in Children and Young People, Motivational Interviewing, Understanding Adolescence course for Early Help teams, Communicating with children workshops, Outcome Star - multi-agency training, Designated Safeguarding Lead for Schools - newly appointed and refresher courses, Early Help training – Introductory level, lead professional and train the trainer courses, Designated Safeguarding Lead in Early Years. **Impact:** These specialist briefing sessions have enabled a wider variety of staff to receive information and guidance that can be incorporated into their working practices.

**Operation Encompass** was launched across Northumberland Schools in 2016-2017. It has now been extended through the Designated Nurse's work within the Clinical Commissioning Group across Primary Care in Northumberland. It aims are to safeguard and support children and young people who are involved in or affected by incidents involving domestic abuse. **Impact:** Following such an incident, children will often arrive at school or attend Primary Care upset and unprepared. Operation Encompass aims to ensure that appropriate school staff and GPs are made aware early enough to support children and survivors in the best way possible.

*"It has been very beneficial. It is important we are aware of issues at home and can prevent making situations worse. It also helps to safeguard staff who do lone visits as we often don't have a lot of information about family composition until we receive notifications."* Assistant Head, High School

Northumbria Police launched a campaign to think '**Through the Eyes of the Child**'. **Impact:** This initiative encourages officers to speak to children present at domestic abuse incidents and to consider how life is for the child. This gives the officer the opportunity to understand the impact on children affected by Domestic Abuse and improve their response to any concerns identified.

The Designated Nurse and Named GP a **General Practitioners Section 11 Audit Framework** to use within GP surgeries with excellent results a process of challenge has been established to ensure the results are robust. **Impact:** The audit identifies if practices are meeting their statutory duties with regards to safeguarding children and young people as identified in Working Together 2015 and embedding learning from recent Serious Case Reviews in Northumberland.

**Children's Social Care Improvement Plan** has been presented and monitored by the NSCB throughout the year to identify any areas that they feel require additional scrutiny or challenge. The plan identifies the priorities and actions that are needed to address the key areas for improvement identified within children's social care. **Impact:** Since its development there has been progress made against all priority areas. **In a focused visit in February 2018**, Ofsted evaluated the plan in line with the self-assessment and concluded that they believed that Children's Services knew itself well and that the plan was leading to improvements in practice.



Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service developed the Drama Project with Young People “**First Time Free**” This was a five week sexual exploitation prevention drama tour June/July 2017 which was funded through Arts Council England Grant for the Arts Scheme, BAIT Creative People and Places with support from & West End Women and Girls Centre. **Impact:** The drama performance and workshop went on tour to high schools throughout Northumberland for year 9 students and in community venues to enable parents, professionals and young people in alternative curriculum provision to attend. The expectation is that schools who took up this opportunity will continue to market the theatre production, using the script in the long term as part of the curriculum and incorporate young people, parents, carers and professionals as a target audience.

**Early Help Hubs** Multi-agency Early Help Hubs are well-established in Northumberland. Northumbria Police’s Early Intervention six month pilot came to an end in March 2018 **Impact:** Early indications that the investment of police staff dedicated to the hubs were proving to be a success. The pilot has been extended for a further three months. An evaluation has been undertaken with some positive outcomes for children and young people including the wider family environment. There are some recommendations that will be reviewed and progressed to ensure the operating model reflects the investment from all agencies with a real desire to allow children and young people to flourish and contribute to better outcomes for families

The “**OneCall**” approach in Northumberland, incorporating Northumberland MASH, has been nationally recognised by Sir Tom Windsor, HMICFRS as best practice and should be adopted nationally. **Impact:** The MASH model is evolving to align delivery of safeguarding and children’s multi agency

services. Additionally bring in a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to tackling domestic abuse.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was successful in securing funding for a **Domestic abuse advocate** who is working predominantly within the acute hospital setting. **Impact:** She provides bespoke training sessions and is supporting staff around MARAC risk assessment and referrals, which supports the victims and their children to make decisions about leaving abusive relationships.

**NSCB Website** has been developed to have specific areas looking at Neglect and Child Sexual abuse, with training materials and seven minute guides for use in team meetings. **Impact:** Accessible structure information is available for teams and individuals

Children’s Social Care have undertaken an **intensive programme of auditing** in 2017/18. This has included specific audits related to particular issues such as assessments, repeat child protection plans, child sexual abuse, and MASH decisions on a monthly basis. **Impact:** Audits have provided Children’s Social Care with a training and improvement action plan which is robustly followed areas of improvement include: chronologies; voice of the child and the child’s wishes reflected throughout involvement; direct work with children supervision, child and outcome-focused plans, recognition of risk and protective factors in assessment is improving..

Education & Skills Service refreshed the **Section 175** audit Safeguarding Standards for schools, academies and alternative providers. **Impact:** Through the audit, schools identify if practices are meeting their statutory duties with regards to safeguarding children and young people as identified in the Children Act 2004 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and embedding learning from recent Serious Case Reviews in Northumberland.

**78 training courses** delivered and attended by 1,403 staff. **Impact:** This supports practitioners, improving their learning, understanding and assessment skills. **4010** course completions for the NSCB Safeguarding eLearning courses, **Impact:** Supports practitioners and volunteers to improve their learning and understanding.

Development of the “Learn Together” Learning Management System **e-learning safeguarding modules**. **Impact:** Providing partners with the opportunity to offer a range of safeguarding e-learning to all staff through unlimited licenses of all developed packages.



## Professional Challenge

The LSCB challenge log was modified in 2017 and is embedded into minutes of the NSCB and its sub-committees. These are followed through until resolution. For example, the police have been subject to a challenge concerning attendance at strategy meetings and initial child protection conferences (ICPCs). Attendance at ICPCs has been resolved through the new post of Police Safeguarding Advisor and criteria for attendance at strategy meetings have been agreed and established within the Child Protection Procedural Manual.



A continued challenge from the Independent Chair is to improve the voice of the child. This has resulted in collaborative work with children's groups, the voluntary and community sector, through the work of the Northumberland Children and Young People's Participation Group.

The North of Tyne Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) challenges agencies if agreed actions are not progressed within timescales and escalation processes are in place. Following a thematic review during the development of their annual report, the CDOP challenged the NSCB in regard to co-sleeping due to their findings regarding modifiable factors in children's deaths. This direct challenge resulted in a communications strategy to ensure people working with families were able to raise the issue with parents.

To view the CDOP annual report please click the image



Similarly, the Board monitors actions for learning following a Serious Case Review to ensure actions are progressed and implemented.

The LSCB have undertaken a challenge event to hold organisations to account following the Section 11 audit and multi-agency audits.

Professional challenge also takes place at a senior level through regular formal meetings between the LSCB Independent Chair, Northumberland County Council Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services.



## 6. Progress on priorities 2017-2018

Northumberland LSCB held two development days in July 2017 to review progress on the current priorities, consider key challenges, and to set its future priorities.

In setting the priorities for 2016/19 the Board considered a number of presentations and information sources which resulted in reaffirming the following strategic priorities:



### Priority 1 – Improving focus on the child's experience of services and better embedding it in practice

#### Therefore we wanted to focus on the following:

Listen to and engage with children, young people and their families in order that we might better be able to see things from their point of view.

Recognise and address issues that impact on children's lives such as poverty and acting as young carers.

Create opportunities for children, young people and their families to engage with and contribute to what the Board seeks to achieve.

Making sure that care planning for the child is robust, timely and sensitive to their needs and that they understand what decisions are being made about them and the reasons why.

Promote working together arrangements to ensure that when children need help, the help they receive is joined up, has clear purpose and direction and that children, young people and their families are partners in this journey.

To achieve this priority, it was essential to better understand how our partner organisations were listening to the child's experience and embedding it in practice. To achieve this we undertook an S.11 deep dive audit into various areas, all with a clear focus on the experience of the child and how the services engaged with children and young people.

During the Deep Dive there was a focus on these key themes:

- The Response to Children Living with Domestic Violence.
- Child Sexual Abuse.
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities.

All of these areas had specific quality statements that related to the lived experiences and views of children and young people.

### **The Response to Children Living with Domestic Violence**

- Professionals and support staff see incidents of domestic abuse through the eyes of the child.
- The views of children and their families are used to improve the help and support that they receive.

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

- The voices and lived experiences of children, young people and their families are used to improve the help and support that they receive.
- Professionals and support staff see incidents of child sexual abuse through the eyes of the child.

### **Safeguarding Children with Disabilities**

- The organisation ensures that careful consideration is always given to how best to obtain children's views, taking the children's disabilities into account.

The audit's initial responses identified areas of deficit and these were addressed over a six month period; following challenge events, all services that engaged directly with children, young people and their families identified that following the review all actions were complete.

It was clear that in some cases organisations with a significant commissioning role found many of the quality statements or questions hard to evidence and recorded these areas as not applicable, however during the challenge events they were asked if their tendering or commission process also asked services to meet these standards.

*"The Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) engagement with young people has included the Patient Forum event which was rolled out for young people via Northumberland County Council's Youth Service. A facilitated session was held with members of the Youth Cabinet and Parliament around looking after your mental health and wellbeing.*

*A second session is planned with the topics of the CCG's operational plan, and how best to involve young people in our work. Young people have also been engaged for their views around a new integrated hospital development for Berwick. The CCG commissioned Health watch to carry out this work and Berwick Youth Project was visited and their views were taken".*

The Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Designated Doctor Looked after Children (LAC) worked with a young apprentice who had developed self-help resources for young people regarding emotional health and well-being. The apprentice also attended the GP safeguarding leads network to introduce her work with them.

These have since been distributed widely across primary care and for use with LAC. All services were supported in their individual service audits to address the views of the child or young person and find methods to engage with all children and young people, not just those from vulnerable groups, but also young people accessing universal services. To do this the NSCB supported the development of the Northumberland children's and young people strategic participation group. This group provides a strategic lead, direction and focus for children and young people's participation across Northumberland, improving practice and communication.

## Priority 2 – Further promoting preventative and early help approaches

### Therefore we wanted to focus on the following:

The NSCB is committed to providing help and support to as many families as possible at the level of need. Currently too many families are having to be referred through children's social care in order to access early help services.

The Council and partners are working to improve preventative approaches and access to early help through increasing the number of early help assessments, team around the family and early help plans.

The NSCB has an Early Help and Early Intervention sub-committee which is providing a steer to this work and promoting the links between early help and safeguarding services.

Over the last three years, understanding of all agencies of the role early help plays in supporting families in Northumberland has grown with the help of the Early Help Strategy. The delivery of the strategy has been driven by the Early Help and Early Intervention sub-committee of the LSCB chaired by the Lead for 0-19 Integrated Public Health. The consistently high attendance at this committee from all partner agencies demonstrates the importance which all place on early help.

Over the last three years there has been an increase in early help activity although there has been a recent plateauing off of registration of Early Help Assessments (EHA) and referrals into the Early Help Locality Hubs.

Indicator	15/16	17/Current	Trend	DOT
EHAs Commenced	872	1050	/	▲
EHAs Completed	868	1011	/	▲
EHAs - Stepped Up	23.00%	20.20%	\	▲
First Time Entrants	405	352	\	▲
Hub Referrals	1001	2040	/	▲
Hub Referrals - Stepped Up	12.80%	12.20%	\	▲
Hub Referrals to School Health	n/a	841	n/a	n/a
Supporting Family Claims	9	854	/	▲

The data demonstrates a positive picture of the impact of early help in Northumberland.

There have been a number of key developments which have supported early help across Northumberland:

- Early Help Assessment form-the Early Help Assessment form was relaunched in 2014 as a holistic assessment and plan to support children and families who require early help.
- Early Help Locality Hubs-first piloted in 2014, there are four early help locality hubs across the county which serve as a multi-agency single referral point for families who require early help support.
- Development of the First Contact service-this acts as a single point of access for children's social care, now including the early help coordination staff who manage the locality hub process. This supports greater consistency of decision making and further opportunities for families who don't require statutory social work input to be supported through early help.



- Expansion of the Tier 2 emotional health support offer-the increase in resource in the Primary Mental Health service has supported the development of a training programme for staff about emotional health which has been very well received.
- Review and relaunch of the NSCB multi-agency thresholds document-this has clarified where early help sits on the continuum of need for children and families.
- The expansion and extension of the Troubled Families programme known locally as 'Supporting Families'-this has provided a framework for the development of a multi-agency outcomes plan, continued to develop our thinking of whole family working and to provide resource to support the early help offer across Northumberland.
- Early Help Workforce Development Strategy-sets out what key skills and competencies might be required for someone who is going to act as a lead professional for a family and provides a training framework for staff to use to help fill gaps in skills and knowledge.
- Joint working on universal and targeted support services for children 0-19-including the development of the 'Washing Line' offer providing a visual aid demonstrating what support is available at a universal level from children's centres and health and the development of the integrated 27 month review by health visiting and early year's education. A multi-agency approach to enhancing resilience in adolescence in particular is a key development in addressing universal support.
- Development of the Early Help Locality Family Work teams-since April 2017 these teams have been delivering support

for children 0-19 who meet three of the eligibility criteria for the Supporting Families partnership and require intensive support around parenting and relationships on a locality basis.

