



North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

New Governance Arrangements for Safeguarding Children in North Somerset

Authored By:

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the new governance arrangements in North Somerset which replace the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB) in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018).

1.2 The partnership is known as the 'North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership'.

1.3 The three lead safeguarding partners are as follows:

- Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- North Somerset Council

1.4 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership builds on a long history of partnership working in North Somerset in order to promote the welfare of all North Somerset children and to ensure that they are effectively safeguarded.

2. Background

2.1 The Wood Review: this review of the role and functions of LSCB's was published in March 2016, and concluded that existing arrangements were not fit for purpose and recommended that they should cease.

2.2 Key recommendations from the Wood Review have been incorporated into the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Act states that the three statutory safeguarding partners are jointly accountable, extending this accountability for arrangements beyond that of the Local Authority. The Act was passed in April 2017, and in July 2018, the Government published the relevant guidance, making it explicit that new arrangements for children must be published by 29th June 2019 and implemented by September 2019.

3. Geographical area

3.1 The new arrangements apply to the area defined by the North Somerset Council local authority boundary.

4. Leadership arrangements

4.1 The Executive for the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership is comprised of the three key safeguarding partners, as detailed above. They work in partnership to fulfil their statutory duties as set out in the 'Children and Social Work Act' (2017) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). Sections 16-23 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) set out a duty on the three key partners to make arrangements with other relevant partners to work together to protect and safeguard children in the local area, and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018), stipulates the 'shared and equal duty' of partners 'to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area'.

4.2 The Executive holds responsibility for wider duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of 'The Children Act' (2004). It will also ensure that duties placed on local authorities under Section 10 of 'The Children Act' (2004) to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate, are carried out.

4.3 At an Executive level, the three safeguarding partners will:

- Provide leadership for safeguarding children within the representing agency/sector.
- Have oversight and offer challenge to an agreed data set reflecting the safeguarding performance of North Somerset.
- Ensure that the allocated agency resources, financial and 'in kind', are utilised to meet the partnership's objectives.
- Take ownership of the strategic plan, budget, annual report and risk register.

4.4 Accountability for safeguarding children lies with the Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the Chief Executive, North Somerset Council, and the Chief Accountable Officer, BNSSG Clinical Commissioning Group. All parties have delegated their responsibility to the following three named safeguarding partners:

- Jan Baptiste-Grant , Interim Director of Nursing, BNSSG CCG
- Sheila Smith, Director of People & Communities, North Somerset Council
- Area Commander Leanne Pook, Avon & Somerset Constabulary

4.5 The Executive will engage with relevant agencies through the North Somerset Communications Sub-Group which will have a focus on themed learning, as priorities and areas for development arise across the partnership. This group will

be one of a range of methods for relevant agencies to engage with the safeguarding arrangements which include, but are not limited to, opportunities for digital engagement, safeguarding children bulletins, and scrutiny activity. There will be close engagement with regional communications groups.

