



## **Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board**

### **Business Plan – 2015–2017**

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Reviewed ESG	19.02.2015
Reviewed NSCB	24.03.2015
Version 2	<p>Reviewed: Suzanne Binley – See pages 19-23 for activity review.</p> <p>Note: Data will be reviewed at the end of the financial year 2015/16.</p>
Reviewed ESG	19.11.2015

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Statutory objectives and functions of LSCB's	
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Governance and structure of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board	
2.2 Resourcing Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board	
2.2.1 Current Partner Contributions	
2.2.2 Budget Expectation for 15/16 and 16/17	
<b>3. Priorities for Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board 2015-17</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Northamptonshire and its Safeguarding Profile	
3.1.1 Local Demographics	
3.1.2 Referral and Caseloads within Social Care	
3.1.3 Safeguarding Children Caseloads	
3.2 The role and impact of the Safeguarding Board	
3.2.1 Self Assessment & readiness for inspection	
3.2.2 The role of the Chair	
3.2.3 The role of the Safeguarding Children Business Manager	
3.3 The Board's role in the effective delivery of the Northamptonshire Improvement Plan	
3.4 Effective Sub Groups Driving Improvement	
<b>4. Understanding and Driving the Impact of the Safeguarding Board</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Learning Improvement Framework	
4.2 Chair Challenge Log	
4.3 Progress Reports from Sub Group Chairs	
4.4 High Level Performance Dashboard	
4.5 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Board Full Scorecard	
4.6 Front Line Feedback	
<b>5. Improved Outcomes for Northamptonshire</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Activity Review – period to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015</b>	<b>19</b>

## **1.0 Introduction**

Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board has written this 2 year plan to describe its key priorities, resources and improvement actions that the Board will deliver on. The aim of the Board is to ensure NSCB partners work collaboratively to identify Children and Young People early who are at risk of harm, ensuring all services work effectively together to keep Children and Young People safe and reduce the risk of escalation into care. In doing so the significant failings identified in the 2013 Inspection will be addressed.

This Business Plan works alongside Northamptonshire's Improvement Plan (please see Appendix 1). Northamptonshire's Improvement Plan identifies actions for the Local Authority and its key partners in order to deliver a 'good' standard of services for Children in Northamptonshire.

Northamptonshire's Improvement Plan has three over arching objectives, these are:

- Ensuring Early Help and Early Intervention pathways are in place and focused on targeted support, reducing the escalation into Children's Social Care;
- Enabling investigation, assessment and planning which provide the best possible outcomes for children and their families and;
- Embedding support for children and families subject to a Child Protection Plan, 'Looked After' by the Local Authority, Fostered or Adopted.

Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board has agreed the following guiding principles in order to operate effectively:

### **1. Strategic**

- Taking a broader and longer view
- Thinking thematically
- Basing decisions on evidence and good data.

### **2. Communicative**

- Engaging with communities
- Listening to children and young people
- Listening to young families
- Informing the public
- Honesty with the media
- Listening to professionals
- Providing feedback.

### **3. Open**

- Constructively challenging each other
- Acting as "critical friends"
- Developing trust
- Being able to say things or ask questions without fear of ridicule
- Developing respect.

### **4. Focused**

- Acting non-bureaucratically
- Delivering change at pace and quality.

### **Quality Assuring**

- Monitoring progress
- Ambitious
- Learning from deficits and strengths.

## 5. Risk Managing

- Identifying potential risks
- Monitoring risks
- Taking corrective actions.

## 6. Resilient

- Being relentlessly attentive
- Keeping with core aims, not chopping and changing.

This business plan focuses **uniquely** upon the work and outcomes needed for Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board. The information below sets out the statutory objective and functions of a Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### 1.1 Statutory objectives and functions of LSCBs

An LSCB must be established for every local authority area. The LSCB has a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. The statutory objectives and functions of the LSCB are described in the two boxes below:

#### Statutory objectives and functions of LSCBs

**Section 14 of the Children Act 2004** sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:

- (a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

**Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006** sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are as follows:

- 1(a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
  - (i) the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
  - (ii) training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
  - (iii) recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
  - (iv) investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
  - (v) safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
  - (vi) cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;

- (b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- (c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- (d) participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and
- (e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

**1.2** In order to fulfil its statutory function a LSCB should use data and, as a minimum, should:

- assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
- assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations;
- quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**1.3.** LSCBs do not commission or deliver direct frontline services though they may provide training. While LSCBs do not have the power to direct other organisations they do have a role in making clear where improvement is needed. Each Board partner retains their own existing line of accountability for safeguarding.

## **2.0 Background**

An Annual Safeguarding Children Conference took place in October 2014. The event was attended by 76 professionals from statutory and voluntary and community sector agencies across Northamptonshire.

At this event the Northamptonshire's Annual Report of 2013/14 was presented, this identified a number of critical improvement areas following a detailed review of Northamptonshire's performance data. These were listed as the need for:

- **The full and committed engagement with the Board across all Sub Groups from partners with the right people around the table to take actions and deliver the change needed;**
- **Partners to appropriately engage with early help services to ensure the right children are provided with the right support at the right time;**
- **The use of intelligence and detailed assessments to drive improved outcomes for vulnerable children with a specific focus on the Corporate Parenting Board, Health and Well-Being Board and the overall commissioning of services;**
- **Review of the issue of Homelessness for children and young people;**
- **An examination of the safeguarding needs of children with disabilities; and**
- **Engaging with children and young people so that their views on safeguarding are understood and prioritised.**

Attendees at the event were asked to identify their key priorities for the Board. The contributions from this event have been used to develop the business plan priorities. These priorities are also detailed within the Sub Group plans.

