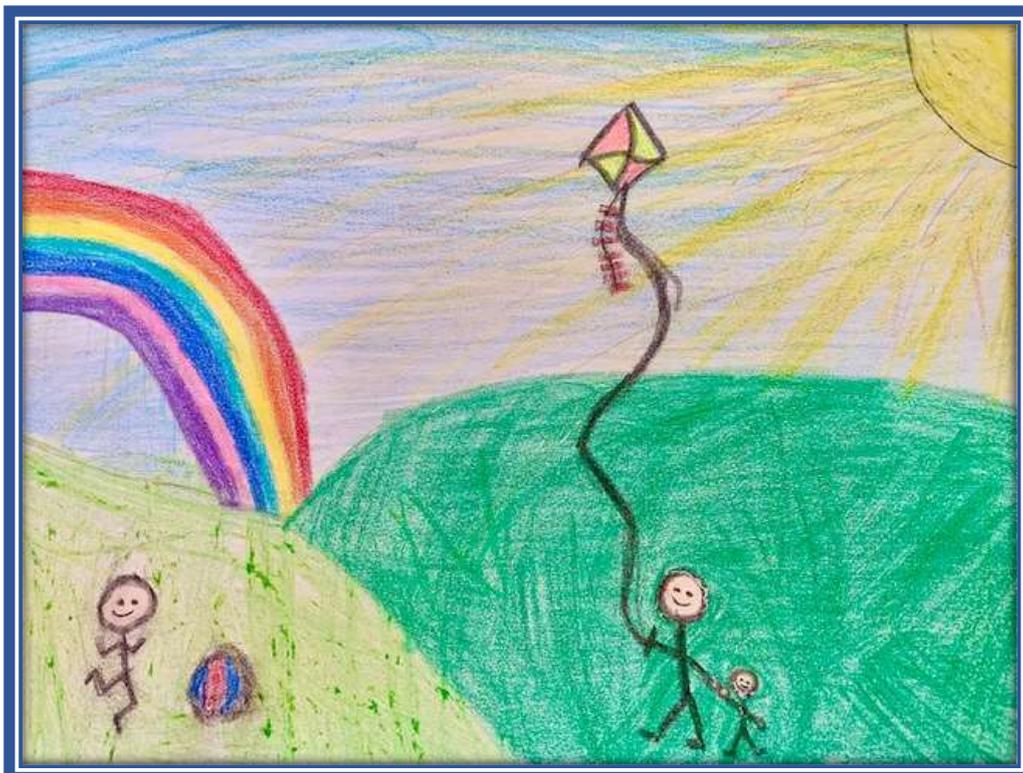




Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)

Annual Report
July 2019 – March 2020



Drawing by Shreya, age 7

Introduction from Tina Swain, Facilitator for and on behalf of Strategic Leads

This is my first report covering the work of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP).

In June 2018, the Government (informed by *The Wood Report* that they had commissioned) published *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*, which introduced new partnership arrangements to safeguard children and in doing so formally ended the statutory guidance that covered the roles and responsibilities of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.



Focus on building the new partnership started in August 2018. The new arrangements were published at the end of June 2019 and the Board transitioned into a Partnership as of 1 July 2019, hence the period of this report being July 2019 to March 2020.

This report, whilst focussing on the voices of children and young people, will reflect on the initial nine months of partnership activity and future plans to build on and strengthen partner agency safeguarding arrangements as the county prepares for the implementation of a Children's Trust in the latter part of 2020 and the restructure of the county in to two unitary authorities in 2021-22.

The previous NSCB report highlighted a number of priorities for the partnership to take forward:

- Taking positive action early enough to protect children;
- To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation; and
- To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff.

In February 2020, we commissioned David Goosey as an Independent Scrutineer to challenge and scrutinise the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements.

Keeping Children and Young People safe is at the heart of our work and we have created an Early Help Sub Group in recognition of the need to focus on early intervention and prevention. The number of young people at risk of exploitation through organised criminal activity continues to be an increasing concern. In acknowledgement of this significant risk, the NSCP revised the remit of the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group to include all forms of criminal exploitation and is now known as the Child Exploitation Sub Group.