5. Vision & Principles

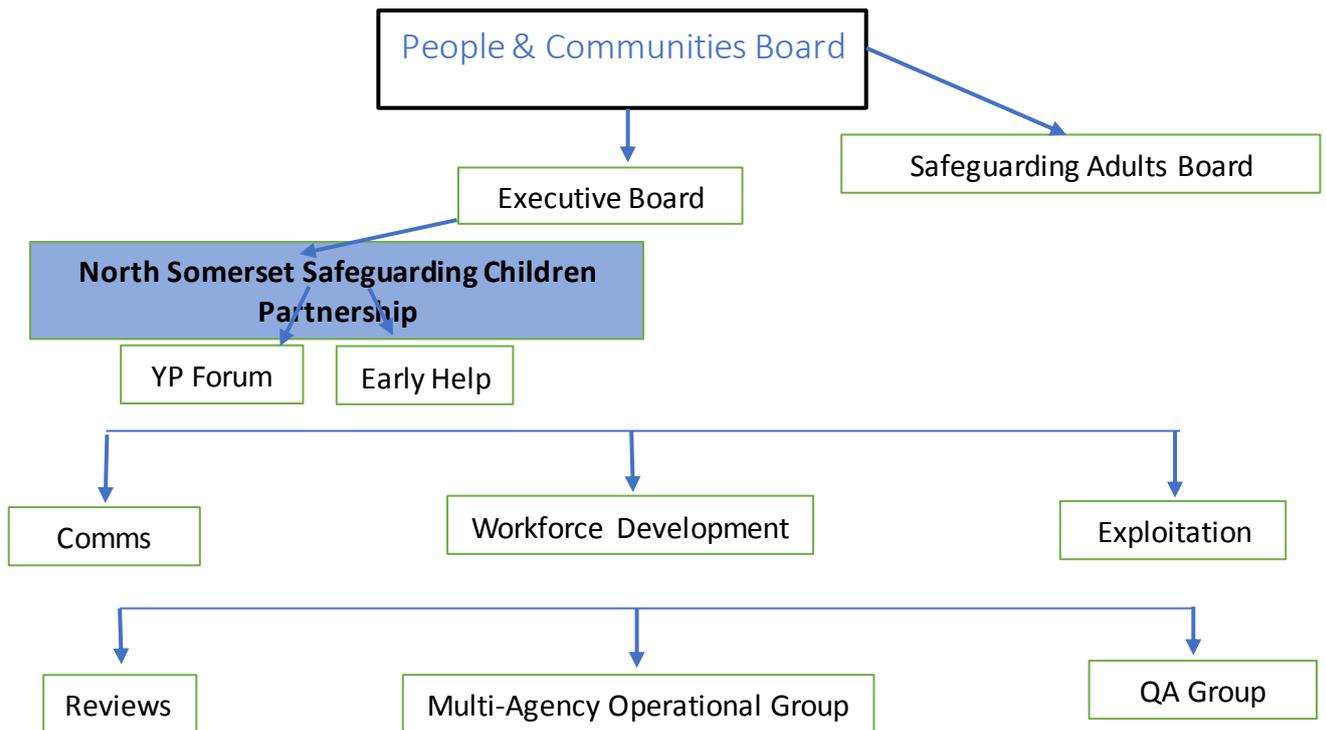
5.1 The proposed model has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including Avon & Somerset Police, Avon Fire & Rescue, North Somerset Council, CCG and the National Probation Service. All partners involved in the LSCB and children's services were invited to consult on this model.

5.2 A number of principles are agreed:

- The voice of children, young people and families will be heard and responded to in a meaningful way;
- Being cognisant of arrangements in neighbouring areas and ensuring links are maintained to promote the safety of child and families who move between new safeguarding arrangements and LA areas. This is especially important in areas such as county lines and exploitation;
- The need to work more effectively and efficiently and ensure that resources are used to their optimum to promote the safety and well-being of children and families in North Somerset.

6. Proposed New Governance Arrangement

6.1 Following consultation with core partners it was agreed the new safeguarding arrangements would be called the 'North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership'. The governance structure for the proposed new arrangement has been developed by a working group and approved by members:



6.2 Executive Group:

This will be a small, strategic group comprising of the three core safeguarding partners. This group will provide the overall strategic direction for the development of services for children and young people and will fulfil the statutory functions. This includes agreeing ways to coordinate safeguarding services, provide strategic leadership in supporting and engaging others, and implementing local and national learning from child safeguarding practice review, learning reviews, and rapid reviews. The group will determine and review annual priorities. They will develop, implement and monitor an annual business plan against these priorities and will provide direction to the local and regional sub-groups to ensure delivery of the plan. They will ensure an annual report is published on the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership' website and ensure that there are effective scrutiny arrangements across the partnership.

The decision makers will be the three key partners, with delegated powers, and will meet twice a year, reporting to the North Somerset People & Communities Board on an annual basis, and by exception.

6.3 Task and Finish Groups:

As detailed above, sub-groups will be supported through the formation of short life task and finish groups, in order to tackle specific issues identified by the Executive Group or any of the sub-groups, or to take forward specific pieces of

work. Such groups will be introduced when the need arises and allows for a more flexible and agile system.

6.4 Sub-Groups:

Each sub-group will be responsible for the following:

- Development of communication materials in line with the Communication Plan;
- Ensuring the actions within the Strategic Plan and Board Assurance Framework are delivered;
- Monitoring effectiveness;
- Consideration of any training and development needs;
- Delivering statutory frameworks;
- Ensuring that the voice of the child and young person is listened to;
- Being aware and abreast of national and regional networks and activities that will influence local arrangements;
- Ensuring evidence-led approaches are implemented.

