



# Northumberland

Strategic Safeguarding Partnership

## Terms of Reference

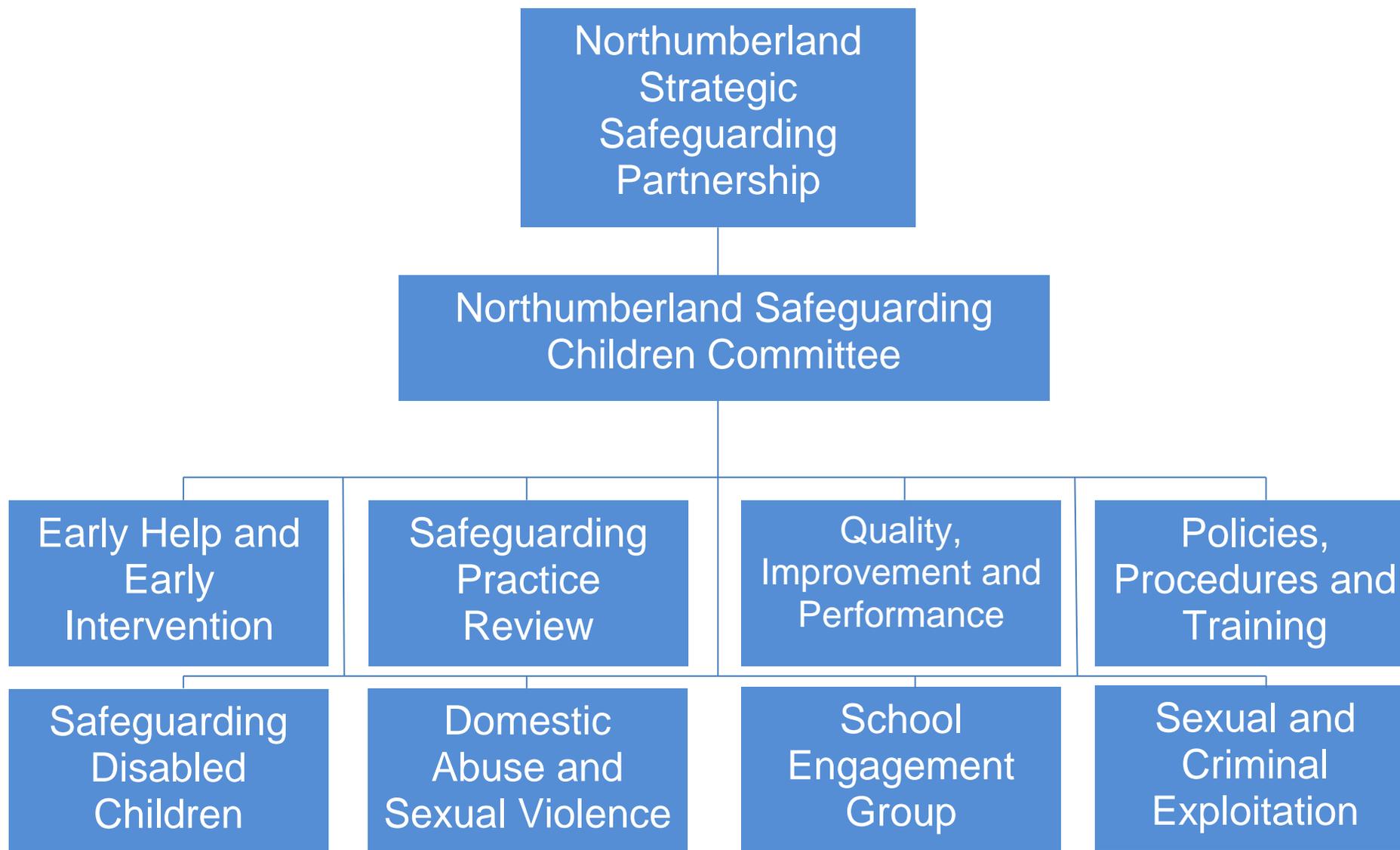


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Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership  
Structure  
Table 1



## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) is to support the three Safeguarding Partners to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in the County of Northumberland, and for ensuring the effectiveness of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- 1.2 The NSSP is the key mechanism for driving change. It will bring Relevant Agencies together at both a strategic and operational level to: deliver a focused, co-ordinated response; innovate system change; deliver efficiencies; and support effective multi-agency practice.