The following were identified as other key areas for review from the Annual Event:

- **Domestic Abuse** – understanding the current service platform and development need to support families;
- **Understanding neglect in Northamptonshire** – how all partners identify and support children and families at the earliest opportunity;
- **Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children** – delivering a comprehensive Action Plan to safeguard children and young people at risk;
- **Quality Assurance** – reviewing the impact and efficacy of safeguarding services across the partnership, ensuring that the voices of children are central to service improvements and delivery; and
- **Communication** – raising the profile of the work of the Board and ensuring that all key stakeholders are able to engage with the Board and are informed of its work.

In response to the recent high profile of these issues and the proposed revisions to Working Together 2013, the following areas will also be reviewed:

- **Female Genital Mutilation** – reviewing the preventative work and support and access to help and services available to Children and Young People and targeted responses to safeguarding concerns; and
- **Radicalisation** – develop a plan to ensure the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism is effectively embedded in safeguarding practice and that professionals across the children's workforce are engaged and signposted.

## **2.1 Governance and Structure of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board**

Over the last 12 months a number of actions have taken place in order to refresh and strengthen the work of the Board. This has included the refresh and creation of a number of Sub Groups. These Sub Groups deliver the majority of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board's work. The table below illustrates the working structure of the Board and reflects solid engagement across key statutory agencies in this work. This meets the requirements of Working Together 2013:

Group/Board	Meeting Frequency	Chaired by/ Organisation	Comment
NSCB Full Board	Quarterly	LSCB Chair	Audits show that attendees meet all WT13 requirements.
NSCB Executive Support Group (ESG)	Monthly	LSCB Chair	Introduced to ensure that the Board improves and addresses the deficiencies found in Ofsted inspection of 2013.
Child Death Review Sub Group	Bi-Monthly	Michelle Dominic NHS	WT13 requirement.
Quality Assurance Sub Group	Monthly	Jane Bell Independent Consultant - Sept 2015	WT13 requirement.
Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Sub Group	Monthly	Alex Hopkins NCC (Sept 2015)	Formally introduced during 2014/15.
Learning and Development Sub Group	Bi-Monthly	Abigail Marsden NCC	WT13 requirement.
Policies and Procedures Sub Group	Quarterly	Sharon Muldoon NCC	WT13 requirement.
Serious Case Review Sub Group	Monthly	Palvinder Kudhail NCC	WT13 requirement.
Communications Sub Group	Bi Monthly	Richard Edmondson Police	-
Children and Young People's LSCB (North and South)	Meets termly	LSCB Chair	Formally introduced in 2014/15.

In addition to the above structures, the Chair of Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board has quarterly accountability meetings with the Chief Executive and Lead Member for Children's Services within Northamptonshire County Council. These meetings are used to ensure that the Board is effective in holding all partners to account in their safeguarding role.

The Chair of Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board is also a member of the Health and Well-being Board and the Improvement Board. This engagement ensures that all safeguarding priorities are understood and influences the commissioning of services.

## 2.2 Resourcing Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children's Board

The following table sets out the budget for the Board and the contributions made from each of its partners. The Chair has reviewed the budget and resource available to the Board and will be working with the partnership to ensure that the Board is appropriately resourced in order to deliver the work of the NSCB. Given the current agenda, it is likely that contributions will need to increase over the short term:

## 2.2.1 Current Partner Contributions 2014/15

Agency Name	Contribution
Cafcass	£ 550
Clinical Commissioning Groups	£ 86,998 (10% Corby, 90% Nene)
Connexions (now Horizons)	£ 3,222
District & Borough Councils	£ 15,466
Further Education Colleges	£ 1,031
Northamptonshire County Council	£ 86,998
Northamptonshire Police	£ 38,666
Probation	£ 2,578
Rainsbrook	£ 1,611
Schools Consultative Forums (DSG)	£ 86,998
St Andrews Healthcare	£ 4,124
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 328,242</b>

## 2.2.2 Budget Expectations for 2015/16 and 2016/17

The Safeguarding Children Board Manager will carry out an exercise to test whether the current structure of the IBO is sufficient for the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board and the developing priority areas. This review will determine whether there is a need to increase or restructure the roles within the Board and the Children's Early Help Partnership as the Integrated Business Office is currently supported by two separate funding streams.

## 3.0 Northamptonshire and its Safeguarding Profile

The following section identifies key demographic and performance information for Northamptonshire:

### 3.1 Local Demographics

Northamptonshire is a county of average size (based on population). The current population estimate is 706,647, of which approximately 173,973 of whom are children and young people aged 0-19 (25%), (Office for National Statistics, 2012 mid Year Estimates).

Northamptonshire has a predominantly white ethnic population with 83.2% of children aged 0-19 of White British ethnicity and 95.5% of children aged 3-14 whose first language is English (Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census). The county is a mix of urban and rural populations, with areas of affluence and areas of significant deprivation. 57 areas in Northamptonshire are among the most deprived in the country (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010).