7. Relevant agencies

7.1 Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies with a duty under Section 11 of 'The Children Act' (2004) to ensure 'their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'. They are also the organisations whose involvement the core partners consider are essential to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). Relevant agencies also include those services commissioned by partners to provide services to children, young people and families

These organisations have been selected as relevant agencies given the key strategic and operational insight they provide to the work of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Weston Area Health Trust
Avon and Wiltshire Partnership (mental health trust)
North Somerset Community Partnership
Named and Designated Professionals for Safeguarding Children
National Probation Service
Community Rehabilitation Company
CAFCASS
Social Housing Providers
Primary, secondary and special schools

Further education and alternative education providers
Early years providers
Youth Offending Team
Locally commissioned services provided by independent and community sectors
Voluntary Sector

7.2 Regional and national organisations which also constitute relevant agencies:

South West Ambulance Trust
Avon Fire and Rescue
Faith organisations
Independent fostering agencies
Social housing providers
British Transport Police
NHS England

In line with statutory guidance, the three key safeguarding partners note the option to co-opt representatives from other agencies/organisations as the partnership develops or the need arises from particular areas of partnership work. The list of locally selected relevant agencies may therefore change over time to reflect those present in the local area, and other opportunities explored to strengthen the partnership.

7.3 Engagement of schools and educational settings: Schools and educational settings, including early years (Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006), are vital safeguarding partners. The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership builds on the existing strong relationships with schools, college and early years settings. We need to ensure that we retain the focus of how educational settings contribute to making the voices of children and young people heard within an educational safeguarding context.

7.4 Engagement of health: The existing strong relationships with health partners are reinforced through the BNSSG safeguarding professionals' forum. This forum supports both the adult and child safeguarding agenda and promotes learning between health providers. There is also a Link GP forum for the safeguarding links in each GP practice across North Somerset.

7.5 Responsibilities of relevant agencies: Section 11 of 'The Children Act' (2004) places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to 'ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'. Partners with

responsibilities under Section 11 are expected to ensure that their responsibilities are executed within their agency.

7.6 At the level of sub-group delivery activity, relevant agencies and wider partners are expected to:

- Ensure appropriate seniority of representation, attendance and commitment to the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership sub-groups.
- Share the responsibility of ensuring that the Business Plan and North Somerset strategic plan are delivered.
- Ensure that policies are in place which are compliant with partnership arrangements to safeguard children and young people.
- Promote the voice of the child to inform North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.
- Attend and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding children training.
- Act as a channel of communication for proactive dissemination of information and learning within agency/sector (and beyond as appropriate).
- Ensure, as part of the Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, that single and multi-agency action plans are implemented in a timely manner.
- Make arrangements for financial or 'in-kind' contributions to the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Provide professional challenge and act as critical friends, as appropriate.

8. Wider partnership engagement

8.1 Organisations and agencies who are not named in the relevant agency regulations, whilst not under a statutory duty, should nevertheless cooperate and collaborate with the safeguarding partners, particularly as they may have duties under Section 10 and/or Section 11 of 'The Children Act' (2004).

These include, but are not limited to:

Children's residential homes including private providers
Community services
Sports clubs and organisations

8.2 Engagement of residential homes: All residential homes for children within North Somerset are deemed to be relevant agencies by the safeguarding partners. There are mechanisms in place to engage residential homes, for example through the Section 11 audit process.

8.3 Engagement of youth custody establishments: There are no youth custody establishments within North Somerset's boundaries. However, youth custody establishments exist within the Avon and Somerset Constabulary boundaries. The three key safeguarding partners will seek assurance from other safeguarding partnerships within the region to ensure that measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are robust.

8.4 Community and lay members will be co-opted as required and have a role to play in the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and to provide professional challenge where appropriate.

8.5 The Communications Sub-Group is a key part of local arrangements in North Somerset to engage and connect all partners across the workforce. Through this group, partners across the wider workforce will be invited to:

- Attend themed events to strengthen the partnership and proactively disseminate learning across agency and sector.
- Promote the voice of the child to inform local safeguarding children arrangements.

9. Involvement of children and young people

9.1 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership will make use of existing structures to ensure that the voices of children, young people and families are heard. These include:

- Children's Champions Group
- Children in Care Council
- Care Leavers Forum
- Children and Young People's Participation Officer, North Somerset Council
- Bright Spots Survey

9.2 The partnership will explore other opportunities to engage with the wider children and young people's population in North Somerset. Young people will be invited to join task and finish groups with the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements as appropriate.