In September 2019 the NSCP held a very well attended Child Exploitation Annual Conference with very good school representation and partnership attendance.

An historic Serious Case Review was published in January 2020. The format of the report focussed on findings and recommendations from the review, in line with *Working Together 2018* and in recognition of the significant ongoing vulnerabilities of the children concerned. NSCP remains committed to driving through changes in practice to increase the protection and outcomes for children and young people in the county whilst acknowledging the fragility of those concerned in these reviews.

Finally, I would like to thank partner agencies and colleagues for their continued commitment to the NSCP and efforts to making a difference to the children, young people and their families of Northamptonshire. Particularly during the unprecedented and difficult times of managing the COVID-19 pandemic, huge efforts are being made by all agencies to pull together resources and provide a co-ordinate response to our most vulnerable children and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Swain'.

Tina Swain

Facilitator for and on behalf of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, March 2020

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1. What is Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership?

Statutory and Legal Context

In July 2018, [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2018](#) was published. It replaced previous versions that set out the requirements for local authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards. In accordance with Section 13 and the objectives set out in Section 14 of the Children Act.

Working Together 2018 was published in response to The Wood Report and sets out the requirements for a system that focuses on the needs and interests of children and families and not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area, regardless of where they are found; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The NSCP is not an operational body and therefore has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children and their families. The NSCP's responsibilities are to hold partner agencies to account for their safeguarding arrangements and ensure the quality of those arrangements through policy, guidance, setting standards and monitoring.

The delivery of services to children and their families is the responsibility of the partners – the commissioning and provider agencies, not the NSCP itself.

[The Children Act 2004](#), as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), strengthens this already important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

How the NSCP functions

The Partnership has a 24 month Business Plan usually refreshed each March for the start of the new financial year. The Business Plan sets out the Partnership's priorities for 2019-21.

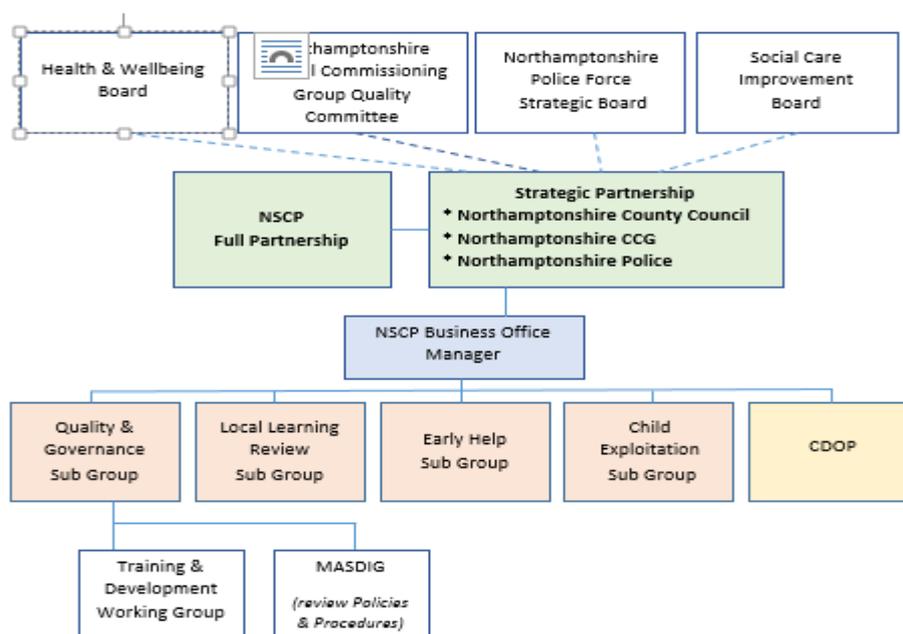
The [Business Plan 2019-21](#) for the new safeguarding arrangements was developed in November 2018 to help inform and in readiness for the transition in July 2019.

Details of the new safeguarding arrangements are published in the [governance document](#).