## 2. The Vision of the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership

- 2.1 It is the vision of the NSSP that all Statutory Partners and Relevant Agencies work together to ensure that *everyone does everything they can to ensure that all of Northumberland's children are safe, supported and successful.*
- 2.2 The vision for the NSSP is: for all Partner Agencies in Northumberland to be at the forefront in terms of delivering effective safeguarding practice; to be recognised for the culture of review and reflective learning; and positively acknowledged by children and young people for the work that supports their safety and welfare.
- 2.3 The Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) was graded by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in its last inspection as good and whilst we wish to retain this effective and robust local arrangement, there is a drive over the next three years to work more effectively together. This would be within Northumberland in partnership with the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Community Safety Partnership, and sub-regionally with neighbouring Local Authority (LA) areas, which is currently being driven forward by the Strategic Safeguarding Partners from all six LA areas. The goal over time is for this sub-regional Strategic Partnership to take over responsibility from the NSSP.
- 2.4 Many issues that keep children and young people safe from harm are not restricted by geographic and organisational boundaries and a sub-regional approach will ensure that children and young people are kept safe and protected by strong regional approaches to complex safeguarding issues that cover more than one Board or LA area of responsibility.
- 2.5 The NSSP and Northumberland Safeguarding Children Committee (NSCC) are robust multi-agency partnerships that enable all children and young people to be safe in their homes and communities and to fulfil their potential. The Partnership coordinates the work of all agencies and ensures that this work is effective in achieving the best outcomes for Northumberland's children and young people.

The overarching principles which underpin the work of the partnership are as follows:

1. ***The voice of children and young people:*** To communicate with and listen to children and young people and ensure that individual agencies and the Partnership all work to ensure that the voices of children and young people are considered. Where possible and appropriate, to involve young people in the work of the Partnership.
2. ***Think Family:*** To ensure that all agencies 'think family' so that children and adults receive coordinated services that assess and address the needs of the whole family.
3. ***Understanding our community:*** To seek to understand and respect the local community and its diversity, and to share information and seek views, where possible.

4. **Listening to and learning from practice:** The Partnership commits to consulting front-line practitioners and their line-managers in the work of the Partnership through providing information regularly and seeking feedback.
5. **Enabling the highest standards of practice:** To promote up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and high standards of practice in responding to the needs of children and young people in Northumberland, focusing on good and safe **outcomes**.
6. **Leading continuous improvement:** To lead improvements in the quality of multi- agency safeguarding practice.
7. **Effective coordination:** To co-ordinate and monitor the **effectiveness** of agency, multi-agency and the Partnership's own work, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
8. **Early Intervention and prevention:** The Partnership is committed to effective early intervention; this means working together so that families review the help they need so that their problems and concerns are effectively addressed early in the life of the child and early in the development of issues so that these do not escalate.
9. **Integrity in public life:** To work with the ethics, behaviour and values of public services (The Nolan Principles) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>

### 3. Priorities

- 3.1 The NSCC works to ensure that local services work knowledgeably, effectively, and together, to safeguard children and young people and to support their parents or carers. The Partnership's priorities will be informed by detailed analysis of local need and will target the most vulnerable children and their families for support. The Partnership's priorities will be informed by: the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis; learning coming out of local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews; and system-wide developments in safeguarding practice such as the Northumberland Social Work Practice Model.
- 3.2 The Partnership's priorities will be agreed at an annual Partnership Development Day. The agreed priorities will be outlined in a 24-month Business Plan and will be reviewed at each meeting of the Partnership.