#### 3.1.2 Referral and Caseloads within Social Care

During 2013/14 a total of 14,601 referrals were received. This was a 39% increase from the previous year. Analysis for data for 2014/15 shows an increase of a further 13%.



The following table provides information on referrals into Safeguarding Children's Services for the full year 2013/14

<b>Agency</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Police/Probation/Court/ Immigration	4907
Family member	1139
Education professional	2488
Primary Health	1840
Secondary Health	482
Other local authority	306
Anonymous	563
NCC Social Services Dept	283
Other NCC Department	239
Friend/neighbour	216
L.A. Housing Dept & Association	138
Other	2000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14601</b>

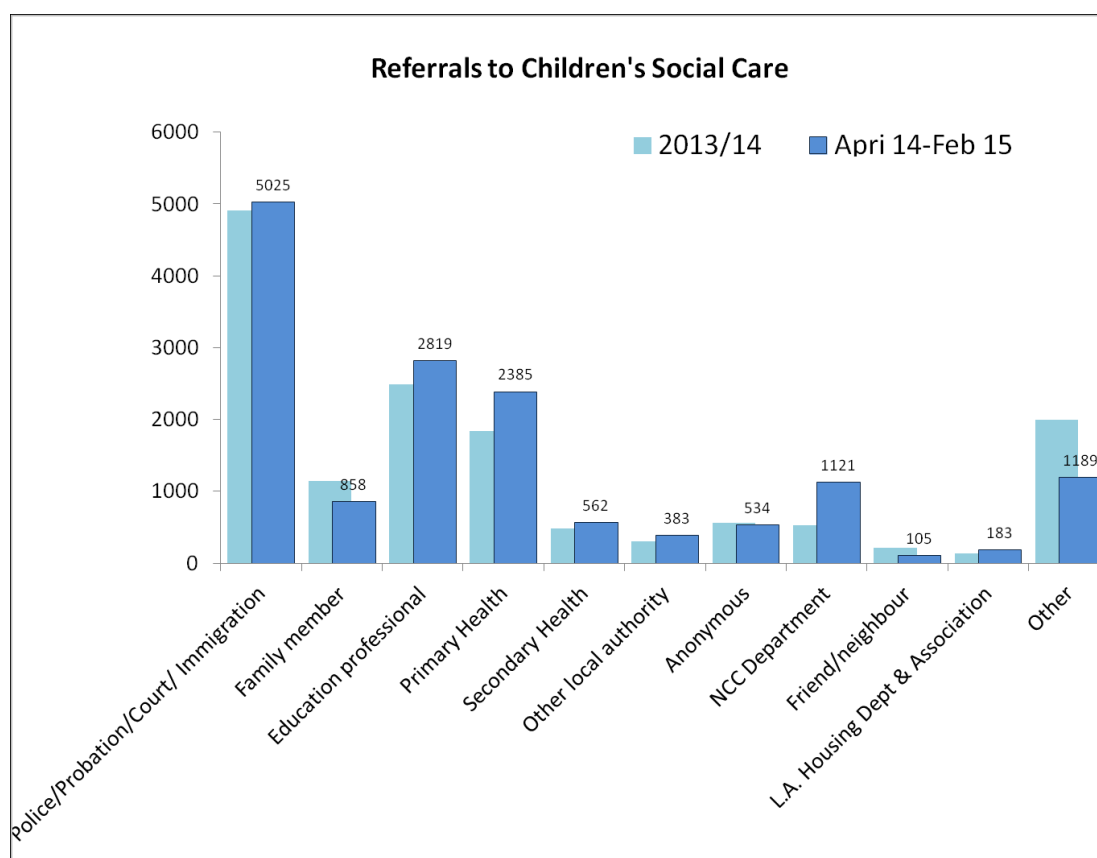
The following table shows the referrals into Safeguarding Children's from April 2014 to end February 2015.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>April 2014 – Feb 15</b>
Anonymous	534
Domestic Abuse Protocol	13
Education - Other (Children's Centre, Nursery)	397
Education – Schools	2422
Family member	858
Fire and Rescue	8
Friend/neighbour	105
Health Services - A&E	662
Health Services – GP	312
Health Services - Health Visitor	217
Health Services - Other Primary Health Services	1194
Health Services - Other Secondary Health Service	562
Housing (Borough Council or housing association)	183
LA Services - Other Local Authority	383

LA Services – NCC	1121
Other	943
Other Legal Agency (court, immigration, CAFCASS, Prison)	284
Police	4426
Probation	315
Self Assessment	128
Third Party	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>15164</b>

The following chart shows a comparison of referrals received in 2013/14 against 2014/15. Please note to allow for comparison, the following have been counted as one category:

- Police, Probation, Courts & Immigration;
- GPs, Health Visitor, other Primary Health as Primary Health; and
- Domestic Abuse, Fire and Rescue, Self Assessment and Third Party as Other.



**Comment:**

There is a continued increase of referrals to Social Care. Nationally, out of 149 authorities Northamptonshire's profile is placed in 16<sup>th</sup> position with regards to volume of referrals. The Safeguarding Children Board is committed in reducing the number of referrals into Social Care and increasing the number of early help referrals, thereby supporting families at the earliest point of need and reducing the escalation of risk.