Delivered or commissioned by the local authority, these teams provide a response for families who have a range of issues across multiple family members.

- Investment in a case recording system for early help work-live since September 2016, this allows us the potential for multi-agency early help case recording to be completed on one system. Already being used by local authority internal family work teams and Barnardo's and Action for Children, the hope is to make this available for wider usage by others undertaking Early Help Assessments. As the system links to the local authority social work recording system it supports showing the 'journey of the child' and allows gathering of more robust performance data.
- As a member of the Child Death Overview Panel, the designated nurse has been involved in sharing information widely across Northumberland to prevent baby deaths as a result of parents co-sleeping with their baby whilst under the influence of substances or smoking.

### Priority 3 – Consolidating partnership working with education settings on the safeguarding agenda

#### Therefore we wanted to focus on the following:

For the third year the Education & Skills Service led on the LSCB's priority to improve partnership working with schools on the safeguarding agenda. There is strong evidence that schools, academies and alternative providers are better engaged in the work of the NSCB.

Schools and other education settings have individual responsibilities to keep children safe but they are also key partners in raising awareness, building resilience with pupils and their families and providing other preventative interventions.

We will therefore continue to build capacity in schools to keep children safe in education and consolidate their engagement with the NSCB.

Since 2015, this strategic priority has improved year on year. The partnership with education settings has improved to a stage where, although the NSCB reference group will continue to progress and maintain these positive partnerships, in 2018-2019, this strategic priority will change to an area of interest of the NSCB.

During 2017-2018, the representation from schools on the NSCB has remained at three head teachers; school representatives have joined other NSCB sub-committees, including Serious Case Review, Sexual Exploitation and Early Help.

The NSCB Education Reference Sub-Group has continued to effectively engage schools, academies and alternative providers. Members have shown their commitment through regular attendance to participate in termly workshops with agendas set by the group and involving visiting professionals from partner agencies. Themes explored include early help, the role of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), partnerships with health and domestic violence and the role of the Designated Officer.

The Education & Skills Service has continued to develop a child-focussed culture with good understanding of safeguarding procedures and the work of the NSCB through training for all senior and team managers in safeguarding, including neglect, domestic abuse and CSE.

They have ensured there is 100% completion of mandatory online safeguarding training by Education & Skills staff and delivered training to Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools, in partnership with the Learning and Organisational Development team.

During the year:

- The delivery model for monitoring pupils who are electively home educated was refreshed and became the responsibility of the Education Welfare Service.
- The delivery model for identifying and finding children missing from education and children missing out on full time education was refreshed and became the responsibility of the Education Welfare Service.
- The post of MASH Education Liaison Officer was created in the Schools' Safeguarding and Wellbeing team. The newly appointed officer will take up post in August 2018.
- Revised statutory guidance for local authorities and designated teachers for improving education outcomes for looked after and previously looked after children was launched.

For the third consecutive year, 100% of schools completed an annual review of their mandatory section 175 safeguarding standards audit within timescale, which provides reassurance to the NSCB that prevention is understood and being promoted in our schools.

The Education & Skills Service has established effective partnerships with Public Health and other colleagues to deliver on key priorities relating to schools and safeguarding standards, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drug education, Prevent, anti-bullying, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The Schools' Safeguarding and Wellbeing team has played a significant part in the roll out of Operation Encompass. Since April 2017, over 100 head teachers and safeguarding leads have had face to face training and over 500 school staff have had face to face training. The team manager continues to support this work and is a key member of the multi-agency steering group which will monitor the continued roll out of this initiative. Early indications are that the programme is very valuable and supports the safeguarding of very vulnerable children in school.

The Virtual School completed, on behalf of the Education & Skills Service, a deep dive activity which focussed on the service's response to key priority areas including domestic violence, disabled children and neglect. An evaluation was made across all areas and an action plan produced which is monitored every three months. By 31st March 2017 we had:

- raised awareness regarding domestic violence amongst service staff by producing and sharing a '10 Things You Need to Know About Domestic Violence' document.
- delivered safer recruitment training to all managers and senior staff who are involved in appointment panels.
- shared the updated neglect strategy with managers and ensured that staff have had sight of it.

The Education Welfare team, Education Support for Looked after Children team, Inclusion team and Schools' Safeguarding and Wellbeing team continue to provide statutory services for vulnerable learners and those with complex needs considered to be high-risk.

Services include:

- education for pupils with medical needs, mental health needs, teenagers who are pregnant and teenage mothers.
- integrated working with Northumberland Adolescent Services.
- representation at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.
- quality assurance of alternative providers.
- involvement in complex abuse strategy meetings for pupils involved in or at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- a drug exclusion pathway.
- sharing learning from Serious Case Reviews.

For the fourth consecutive year there were no children recorded as missing from education or left the area and not found or placed onto the lost pupil system, demonstrating the continued effectiveness of our well-established multi-agency protocol to identify, find and support children missing from education. Data is held centrally on all pupils not receiving full time education and is updated monthly. 303 pupils were known to have attended an alternative education provider during the year.

A review is continuing into how the service scrutinises the quality of work carried out with disabled children, based on an audit of current practice within services. A first day absence protocol is also in place for pupils being educated other than at school.



## Priority 4 – Improving support to especially vulnerable children and high risk adolescents

### Therefore we wanted to focus on the following:

NSCB understands high need households to mean those family units that we know from experience are more likely to face difficulties in general and specifically in terms of prioritising and meeting the needs of the children and young people who live in them.

This is a complex agenda, involving issues such as poverty, crime, anti-social behaviour housing, environment, health and developmental issues, substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence and other factors that can be seen to increase risks to children and young people. The Troubled Families programme is providing an impetus and framework to be intervening in the lives of children where poor outcomes are the result of these factors. The Family Recovery team is playing a major role in turning around the lives of very complex and troubled families.

We also know that adolescents face particular risk, such as sexual exploitation, substance misuse, self-harming behaviour, bullying, mental health problems, eating disorders and identity issues that we have a number of ongoing work streams.

In 2017-2018, it was clear that the existing Vulnerable Adolescents sub-committee was duplicating the work of many other groups, such as the Youth Offending Service (YOS) management board safeguarding young people involved in crime and the Multi-agency Looked after partnership (MALAP) safeguarding looked after children, so the sub-committee was closed with plans for the YOS board and MALAP to report directly to the NSCB.