### 4. Membership (see Appendix 1)

- 4.1 The NSSP will comprise the following Statutory Partners<sup>1</sup>
  - (a) The Local Authority (represented by Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, or their delegated representative)
  - (b) A Clinical Commissioning Group for an area any part of which falls within the LA area (the CCG, the Accountable Officer or their delegated representative)
  - (c) The Chief Officer of Police for a police area any part of which falls within the LA area (or their delegated representative)

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<sup>1</sup> Working Together 2018, Chapter 3, p72

- 4.2 The NSCC will include other Relevant Agencies, including:
- (a) In accordance with Working Together 2018, the NSCC recognises the vital role of schools, colleges and other educational providers
  - (b) Housing
  - (c) Probation (including National Probation and CRC Probation)
  - (d) Department for Work and Pensions
  - (e) Voluntary Organisations represented by the CVS or another relevant body
  - (f) Acute Trusts, Health Providers and Mental Health Trust
- 4.3 Members from Statutory Partners and Relevant Agencies must be sufficiently senior and delegated to speak with authority, to make decisions, and commit resources on behalf of their agency. Each Statutory Partner and Relevant Agency should nominate a standing deputy to represent the Member in her/his absence. For the Relevant Agency, the deputy will hold the same authority on their Agency's behalf. A deputy should be briefed in advance on the Agency's perspective concerning issues on the agenda and should not overturn an agency view expressed by the substantive Member in a previous meeting, without confirmation from the substantive Member in writing that there has been such a change of agency perspective.
- 4.4 Members from Relevant Agencies<sup>2</sup>, who represent their sector rather than a single agency, e.g. Head Teachers and Voluntary Sector representatives, cannot speak on behalf of any other single agency apart from their own. They are expected to give a generic view for their sector. They are not expected to canvass the views of their sector. It is expected that they will link with their counterparts through relevant forums etc. Also, they are not expected to make commitments on behalf of agencies/organisations within their sector, in terms of resources.
- 4.5 The Partnership will also include Co-opted Members who have an interest in and a contribution to make in the safeguarding of children and promotion of their welfare.
- 4.6 For the NSCC to work effectively there must be commitment, consistency and continuity in membership. The role of each Member must be to contribute actively to the work of the NSCC, provide constructive support and challenge, and act as a 'critical friend' to Partner Agencies in the monitoring of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4.7 Members will be expected to attend the meetings; they are required to respond to communications between meetings and to contribute to the on-going work of the Partnership.
- 4.8 Members who represent a sector will be covered in their absence by other members from that sector and so do not require a deputy e.g. Head Teachers, Voluntary Sector.
- 4.9 Where a Member does not attend two consecutive meetings, this absence will be reviewed with them on behalf of the NSSP with their organisation; by the NSSP Manager, on behalf of the Partnership.
- 4.10 Partners and Relevant Agencies are expected to ensure appropriate membership and commitment to the Sub Groups and ad hoc Task and Finish Groups, according to the membership agreed in their terms of reference. Co-opted Members may be asked to volunteer to contribute to the work of Task and Finish groups.

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<sup>2</sup> Working Together 2018, Chapter 3, paragraph 17 notes, "Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children." Also, "When selected by the safeguarding partners to be part of the local safeguarding arrangements; relevant agencies must act in accordance with the arrangements. Safeguarding partners should make sure the relevant agencies are aware of the expectations placed on them by the new arrangements."

## 5 Functions

- Inform the strategic direction in matters relating to safeguarding children
- Identify key priorities for safeguarding
- Drive the three Safeguarding Partners' multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people
- Submit proposals to the Safeguarding Partners for funding and resources
- Oversee the work of Sub Groups and Task and Finish Groups
- Challenge and support organisations, services and partnerships in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Consult on safeguarding issues
- Contribute to the production of the Safeguarding Partner's Annual Report
- Act as a conduit for information sharing on national and local issues, including the evidence base for effective interventions
- Analyse management information and contribute to inspection processes
- Ensure the involvement and participation of children, young people, parents and carers in the work of the Safeguarding Partners and the Partnership
- Contribute to regional working and learning

## 6 Accountability

- 6.1 The NSCC is accountable to the Safeguarding Partners. All Relevant Agencies are responsible for contributing fully and effectively to the work. The NSSP will work within and will comply with statutory guidance.
- 6.2 The Safeguarding Partners will appoint a chairperson to the NSSP from their membership and will appoint its vice chairperson.
- 6.3 When a serious incident becomes known to Safeguarding Partners, they must consider whether the case meets the criteria for a local review in accordance with chapter 4 of Working Together 2018.
- 6.4 Statutory Partners must make arrangements to:
- a. Identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area
  - b. Commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken
- 6.5 The Statutory Partners are responsible for identifying opportunities for independent Scrutiny, with advice of a panel of NSCC Members (including lay Members).
- 6.6 The membership of the NSCC comprises of those agencies set out in Appendix 1.