All partners are expected to review and understand the referrals that they make into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub that **have not** met the social care threshold and will be held to account to:

- a) Reduce the number of referrals into social care where appropriate;
- b) Increase the number of referrals into the Early Help and Prevention Services where appropriate; and
- c) Play an active role in the management and support of cases held at Tier 2 and 3.

### 3.1.3 Safeguarding Children Caseload

The following table provides information on caseloads within Safeguarding Children Services as at end December 2014.

Area (per 10k)	December 2014	March 2014	Statistical Neighbour Comparison and comment
Child Protection	59.5	50.2	40.0
Children in Need	310.6	278.5	343.4
Looked After Children	60.5	52.0	54.0

#### Comment:

Northamptonshire continues to experience an increase in its social care caseload. Whilst this is not unusual in an authority under a DfE Improvement Direction, this increase needs to be fully understood. Strategies and services must be deployed across Northamptonshire to address this dynamic ensuring that families are supported at earliest point of need.

The recent Ofsted Progress Inspection (December 2014) tested Child Protection thresholds and found that they were being appropriately applied. The challenge to the partnership is to ensure that:

- Families are supported at the earliest point of need;
- The partnership understands and engages with services at Tiers 2 and 3 to prevent escalation of need;
- Edge of Care strategies are reviewed and best practice is deployed to prevent children and young people coming into care where appropriate; and
- The Sufficiency Strategy is revised to accommodate the additional demand within Looked After children services.

## 3.2 The Role and Impact of the Safeguarding Children Board

An effective Local Safeguarding Children Board relies on a number of roles and functions to work well. The following section highlights the key roles and methods used to hold agencies to account in Northamptonshire.

### 3.2.1 Self Assessment and readiness for inspection

The Board will monitor improvement of performance through on-going self assessment and stakeholder review. A self assessment framework, based on the inspection criteria for LSCBs used by Ofsted, will be developed into an Action Plan. The Board will measure activity against stronger performing LSCBs and seek to incorporate identified 'Best Practice' and evidence based systems and processes into operations.

Thorough, accurate and realistic self assessment has been identified as the common strength of inspected organisations.

### **3.2.2 The role of the Chair**

The Chair of the LSCB will hold all agencies to account and ensure that they are delivering their statutory function with regards to safeguarding Children and Young People. The Chair will improve Northamptonshire's safeguarding activity by:

- Engaging with Political leaders, senior executives of all statutory agencies and the Voluntary and Community sector to ensure that everyone is aware of their role in safeguarding;
- Strengthening relations and practicable support to schools and Head Teachers through information sharing, policies and procedures, tool kits, training and targeted communications;
- Testing the engagement, delivery and impact of the Early Help and Prevention strategy so that it supports families at the earliest point of need through effective partnership working. If necessary, to escalate issues to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board;
- Reviewing the impact of effective early intervention partnership working between Children Centres, Police, Health Visitors and the Voluntary and Community sector;
- The strategic use of detailed performance data and needs assessments to identify gaps for vulnerable groups and ensuring the delivery of services to address these gaps;
- Establishing robust links with Corporate Parenting Board particularly through the Leaving Care and Virtual School services;
- Improved links with Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that a 'whole family' approach is deployed where necessary; and
- Ensuring that all agencies are aware of their role in improving Children's Services in Northamptonshire.

### **3.2.3 The role of the Safeguarding Children Business Manager**

The Safeguarding Children Board Manager plays a pivotal role in the delivery of this Business Plan. Key responsibilities of the Manager are to:

- Ensure that all Sub Group Chairs and their supporting Project Officers are driving action plans to realise improvements;
- Deliver an effective communications strategy that promotes the work of the Board through targeted messages around safeguarding and the improvements required;
- Ensure solid analysis of the annual Section 11 Audit, highlighting key deficits and improvement areas for the partnership;
- Deliver an effective business support function to support the Annual Safeguarding Conference, Annual Report and associated assessments;
- Work closely with the Children's Early Help Partnership to ensure items for improvement and communication are delivered; and
- Regularly review support to the Board and its Sub Group structure with the aim to be streamlined and efficient; in particular, in its demands on partners around multiple reports to multi-forums.

### **3.3 The Board's role in supporting delivery of the Northamptonshire Improvement Plan**

The Board will play a key role in supporting the delivery of the Northamptonshire Phase 2 Improvement Plan and the partnership's vision that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This means that:

- All children are safe;
- All children achieve their best in education, are ready for work, and have skills for life;
- All children grow up healthy and have improved life chances; and
- The best possible outcomes for vulnerable children, especially those who are looked after.

Three priority areas have been identified for focus, each are of equal importance and all of these require actions across the partnership.

The priority areas are:

**Priority Area 1:** Ensuring that Early Help and Early Intervention Pathways are in place and focused on targeted support reducing escalation into children's social care.

**Priority Area 2:** Enabling investigation, assessment and planning which provides the best possible outcomes for children and their families.

**Priority Area 3:** Embedding support for children and families subject to a Child Protection Plan, Looked After by the Local Authority, Fostered or Adopted.