The Strategic Leads consists of representation of the Local Authority, Police and Health:

Organisation	Lead	Deputy
Local Authority	Director for Children's Services On behalf of Chief Executive	Assistant Director for Safeguarding
Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups	Chief Nurse On behalf of Chief Executive	Head of Safeguarding and Nursing
Northamptonshire Police	Assistant Chief Constable On behalf of Chief Constable	Head of Public Protection

NSCP Structure



The Partnership's three priorities for 2019-21 are as follows:

Key Priorities for 2019-21	
1.	Taking positive action early enough to protect children.
2.	To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation.
3.	To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff.

Full Partnership

It was agreed that the full Partnership would meet twice yearly to review the previous six months of activity and look to the next 6-12 months to set priorities. A full Partnership meeting took place on 27 February 2020 where Strategic Leads presented an update on how the new arrangements were being embedded to strengthen established processes to improve on practice.

Strategic Leads

Strategic Leads continue to meet on a monthly basis. Two schools representatives now sit on the Strategic Leads group to act as the fourth partner (non-voting). This is a Head Teacher from a special school and Head Teacher from a primary school (representation will be rotated on an annual basis). In moving forward, the Deputy Director for Learning, Skills and Education in the Local Authority will also attend Strategic Leads meetings. This will allow a far better understanding of education safeguarding arrangements in the county and allow a closer working relationship with this key sector.

Independent Scrutineer

David Goosey has been commissioned as Independent Scrutineer to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Northamptonshire, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. The Independent Scrutineer will be objective, and act as a constructive critical friend to promote reflection to drive continuous improvement. The NSCP established the areas of activity for scrutiny in its initial Governance Document as follows:

- Attend the Strategic Leads Group and Strategic Partnership Group.
- Review the Partnership's annual report.

- Review audits and performance data, including Section 11 and Section 175 audits.
- Determine the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review local child safeguarding reviews.
- Involvement in the escalation and conflict resolution process.
- Have regular direct contact with frontline practitioners to receive frontline practice feedback.
- Ensure the voice of the child is at the heart of all aspects of safeguarding and receive direct feedback from children, young people and their families to monitor the effectiveness of their voice and experiences with performance and practice.
- Embed scrutiny as a positive process and measure throughout the partnership with learning as the outcome.
- Ensure informed challenge from elected Members takes place.

David started his work as Independent Scrutineer on 4th March and has initially acted as a critical friend to the Strategic Leadership during the Covid-19 crisis.

Sub Groups

The NSCP Sub Groups continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis.

Quality & Governance – aims to develop a culture of open, honest and meaningful challenge and scrutiny, in order to identify areas of good practice and areas of concern and to make recommendations for action and improve safeguarding and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency safeguarding processes incorporating audit, performance analysis and views of children, families and practitioners.

Local Learning Review – is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and protect children through individual Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, ensuring dissemination of lessons learned, and monitoring implementation of actions arising from case learning.

Early Help – aims to understand the current Early Help Offer across the Partnership and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating strengths and gaps in the system which will inform the revision of the Early Help Strategy and work focus for the next three years.

Child Exploitation – aims to understand and reduce the prevalence of child exploitation in Northamptonshire and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating responses to tackling child exploitation by meeting the aims and objectives set out in the Northamptonshire Child Exploitation Strategy.

Child Death Overview Panel – will gather and assess data on the deaths of all children and young people from birth (excluding those babies who are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law - Abortion Act 1967) up to the age of 18 years old who are normally resident in the local area.

Sub Group Chairs meetings have been developed to ensure the work of the partnership is joined up and working together in driving forward the partnership's key priorities.

Under Working Together 2018, Child Death Review arrangements are the responsibility of local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Public Health. Strategic Leads made the decision that local CDOP arrangements would continue to function under the remit of the partnership to ensure learning remains joined up and focused.

COVID-19 response

In the latter part of the year, nationally and globally, everyone has been faced with the outbreak of COVID-19 virus, which has and continues to have devastating consequences for families across the globe.

At the time of writing this report, the country remains in 'lockdown' with restrictions in place for all members of the public. This has placed significant anxieties on families in terms of social distancing, schools closures and financial worries, whilst services are facing an unprecedented level of pressure. During these times, Strategic Leads have and continue to meet on a weekly basis to ensure business continuity of key critical safeguarding services is maintained.

The NSCP remains committed to supporting these critical services and huge measures have been taken to ensure the county's most vulnerable children, young people and families continue to receive support.

2. The Voice of Children and Young People

The safety and welfare of children and young people is at the heart of all our work and focused on hearing and understanding children and young people's own voices to achieve this.

Our report last year included some comments from children and young people about their concerns in the county and this is how, in conjunction with Community Safety Partnerships, we have addressed a selection of them.

"Gangs"

The primary aged children spoken to were all very responsive and keen to talk about their concerns. They were extremely knowledgeable of "gangs" naming several who live in the same areas as them. They have a vivid description of "gang members" and said they are frightened when they see them.

In response to this and a serious incident that took place within one month of speaking to the children, we have created a Critical Response process. *Please see Section 4 Contextual Safeguarding for further information.*

"Litter"

In liaison with the local CSPs various community initiatives have been encouraged to keep communal areas tidy and places to be proud of.

"Professionals don't listen"

Engaging young people is core to all professionals. Over the last nine months of the new partnership arrangements, significant emphasis has been placed on hearing the voices of children and young people and understanding them and responding appropriately. Learning from Serious Case Reviews echoes the children and young people's feelings. We are seeing excellent examples of how professionals are engaging with children and improving their outcomes and these are promoted through good practice briefings – an area we will develop further in 2020-21 with briefings based directly on the thoughts and experiences of children and young people themselves.

"Feeling unsafe in town of an evening"

Additional lighting has been placed in poorly lit areas off the town centre and CCTV upgraded.

Last year, our annual report focused on the voices of children and young people which helped inform and strengthen our safeguarding arrangements as we became a partnership. This year, we have continued to build on this and asked some Looked after Children and Police Cadets for their thoughts and experiences of living in Northamptonshire.

This year we decided to ask children and young people what they like about Northamptonshire and the responses we received were all very much focused around the good selection of activities and rural spaces available to them within the county.



...lots of places to go – parks, shops...



...good sports facilities...



'...Northamptonshire is a community full of social opportunities...

Children and young people continue to feel anxious and concerned around 'gang' activities, including feeling anxious when presented with large groups of young people. This was a significant concern raised by primary aged children last year but was not seen as a concern by secondary aged young people. However, feedback from Looked After Children and police cadets indicates gang related activity as being their main concern.

...a lot of robbery
and knife attacks...

'...not wanting to walk past
groups of young people or
in parks where large groups
are...'

Towards the latter end of the year, the country has been faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. During these unprecedented times, with schools being closed to the majority of students and children and young people being required to socially isolate themselves it is important to understand children and young people's perception of these times and their experiences of this new environment to help us ensure we are able to provide additional support as required.

When asked, the majority of young people showed a very good understanding of COVID-19, the severity of the virus and acknowledged and accepted the reasons for the lockdown. It was clear that parents and carers had encouraged the young people to find out more about the pandemic through news coverage and asking questions.

The young people's biggest concern was around the impact on their exam results and the consequences this could have on them as they look forward to university and careers.

...I understand it, I
feel fine...

...I just hope I get
good exam results...

'...this upset me because
it has taken away my
opportunity for a good
future...'

The Local Authority and NSCP will work in partnership with schools to provide guidance and support to students due to receive exam results under COVID-19 arrangements in the summer of 2020. This will include advice about options available to students who want to transition to higher education.

3. What the NSCP has done to support agencies to keep children safe?

Taking positive action early enough to protect children

- The Thresholds and Pathways document has been revised to reflect Signs of Safety terminology and 'champions' have had relevant Threshold training that they cascade with their organisation.
- The Early Help Sub Group has begun to map out what early help looks like in Northamptonshire and what resources are available.
- An Early Help Strategy has been drafted and a plan is in place to launch the strategy at the next NSCP conference.
- The Early Help Assessment has been updated to incorporate Signs of Safety terminology.
- Access to Early Help advice is now available through a 'self-serve' online form, available to both professionals and families.
- The next NSCP Conference, scheduled for 24 September 2020 will be focused on understanding Early Help and resources. The programme for the day is under development.
- A Domestic Abuse Triage Desk is now in place within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure there is a co-ordinated and quick response to incidents of domestic abuse.
- As social distancing and restrictions have been put in place by the government, Northamptonshire Police has carefully monitored the levels of domestic abuse in the county and at the time of writing this report, only a very small increase in incidents of domestic abuse has been identified.

To support children, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation

- An Integrated Adolescent Service has been created.

- The NSCP commissioned an independent review of the partnership response to Child Sexual Exploitation and the findings are being taken forward by the Child Exploitation Sub Group.
- Gang training has been delivered to Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and been delivered to multi-agency groups.
- A Child Exploitation guide has been developed and is available on the NSCP website with a quick reference option for professionals. Topics included are:
 - County Lines
 - Gang Involvement
 - Modern Slavery
 - Trafficking
 - Child Sexual Exploitation

NSCP Conference

- In September 2019, the NSCP held a very successful conference around Criminal Exploitation of children and young people with a focus on gang activity.
- The day was attended by over 200 delegates with good representation from education settings. The day was well received with a presentation from young people and a moving presentation from an ex-gang member.
- The day was joined by the launch of the Youth Offending Service 'Knives Takes Lives' initiative.

To work effectively as a partnership and support our staff

- NSCP newsletters have been revived with an initial theme around the partnership's response to COVID-19.
- The Child Exploitation and Early Help Sub Groups have been mapping relevant resources across the county to strengthen partnership working.
- The Training and Development Working group focuses on e-learning and strengthening the partnership's in kind training offer.
- The Independent Scrutineer is in post to review and challenge the safeguarding arrangements in the county.
- Good Practice Briefings have been developed to encourage a culture change within the workforce and promote and acknowledge excellent multi-agency practice.

Engaging with education

- Engaging with education is critical in partnership safeguarding arrangements. Two education representatives and the Deputy Director for Learning, Skills and Education now attend the monthly Strategic leads meetings to provide a robust link with the education settings across the county.

Scrutiny, evaluation and monitoring of safeguarding data

- The NSCP Scorecard and Dataset has been further refined to reflect the partnership's three key priorities.
- The process for Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACAs) now follows the Signs of Safety model. During the period no MACA's have been undertaken as the process has been further refined to reflect the Rapid Review templates. A full schedule is in place for 2020-21.
- The Section 175 Schools audit was completed and the findings collated and shared. A list of overarching recommendations have been created which are being taken forward by the Quality & Governance Sub Group and in discussion with education Strategic Lead representatives.

Missing Children and Young People and Permanent School Exclusions

- The number of reports of missing children has significantly increased over the past two years.
- In 2019-20 there were 2266 reports of missing children, an increase of approximately 45% on the previous year.
- In the last quarter of the year there were 556 reports of missing children, an increase of approximately 19% based on the same period of the previous year.
- Whilst the numbers of missing children do continue to increase, some of this percentage is reflective of more effective processes and policies in place to monitor missing children and young people.
- The NSCP is currently undertaking an internal review of the number of children and young people missing and how this connects with the number of permanent exclusions.
- The findings will indicate whether practice and provision requires strengthening further.

- Missing children and young people is a strong focal point for police as schools have closed and the country has gone in to 'lockdown' through the COVID-19 outbreak.

Child Exploitation

- There has been an increasing trend of recorded crimes against children in 2019-20 with 7039 offences recorded. This represents an approximate 20% increase on the previous year.
- In the last quarter of the year, 1955 crimes were recorded, an increase of just under 25% based on the same period of the previous year.
- In the 12 months to March 2020 crimes with child victims accounted for just over 11% of all recorded crime which indicates a small increasing trend. The majority of these offences involved violence and accounted for 2 in every 3 offences against children. Part of this increase is due to improved identification of offences against children.