- 6.7 The Safeguarding Partners will co-opt such other persons as it considers necessary in either an advisory or participatory capacity.
- 6.8 The NSSP will invite other statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and community organisations to become members of the NSCC and its Sub Groups and Task Groups.
- 6.9 The NSSP may delegate functions as it considers appropriate to Sub Groups or Task Groups. These groups are accountable to the Partnership who will decide the chairing arrangements.
- 6.10 The NSSP Members will nominate professionals with relevant knowledge and skills from their organisation to sit on Sub Groups and Task Groups. Each group will appoint a vice chairperson.
- 6.11 The NSSP is accountable to its Members and to the local community for its work. This accountability will be demonstrated through the NSSP Annual Report, through which the NSSP will evaluate the effectiveness of its own work, as well as that of the local multi-agency partnership. The Annual Report will be shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board, in accordance with the governance arrangements of the Statutory Partners, Ofsted and the Department of Education (DfE). It will also be published on the NSSP website (see also section 8 under Reporting).
- 6.12 The NSSP and the NSCC are accountable to the children and young people of Northumberland. We will work with the Northumberland Children & Young People's Strategic Participation Group to ensure meaningful participation, consultation and accountability with young people.
- 6.13 All Relevant Agencies and Co-opted Members will respond to information requests from the NSSP in relation to data, commentary, evaluation, planning, performance and resources, in order to assist the NSSP in the completion of its objectives. Such data will be governed by any requirements of the Data Protection Act. The Safeguarding Partnership can require a person or body to comply with a request for information under section 14A of the Children Act 2004 (Amended 2010) and Working Together 2018, Chapter 3, paragraphs 28-29.
- 6.14 Where Partners and Relevant Agencies are asked for information or consulted on NSSP or NSCC business or draft documents between meetings, it is expected that agencies will make a definite response and not assume that no response means agreement. Where an agency does not respond to such a request, this will be raised at the following NSCC meeting. The NSSP needs confirmation of agreement and sign up to the NSCC Business Plan.

## **7 Partnership Meetings**

- 7.1 The NSCC will meet 4 times per year, although the chairperson may call an extraordinary meeting with the agreement of the Safeguarding Partners.
- 7.2 The NSCC Members may request an extraordinary meeting by submitting a written request to the chair.
- 7.3 Business support to the NSCC will be provided by Northumberland County Council, jointly funded by the Safeguarding Partners.
- 7.4 Minutes of each meeting will be prepared and submitted for approval at the next meeting. The approved minutes will be entered as a permanent record.
- 7.5 The NSCC will be quorate if two Statutory Partners and eight Members representing four separate Relevant Agencies are present. The Relevant Agencies shall designate named people as their NSCC Member to ensure consistency and continuity in membership and attendance at meetings. A named deputy may attend if the designated lead is unable to, and will be expected to take part fully in the meeting and have the authority to act.
- 7.6 It is essential that Statutory Partners are represented at meetings of the Partnership. In the

event that a Statutory Partner fails to ensure appropriate representation at a scheduled Partnership meeting, the chair will write to the Accountable Officer of the relevant Statutory Partner to raise a concern regarding the lack of attendance.

- 7.7 The NSSP will be quorate if all Statutory Partners (LA, CCG and Police) are present.
- 7.8 The Safeguarding Partners will have the responsibility to disclose wrong doing, maladministration or organisational dysfunction to Ofsted and the DfE, if it becomes clear that the NSSP or NSCC is failing to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and normal processes of challenge and dispute resolution have become untenable.

## **8. Reporting**

- 8.1 The NSSP will publish an Annual Report. The report will set out the work that partners have done as a result of the arrangements and how effective the arrangements have been in practice. It will also include actions relating to local child safeguarding practice reviews and what the Safeguarding Partners have done as a result. The Annual Report will also include a summary of the Partnership's self-evaluation and the key findings of independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Partnership.
- 8.2 In addition, the report will also include:
- Evidence of the impact of the work of the Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies on outcomes for children and families
  - A record of actions taken by the Safeguarding Partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any reviews
  - Ways in which the Safeguarding Partners have sought and utilised feedback from children, young people and families to inform their work and influence service provision
- 8.3 The Annual Report will be signed off through the governance arrangements of the Statutory Partners. The approved Annual Report, including local challenges to safeguarding and any national implications arising from these, will then be sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the DfE and to Ofsted, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, within seven days of publication.

