

**Northumberland Safeguarding Children Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**13<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 2.00 – 4.00pm**

**Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Paula Mead	Independent Safeguarding Scrutiny and Assurance Chair, NSCC	PM
Sandra Clement for Paul Weatherstone	SPO, National Probation Services	SC
Lynne Colledge for Claire Wheatley	D/Chief Inspector Safeguarding, Northumbria Police	LC
Steven Gilbert	Deputy Director (South of Tyne), Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company	SG
Naomi Jones	Designated Doctor, Child Protection, CCG	NJ
Liz Morgan	Director of Public Health, NCC	LM
Vida Morris	Group Nurse Director, North Locality Care Group, CNTW	VM
Graham Reiter	Service Director, Children's Social Care, NCC	GR
Brian Smeaton for Alan Hartwell	Children's Improvement & Development Manager, Performance and Systems Support, NCC	BS
Julie Stewart for Phil Soderquest	Strategic Housing Manager, NCC	JS
Martyn Strike	Deputy Director of Offender Management, Northumbria CRC	MS
Margaret Tench	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children, Northumberland CCG	MT
Claire Thomas	Associate Director Safer Care, CNTW	CT
Annie Topping	Executive Director of Nursing Quality & Patient Safety, Northumberland CCG	AT
Jill Wood for Paula Shandran	Named Midwife Safeguarding, NHCFT	JWo
Karen Wright	Strategic Safeguarding Manager, Safeguarding Adults, NCC	KW

Apologies Received	Role	Initials
Robin Harper-Coulson	NSCC Business Manager, NCC	RHC
Alan Hartwell	Senior Manager, Performance, Education & Safeguarding, NCC	AH
Catherine Joyce	Operational Director Children's Services, Action for Children	CJ
Audrey Kingham	Director, Business Development, NCC	AK
Cath McEvoy-Carr	Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, NCC	CMC
Paula Shandran	Professional & Operational Lead Safeguarding Adults & Children, Safeguarding Service, NHCFT	PS
Phil Soderquest	Head of Housing and Public Protection, NCC	PSO
Jane Walker	Virtual School Headteacher, NCC	JW
Paul Weatherstone	Head of North of Tyne, National Probation Services	PW
Claire Wheatley	Chief Inspector Harm Reduction & Intel, Northumbria Police	CW

In Attendance		
Steven Hume	Head of Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)	SH
Nicola Johnson	Project Delivery Lead, Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)	NiJ
Su Kaur	Principal Social Worker - Children and Families, NCC	SK
Sandra Blackwood	NSCC Business Support, NCC (Minute Taker)	SB

Agenda Item	Discussion and Action Agreed	A	C
	<b>Standing Agenda Items</b>		
1.	<b>Welcome, Introductions &amp; Apologies for Absence</b> PM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted (see above).		
2.	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting, Matters Arising and Action Log (papers)</b> The previous minutes of 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 were accepted.  The action log was reviewed and updated - see separate document.		
3.	<b>VRU Presentation</b> SH provided information about the VRU. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health approach to reducing crime and the fear of crime.</li> <li>• Now permanently funded as a resource.</li> <li>• Strategic Violence Reduction Board made up of the VRU Director, Public Health Specialist, DA Specialist, Performance &amp; Commissioning Lead, 2 VRU Co-ordinators, a Partnership Analyst, a Comms &amp; Engagement Officer, and a Project Support Officer. It is chaired by the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner, meets every quarter, and takes decisions on the strategic objectives for the VRU.</li> <li>• Subgroups to the Board are being reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Julie Smith is the DA Specialist.</li> <li>• Important to increase engagement with health colleagues and wider safeguarding services.</li> <li>• Tasked to develop a 5 year response strategy. This has 4 key themes e.g. youth diversion, reducing offending, working with families, and connecting communities (targeting and using data to identify areas of most need to decrease vulnerability).</li> <li>• Intelligence based.</li> <li>• Reliance on partnership working and community engagement.</li> <li>• The VRU sits on all 6 Community Safety Partnerships and subgroups.</li> <li>• Regular VRU partner briefings during lockdown.</li> <li>• Wider community engagement: exploring social media to increase this e.g. use of Facebook live for a Knife Crime awareness briefing one year from the 'Knife Angel', which was well received.</li> <li>• Co-production of interventions and progression of 'Theory of Change' model during year 3.</li> <li>• Impact of 'lived experience' around engagement and access of services. Will be continuing this year, to ensure interventions are shaped by need.</li> <li>• Youth survey last year: more than 1300 responses; main issue was around mental health and anxiety about the future (issues</li> </ul>		