Learning from Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Rapid Reviews

- In accordance with Working Together 2018, safeguarding partnerships are required to undertake a Rapid Review of every Local Authority Serious Incident Notification – [see Appendix 1](#).
- These reviews can identify learning without the case reaching the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) – formerly known as a Serious Case Review.
- The NSCP has focused on getting learning out to the partnership at the earliest opportunity.
- For every Rapid Review, a Learning Briefing is developed regardless of whether the Rapid Review then proceeds to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review. This allows professionals to hear learning at the very earliest opportunity and to consider the learning in accordance with their own practices.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- When a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) is undertaken, a Learning Briefing is developed after the Practitioner Event midway through the process to help inform practice.
- Partner agencies are asked to update their own agency's learning and how it has changed practice from the beginning and throughout the duration of the process which helps inform the action plan.
- Actions are carefully scrutinised to ensure they are realistic and achievable with an added level of challenge provided by the Independent Scrutineer.
- Action plans have been revised to enable professionals to consider the 'so what' question and provide rich evidence through examples of changes in direct front line practice.
- One historic Serious Case Review was published in January 2020. The report had been carefully and sensitively written to focus on learning and recommendations with minimal family context to support the vulnerable children and young people involved.
- Training on Learning from Local Reviews continued to be facilitated by members of the Local Learning Review Sub Group on a bi-monthly basis, with the presentation regularly updated to reflect learning from Rapid Reviews and new CSPRs.
- At the time of writing this report, two further CSPRs are underway – [see Appendix 1](#).

Learning Briefings

- [6 Step Briefings](#) continue to be developed following every review and as mentioned above, we also complete Learning Briefings during the process of a review to ensure the learning is identified early and shared across the partnership.
- In addition, we also develop Good Practice briefings. These are an important way of celebrating how a case has been positively managed by individuals and agencies and encouraging and spreading that learning far and wide.
- We have recognised how similar themes tend to be identified from reviews and have started developing thematic briefings to support learning.

Training opportunities

Face-to-face training

- 2019-20 has continued to be a challenging year in terms of the face-to-face training offered by the Partnership.
- The Partnership looked to develop an in-kind training offer whereby individual partners would extend some of their in-house training opportunities to wider partners.

- In 2019-20, the in-kind offer has mainly focused on Child Sexual Exploitation and Learning from Local Reviews. This is a little disappointing and the training proposal being developed for 2020-21 will be looking to develop and broaden the range of courses available.
- In the last 2 months of the year face-to-face training was postponed in line with the government's arrangements to tackle COVID-19.

E-Learning

- A suite of e-learning courses has continued to be offered focusing on general safeguarding issues, along with more focused courses specific to the priorities within Northamptonshire.
- The number of licenses used for 2019-20 was 7767 which is an encouraging increase on the previous year. It should be noted that over 1,000 of these licenses were used in March 2020 and attributes to the outbreak of COVID-19 that led to many professionals working from home and having the opportunity to complete their safeguarding training and update their knowledge base.
- The uptake of e-learning has and continues to be well accessed by professionals within education settings.

Neglect

- 9,236 assessments were undertaken in 2019-20 in comparison to 12,000 in 2018-19.
- 2,174 featured neglect as a factor of concern. This equates to approximately 24% of the total number of assessments and is slightly higher than the previous year.
- This made neglect the fourth most common factor of concern.
- The NSCP continues to promote and monitor the use of the Neglect Toolkit that uses the Graded Care Profile and has raised the importance of completing when referring cases to MASH where neglect is a known factor.

Tea Break Guides

- The NSCP continues to create and build upon its suite of tea-break guides to give practitioners a summary on a range of prominent safeguarding issues and those issues identified from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. There are over 20 available and can be accessed [here](#).

Use of Restraint

Within Northamptonshire, there are two secure facilities; Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC) and St Andrews Healthcare. Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC) is one of three purpose-built centres designed to accommodate up to 76 male and female young people between the ages of 12 and 18 who are either serving a custodial sentence or are remanded to a secure facility. St Andrew's Healthcare provides specialist mental healthcare for people with challenging mental health needs.

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership works closely with both organisations to review their safeguarding arrangements and in particular their use of restraint. There are two Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) who undertake regular meetings and reviews with each organisation and report regularly to NSCP Strategic Leads.

Rainsbrook STC received an inspection rating of requiring improvement during the period and has been working to an extensive improvement programme.

There were over 300 recorded incidences of using restraint and over 600 recorded incidences of use of force for the period April 2019 – March 2020. Initial seven day training is provided for all new members of staff around the use of restraint and force with six monthly refresher training for all members of staff. All incidences are logged and there are weekly meetings to review the use of force.