10. Scrutiny arrangements

10.1 Independent Scrutiny - Arrangements are being developed to secure sufficient challenge and independence in the new safeguarding partnership with a

regional independent scrutiny coordinator identified. This person will be accountable to the strategic leads appointed by the core partners and will provide scrutiny, challenge and seek assurance from partners on the effectiveness of the children's safeguarding arrangements across Avon & Somerset. The arrangements will be assessed on how effectively they are working for children, young people and families, as well as practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partnership is providing strong and effective leadership. There will also be a regional working group which will be put in place in order to:

- Ensure that the independent scrutiny arrangements meet expected requirements and stand up to assurance tests;
- Ensure compatibility of processes across the region;
- Develop standards for the regional approach which are effective in holding each area to account.

11. Reporting

11.1 Across the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, there are a range of reporting mechanisms which are used to assess the effectiveness of services provided to children and families. The partnership's Quality and Assurance function will be responsible for analysing multi-agency safeguarding performance data and intelligence to inform the Executive of risks and trends, and to oversee action.

11.2 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership has an established Quality Assurance Framework which has been adopted by the new regional partnership and will be developed further as the new safeguarding children arrangements mature.

12. Resourcing

12.1 Funding will be reviewed by the core partners in line with the regional resource workstreams.

13. The role of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Support Unit

13.1 The three safeguarding partners will jointly fund a Business Unit Manager, hosted by North Somerset Council. Any/all roles and functions will be

consistent with delivering the priorities of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, in a manner consistent with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018).

14. Regional co-operation

14.1 Avon & Somerset Constabulary coordinated a number of meetings, during an 18-month period leading up to June 2019, working with statutory partners across the Avon & Somerset geographical footprint, in order to develop new safeguarding arrangements for children. Options for these arrangements were submitted to the Avon & Somerset Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (ASSSP) and as a result, seven regional work-streams were agreed:

- Resources
- Learning & Practice Development
- Scrutiny
- Communications and Engagement
- Quality & Standards
- Contextual/Complex Safeguarding
- Data and Performance Management

Work to develop the Terms of Reference and Frameworks for these work-streams has been agreed, and is being progressed throughout 2019/2020.

It has been agreed that the three core safeguarding partners retain responsibility and accountability for safeguarding children and young people in North Somerset. The ASSSP have agreed to regularly review these new arrangements and regional workstreams.

15. Annual report

15.1 The Executive will produce an annual report on safeguarding arrangements in North Somerset, as specified in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). The report will be available on the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website. The report will be submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care within seven days of being published, having been subject to independent scrutiny, as specified in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018).

15.2 The report will be submitted to the People & Communities Board.

16. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- 16.1 The Review Sub-Group of North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership will identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area and commission and oversee a review of those cases where they consider it appropriate to do so. All agencies will have their own formal notification process for serious incidents. The Local Authority have specific areas that will trigger a notification to the National Panel but any agency can raise a concern or a case for consideration of a Safeguarding Practice Review. North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership will consider the potential for oversight from independent scrutiny on a case-by-case basis.
- 16.2 Any organisation within statutory or official duties in relation to children (including all members of the partnership) informs the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Manager of any incident which they think should be considered as a notifiable incident and should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review.
- 16.3 The definition of a serious child safeguarding case is that in which:
- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and
 - the child has died or has been seriously harmed.
- 16.4 Notification of incidents: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) places a duty on local authorities to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if a serious child safeguarding incident has occurred. They must do this within five working days of becoming aware that the incident has occurred using the approved on-line process. They must also report the event to the safeguarding partners within five working days.
- 16.5 Rapid Review: The Business Manager will arrange for a Rapid Review to be undertaken and completed for all cases agreed to be a notifiable incident. The Rapid Review will be undertaken and completed within 15 working days of notification.
- 16.6 When considering whether to commission a child safeguarding practice review the core partners will have regard to the definition of a serious child safeguarding case (see earlier) and the following criteria:
- Whether the case:
- highlights or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified.
 - highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children.

- highlights or may highlight concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - is one which the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have considered and concluded a local review may be more appropriate.
- 16.7 Where there are differences of opinion, from the core partners, on whether the criteria for a review have been met, the views of an Independent Scrutineer will be sought with further recourse to the National Panel to seek a resolution if required.
- 16.8 The three core partners may consider that a child safeguarding practice review is appropriate for circumstances that do not meet the definition of a 'serious child safeguarding case' but nevertheless might reveal learning for the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 16.9 The response of the National Panel to the Rapid Review will be reported back to the three core partners. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews will be undertaken in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018).
- 16.10 Reviews will be completed and published within six months unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as ongoing criminal proceedings. Publication of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or information about the improvements that should be made will be published on the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.
- 16.11 The partnership is committed to embedding learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews through the Learning and Improvement function.

17. Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

- 17.1 The Child Death Notification, Investigation and Review processes fall outside the new safeguarding arrangements. There is a clear plan for publishing the new CDOP arrangements for the West of England which cover the North Somerset local authority area. The core partners are the local CCG's and Local Authorities, supported by Avon and Somerset Police. The CDOP will produce an annual report which will be published on the BNSSG CCG website with an active dissemination process in place for system wide learning.

18. Learning and staff development

- 18.1 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership is fully committed to multi-agency workforce development and seeks a range of ways to deliver key safeguarding children messages and to test how the learning has been implemented in practice. Activity includes face-to-face training, multi-agency practitioner information groups, safeguarding children conversations using an

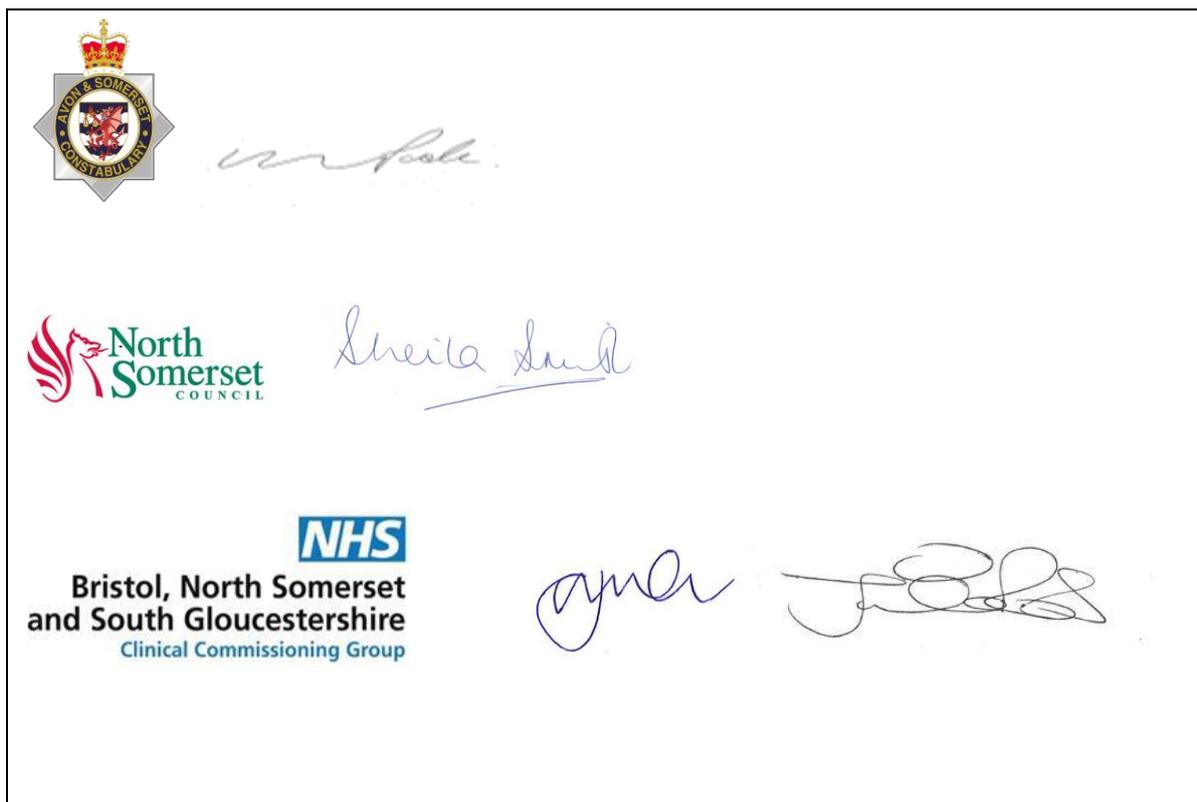
appreciative inquiry model, and single agency training. Evaluation takes the form of formal agency feedback processes, multi-agency audits, and case reviews.

19 Effective Support for Families in North Somerset

19.1 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership has adopted the threshold document formerly used by the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

20. Resolving professional differences

20.1 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership has adopted the policy for Resolving Professional Differences for dispute resolution formerly used by the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board and recently refreshed.



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