



Northumberland

County Council

COMMITTEE: Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 3 February 2022

Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020-21: Safeguarding Children in Northumberland

Report of Paula Mead, NSSP Independent Chair and Scrutineer

Cabinet Member: Guy Renner-Thompson

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the work by the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership 2020-21.

Recommendations

Members to note the content of the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) Annual Report 2020-21.

Link to Corporate Plan

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.

Key Issues:

1. The Annual Report describes the work undertaken between September 2020 and August 2021 of the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP). It evaluates the impact of partner's strategic decision-making and the subsequent outcomes on operational safeguarding activity during the year. It looks forward; outlining future plans and makes recommendations for improvement.
2. The report describes achievements and progress, as well as challenges, for the NSSP during the year.
3. The NSSP collates the findings and analyses the learning from local safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs). During this period there have been 2 LCSPRs, 3 learning reviews and 4 rapid reviews. Two joint child/adult reviews, undertaken in the previous reporting period, were published this year.
4. The safeguarding partners reviewed the strategic priorities last year; new priorities were developed with work on previous priorities embedded as business as usual.
5. Priorities focus on children and young people's mental health, suicide and self-harm; the impact of domestic abuse on children, including child to parent violence and abuse (CPVA); safeguarding children under 1 year old (the most vulnerable age-group) and we continue work with Neglect which remains a stubborn cause for concern in the county.
6. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is exacerbating the challenges of day-to-day life for many people in Northumberland and is therefore a focus within all our priorities and

work. It is within this environment that the NSSP provides leadership, oversight and quality assurance of safeguarding activity.

7. Overall, there is evidence of progress, with good engagement and partnership working adding value on the front-line, within an integrated children and adult Multi Agency Safeguarding (Hub- MASH).
8. Agencies are engaging with children and young people, although there is more work needed to build their lived experience into practice.
9. Partners need to continue to evaluate which interventions work and adds value through multi-agency audits, shared intelligence, deep-dives and evidence-based, reflective practice.

Background

This report covers the second year of the Northumberland Safeguarding Strategic Partnership (NSSP) arrangements which began on 5th August 2019, replacing the local safeguarding children board (LSCB). This change was required by legislation in line with the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

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 NSSP has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which analyses and assesses how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people. 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.

Implications

Policy	The Annual Report 2020-21 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 2020-21 evidences how NSSP 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).
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 checked="" 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 NSSP as are 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 NSSP and its work.
Wards	All

Background papers:

Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) Final Annual Report 2020-21

Report sign off.

Paula Mead NSSP Independent Chair and Scrutineer

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