From October 2017, there will be in place a specific Safeguarding Children with Disabilities sub-committee, with links into all other sub-committees that will ensure these vulnerable young people's difficulties are better understood and met.

During the year, the NSCB also introduced a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence sub-committee in partnership with the Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Northumberland Partnership. This sub-committee, although new, helped develop the Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) pathway following the Sarah Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) and is progressing the three board Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy.

The DHR raised many issues for learning, including APVA, the risk of social media and learning disabilities. It also raised the issues relating to the advice given to parents who were victims of APVA.

Alongside the DHR, the SCR Olivia and Molly raised the issues of Child Sexual Abuse to the fore front of the NSCB who following the reviews, commissioned a multi-agency case file audit. This audit identified 26 actions for the NSCB Partners to address; the action plan is now complete and the actions taken will ensure the safeguarding arrangements in relation to Child Sexual Abuse was reviewed and improved.

This strategic priority was not continued following the NSCB development day in 2018; the strategic priorities for 2018-2019 are provided in section 10.

## Priority 5 – Reviewing our response to sexual exploitation

### Therefore we wanted to focus on the following:

In the past three years the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation (CSE) has become much better understood although with a recognition that there is opportunity for further development at this stage and that over the next few years we should expect to know more.

A Police led Sexual Exploitation Investigation Sanctuary has established that young people in the North East are as at risk from CSE as in other more high-profile parts of the country but we would want:

- Continue to develop a targeted training programme in relation to SE in Northumberland

- Ensure that SE becomes a key priority for established multi-agency group's community and faith groups.

- Develop peer lead training programmes in partnership with the youth service and youth organisations.

The Sexual Exploitation (SE) sub group is undertaking delegated functions on behalf of the NSCB and Adults Boards (NSAB) and Safer Northumberland Partnership (SNP). The committee has been in place for over three years with bi-monthly meetings taking place to date. There is a high level of commitment by all agencies, including the voluntary sector. The main aim of the group is to influence and oversee implementation of the SE Strategy at a strategic level.

In 2017-2018, the sub-committee also took on the issue of modern day slavery due to its close relationship to SE. During the year, the

Newcastle Joint SCR into Sexual Exploitation in Newcastle was published. The themed review provides a significant national view into sexual exploitation, focused on vulnerability rather based on age. It is also strongly victim focussed and lead. This provides an insight into not just the lived experiences of the victims but some insight into the motivations of the perpetrators.

The NSCB, working with its partners, developed and facilitated workshops into the themed SCR from Newcastle. These were provided on a county wide basis to multi-agency groups of front-line staff with the evaluation demonstrating the sessions were excellently delivered and the content was correct for the audience.

The recommendations of the themed review are being embedded into a refreshed Sexual Exploitation Strategy lead by the NSCB; the development of the Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking Strategy will be led by the Safer Northumberland Partnership.

The NSCB website was redeveloped to ensure all visitors could access a single page which offered advice, procedures, research, training and communication at a single web address to ensure that important messages are not lost due to poor administration of the NSCB website.

A Newsletter was also developed and forwarded to all front line staff with all partner organisations.

## 7. Quality, Improvement and Performance

The NSCB continually monitors the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of multi-agency practice through the Performance Management Framework.

Where gaps are identified, implications for the NSCB are considered and any agreed actions are progressed through the business planning arrangements and the work of the NSCB sub-groups.

NSCB action plans against priorities and performance are reported, monitored and challenged at each sub-committee, the NSCB Business Group, then at the NSCB.



**Monitor partner compliance with the statutory requirement to have effective safeguarding arrangements in place (Section 11)**



**Carry out multi-agency audits and identify lessons to be learned and make recommendations for future improvement and feeding into NSCB training**



**Produce a series of multi-agency audit reports to inform the NSCB Board of the quality of work being undertaken and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people**



**Use a series of performance scorecards for priority areas**

One of the achievements this year was the development of a performance scorecard with multi-agency key performance indicators based on the Board's priorities and in keeping with statutory guidance.

This has not been without challenges; however, further progress has been made in the presentation of partner data and analysis to go alongside the Local Authority data.

The Quality, Improvement and Performance sub-committee also set the parameters of and views the results of audits prior to being presented to the NSCB.

During the year, there have been a number of multi-agency audits. In 2017-2018, the NSCB agreed that the Section 11 audit would rotate on a two yearly basis from a full S.11 audit to a structured focussed review.

A Section 11 Audit is the NSCB's primary audit to examine the safeguarding arrangements within agencies and provides the Board with assurance that agencies are doing what they can to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people.

In 2017, we undertook a focussed review of four key areas identified by the NSCB from data analysis, Serious Case Review findings and current research.

The four areas are:

- The response to children living with domestic violence.
- Child sexual abuse.
- Safeguarding children with disabilities.
- Neglect.

The return rate was again 100% and was reported to the NSCB in September 2017. There was an action plan following a challenge event in October 2017 chaired by the Senior Manager Governance, Risk and Audit, Northumbria Healthcare Trust to ensure that the challenge was robust and quality driven and afforded a level of independent scrutiny. The completed action plan was presented to the NSCB in March 2018 with a 100% completion rate and agreement that the partner organisations with a commissioning role would embed the quality standards into their tender agreements and commissioning arrangements.

The Designated Nurse and Named GP a General Practitioners Section 11 Audit Framework to use within GP surgeries with excellent results a process of challenge has been established to ensure the results are robust.

Education & Skills Service launched a Section 175 audit Safeguarding Standards for schools, academies and alternative providers. The audit identifies if practices are meeting their statutory duties with regards to safeguarding children and young people as identified in the Children Act 2004 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and embedding learning from recent Serious Case Reviews in Northumberland.

These three audits will provide an indication of how well organisations are working to keep children safe. The full S.11 audits will be repeated every two years with a focussed S.11 audit undertaken in the years in between. Agencies will be asked to develop action plans to address any areas requiring improvement.

Sample of multi-agency audits undertaken:

- Quality and impact of the Early Help Assessment (EHA) process in Northumberland, in relation to role of fathers, child's voice, SEND and Domestic Violence.
- Neglect.

- Child Sexual Abuse.
- Suicide lead by CDOP.
- Consanguinity lead by CDOP.
- Attendance and reports to Child Protection Conferences.
- Return Interview Audit.
- Current and proposed pathways in respect of child protection conferences audit.
- Northumberland CSE Problem Profile.



## The Use of Restraint – Safeguarding Young People in Secure Settings

In conjunction with Northumberland County Council, Northumberland LSCB monitors the use of restraint at [Kylloe House](#) National Secure Children's Home. Many of the young people are placed by Local Authorities outside of the Northumberland area. Since 2011 and in line with Working Together guidance, we have reported on the use of restraint. Northumberland is amongst a small number of Local Authorities who have secure services within its boundaries.