Some of the young people at Rainsbrook STC were asked for their views around the use of restraint:

'... staff spoke to me during the incident when they told me to leave the classroom. I was restrained which I think was managed well...'

'...I was angry during the restraint but there was on discomfort from the restraint. I don't think the restraint was managed very well...'

'...Staff communicated well with me usually "saying stuff like doing really well, nearly there" ...'

These comments, along with all others recorded from de-briefs with the young people following an incident are monitored for learning and improving practice in the future.

At the time of writing this report, Rainsbrook STC has just had a further Ofsted inspection and the full report is due for publication on 23 April. The NSCP will continue to work closely with the allocated LADO to understand the findings of the inspection and any recommended actions to improve their safeguarding arrangements. In addition, Strategic Leads will be visiting Rainsbrook STC to review the facility and safeguarding arrangements in pace.

St Andrews Healthcare has been through a difficult year and following poor inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) acknowledged towards the end of the year that the size of its facilities for young people had expanded too quickly and was too large to ensure the consistent safety and wellbeing of its residents. A decision has been made to right size the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) services to ensure the amount of permanent and experienced staff working currently can cover the wards safely. The CAMHs senior management team have developed and put in place a number of changes to the staffing structure with a more flexible system, which supports staff covering a number of shifts including working nights and days.

There were just under 4,800 recorded incidents of using restraint during the period April 2019 – March 2020.

Some of the residents at St Andrews Healthcare were asked for their views around the use of restraint:

'...I don't like restraint. I don't think staff should restrain me...my peers should be restrained to stop them from harming themselves, but I should be allowed to self-harm...I think staff are too rough in restraint at times with my peers from what I have seen...'

'...I don't always expect to be restrained when it happens but afterwards I can see staff are trying to help me..staff talking to me does help to calm me down...staff spend time with me to support me when my restraint has ended...but this is not always helpful if I don't know the person...'

These comments, along with all young people's voices following an incident are monitored for learning and improving practice in the future.

Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups continue to work closely with St Andrews Healthcare and the CQC to ensure there is a robust improvement plan in place and regular updates are provided to Strategic Leads of the NSCP along with quarterly updates from the allocated LADO.

4. Supporting Initiatives

Contextual Safeguarding

In response to the children and young people's voices we have recognised the worrying increase in gang activity in the county and the impact and consequences incidents can have on children, young people, their families and local communities. Sadly, these concerns have been evidenced through incidences of gang related violence including knife and gun crime in the county.

In direct response, we have developed a Critical Incident Response process. This process has been adopted by local Community Safeguarding Partnerships (CSP) in the county and is being trialled by Northampton CSP. The process draws together a multi-agency community response following a significant incident to ensure the community is safe and children and young people have the opportunity for support and advice.

The Critical Incident Response forms part of a wider Contextual Safeguarding Handbook which is currently being created. Once agreed, this will be disseminated across the partnership and be used to proactively risk assess specific geographic areas in terms of safeguarding implications.

Adolescent Service

In October 2019, Children First Northamptonshire launched a new Adolescent Service in response to significant increasing numbers of teenagers at risk of exploitation and where there are contextual safeguarding risks. The numbers of young people becoming looked after for the first time aged 14+ is steadily rising with some needing secure accommodation to protect them from the criminal gangs who have recruited them.

The Adolescent Service provides a group work programme which addresses healthy relationships; protective behaviours; sexual health; healthy lifestyles and emotional health alongside diversionary activities and access to education and training opportunities for those who have disengaged from school or college. The service also signposts to support for substance misuse and homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds.

The service works closely with RISE (Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation) and Missing Children teams, the work of the Youth Offending Service, housing partners and the work of CIRV (Community Initiative to Reduce Violence).

Reducing Parental Conflict

In 2018-19, the NSCB supported the work of Troubled Families Programme to undertake a review of understanding of the impact of reducing parental conflict on children. The NSCP has continued to support this initiative and through face-to-face training courses being facilitated throughout 2019-20. Fourteen sessions were held with 100% attendance at every meeting totalling 280 places. In addition, a Train the Trainer session was held that was fully booked with 20 attendees.