Improvement Plan Outcome	High Level tasks supported by the Board
Getting it right for children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Families understand how to complain and that each complaint is reviewed within timelines and given the appropriate attention.</li> </ul>
Providing confident leadership and management across Children's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance processes, outcomes of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and the performance management framework to drive performance across safeguarding.</li> <li>• All agencies to monitor quality of referrals on a monthly basis and hold to account organisations to address poor referrals.</li> <li>• All partners understand and are aware of the need to identify children who are privately fostered.</li> </ul>
Strengthening Partnerships to make a difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District &amp; Borough Councils fully engaged in focused activity to improve outcomes for children and young people.</li> <li>• The JSNA is used to inform future services across the partnership e.g., Health and Well-Being Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.</li> <li>• Review effectiveness of the partnership understanding and response to neglect.</li> <li>• All agencies to support families when they are being stepped down from social care.</li> <li>• An effective universal tool for Pre-Birth Early Intervention Risk Assessment in place.</li> <li>• All partners will support the needs of Looked After children, Children in Need and those in need of protection and act as 'team' around the child.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners are aware of their statutory duties to support Care Leavers and work for the best interests of the young person.</li> <li>• All Looked After children who go missing from care have a return to care interview within 72 hours.</li> </ul>
Putting in place effective front line practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out Making Children Safer events in all localities.</li> <li>• Focused events for agencies e.g. Schools, Early Years settings, Health Visitors, GPs, Police and Voluntary Sector agencies, District and Borough Councils.</li> <li>• A review of commissioned services to support families with needs around Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and Substance Misuse takes place. This will support neglect work across the partnership.</li> <li>• Chair to visit front line practitioners to ensure their views are heard and acted upon.</li> </ul>
Delivering a clear workforce strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure learning and development reflects the diverse needs of partners and makes the optimum use of available resource.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Effective Sub Groups Driving Improvement

Each of the identified Sub Groups has an Action Plan (see appendix 2 for individual Sub-Group action plans). The high level priorities for each of the groups are identified below. Every Sub Group has a Project Officer, the role of the Project Officer is to support the Chair and ensure that actions are delivered against in order to drive improvement.

Sub Group	High Level Priorities for 2015 to 2017
Child Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Professionals Meetings.</li> <li>• Meet all Child Death Review requirements.</li> <li>• Increase the proactive work undertaken within the group beyond the statutory CDOP processes.</li> <li>• The Child Death review Sub Group will proactively identify and highlight any issues which result from the detailed consideration of all child deaths in the county. The aim is to ensure there are effective multi agency processes to enable identified lessons to be learnt across the LSCB partnership.</li> </ul>
Serious Case Review (SCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communication and promotion of SCRs and other types of review and associated best practice.</li> <li>• Delivery of associated actions to ensure that corrective action and learning opportunities are identified to improve safeguarding structures.</li> </ul>
CSE and Missing Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery against the detailed Action Plan.</li> <li>• Delivery of an effective communications strategy ensuring that all partners and stakeholders are educated and aware of CSE and Missing within Northamptonshire.</li> <li>• Delivery of a detailed profile for CSE in Northamptonshire.</li> <li>• CSE training provided to all key roles across the partnership.</li> </ul>

Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and testing the impact of safeguarding services across a number of selected themed audits.</li> <li>• Ensuring that the quality assurance processes focus upon the child's needs.</li> <li>• Understanding neglect in Northamptonshire and how partners are engaging in Early Help Services to reduce the escalation of risk for children and young people.</li> <li>• Ensuring the full engagement of partners 'Team around the Family' is delivered in Northamptonshire.</li> <li>• Ensuring that there is the full engagement of partners, for the Section 11 audit process: detailed analysis takes place and holds partners to account for improvement.</li> <li>• Reviewing the efficacy of LADO arrangements.</li> <li>• To review the performance data and ensure key themes for concern or escalation are notified to the NSCB Chair.</li> <li>• To make any necessary amends to Policy &amp; Procedures, the Learning Improvement Framework and Learning and Development strategy following learning from case audits.</li> <li>• Review of LSCB escalation performance data.</li> </ul>
Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that all policies and procedures are reviewed within the necessary timescales.</li> <li>• To horizon scan for key policy and legislative changes; ensuring that the Board is compliant.</li> <li>• To ensure that effective Housing and Homelessness protocols and procedures are in place for young people.</li> <li>• To ensure that all Domestic Abuse protocols and strategies are in place and used across partners.</li> <li>• To ensure that joint working protocols and procedures between adults and children's services are developed and in place.</li> <li>• To raise the profile of Policies and Procedures manual and regularly evaluate its effectiveness.</li> </ul>
Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning and development strategy is approved and details a programme for Northamptonshire.</li> <li>• To deliver CSE training for key practitioners during 2015/16.</li> <li>• To review all single agency level 1&amp;2 'Introduction to Safeguarding' training delivered by NSCB partners.</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To raise the profile of the Northamptonshire Children Safeguarding Board to all stakeholders. Ensuring that its' purpose, impact is understood and stakeholders are able to engage.</li> <li>• To launch the new website and drive engagement through this site.</li> <li>• To improve NSCBs engagement with the Voluntary Sector to support safeguarding across formal and informal structures.</li> <li>• To raise the profile of NSCB to the BME communities in Northamptonshire.</li> <li>• To ensure that safeguarding issues are promoted to all communities.</li> <li>• The continued promotion of the escalation procedures so that all stakeholders know how to escalate concerns.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To raise the profile of private fostering to ensure all partners are aware and notify accordingly.</li> <li>• To raise the profile of LADO to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of this function.</li> </ul>
Young Peoples NSCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore the use of the Viewpoint tool to establish a voice from children and young people on key safeguarding issues.</li> <li>• To ensure the voice of the young people is heard when identifying the priorities of the NSCB.</li> <li>• That young people inform and influence NSCB priorities through formal and informal structures.</li> </ul>

#### **4.0 Understanding and Driving the Impact of the Safeguarding Children Board**

Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board has developed a series of mechanisms in order to understand the impact of its work, these are listed below. At all times the Chairs of all Safeguarding Children Board meetings and Sub Groups are expected to positively and constructively challenge progress and issues of concern.