Kylloe House National Secure Children's Home houses a changing population of young people (aged 11-17) with complex and challenging behaviours.

The number of incidents fluctuates during 2017-2018. This is reflective of the number of admissions and discharges from the Home and the chaotic and violent behaviour, including self-harm, initially presented by some of the young people admitted. The number of high level interventions demonstrates the nature of the locked service and the need for young people to use "fight" rather than "flight" when discussing their frustrations, thoughts and challenges. In comparison to other secure services, Kylloe House has low numbers of incidents recorded. Staff will use other defusing methods to support the young person, including agreed support strategies, which may include planned time out of the direct living environment. There are no prone incidents during the reporting period.



In the most recent Ofsted Inspection Kylloe House was rated as Good with the inspection team noting,

*"There are high-quality relationships between staff and young people. Staff are excellent role models for young people. They provide good support and guidance and encourage positive social skills and behaviour, which form the foundations for the good-quality individualised work undertaken."*

*Healthcare, including mental health care, is of a good quality, ensuring that young people's needs are assessed, planned for and met."*

*Good-quality work is undertaken to help, guide and support young people to make progress and return to community living."*

*A stable, knowledgeable and well-led staff team is supported by managers who have high aspirations for young people".*

## Serious Case Reviews

The NSCB have instigated three Serious Case Reviews (SCR) during 2017-2018 and published another SCR undertaken the year before. One remains unpublished due to care proceedings. Serious Case Reviews are published on the NSCB website for a period of 12 months website submission to the National Panel, Ofsted and the Department of Education.

Action plans are monitored by the NSCB Business Unit and reviewed by the NSCB Board through the Serious Case Review sub-committee and is a standing agenda item on the NSCB agenda.

To ensure that learning from Serious Case Reviews and Multi-Agency Deep Dive Reviews is embedded into training immediately, the NSCB Training and Development Officer is a member of the Serious Case Review Committee.

Although the Serious Case Reviews are unpublished, we have embedded learning into core training and thematic learning events and reviewed procedures.

These various forms of training have provided time for professional reflection of key messages and recurrent themes running through the published Serious Case Reviews. The LSCB continue to implement the recommendations from Serious Case Reviews both multi and single agency recommendations.

Following publication there was a series of learning events to ensure that Serious Case Reviews contribute to the professional development of staff and improve their understanding of local safeguarding concerns and themes. These learning events also included learning from a National Joint SCR into Sexual Exploitation and the Northumberland Sarah Domestic Homicide Review. In total, 1000 front line staff attended the events across Northumberland and team briefs and website links supported them to embed the themes into practice and raise at team meetings.

**Feedback from one learning event,** *“Every time I attend one of these sessions it raises my awareness and sharpens my questions and responses. They are extremely useful tools for practitioners and managers.”*

Outcomes and findings feed into our learning and improvement structures to promote a culture of continuous improvement across the NSCB.

Assurance is sought from partners annually that, changes to practice following Serious Case Reviews, remain embedded in all partner organisations.

The audit schedule is adapted following Serious Case Reviews to ensure the safeguarding system is monitored and scrutinised through audit and challenge events.

## Child Death Overview Panel

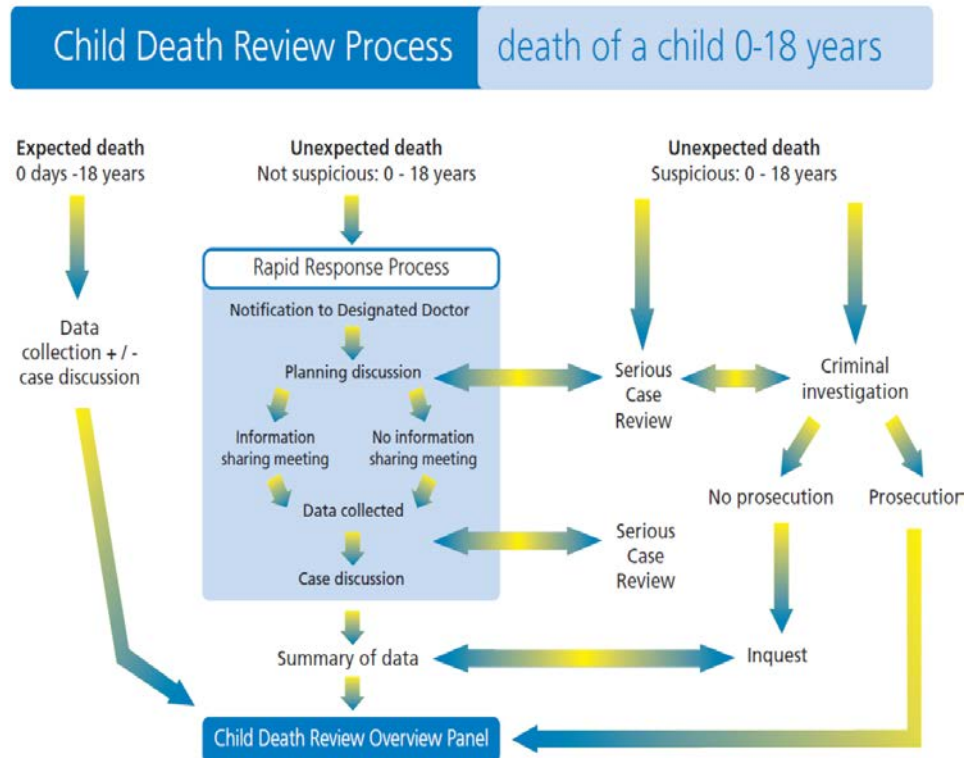
It is the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that a review of every death of a child normally resident in their area is undertaken. A joint Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has been agreed by Northumberland North Tyneside and Newcastle upon Tyne LSCBs.

North of Tyne CDOP undertakes the review process locally for all children normally resident in Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle. Every death of a child is a tragedy and the panel's task is to learn from the circumstances of every death to:

- Identify any changes which can be made that might help prevent further deaths.
- Share the learning regionally and nationally, with other CDOPs and agencies involved in the process.
- Identify trends and target interventions to prevent further deaths; the review process is not about allocating blame but is about learning lessons to prevent deaths in the future.
- Of the 13 cases reviewed in 2017/18 from Northumberland, modifiable factors were identified in 7 cases or 54%.
- A modifiable factor is identified as something which: "may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally and nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths".
- Rapid response meetings took place in 100% of the cases.

- All parents were informed about the CDOP process following the introduction of procedures to ensure this occurs.