Transformation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- Following identification of concerns, including those raised by partners, and a critical Ofsted focussed visit in October 2018, actions were put in place to implement a new MASH model with associated changes to the First Response Teams (FRTs). In June 2019, Ofsted found decision making in the MASH was timelier and longstanding unallocated cases reduced however progress still needed to be made.
- Improvement work continued, and an Ofsted monitoring visit in January 2020 found risks were better identified, children were seen more promptly and decision making and application of thresholds were more consistent.
- The journey to further is supported by improved partnership working in the MASH. As resources have been increased and the multi-agency response has become more effective. With clear understanding of professional roles, MASH work is focused on achieving consistency in identification of and response to risk, quality of management decision-making, oversight and challenge.
- 2019-20 will see ongoing monitoring for a more consistent application of threshold.
- From December 2019, all children are allocated promptly to a Social Worker in Children's Social Care. While caseloads remain challenging for some parts of the service the Ofsted monitoring visit concluded that decisions did not leave children at risk of harm.

Thresholds and Pathways

The Thresholds and Pathways document was updated to reflect Signs of Safety terminology. In doing this, it was recognised that the document needs a multi-agency review and this will be scheduled to take place in 2020-21 (*please note this has been slightly delayed due to managing the COVID-19 pandemic*).

5. Plans for April 2020-March 2021

The three Key Priorities for the Safeguarding Partnership in 2019-20 will continue to be a focus of activity along with:

- Continue to develop our direct involvement with children and young people, to hear, understand and promote their voices.
- Develop and strengthen engagement with our educational setting as a whole.
- Continue to develop and strengthen in-kind training opportunities across the partnership.

- Ensure the Contextual Safeguarding Handbook and approach is adopted and strengthened across the county and develop a mechanism for capturing the evolving data.
- Have a better understanding and therefore strengthen the partnership response to missing children and permanent schools exclusions.
- Strengthen the partnership response to learning from CSPRs and developing frontline based evidence of how the learning is positively changing practice and the outcomes for children and young people.
- Consider and strengthen our individual and collaborative responses to the two top factors of concern identified from the number of assessments that took place throughout the period of this review; Domestic Violence between Parents/Carers and Parental Mental Health.
- Hold an Annual Conference around the theme of Early Help and launch the Early Help Strategy along with an Action Plan.



Drawing by Shreya – age 7

Appendix 1 – Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

For the period July 2019 – March 2020

Number of Serious Incident notifications	6
Number of Rapid Reviews carried out	6
Number of Rapid Reviews completed within 15 working days of date of notification	4
Number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews initiated	1
Number where learning was identified and taken forward as an outcome of the Rapid Review	4
No further action	2
Any outstanding as of 31 March 2020	0

Number of requests for consideration of a review	5
Number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews initiated	0
Number where learning was identified and taken forward as an outcome	2
No further action	3
Any outstanding as of 31 March 2020	0

Appendix 2 – Child Death figures

April 2019 - Mar 2020 saw a total of 35 deaths.

Of these, 10 deaths were considered unexpected:

Category of death	
Co Sleeping	2
Road Traffic Collision	2
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy	1
Anaphylactic Shock	1
Other medical cause	4
Total	10

Gender of deaths:	
Male	2
Female	8

Ethnicity of unexpected deaths:	
White British	9
Asian British	1

Appendix 3 – Financial Contributions

Partner contributions for the period April 2019-March 2020

Balance of partners' funds brought forward from 2019-20	114,981
Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups	48,949
Northamptonshire County Council	48,949
The Police & Crime commissioner for Northamptonshire	23,931
Northampton Borough Council	2,749
Kettering Borough Council	1,173
Borough Council of Wellingborough	942
South Northamptonshire Council	1,031
Daventry District Council	913
East Northamptonshire District Council	1,067
Corby County Council	826
St Andrews Healthcare	2,320
Rainsbrook STC	906
CAFCASS	309
BeNCH CRC	725
National Probation Service	725
Moulton College	290
Schools Consultative Forums (DSG)	71,000
2020-21 Partner contributions total	206,805
Total funds available in 2020-21	321,786