	<p>magnified during Covid).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 3: continue to build community approaches e.g. direct engagement with young people via Youth Navigators proactively working closely with those close to the criminal justice system. Enhancing the existing offer.</li> <li>• Also working in South East Northumberland (Ashington and Blyth) and Berwick re. mental health in young males.</li> <li>• Will link into the work of the PCC - intensive interventions, early intervention to prevent exploitation of vulnerable people, and building resilience.</li> <li>• Strategic needs assessment – shows areas, needs and priorities to tailor interventions. Partnership data.</li> <li>• Family Gateway work projects developing over the next 12 months.</li> <li>• Five Link Workers coordinated by NiJ: Sunderland (working in A&amp;E (alcohol harm team)), Ashington, Gateshead, North Tyneside and Berwick – these help to identify vulnerable young people.</li> <li>• Targeted approach, building up trust and confidence to help problem solve.</li> <li>• Education team – can circulate brochure and can offer a range of support e.g. to the PRUs (project based learning approach, tailored interventions, building resilience and recognising strengths).</li> <li>• Developing Police safeguarding and education resources.</li> <li>• SH can provide the group with data/updates on the progress of interventions in the future, if required.</li> </ul> <p>The group thanked SH and NiJ for their information and reiterated it was good to have a public health approach.</p> <p>VM asked whether the young people were asked about potential solutions from their perspective and NiJ confirmed that there are 2 projects in Northumberland involving family work and young people with mental health issues. They are working closely with Emma Richardson and community voluntary sector family link workers; keen on getting the voice of the family and young person to understand what would make them engage etc.</p> <p>SH mentioned the challenges of young people accessing mental health support. They hope to put a bid in for Home Office funding for therapeutic support, although this is just for 12 months initially. Collaboration on the plan is welcome. PM suggested SH links in with Jane Walker and Helen Bowyer of the CCG who are leading on this work (<i>post meeting: SB sent SH email addresses for Jane and Helen</i>).</p>		
4.	<p><b>Increased cocaine use in pregnancy presentation (paper)</b></p> <p>JWo presented information from her audit on cocaine use in pregnancy and the group thanked her for excellent work and providing assurance.</p> <p>MT has discussed the presentation within the Safeguarding group. The GP Chair was concerned and suggested a systemic approach i.e. fathers' use of cocaine and the impact on children. JW commented that this is a</p>		