## Interrelated processes for reviewing child deaths



**Each year, the panel takes a close look at deaths where modifiable factors occur, in order to learn lessons for the future.**

In 2017-2018, the following themes were identified:

Themes
Consanguinity - First cousin marriages
Poorly managed asthma treatment with a delay in ambulance reaching patient due to location of patient being withheld
Co-sleeping
Three cases of maternal obesity as a risk factor for prematurity
Smoking/Domestic Violence/Neglect/Unhygienic home environment
Sudden unexpected death in epilepsy
Poor engagement with healthcare services
Smoking/Domestic Violence/Neglect/Unhygienic home environment
Co-sleeping with alcohol and smoking
Opiate withdrawal and maternal smoking
Co-sleeping with alcohol and illegal drugs found in mothers system
Lack of antenatal care sought by mother

Following the identification of these themes the NSCB has lead on communication strategies in respect of co-sleeping, sofa sharing and the impact of smoking during pregnancy.

How to impact on the issues regarding consanguinity is current being researched by CDOP and we are considering national models of community engagement and assessing if these could be successful in our region.



## Policy and Procedures

The updated online Northumberland LSCB Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures were launched in July 2017.

They provide a web based solution that is fully searchable and allows the user to access content from a wide range of devices.

**Website link** - <http://northumberlandlscb.proceduresonline.com/>

Professionals should add the link above into work related phones, smartphones, tablets and computers to link directly to the procedures when needed.

**Register for updates** – Please [register for updates](#) and you will be automatically updated on any future child protection procedural changes and any new national or local guidance.

**Feedback on the new procedures** – If you have any comments, updates or feedback on the new procedures, you can let us know by completing the [procedures feedback form](#).

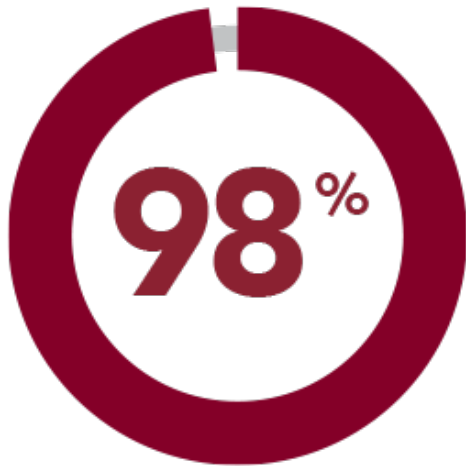
### **Procedures updated in 2017-2018 include:**

- Referrals
- Single Assessment Framework
- Statutory Assessments
- Strategy Discussions/Meetings
- Section 47 Enquiries
- Initial Child Protection Conferences

- Child Protection Review Conferences
- Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
- Unborn Thresholds Document
- Management of Women who Misuse Substances in Pregnancy
- Child Abuse and Information Communication Technology
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children and Families who go Missing
- Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Safeguarding Children in Whom there are Concerns that illness is Fabricated or Induced
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriages
- Children Affected by Gang Activity and Youth Violence
- Agency Roles and Responsibilities
- Complaints and Appeals
- Managing Allegations of Abuse against people who work with Children
- Engaging with Fathers, Male Partners or Carers
- Good Practice Supporting the Voice of the Child
- Dangerous Dogs and Safeguarding Children
- Modern Slavery
- Guidance for Writing Child Protection Policy and Procedure.
- Use of Interpreters, Signers or Others with Communication Skills
- Ofsted Notifications of Serious Childcare Incidents: Guidance

## 8. Training and Communication

Northumberland LSCB offered over 20 core training courses in 2017-2018; to see the [full prospectus please click here](#)



A total of **75 courses** were delivered in 2017/18. The courses we attended by a total of **1,403 staff and volunteers**.

The training courses received very positive feedback with 98.6% of attendees marking the training as good or excellent.

"The overall quality of the NSCB training courses that I have attended has been excellent. I have found every course interesting, informative and useful in my current role."

"Following the training courses I have attended, I feel more confident with the families I am working with and have been able to apply my learning to consider the impact on the child which I have been able to reflect more concisely in my assessment work."

"Since joining Northumberland in May I have been impressed with the quality of the NSCB courses I have attended. There is a wide range of topics and niche areas of social work to enhance learning."

### Quality and partner commitment

The quality and breadth of the NSCB training offer is made possible because of the knowledge, expertise and commitment of the multi-disciplinary training team. Thirty-five local professionals from partner agencies contributed to the 2017-18 programme.

### E-Learning

In 2017-18 we changed our provider of eLearning to the Northumberland County Council Learning Management System "*Learn Together*". Since the transfer the NSCB has had 4,010 completion on safeguarding eLearning. The NSCB provides a comprehensive curriculum of eLearning with 15 modules currently on offer with others being developed.

### Local Authority Designated Officer - Awareness Raising

To support settings in understanding the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer and safer working practice, the Northumberland Designated Officer delivered training at 37 learning events (1,679 delegates).

### Achievements and Future Planning

Throughout this training year, the NSCB trainers have maintained the depth and breadth of the multi-agency training programme. One of the key areas for development in 2017-18 has been to provide a multi-agency training offer which implements the Northumberland Early Help Workforce Development Plan.

## Communications Activity

The Communication and Engagement activity responsibilities reverted to the previous position, with the NSCB Business Manager holding responsibility for the communications activities of the NSCB.

The focus of the work this year has been focused on the development and distribution of awareness raising materials, and the further development of the LSCB Website.


Specific campaigns have been focussed on our Serious Case Reviews, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect, Domestic Violence and Gangs and Groups.

Printed materials alongside newsletters and Seven minute guides to raise awareness of safeguarding children were distributed to contact points such as GP surgeries, Children's Centres, Day Nurseries, Customer Access Points and Libraries across Northumberland and made available for printing from the NSCB website.

The materials content is driven by the findings of SCRs, CDOP modifiable factors, national and local priorities or research.

This year they have included:



 **More Information:** Find out more information about Communication campaigns and Team Briefs

## 9. How effectively are children and young people being safeguarded in Northumberland

This section addresses one of the key questions for all LSCBs: 'How effectively are children and young people being safeguarded in Northumberland?' It provides an overall picture of the progress being made to improve services and outcomes for children and young people across the whole safeguarding system (from universal services through early help to statutory intervention).

### Monitoring and Reviewing

Many key processes and specific services are subject to independent monitoring and reviewing which provides a useful external measure of how well safeguarding is being carried out in Northumberland. This section considers the evidence provided from a number of sources.