##### **4.1 Learning Improvement Framework (LIF)**

A detailed LIF is in place for Northamptonshire and drives the work of the Board. The [LIF on the website](#) outlines this approach. This is reviewed on an annual basis by the Quality Assurance Sub Group.

##### **4.2 Chair's Challenge Log**

From time to time, the Chair may identify an issue that needs to be addressed either across the partnership or within an individual agency. All issues raised by the Chair are recorded and reviewed in order to ensure that the appropriate action has taken place in order to address the issue. This Challenge log is maintained by the NSCB Business Manager.

##### **4.3 Progress Reports from Sub Group Chairs**

On a Bi-monthly basis the Chairs of the Sub Groups report to the Executive Support Group. The Sub Group Chair is expected to provide factual, concise information on:

- Progress against NSCB Business Plan priorities;
- Improvement Plan links (progress against actions);
- Peer Review Action Plan Links (progress against actions);
- Learning & Improvement Framework links (progress and review);
- General Sub-Group Updates (including challenges made to the partnership / single agencies for improvement);
- Communication requirements (across partner agencies key areas to promote awareness); and
- Committee 'health' update (Terms of Reference, attendance issues etc.).

##### **4.4 High Level Performance Dashboard**

A performance dashboard is in place containing 42 indicators (see appendix 3). The indicators have been identified as being central to understanding safeguarding patterns and progress. The dashboard is reviewed at each NSCB Full Board and quarterly at the ESG.



#### **4.5 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board's Full Scorecard**

Alongside the dashboard there is a further detailed scorecard (see appendix 4.) This is reviewed at the Quality Assurance Sub Group and the ESG of the Board. Each partner is responsible for the timely reporting of the information with supportive narrative i.e. what is happening, what actions need to be taken in order to improve or address performance. Actions will then be reviewed within an appropriate timeline via detailed discussions through the Quality Assurance Sub Group.

#### **4.6 Front Line Feedback**

The Chair is committed to hearing from frontline staff in Children's Safeguarding. Over the next two years a number of mechanisms will be put into place to ensure that voices of children, young people and practitioners are heard. The Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board and NSCB structures will work together to secure this feedback through:

- The use of Viewpoint to establish views on safeguarding from children and young people in Northamptonshire;
- The use of survey monkey questionnaires to key roles e.g. Health Visitors, Social Workers, Voluntary and Community Sector;
- Small focused 'surgeries' to gain views from stakeholders in Northamptonshire;
- Chair visits to agency and area teams; and
- A review of complaints and compliments across agencies.

#### **5.0 Improved Outcomes for Northamptonshire**

Through the work identified above, Northamptonshire will experience improved safeguarding outcomes in the following areas:

- An increase of families being supported through Early Help services ensuring that neglect is identified and support is in place to address need;
- The increased use of CAF across all agencies the impact of which would be:
  - A holistic assessment;
  - Improved information sharing;
  - Timely and integrated responses;
  - A reduction of referrals and re-referrals into Safeguarding Children Services; and
  - Enhanced quality of referrals and compliance with thresholds and pathways.
- Improved engagement with children and young people informs service planning and future developments;
- Stakeholders know how to access and use the resources available from NSCB e.g. policies and procedures;
- Increased awareness and engagement with safeguarding issues within Northamptonshire, delivered by an effective communications strategy from NSCB;
- The delivery of a focused Learning and Development plan for key practitioner roles in Northamptonshire delivering an improvement in safeguarding practice;
- The full engagement of the Voluntary and Community Sector in safeguarding, including faith and BME communities;
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children profiles are understood and all services work together to reduce this risk and support those at risk;
- The partnership can evidence that practice is informed by solid research with the voice of the child being central to service provision;
- A robust Section 11 process that informs the partnership of key safeguarding issues with corrective actions that are implemented and reviewed;

- Vulnerable cohorts are supported through targeted services e.g. Children with Disabilities, domestic abuse, homelessness; and
- Serious Case Reviews are delivered on time and associated actions take place to drive further improvement across services in Northamptonshire.

## **Six Monthly Review – November 2015**

This review focuses on the activity undertaken and priorities for Northamptonshire's Safeguarding Children Board 2015-17 as detailed in section 3 above, for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015, namely:

1. The role and impact of the Safeguarding Board
2. Self Assessment and readiness for inspection
3. The role of the Chair
4. The role of the Business Manager
5. The Board's role
6. Effective Sub Groups

Due to the Safeguarding Children Board Manager being in post for a short period of time, points 4 and 5 will be reviewed during Q3 and Q4 (full financial year) to include updated analysis on referrals into Social Care, and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **1. The role and impact of the Safeguarding Board**

The Safeguarding Children Board was without a Business Manager for several months during 2015. A recruitment process during April and May resulted in a New Business Manager being appointed as of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

Terms of reference were reviewed by the Board in September 2015.

