



# Protocol in support of the relationship between the Health & Wellbeing Board and Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the expectations of the relationship and working arrangements between Northumberland's Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP). It covers their respective roles and functions, membership of the two partnership arrangements for challenge, oversight and scrutiny and performance management.
- 1.2 The Chair of the HWBB and the three safeguarding partners, Northumbria Police (NP), Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Northumberland County Council (NCC) have formally agreed to the arrangements set out in this document, which will be subject to review annually.

## 2 Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership

- 2.1 NSSP is a statutory partnership with responsibility for agreeing how relevant local organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. NSSP's role is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard all children.

### 2.2 NSSP's key responsibilities are to:

- Develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention, ensuring safe recruitment and working practice, investigating allegations and concerns and training provision.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the Local authority and board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve.
- Communicate and raise awareness of the need to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children to those who work with children including volunteers and members of the public
- Collect and analyse information about child deaths with a view to learning from experience and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account
- Undertake reviews of cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, a child has died or a child has been seriously harmed, and there is cause for concern about the way in which the authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.
- Lead on or contribute to specific safeguarding initiatives e.g. sexual exploitation, e safety, substance misuse, licensing.

- The role of the Strategic Safeguarding Partnership is to scrutinise and challenge the work of agencies both individually and collectively. The NSSP is not operationally responsible for managers and staff in constituent agencies.

### **3 The Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB)**

#### 3.1 The Purpose of Health and Well-Being Boards

3.2 HWBBs were established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. They are intended to be a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

3.3 Each top tier and unitary authority must have its own health and wellbeing board. Board members are expected to collaborate to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners to work in a more joined up way. As a result, patients and the public should experience more joined-up services from the NHS and local councils in the future.

3.4 The HWBB is a partnership of providers and commissioners of community, health and social care services in Northumberland.

3.5 The Board commissions programmes of work to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities for children living in Northumberland.

3.6 The basis for decisions about strategy and design for service delivery is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in Northumberland. The Board has produced, and will update from time to time, a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which sets out the key priorities for joint working, including joint working in services for children. The current strategy includes a focus on prevention and early intervention in children's services.

3.7 The members of the Board, through working together and developing integrated services, will:

- Provide a forum to enable provider and commissioner dialogue
- Provide a forum for challenge, discussion and the involvement of service users and local people
- Oversee the development of integrated or coordinated services, aiming to ensure that these safeguard children and avoid duplication.

3.5 The HWBB's key areas of responsibility relating to children are:

- The provision of an overall strategic framework for the commissioning of health and care services for children
- Monitoring the plans of commissioners and providers against the agreed joint strategic plan.
- Driving forward the further integration of multi-agency services.

- ‘Unblocking’ pathways where organisational boundaries are causing challenges.
- Driving change and bring challenge to encourage new ways of working.

#### **4. The Relationship between the NSSP and the HWBB**

- 4.1 The roles and responsibilities of the two respective bodies are different but complementary. They have a common purpose – to promote joint working and co-operation between partners to improve the wellbeing of children in Northumberland, support and develop areas of mutual interest: examples include Reducing Infant Mortality, Child Death Overview Processes (CDOP), Safe Sleeping, referrals to A&E, challenges presented and experienced by children from ethnic minority groups and the changing ethnic profile in the county, teenage conceptions and integrated multiagency practice in prevention and early intervention.
- 4.2 Whilst the NSSP contributes to that wider goal of improving the well-being of all children, of necessity, it has a narrower focus on safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- 4.3 The NSSP is a statutory body in its own right, and not a sub-committee of any other body.
- 4.4 Through its case review, evaluation and audit programmes of work, the NSSP must be able to form a view of the quality of local activity, to challenge organisations as necessary, and to speak with an independent voice. For that reason, the NSSP and HWBB are chaired by different people.
- 4.5 In Northumberland, the NSSP is chaired by a selected senior officer from the three safeguarding partners; the HWBB is chaired by the Business Chairman (Northumberland County Council)
- 4.6 The Chair of NSSP will be invited to attend HWBB meetings, as/when necessary, in order to present reports and assist/advise on the development of effective plans and service delivery arrangements for safeguarding Northumberland children. Similarly, representatives of HWBB will be invited to attend NSSP when there are issues of common interest and purpose.
- 4.7 NSSP will work with the HWBB, informing and drawing on the JSNA. Within the wider Health and Social Care environment, the HWBB will seek to advise, inform and consider issues referred to it by, and in conjunction with, the NSSP. The HWBB may request the NSSP to consider issues for development, action or scrutiny
- 4.8 Given the NSSP’s remit (see 2.2 above) the NSSP’s role in relation to HWBB is:
- to focus on ensuring that key people and organisations that have a duty under s11 of the Children Act 2004 are fulfilling their statutory obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that the arrangements made by the HWBB are effective in supporting this
  - to offer support, guidance, advice, challenge and scrutiny to HWBB to enable the partner organisations to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities effectively

- to produce and publish an Annual Report which comments on the effectiveness of safeguarding in Northumberland and which will inform the work of the HWBB and other bodies. The Annual Report will be submitted to the Chair of the HWBB (as well as the Chief Executive of the Council, the Leader of the Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner)

#### 4.9 The HWBB will work with the NSSP:

- to develop and interpret the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with respect to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Northumberland's children
- to develop a clear understanding of the effectiveness of current services, including where services might need to be improved, reshaped or developed
- to ensure priorities for change are delivered

#### 4.10. Arrangements to secure co-ordination between the Boards:

In order to secure the opportunities identified above it is proposed that the following arrangements be put in place to ensure effective co-ordination and coherence in the work of the two Boards.

1. Between September and November each year the NSSP will present to the HWBB their Annual Report outlining performance against Business Plan objectives in the previous financial year. This will be supplemented by a position statement on the Boards' performance in the current financial year. This will provide the opportunity for the HWBB to scrutinise and challenge the performance of the Board, to draw across data to be included in the JSNA and to reflect on key issues that may need to be incorporated in the refresh of the HWBB Strategy.

2. The HWBB will present to NSSP updates of the Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy, and significant changes to the JSNA (which is maintained as a living document on the Council website)

3. In case of any urgent matters that need attention, respective Chairs will contact each other directly in the first instance.

4.10 The HWBB will consider within its remit any Community, Health and Social Care services the provision of which is the responsibility of its members; this will include (among other things) safeguarding children services

In general, the NSSP will not be an operational body or one which directly commissions or delivers services to children, young people and their families. The HWBB supports the shaping of children's health strategy and priorities for Northumberland to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for children and families. Commissioning decision