



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5TH JANUARY 2023

Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) Annual Report September 2021 – August 2022 Safeguarding Children in Northumberland

Report of Joint Interim Directors of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Audrey Kingham

Cabinet Member: Guy Renner Thompson, Lead Member for Children's Services

Purpose of Report

This report sets out Northumberland's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) for children and young people. The safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, the Integrated Care Board and Police) are required to publish a yearly report, setting out what they and relevant agencies have done as a result of the MASA. The purpose of the report is to ensure transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity agencies have undertaken and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

1. To note and comment on the contents of the report.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'Living and Learning' priority included in the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2021-24, and the commitment to providing sustainable support to children and families and supporting the most vulnerable in our society, including children and young people.

Key Issues

Relevant local organisations and agencies have a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. The responsibility for this coordination rests with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements

for agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

A transitional year began in April 2022, since which time the safeguarding partners have been developing joined-up arrangements with our Safeguarding Adult Board to develop an integrated Northumberland Children and Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) over the coming year whilst working towards streamlining and reducing duplication across Northumberland's strategic partnerships.

A suite of measures enables the partnership to monitor impact and progress against the partnership's priorities:

- **Overarching Priority - The impact of Covid-19** has continued to amplify safeguarding risks to children and young people. Its impact is therefore considered within all our priorities.
- **Mental Health; Suicide, Self-Harm, Social Media Impact/Bullying.** Demand for mental health services has increased amongst healthcare providers and there are challenges to the workforce's capacity to meet it (30% increase in referrals to CYPS tier 3 between July 2021 and June 2022 compared to same period the previous year)
- **Neglect.** This continues to be a stubborn issue in Northumberland and the wider region. The trends tell us that recorded neglect remains prominent within the lives of vulnerable children and young people in the county. It continues to be the most frequently cited category in child protection plans and is often identified as a factor in those entering care.
- **Safeguarding children under 1 year old including non-accidental head injuries and co-sleeping.** The under 1s are the most vulnerable and therefore proportionately more represented the further through the safeguarding system they travel. They therefore continue to be a priority focus for the partnership.
- **Impact of Domestic Violence on children (2018-2020) - including Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) (2020-2023).** As with neglect, the police data repeatedly tells us that domestic abuse is a significantly prevalent factor in our work with vulnerable children and young people.
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB).** Whilst this was not originally identified as a priority, emerging evidence of significant risk has required further analysis and focus by the partnership.

Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) collates the findings from local children's safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs), evaluates the learning/findings, and

provides further audit and scrutiny to gain a broader view of the findings on behalf of NCASP.

There have been 3 rapid reviews this year and no LCSPRs initiated during this reporting period. Ongoing work and actions have continued in relation to previous reviews.

- There have been 2 rapid reviews undertaken relating to suspected child suicide although neither met the criteria for a formal LCSPR, one of these involved a child placed out of the area.
- The SPRG undertook a learning review during this year where neglect featured, and the action plan is currently being monitored.
- A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) undertaken this year was asked to consider any learning relating to a child which will be included as an appendix report.

Background

The aim of the annual report is to outline:

- Evidence of the impact of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work, including outcomes for children and families, from early help to looked-after children and care leavers.
- An analysis of areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.
- Evidence of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the reporting period, or planned to be taken, to implement the recommendations of local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including resulting improvements.
- Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.
- A review of the use of restraint in Northumberland's secure children's home.

The data and analysis presented in this report demonstrates that the partnership has met its statutory duties and agencies have delivered safe and effective frontline services that strive to safeguard children and young people. There is evidence of improvements and effective partnership working despite the context of increasing pressures and risks from the pandemic and the subsequent economic environment that may negatively impact on children's health and well-being going forward.

Implications

Policy	The Annual Report 2021-22 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.
Legal	The Annual Report 2021-22 evidences how NCASP arrangements meet the statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report demonstrating how partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people. In accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.
Procurement	No direct implications.
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 type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	This is an information report so does not require an EIA. Referral 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 NCASP as are the Safer Northumberland Partnership, 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 Consideration	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
Health and Wellbeing	Promoting the safety, welfare, health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people is the primary function of the NCASP and its work.
Wards	All

Background Papers

Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) Annual Report 2021-22

Report Sign Off

Paula Mead NCASP (formerly NSSP) Safeguarding Scrutiny and Assurance Chair

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson obo Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Directors	Graham Reiter & Audrey Kingham
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

Author and Contact Details

Name: Paula Mead
 Job Title: NCASP Independent Safeguarding Scrutiny and Assurance Chair
 Email: Paula.mead@northumberland.gov.uk