



Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
Governance Arrangements
2024-2026

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1.0 Introduction

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP), in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, has been in place since 1 July 2019.

This Governance document replaces the initial governance transition document published on 1 July 2019 and, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, sets out how the partnership arrangements have been adapted and strengthened, improving and enhancing our responses to keep children and young people as safe as they can be in our county.

NSCP is committed to delivering the requirements of Working Together 2023. NSCP are on a journey to deliver high quality services which will best support children, young people and families in Northamptonshire.

Working Together 2023, under paragraph 76, states ‘schools, colleges, early years and childcare settings, and other educational providers (including alternative provision) all have a pivotal role to play in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Their insight and co-operation are vital to the successful delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. People working in education settings play an important role in building relationships, identifying concerns and providing direct support to children. They may be the first trusted adult to whom children report safeguarding concerns. LSPs should give careful consideration to naming all local schools, colleges and education providers set out in the 2018 Regulations²⁷ as relevant agencies’.

The NSCP is clear of the role played by education providers in safeguarding children and young people and is developing separate arrangements pertaining to the reciprocal and working multiagency arrangements between schools, colleges, early years and other education providers as part of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and their statutory requirement to keeping children safe in education.

NSCP Mission Statement:

“For the children and young people of Northamptonshire to be as safe as they can be from harm, exploitation and neglect”.

NSCP Business Plan 2024-26

The NSCP Business Plan 2024-26 sets out the purpose of these local arrangements, which is to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- **Excellent practice is the norm**
- **Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively**
- **There is early identification of “new” safeguarding issues**
- **Learning is promoted and embedded**
- **Information is shared effectively**
- **The public can feel confident that children are protected from harm**

In addition, the Safeguarding Partnership’s values are:

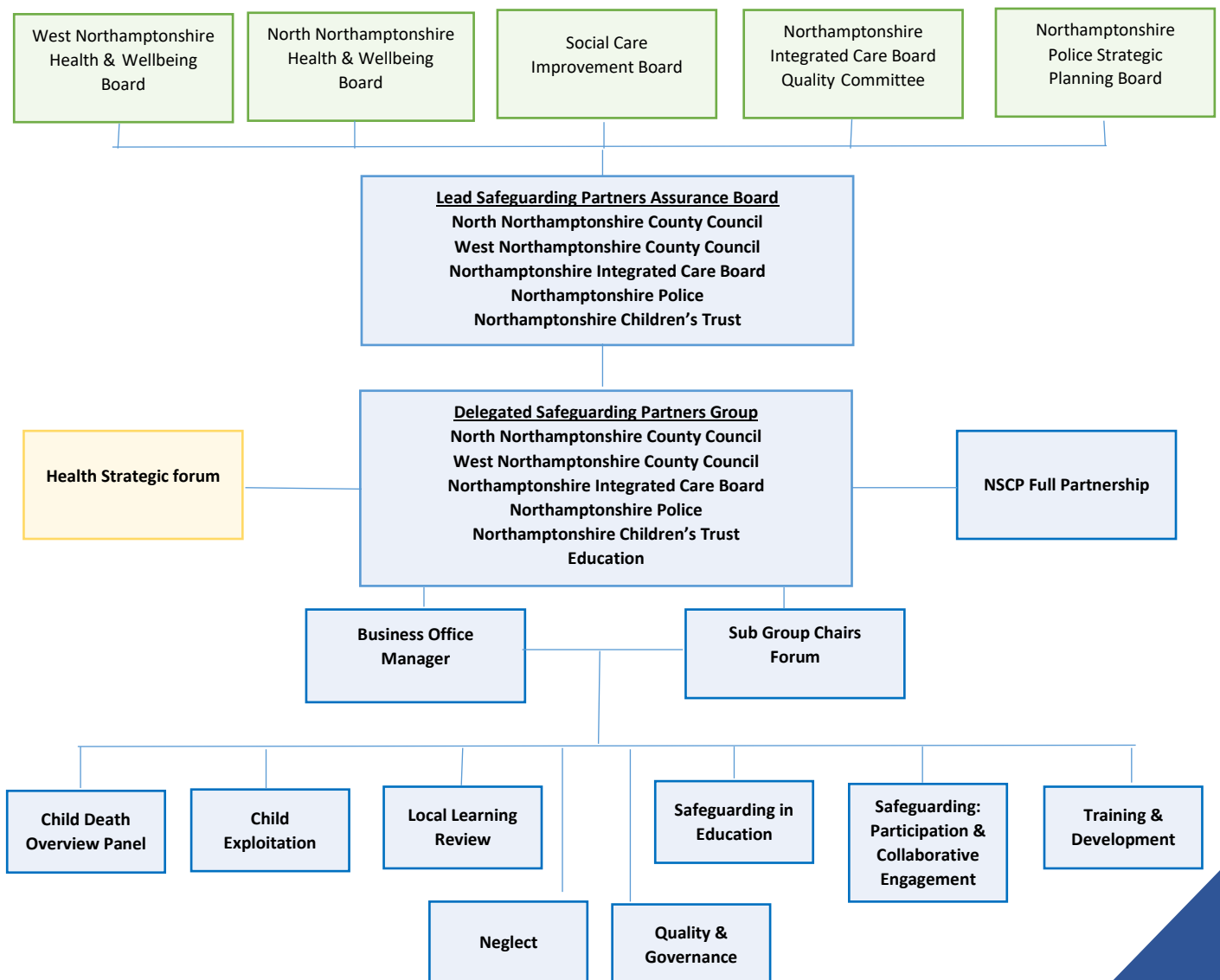
1. A child centred approach to safeguarding ensuring their voice is heard and understood.
2. Effective ways to identify and support children and families who would benefit from early help; A culture of continuous review and learning.
3. Embrace equality and diversity in everything we do; and
4. Constructive and mutual challenge between partners to keep children safe.

Key Priority Themes for 2024-26	
1.	Neglect: Taking positive action early enough to protect children and young people
2.	Exploitation: Ensure those children, young people and families who are most at risk are supported through robust multi-agency co-ordination, assessment support
3.	Domestic Abuse: Promote and implement a joined up multi-agency approach to protecting children and young people at risk of domestic abuse and violence

A NSCP Business Plan Action Plan has been developed to progress and monitor progress of the three priority theme areas.

2.0 Structure

The structure for the partnership is as follows:



3.0 Governance

Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP) Assurance Board

Lead Safeguarding Partners are:

- Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Council*
- Chief Executive, West Northamptonshire Council*
- Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board*
- Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police*
- Elected members
- Delegated Safeguarding Partners (*as identified below with an ***)

** Voting members accountable for decision-making*

Lead Safeguarding Partners have two-way communication links with West Health & Wellbeing Board, North Health & Wellbeing Board, Social Care Improvement Board, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board Quality Committee and Northamptonshire Police Force Strategic Board and are jointly responsible for ensuring the proper involvement of and oversight of all relevant agencies, acting as a team and with clear responsibilities:

1. Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
2. Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
3. Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
4. Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
5. Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
6. Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners Assurance Board meets six-monthly with each meeting chaired by a different member accountable for decision-making on a rotation basis.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group

Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group consists of:

- Director of Children's Services, North Northamptonshire Council**
- Director of Children's Services, West Northamptonshire Council**
- Chief Nurse, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board**
- Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police**
- Chief Executive / