



Northumberland

County Council

Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 December 2020

Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) Annual Report April 2019- September 2020

Report of the Independent Chair of the NSSP, Paula Mead.

Purpose of report.

To provide an overview of the work completed by the NSSP undertaken from April 2019 to September 2020.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

- 1) **Notes the content of the NSSP Annual Report.**
- 2) **Identify any areas for additional scrutiny**

Link to [Corporate Plan](#)¹

This report is relevant to the "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for" and "We want to make a difference" priorities included in the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Link to the [Northumberland Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2022](#)²

This report is relevant to the "Children and young people feel safe and supported and are able to cope with life's ups and downs", "Ensure all services work together towards tackling any form of disadvantage" and "Children and young people have the best start in life"

Key issues

1. The attached report describes the work during April 2019- September 2020 of

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yxfb4mqp>

² <https://tinyurl.com/yxnhuvx3>

the NSSP and provides information about operational and strategic safeguarding activity during the year. The report describes a range of achievements and progress of the NSSP priorities during the year.

2. The report highlights the transition into the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership set out in the Children and Social Act 2017 undertaken in June 2019.
 3. The report highlights the work of the NSSP during the current coronavirus pandemic, quickly moving to weekly then fortnightly meetings to monitor, scrutinise and to provide an information sharing opportunity for all partners. The meetings ensured quick identification of risk and actions agreed to mitigate the risks and the development of a Covid-19 performance framework to identify any areas where there was an increase and used this to plan for increased demand post Covid-19 lockdown.
 4. The multi-agency training programme has continued to provide a significant number of learning opportunities on a wide range of safeguarding subjects this year and has broadened the offer to address emerging national and local issues. Since the start of the pandemic the NSSP has had to rapidly change its training offer to a virtual training programme of webinars and e-learning. There have been 288 people who accessed webinars and an extra 543 e-learning completions. The training courses received very positive feedback with 99.5% of attendees stating the training met their needs
 5. The NSSP has undertaken four rapid review meetings following serious child safeguarding incident notifications being made by Northumberland County Council. These rapid reviews led to decisions to convene two learning reviews and two local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR). The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has agreed with each of the NSSP's decisions. In addition, the Partnership has undertaken two learning reviews jointly with the Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Board into two young adults. These are due for publication in the autumn of 2020 however the learning began being embedded from the point of identification.
 6. Following a local Serious Case Review in Northumberland after a baby suffered significant and life-changing injuries which were felt to be non-accidental in nature, the Sharing Information Regarding Safeguarding (SIRS) pilot was initiated. The case review highlighted that services were unaware of key relevant background information regarding the baby's father and that this information could have been instrumental in safeguarding the baby. The Northumberland CCG and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHCFT) safeguarding service commenced a pilot, in collaboration with maternity services and GP practices in Northumberland to share information regarding fathers that are registered with a different GP practice to the pregnant women.
 7. The NSSP has been a leader in the development of the [Early Adopter](#) regional
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work, establishing North and South of Tyne Child Death Overview Panel, developing a shared training pack based on learning from regional reviews. This has led to a regional multi-agency scorecard, dataset and reporting templates agreed for implementation in 2020 and completing a sub-regional Section 11 presented to the NSSP in 2020 following collation across the sub region.

8. The NSSP also undertook a series of multi-agency audits, including, Safeguarding Disabled Children and Young People, Voice of the Child, Neglect (Follow Up Audit), Early Help Impact audits, (Every three months) Children Living with Domestic Violence, All the audits have a robust action plan and have driven forward change across all partner organisations.
9. The report sets out the outcomes from June 2019, when Northumberland was subject to a joint [Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and HMI Probation inspection of the multi-agency response to children experiencing or at risk of Sexual Exploitation](#) and those experiencing or at risk of Criminal Exploitation. It also sets out the findings from the [Ofsted Inspection of children's social care services](#) with a "Good" Judgement highlighting partnership works as *"Good partnership work and a wide range of effective resources provide early help services that are a strength"*.
10. The [Care Quality Commission's inspection of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#) found that the overall rating for services was 'Outstanding' and the action plan is now completed.

Background

The statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which analyses and assesses how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people is retained under the new NSSP arrangements. 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.

The attached Annual Report describes the strategic activity undertaken by the NSSP, and the most significant specific issues dealt with during April 2019-September 2020.

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy	The Annual Report April 2019-September 2020 demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the NSSP, as set out in the national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) are being effectively fulfilled.
Finance and value for money	No direct implications as the NSSP is funded by the LA and contributions from other partners
Human Resources	Safeguarding investigations can in some circumstances lead to disciplinary action against staff. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff working in Northumberland County Council.
Property	No direct implications
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	This is an information report so does not require an EIA. Referrals statistics suggest that the gender and ethnic balance of safeguarding referrals broadly match those of the care management caseload
Risk Assessment	Management of risks in individual cases is a core element of safeguarding. There are various multi-agency risk assessment groups including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and the Missing Slavery, Exploited and Trafficked Group (MSET)
Crime & Disorder	Northumbria Police are members of the NSSP as are Safer Northumberland Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board, and there is close joint working to ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken where it is thought that a crime may have been committed.
Customer Considerations	There is a continuing need to ensure that children and young people are adequately protected from the risk of abuse or exploitation and children and young people in need are offered the services to maintain their health and development
Carbon reduction	No direct implications
Wards	All

Policy

The Annual Report April 2019-September 2020 demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the NSSP, as set out in the national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (March 2018) are being effectively fulfilled.

Background papers:

NSSP Annual Report 2019-2020

Report sign off.

Paula Mead NSSP Independent Chair

Report Author

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