## **9. Resources<sup>3</sup>**

- 9.1 The NSSP will have a shared budget to further its objectives. Statutory Partners will agree contributions each autumn for the following business year. The Statutory Partners will agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, and propose any contributions from Relevant Agencies, to support the local arrangements.
- 9.2 The cost of any local child safeguarding practice review will be borne by additional subscription from the Statutory Partners who have been involved in the case (the LA, the Police and the CCG, as the lead service commissioners). Statutory Partners may propose contributions from Relevant Agencies and Co-opted members who have been involved in the case. The outline costs of the commissioning of the review, independent author/s, legal advice and media work will be estimated as part of the planning of the child safeguarding practice review and apportioned according to agency/sector involvement in the case. The cost of dissemination of lessons will be borne as part of the NSSP Training Budget.

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<sup>3</sup> *The published arrangements should set out clearly any contributions agreed with relevant agencies, including funding, accommodation, services and any resources connected with the arrangements. See Working Together 2018, chapter 3, paragraphs 36-37*

- 9.3 Partner Agencies will bear the costs of the attendance and contribution of their representatives and will ensure that sufficient time is given to Members to attend meetings and undertake the work of the Board.
- 9.4 Partner Agencies will take responsibility for chairing the range of Sub Groups to ensure that there is leadership across several disciplines.
- 9.5 The NSSP will be supported by a Business and Administrative team designed in accordance with the needs of the Partnership.
- 9.6 Northumberland County Council will host the NSSP Business Support Team and NSSP meetings. Partners will be encouraged to host appropriate meetings or training, where possible and appropriate, at no expense to the NSSP Budget.
- 9.7 The NSSP will not routinely seek legal advice on all its work but only when it is needed.

## **10. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training**

- 10.1 Multi-agency training is important in supporting the collective understanding of local need. Practitioners working in both universal services and specialist services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and provide children with the help they need.
- 10.2 The Partnership recognises that to be effective, practitioners need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills and need be aware of the new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines and radicalisation. To enable this, Safeguarding Partners have a multi-agency Training Strategy and a Training Programme to ensure that the training needs of the children's workforce are met and that the Partnership is able to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training it commissions.
- 10.3 The NSSP will commission multi-agency training that will be delivered through the NSSP training officer and commissioned trainers. This training will be monitored for impact. The Quality Assurance Sub Group will undertake multi-agency and inter-agency audits and will receive information regarding single agency audit activity to ensure that the partnership has a clear view regarding the quality of practice across the children's safeguarding system. The Independent Scrutineer will have a role in scrutinising the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard children and promote their welfare
- 10.4 The NSSP expects that all organisations or groups will:
- Undertake a periodic analysis of the training and development needs of their staff or members
  - Provide new employees or members with induction training on their role and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people
  - Provide refresher training to keep people up-to-date.
  - Evaluate the impact of individual learning on their professional development and practice

## **11. Delegation of key responsibilities**

- 11.1 The NSSP, to further its objectives and to ensure that its statutory responsibilities are discharged, will delegate its functions and activities by theme, through its Business Plan and the Sub Group Annual Work Plans. However, the NSSP (Main Board) will remain accountable for the work undertaken even where it has been delegated.

## Appendix 1

### Statutory Partners:

- Local Authority (represented by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, or their delegated representative)
- Clinical Commissioning Group for an area any part of which falls within the LA area (the CCG, the Accountable Officer or their delegated representative)
- Chief Officer of Police for a police area any part of which falls within the LA area (or their delegated representative)

### Other Relevant Agencies:

- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company
- National Probation Services
- Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
- Barnardo's North East
- Action for Children North East
- Northumberland College
- CAFCASS
- Northumberland Adult Social Care
- Northumberland Community Voluntary Action - North East Youth
- Lay Members
- Northumberland Public Health
- Northumberland County Council Housing
- Northumberland County Council Safer Northumberland (Community Safety Partnership)
- Schools