	<p>starting point; partners are also found to be abusing.</p> <p>LM agreed that women can't be treated in isolation. She asked about the ages of the women audited. JWo didn't have specifics but this can be looked into.</p> <p>VM wondered if there was an impact on numbers using substances because of an interruption in the supply during lockdown. JWo noted that this was exacerbated by lockdown but abuse has still continued to grow. There was a concern about the quality, as levamisole (cattle wormer) was detected in the toxicology and it is not known how this will impact on the unborn.</p> <p>LC suggested linking in with Eric Myers and Paul Woods to discuss sharing intelligence re. interruption around drugs.</p> <p>NJ noted that the impact on children may be direct and indirect e.g. stillbirths, cot deaths, neurodevelopmental problems, difficult to settle babies (at risk of harm e.g. shaking) – we may see themes coming through over time from CDOP.</p> <p>The Public Health messages around the risks of cocaine/drug use in pregnancy were discussed. JWo noted that a campaign is about to be launched around this.</p> <p>PM asked if the babies from the women audited are followed up and found to have any direct or indirect injuries. JWo said no, but most are involved with child protection; all infants will have had a pre discharge meeting and the Health Visitors will have a plan and information on who uses cocaine. Kay Vincent (0-19 lead) is involved in the campaign. <b>Action:</b> JWo to ask Paula Shandran and Kay Vincent about the links with Health Visitors and the impact on the children.</p>		
5.	<p><b>Peer on peer sexual abuse of school-aged children</b></p> <p>GR and JW have been reviewing this issue, specifically in schools, following concerns identified in the media recently; NJ and MT requested we consider Northumberland's response and the issue of peer on peer sexual in the wider community, beyond school.</p> <p>A briefing paper is attached with the minutes.</p> <p>GR provided assurance that work is in place.</p> <p>NJ noted that the broader picture is complex and 'Everyone's Invited' is only the tip of the iceberg; peer on peer abuse is part of contextual safeguarding and other safeguarding committees are reviewing their situation. We have a partnership approach to violence against women and NJ asked if this should be considered as a NSSP priority.</p> <p>MT suggested that contextual safeguarding be included under the 'Impact of Covid' overarching priority and we could also capture the increase in online abuse.</p> <p>LC noted the National Police Council's response was Operation Hydrant – coordination of a national response of historical child abuse testimonials and providing analysis. From the 'Everyone's Invited' website, there were</p>	JW	

	<p>17 responses for Northumberland (Northumbria or Newcastle university related). Weekly dashboards provide updated information re. new referrals and these could be fed into the Local Authority.</p> <p>The group discussed having a Task &amp; Finish Group and scoping out information on peer on peer abuse but agreed that a regional approach should be explored in the first instance. KW stated that she will raise this issue at the regional Business Managers' meeting. <b>Action:</b> PM to email Jill Colbert and ask that it be put on the agenda for the Tyne, Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNSP).</p>	<p><b>KW</b></p> <p><b>PM</b></p>	
6.	<p><b>Northumberland Safeguarding Transitional Protocol</b></p> <p>KW informed the group that this protocol sits as part of a wider transition policy. It will also be presented at the SAB. <b>Action:</b> All to review and provide feedback to KW.</p> <p>The report was endorsed by the NSCC.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>	
7.	<p><b>SPRG Update (paper)</b></p> <p>MT updated the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel: This was delayed but the 2<sup>nd</sup> learning event took place and a final draft report has now been circulated. It will be presented to the SPRG and then to the July NSCC.</li> <li>• Fiona: This report was presented at the previous NSCC meeting. KW is developing a 7 minute briefing and has arranged a comms meeting ahead of the publication date of 4<sup>th</sup> June. An attempt to communicate with Mum has been made.</li> <li>• CAP (suicide): No formal practice review. Carol Leckie has been asked to pull together learning, focussing on the themes; a first draft will be ready in June.</li> <li>• LB (head injury): An additional report was provided to the National Panel; no feedback from them yet. ICON is being rolled out and train the trainers completed; all frontline staff will be trained when fully rolled out in July.</li> <li>• BB: Adele Wright is attending the DHR and has asked that learning for BB be included in this.</li> <li>• Fathers audit: Complete. To be shared with QIP and SPRG, then learning discussed at the PP&amp;T subcommittee.</li> <li>• CB (small baby with fractures): Rapid Review meeting next week. The outcome will be shared at the next meeting. The older sibling is now in care.</li> </ul>		
8.	<p><b>Annual Reports (papers)</b></p> <p><b>a) Private Fostering</b></p> <p>SK presented her report which the group found interesting.</p>		