### **2. Self Assessment and Readiness for Inspection**

The Business Manager has reviewed the Self Assessment Action Plan and the first draft was presented to the Executive Support Group (ESG) on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015. A further review was undertaken and is due to be presented to ESG on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Whilst good progress has been made in all categories, the overall judgement remains at 'Requires Improvement'. In order to achieve a status of 'Good', there is additional work needed across all 16 categories, however, no categories have a RAG rating of red.

The 16 categories in the self assessment are:

- 1) The governance arrangements enable LSCB partners (including the Health & Well-being Board and the Children's Trust) to assess whether they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to help (including early help), protect and care for children and young people. The LSCB effectively prioritises according to local issues and demands and there is evidence of clear improvement priorities identified that are incorporated into a delivery plan to improve outcomes.
- 2) Regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of multi-agency practice to safeguard children identify where improvement is required in the quality of practice and services that children, young people and families receive. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of early help.
- 3) Partners hold each other to account for their contribution to the safety and protection of children and young people (including children and young people living in the area away from their home authority), facilitated by the Chair.
- 4) Safeguarding is a priority for all of the statutory LSCB members and this is demonstrable, such as through effective section 11 audits. All LSCB partners make a proportionate financial and resource contribution to the main LSCB and the audit and scrutiny activity of any Sub Groups.

- 5) The LSCB has a local learning and improvement framework with statutory partners. Opportunities for learning are effective and properly engage all partners. Serious case reviews are initiated where the criteria set out in statutory guidance are met and identify good practice to be disseminated and where practice can be improved. Serious case reviews are published.
- 6) The LSCB ensures that high-quality policies and procedures are in place (as required by Working Together to safeguard children) and that these policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness and impact and revised where improvements can be made. The LSCB monitors and understands the application of thresholds locally.
- 7) The LSCB understands the nature and extent of the local issues in relation to children missing and children at risk of sexual exploitation and oversees effective information sharing and a local strategy and action plan.
- 8) The LSCB uses case file audits including joint case audits to identify priorities that will improve multi-agency professional practice with children and families. The Chair raises challenges and works with the local authority and other LSCB partners where there are concerns that the improvements are not effective. Practitioners and managers working with families are able to be involved in practice audits, identifying strengths, areas for improvement and lessons to be learned. The experiences of children and young people are used as a measure of improvement.
- 9) The LSCB is an active and influential participant in informing and planning services for children, young people and families in the area and draws on its assessments of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice. It uses its scrutiny role and statutory powers to influence priority setting across other strategic partnerships such as the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 10) The LSCB ensures that sufficient, high quality multi-agency training is available and evaluates its effectiveness and impact on improving front-line practice and the experiences of children, young people, families and carers. All LSCB members support access to the training opportunities in their agencies.
- 11) The LSCB, through its annual report, provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It identifies areas of weakness and the causes of those weaknesses, and evaluates and, where necessary, challenges the action being taken. The report includes lessons from management reviews, serious case reviews and child deaths within the reporting period.
- 12) The LSCB effectively scrutinises the performance of custodial and detention facilities within the local authority area.
- 13) HMI Probation Thematic Inspection – An inspection of the work of Probation Trusts and Youth Offending Teams to protect children and young people.
- 14) Ofsted Thematic Inspection – ‘In the child’s time’: Professional responses to neglect.
- 15) Ofsted Protecting Disabled Children Thematic Inspection.
- 16) Ofsted CSE Thematic Inspection

Please see the NSCB Inspection Self Assessment Action Plan for a breakdown of the progress made.

### **3. The role of the Chair**

In order for the Chair to ensure partner agencies are delivering their statutory function to safeguard children and young people, he has undertaken a number of visits to key stakeholders during the course of the year, including:

- Meeting with Chief Executives of Districts and Boroughs
- Voluntary sector reps
- Making Children Safer events
- Health Visitors
- Residential Children’s Homes

- Children in Care Forum
- University of Northampton Early Help Project
- Schools events in Kettering, Northampton and Towcester
- Children's Centres
- Social work teams, Child Protection Charis and IROs
- Young People's NSCB
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Full Council

During meetings with key professionals the Chair reviews the impact of Early Help and Prevention and the safeguarding activity through robust discussion and challenge. Where activity of front-line practice is in question, the Chair will challenge in order to seek improvement. The following mechanisms are also in place to enable effective work of the Board:

- A log of the Chair's challenges is maintained and partners are held to account. This includes attendance and engagement at Sub Group and Board and other activity that undermines the work of the Safeguarding Children Board.
- Chairs the Executive Support Group and Board and again, challenges partners when necessary.
- Links have been made with the Corporate Parenting Board and the Chair meets with the Chair of the CPB to discuss progress and challenges.
- The Chair meets regularly with the Chair of the Adults Safeguarding Board and future activity includes a quarterly meeting with the Chair and respective Business Managers and a joint NSCB/NSAB workshop.
- Out of County placement review.