The NSCB has considered the following factors in assuring itself that practice and multi-agency working is appropriate and safe:

### Findings from external inspections:

- The Local Authority had a focussed visit on the 6 Feb 2018. In summary its overview states: *"Children and young people reviewed as part of this focused visit benefit from a timely and proportionate response when they need help and support. The current leadership team has improved the effectiveness of the local authority's initial response to children and young people needing help and protection. Senior managers have taken a systematic and incremental approach to improving its front-door. They have implemented a single point of contact for families and professionals to raise concerns, and have established pathways into early help services, developing the use of triage, and providing early signposting to appropriate services. Good performance information and quality assurance systems enable managers to understand frontline practice. This informs their clear vision and plans to further enhance front-door arrangements"*.

- In the LA Focussed visit the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, also called the "Front-Door", was also part of the visit framework and the inspectors found that:

*'The front-door provides an easily accessible single point of contact for all families and professionals seeking help and support. The service provides advice and guidance, access to early help and statutory provision and signposting to appropriate services. In the main, children receive the right help at the right time.'*

- The Care Quality Commission's inspection of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust found that the overall rating for services was 'Outstanding' and an action plan is being implemented.
- In March 2018 Inspectorate of Constabulary of Northumbria Police Peel inspection, Northumbria Police were judged at 'Good' overall, with 'Requires Improvement' in Protecting Vulnerable People. The Northumbria Police representative presented the findings to the NSCB and their Safeguarding Operating Model Force Improvement Programme will be scrutinised by the NSCB.
- The Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust were inspected by CQC in April 2018 and were graded 'Outstanding Overall' with 'Good' for 'Are services Safe'.
- Partner compliance with statutory duties to ensure arrangements are in place to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- The majority of schools, child minders and day care settings inspected by Ofsted in 2017 were rated 'Good' or better.
- The number of Third Sector organisations attending NSCB training and working as partners of the NSCB continues to grow.
- In January 2018 Children's Social Care undertook a 'Practice



Week' which was an internal review of Children's Social Care carried out by senior managers including some from NSCB partner organisations. From a timetable of visits over a period of a week, managers observed practice out with their management domain and/or professional specialism. The purpose of the visits was to assure quality of service provision, focus on social work practice and to create an action plan where appropriate, to steer service improvement for the coming year. Practice week overall was a 'big learning curve' and the first of its kind to be completed within Northumberland; staff were described as 'tenacious' 'articulate' 'committed' and focussed on their role.. Without exception, staff, when asked, felt supported by their managers.

- The Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group undergoes annual internal audit of safeguarding to provide assurance the organisation is 'safe' from a safeguarding perspective. During the period covered by this report, the CCG received substantial assurance (the highest grade) following an audit in to how learning from case reviews and serious incidents is shared and embedded.
- The Education and Skills Service continues to monitor safeguarding standards in education settings i.e. schools, academies, alternative providers, Free Schools and independent schools through a section 175/157 safeguarding standards audit tool.

### **Performance data and trends**

- National pressures in recruitment to social roles teams continue to be addressed in Northumberland; caseloads have remained static at 22.1% for the year.
- Although sexual exploitation is a strong theme in many of the Risk Management Group cases, it is important to note that there does not seem to be evidence in Northumberland of an organised, network and trafficking approach. However, given

the close proximity to Newcastle and cross border issues, we remain vigilant to this model of exploitation.

- Children and Young people subject to a child protection plan for two or more years has reduced to 16% below the national average.
- Referrals to the four locality based Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs have increased to 2,234 compared to 1,158 the previous year.
- A performance report is provided to each main Board meeting and its key messages are assessed both in the meeting and followed up, with Board members and within the Quality and Improvement Performance (QIP) sub-committee.
- In the 2017/18 the Section 11 deep dive audit had 100% compliance by partners, with 100% of audit questions classified as meeting the minimum requirement.
- Data on attendance and reports at CP Conferences reveals improvement in the provision of reports. The QIP sub group recommending greater use of video links to enable GPs to participate. This included an increase to the category of Neglect was as the most frequent reason for children being placed on a Child Protection Plan in 2017/18 (52% of new plans). This increase was identified by the NSCB and the strategic objective regarding Neglect was agreed by the NSCB in 2018.
- 100% of Children's Homes were rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- 85% of schools inspected by Ofsted in 2017-2018 achieved 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for safeguarding.

## Conclusions

The NSCB plays an active and dynamic leadership role in monitoring and shaping services for children. The governance of the NSCB is a strength and partnerships across adults and children's service are well established. The NSCB partners challenge each other and hold each other to account. The NSCB has taken a lead in establishing strategic developments, such as sexual exploitation, re-establishing the responsible authorities meeting, early help and reviewing our response to child sexual abuse.

The sub-committees, such as the Sexual Exploitation sub-committee, the Prevent Strategy group and Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) have joint accountabilities. This has further promoted a joined up approach with partners and neighbouring local authorities, which prevents duplication in a time of scarce resources. The scrutiny of a range of data from key partners, such as social care, education, police and health has improved during the year through the use of key indicators set and dashboards are in place to enable the Board to monitor effectively the delivery of its priorities.

Assessing and managing risk is a key responsibility in safeguarding children and young people and the NSCB has been absolutely clear that this must be maintained appropriately and safely during the period of 'whole system change' and accompanying restructuring being undertaken by many partners. The NSCB has considered the following factors in assuring itself that practice and multi-agency working is appropriate and safe:

- A review of the information and intelligence considered by the NSCB throughout 2017/18 and analysed through the annual review process suggests that overall the direction of travel is appropriate, good progress is being made and we are in a good place to transition into the new arrangements set out by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Part of the NSCB's role is to hold other strategic bodies to account for their role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The NSCB complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006. The Board has an established relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Families, Northumberland Safeguarding Adult Board (NSAB), Family Justice Board and Safer Northumberland Partnership (SNP) through cross membership and sharing of reports.
- This report will be formally presented to the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner and senior managers of partner organisations who work with children and young people in Northumberland, shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Families and Children's Trust and published on the Safeguarding Board website.

## 10. Priorities for 2017-2019

In 2017-2018, the Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board, at the Board development day, agreed the following priorities and priority actions would be the focus of the NSCB for the 2017-2019 period:

### **Further promoting preventative and early help approaches**

The NSCB is committed to providing help and support to as many families as possible at the level of need. Currently too many families are having to be referred through children's social care to access early help services, The Council and partners are working to improve preventative approaches and access to early help through increasing the number of early help assessments, team around the family and early help plans. The NSCB has an Early Help and Early Intervention sub-committee which is providing a steer to this work and promoting the links between early help and safeguarding services.