	<p>PM asked how we ensure community awareness and whether private fostering was a particular concern in the county. SK is working with Emma Richardson to raise direct awareness into communities e.g. youth clubs.</p> <p>VM asked about the awareness by colleagues in housing and JS confirmed that information was shared with Housing Officers a while ago but it will be useful to refresh this. The Home Finder team are notified if the child is flagged to the private fostering team.</p> <p>GR reminded partners of the importance to continue to spread awareness, based on the significant risks in the past with Victoria Climbié.</p> <p><b>b) Corporate Parenting strategy and MALAP</b></p> <p>GR presented his update on CPAG, MALAP and the progress of the Corporate Parenting strategy action plan.</p> <p>He noted that from September, the Government are making unregistered placements for under 16s illegal. Sufficiency of placements remains a challenge but is being reviewed.</p> <p>More work is being done with council directorates e.g. Fire and Rescue and Housing, to support care leavers.</p> <p>Positive progress with mental health support.</p>		
9.	<p><b>Demand Level Trends (paper)</b></p> <p>BS presented the data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacts to children's social work: from schools, levels are the same as pre Covid. There has been an increase from hospitals; 55% increase in the last month (38% in the last year).</li> <li>• Child Protection Plans have seen a decrease; now 337 (57/10000). 19<sup>th</sup> April was a quiet week.</li> <li>• Section 47 activity is much lower than pre Covid. Contacts are as before, but the strategy discussion is low, in particular, for open cases.</li> <li>• GR reassured the group that cases are being audited if a significant change or trend is noticed - the decision making has been found to be fine; there is no clear theory for the decrease.</li> </ul>		
10.	<p><b>Risk Register (paper)</b></p> <p>This was reviewed and updated. It will be sent out with the minutes for any further updates.</p>		

11.	<b>Forward plan – setting of next meeting’s agenda (paper)</b>  The agenda for the next meeting (13 <sup>th</sup> May 2021) was reviewed and the Forward Plan updated. Partners were asked to consider future meetings and to let SB know of any papers that need to be presented.		
12.	<b>Information Items</b>		
12.1.	<b>First Contact (papers)</b>		
12.2.	<b>Northumberland Exploitation Strategy 2020 – 2023 (paper)</b>		
12.3.	<b>Northumberland Children's Centres - Covid Response (paper)</b>  PM shared CJ's helpful paper on the innovative work done by the children's centres during Covid.		
12.4.	<b>Northumberland and North Tyneside Safeguarding Adults Board Minutes</b>  None available.		
13.	<b>Any Other Business</b>  <u>Domestic Abuse Act</u> JS suggested we ask LP to update the group on the new Act and its implications for children's services. <b>Action:</b> LP to be invited to the September meeting to present a report ( <i>added to the Forward Plan</i> ).  <u>Police force equality and diversity</u> LC noted that work is being done on the three strands and partners will be approached for support; she will link in with GR for the Local Authority.  <u>Annual Report</u> In RHC's absence, PM will be writing the annual report for 2020-21 and partners will be asked to contribute.  <u>National Probation Services – staff changes</u> MS informed the group that this is his last meeting; he introduced SG as his replacement. He commented on PM's great leadership and multi-agency working and the group thanked him for his contributions and wished him well in his retirement.	SB	
14.	<b>Dates and Times of Future Meetings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13<sup>th</sup> July 2021 2-4pm via Microsoft Teams</li> </ul>		



Name	12.1.21	9.3.21	13.5.21	13.7.21	24.9.21	16.11.21
Paula Mead	✓	✓	✓			
Marion Dickson	A	✓	Jill Wood			
Steven Gilbert			✓			
Robin Harper-Coulson	A	A	A			
Alan Hartwell	✓	✓	Brian Smeaton			
Audrey Kingham	✓	✓	A			
Cath McEvoy-Carr	A	A	A			
Liz Morgan	Karen Herne	Karen Herne	✓			
Vida Morris	✓	Jo Sharpe	✓			
Graham Reiter	✓	✓	✓			
Donna Rose	✓					
Phil Soderquest	Julie Stewart	A	Julie Stewart			
Martyn Strike	✓	✓	✓			
Margaret Tench	✓	✓	✓			
Annie Topping	A	A	✓			
Paul Weatherstone	Sandra Clement	Sandra Clement	Sandra Clement			
Claire Wheatley		✓	✓			
Karen Wright	✓	✓	✓			

✓ = Attended DNA = Did not attend A = Apologies