#### **4. The role of the Business Manager**

During the two months the Business Manager has been in post, the following activity to support the delivery of the Business Plan has been undertaken:

- Attended a number of Sub Group, ESG and Board meetings.
- Attended the multi-agency case audit review on neglect.
- Leading a Neglect Task & Finish Group.
- Visited Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- Reviewed and updated the Self Assessment in preparation for inspection.
- Reviewed and updated the Business Plan and Action Plan.
- Met regularly with the Chair and Assistant Director of Quality and Performance.
- Started to build key relationships with partner organisations including the NSAB Business, SQAS, and Early Help.
- Provided leadership and support to the Business Office team during a period of intense activity and at a time where the team are under-resourced (due to staff leaving/recruitment underway).
- Supports the IBO Project Officers and team to drive Action Plans to realise improvements.
- Ensured the Serious Case Review Consolidation Plan is being updated across the partnership.

- Section 11 - follow up activity with schools. Issued S11 to Early Years' settings.
- Commenced a recruitment process in-line with resourcing plans.
- Attended the Children in Care Forum and visited a number of residential Children's Homes.

## **5. The Board's Role**

In order to deliver Phase 2 of the Improvement Plan, the Board has played a key role in driving a number of key activities forward including:

- Nine Sub Groups in place to drive the priorities of the Business Plan forward.
- Sub Group Action Plans in place to ensure key activity is undertaken across the partnership.
- Bi-monthly Sub Group Chairs' reports presented to ESG.
- Budget is reviewed and contributions agreed by partners.
- Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in place and working effectively.
- Early Help Partnership launch.
- Early Help Assessment replaces CAF June 2015.
- Early Help Strategy 2015-2020 published September 2015.
- Making Children Safer events rolled out across the County with regular attendance by the Chair.
- Revised Sufficiency Strategy in place.
- A review of communication across the partnership. This has resulted in a re-launched and much improved website in March 2015 and the circulation of regular newsletters and e-bulletins to all partners.
- CSE conference in May with attendance from 600 delegates across the partnership.
- Data shows 4047 views of dedicated CSE web pages including 1815 toolkit hits and 696 views of the assessment (March – August 2015).
- Impact analysis undertaken on the CSE Conference – presented to ESG on 19.11.15.
- CSE communications campaign reached out to over 60,000 people via the targeted campaign on local radio.
- Publication of learning logs from serious case reviews and multi-agency case audits.
- Review of Section 11 activity.
- Learning and Improvement Framework has been in place since March 2014. The Framework is currently being reviewed and will be presented to ESG.
- Serious case reviews (SCR) are completed within timescales, i.e. ideally within 6 months.
- Actions from SCRs are now compiled in a consolidated plan and any actions addressed across the partnership.
- Schedule of multi-agency case audit reviews in place.
- Serious case reviews are published in agreement with the Chair.
- Training partners commissioned; Barnardo's for face to face training and Virtual College for e-learning.
- Analysis of training offer produced in June 2015.
- Review of policies and procedures. Currently 75 of 86 has been reviewed and refreshed.
- Escalation project review underway.
- Neglect strategy circulated in September 2015 with a Task & Finish Group assigned to ensure assessment of neglect is embedded in practice across the partnership.
- 2014/15 Annual Report produced.

- Annual Conference held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015. Local priorities include:
  - Child Sexual Exploitation
  - Domestic Abuse
  - Female Genital Mutilation
  - Radicalisation
  - Neglect
- Voice of the Child embedded in practice and evidenced by Improvement Board audits.
- Chair attendance at key strategic meetings including NSAB, HWBB and Full Council.
- NSCB Performance scorecard in place.
- Effective links in place with Youth Offending Service.
- Disabled Children report to ESG in April 2015 and a review of the Abuse of Disabled Children Policy.
- LADO annual report published.
- CSE work quality assured via peer review, HMIC inspection and case audits.
- Analysis on licensing undertaken in October 2015.
- Post CSE abuse pathways being developed and a commissioning process is being scoped.
- Excellent partner engagement for CSE and a key area of good practice.
- Voluntary and Community Sector links improving with contact made with Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN) .
- Private Fostering arrangements analysis and challenge undertaken with Schools.
- Housing Protocol drafted and being reviewed November 2015.

## **6. Effective Sub Groups**

There are nine Sub Groups in place. Each Sub Group is working effectively, with good participation and engagement at most. Each Sub Group has a working Action Log and Plan and the Integrated Business drives all actions forward.

Where engagement and participation is in question, this is challenged by the NSCB Chair.

## **Priorities for 2015/16 and beyond**

- Improved links with Districts and Boroughs on young people facing homelessness.
- Understand the migrant issue in Northamptonshire.
- Continue work already started on improved links with the voluntary and community sector including safeguarding in smaller community groups.
- Increased activity with the work being undertaken with Disabled children.
- Continue to improve on communication and reaching a wider audience.
- Launch of a Neglect Toolkit in early 2016.
- Improve the governance
- Improve working structures with the partnership and decrease working in silos.
- Improve process and methods for engaging with children and young people.
- Improve efficiency across the structure of the NSCB by reviewing the number of Sub Groups and activity.
- Continue to improve safeguarding for children and young people by increasing awareness of key issues, being active involved in work across the partnership and challenging practice where necessary.