### **Neglect**

Neglect and the damage to children from neglect has been a feature in both local and national serious case reviews. It has been identified as a feature in national and local SCRs, and locally in learning reviews and multi-agency audits, resulting in neglect being identified as a priority by the Board.

Neglect may be a factor or a direct cause of death or severe injury in children and young people, and it has been identified as a prevailing or risk factor when there is hidden harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. Current evidence strongly suggests that all forms of neglect are particularly associated with damage to the child's lived experience and their physical and emotional wellbeing.

### **Working with fathers**

In Northumberland, since 2009, there have been a number of cases where the role of the father or significant males has not been clearly understood. There have been a number of cases reviewed by the Serious Case Review Committee where parents had different GPs with mother and children at one GP practice and the father or significant male at another, sometimes in another Local Authority area. In one case, Child Concern Notifications regarding domestic violence in a previous relationship had been historically supplied to another Local Authority by the Police and was not known to Northumberland. During Serious Case Review investigations, evidence of engagement with fathers and significant males are often missing from records. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 refers throughout to parents, not mothers in isolation, and defines the statutory guidance to gain parents' views and to understand their capacity to provide care.

*"When professionals refer a child, they should include any information they have on the child's developmental needs and the capacity of the child's parents or carers to meet those needs. This information may be included in any assessment, including the early help assessment" Para 20.*

The need to work with both parents continues throughout the process of any case, either at child protection or early help.

It is important to note that most fathers want to have active input with parenting their children, and most children want contact with their fathers. The need to engage fathers more in the safeguarding process is one of the most pressing reasons for policy and practice to address and challenge the risk of gender inequalities and gendered biases among agencies. Men need to be regarded as core to assessment and planning for children's needs, whether they have parental responsibility; this approach should be embedded within all assessments of children's needs, early help provision and safeguarding.

## **Improving focus on the child's experience of services and better embedding it in practice**

In ensuring that children and young people are protected and kept safe, we need to be able to understand how they see and experience the things that happen to them and to consider the world from their perspective.

## **Impact of Domestic Violence on children and young people**

Domestic violence and abuse has been recognised nationally as having a significant impact on both individuals and families, including affecting a woman's ability to care for her children.

Research evidence shows that children experiencing domestic violence and abuse can be negatively affected in every aspect of their functioning, safety, physical and mental health and well-being, school attendance and achievement, economic wellbeing and emotional development. The effects may continue into adulthood, affecting their ability to form peer friendships and healthy partner relationships of their own. In the most extreme cases, children are at risk of serious injury or death because of domestic violence and abuse. For many children, experience of living with domestic violence and abuse is the underlying factor in other needs for which they come to the notice of services and individual organisations.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Gangs and Groups, including County Lines**

In the past years the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation (CSE) has become much better understood and the NSCB has a developing knowledge of gangs and groups including County Lines. A Police led Sexual Exploitation Investigation and a Joint Serious Case Review undertaken in Newcastle upon Tyne has established that young people in the North East are as at risk from CSE as in other more high-profile parts of the country.



## Appendix 1 – LSCB Membership

### Northumberland LSCB Membership

#### **Independent Chair, NSCB**

#### **Northumberland County Council Children's Services**

Executive Director of Children's Services  
Service Director, Education and Skills  
Service Director, Children's Social Care  
Acting Head of Service, Children Social Care  
Senior Manager, Education, Safeguarding & Performance Team  
Safeguarding Manager/Senior Independent Reviewing Officer  
Principal Lawyer

#### **Northumberland County Council**

Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Observer)  
Chief Executive  
Head of Housing  
Strategic Community Safety Manager  
Strategic Safeguarding Manager, Northumberland  
Safeguarding Adults Board  
Director of Public Health

#### **Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group**

Director of Nursing, Quality & Patient Safety  
Designated Nurse  
Designated Doctor, Northumberland

#### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery

#### **Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust**

North Locality Care Group Nurse Director

#### **Northumbria Police**

Detective Chief Superintendent  
Detective Superintendent

#### **Northumbria Rehabilitation Company**

Director of Offender Management

#### **National Probation Services**

Head of North of Tyne  
Deputy Head of North of Tyne

#### **Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service**

Community Safety Manager

#### **Barnardo's North East**

Assistant Director Children's Services  
Senior Manager Support Officer

#### **Action for Children North East**

Operations Manager

#### **CAFCASS**

Service Manager

#### **VOICES Network**

Director

#### **Lay Members**

Three lay members

## **Schools**

Executive Headteacher, Seaton Valley Federation of  
Schools,  
Headteacher, Prudhoe Community High School  
Designated Safeguarding Lead for Astley High School

The Board is advised by:

- On request, a member of Northumberland County Council Corporate Legal Services nominated as the Board's legal advisor
- The Northumberland LSCB Business Manager

## **NSCB Advisors**

## Appendix 2 – LSCB Staffing and Budget

### Staffing

The LSCB is supported by the following officers:

NSCB Business Manager

NSCB Business Support Officer

### LSCB Budget

The financial contributions from partner agencies are as follows:

#### Income

Partner	2017/18 Contribution
Northumbria Police	£5,000
NHS Northumberland CCG	£10,000
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust	£5,000
CAFCASS	£500
National Probation Service	£250
Northumbria Rehabilitation Company	£250
Northumberland County Council	£128,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>£149,770</b>

### Expenditure

Description	Cost
<b>Expenditure</b>	
<b>Salaries</b>	
Business Support Officer	£12,519
NSCB Manager	£61,544
Travel Allowances and Subsistence	£634
<b>Staffing Total</b>	<b>74,697</b>
Non-Pay related costs	
Insurance - Employers Liability / Third Party	£296
Hire of facilities	£704
Printing & Stationery	£2,377
Professional Services, Tri.x procedures, Independent Chair and SCR Authors	£45,596
<b>Total</b>	<b>£123,670</b>

## Northumberland LSCB Annual Report 2017 / 2018 – Safeguarding Children in the County of Northumberland

Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which describes how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people in the County of Northumberland. Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the County of Northumberland and to ensure that they do so effectively.

The children and young people of the County of Northumberland are at the heart of what all LSCB partners do and our vision of **‘Every child and young person in the County of Northumberland feels safe and grows up safe from harm’** continues to drive services forward.

This Annual Report gives an account of the Board’s work over the past year to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The report reflects the activity of the LSCB and its sub groups against its priorities for 2017/18. It covers the major changes and improvements of our partners’ service delivery, where they link with the Board’s overall strategies and the impact it has had. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities to be taken forward into 2018/19.

A copy of this report is available on

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding.aspx>