

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	14/11/2024
REPORT OF	Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children's Services
SUBJECT	Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Safeguarding children is a key element of the Council plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) have and continue to review and refresh the Local Arrangements, and to further develop the infrastructure which is intended to lead to enhanced practice across the whole system in relation to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children.

The SCP Annual Report 2023/24 fulfils our statutory responsibility to publish a report once in every twelve-month period and sets out what we have done as a result of our Local Arrangements, including rapid reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. The report was published at the end of September 2024 and submitted to the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel as required by Working Together 2023.

The SCP Annual Report 2023/24 sets out the key developments, successes, decisions taken by the three Delegated Safeguarding Partners, the impact and learning from safeguarding reviews, and progress against the SCPB priorities in the reporting period.

Over the last year we have responded positively to new policy directions and guidance, including but not exhaustive, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Review of Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs in Residential Settings, the National Panels' Review of Bruising to Non-Mobile Babies, Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

This report seeks to update scrutiny panel members on what we have done as a result of our Local Arrangements, including learning from rapid reviews or child safeguarding practice reviews and the effectiveness of the arrangements and impact on practice. The SCP Annual Report 2023/24 evidences the impact of the work, including training, on outcomes for children, young people and families from early help to children in our care and care leavers and how national reforms are being implemented.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 There has been significant developments in the reporting period, and specifically in quarter 4, to review, refresh and further develop and embed the North East Lincolnshire SCP Local Arrangements.
- 1.2 We have rationalised and refined our governance and reporting arrangements to enable us to better respond to need, including prioritising the most in need, and to help, support and protect children, young people and families. The number of SCP subgroups have been reduced greatly, ensuring more focus, and strategic oversight has been further strengthened
- 1.3 The Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Young People in North East Lincolnshire threshold document was refreshed and relaunched, fully informed by the Children's Social Care National Framework 2023 and the requirements of Working Together 2023. It clearly sets out the levels of need (thresholds) in the context of our system for early help, support and protection and fulfils the safeguarding partners' responsibility to publish a threshold document
- 1.4 We have ensured that learning from assurance activity, including rapid reviews, has informed practice across the partnership, through embedding action plans, disseminating learning and in ensuring partner agencies recognise their responsibilities
- 1.5 We have continued to support and develop our workforce in respect of education and training, including but not exhaustive, the delivery of neglect training by Jane Wiffin a national expert in neglect. 1271 practitioners attended SCP themed safeguarding training over the last year
- 1.6 The Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was reviewed and further strengthened to better reflect the new arrangements. Three independent scrutiny officers have been recruited to, who represent the three safeguarding partner organisations, and they have commenced scrutiny activity aligned to the SCP priorities, in order to provide assurance and help to further develop practice.
- 1.7 The Section 11 audit provided assurance that partner agencies have clear safeguarding processes in place. There was good evidence of how feedback from children had informed service provision across the partnership. The Safeguarding in Education Audit provided assurance schools were compliant with most safeguarding criteria (for those that submitted audits as part of the process). Where schools did not submit a return, there are plans for schools Trust audits to be submitted to the SCPB for assurance
- 1.8 Working collaboratively across the partnership, the SCP Performance Analysis Report has been significantly developed, and now better aligns to the four SCP priorities. It helps to support the SCP Board to better understand the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and enables board members to challenge and support developments across the system

- 1.9 Progress has been made against the SCP priorities including child sexual abuse, neglect and early help. All three priorities have an identified strategic lead from across the partnership who are responsible for chairing the strategic delivery groups and driving the associated strategic delivery plans and reporting to the SCP Board on progress and exceptions. The Neglect and Child Sexual Abuse strategies were launched alongside the Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Young People in North East Lincolnshire threshold document in June 2023 (and the Early Help Strategy subsequently approved by the SCP Board in September 2024 and pending a launch in December 2024)
- 1.10 It has been agreed that the three priorities for 2023/24 remain the priorities for 2024/25, with the addition of a fourth priority in relation to child exploitation. It is of note that Child Exploitation Strategic Group has been established as part of the revised governance arrangements and a Child Exploitation Strategy and associated strategic delivery plan were also approved by the SCP Board in September 2024 and is pending a launch in December 2024).

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Risks and opportunities are identified through the SCP governance arrangements, measures put in place to manage them, and exceptions reported to the SCP Board. Any identified risks are aligned to the NEL Council Risk Register.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The SCP publish a quarterly newsletter which provides detail of subgroup activity, practice developments and learning from audit and safeguarding reviews. Regular communications are sent out to all agencies across the partnership in respect of both local and national policy updates and the meaning for practice.
- 3.2 The SCP have a website as part of SAFER NEL website, which enables key communications including, learning from practice, safeguarding policies and procedures and the local safeguarding education and learning arrangements. The SCP also have access to dedicated communication officer capacity linked to Children's Services.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Safeguarding partners have a shared ownership of funding responsibilities and have agreed equitable and proportionate contributions to ensure the implementation of the Local Arrangements. These consist of actual funding and in-kind resources, for example representatives from safeguarding partner organisations contribute to the development and delivery of the Education and Training programme.
- 4.2 In addition, each of the safeguarding partners have identified relevant system leaders from their organisations to chair the NEL SCP sub groups, in order to deliver and embed the Local Arrangements, the key areas of focus, associated strategies and delivery plans.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Priority areas of focus for 2024/25 have been identified through performance analysis, local practice, learning from local reviews including the Childs lived experience and experience of practitioners and on national research.
- 5.2 The priority areas for focus for 2024/25 are outlined within the Local Arrangements 2024/25. The key focus is on embedding the four SCP priority strategies and associated delivery plans (Neglect, Child Sexual Abuse, Early Help and Child Exploitation). This involves ensuring multi agency arrangements and practice in these areas are effective, that training is in place and effective and assessing the impact on practice and children's outcomes, through scrutiny and assurance arrangements.
- 5.3 In addition to the SCP priorities, the Local Arrangements are underpinned by a delivery plan related to key functions, actions from policy drivers and recommendations from independent scrutiny. Areas of focus include:
- Implementation of the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework
 - Further development of the SCP Performance Framework
 - Review and refresh the SCP Education and Training Programme
 - Further develop ways in which partners seek and use feedback from children and families in influencing decision making

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No Impact

7. MONITORING COMMENTS

- 7.1 In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

8. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 All Wards impacted

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 [North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2023/24](#)

10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Delegated Safeguarding Partners

- Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children's Services, North East Lincolnshire Council
- Helen Davis, Place Nurse Director, North and North East Lincolnshire Health

and Care Partnership

- Paul French, Temporary Chief Superintendent, Humberside Police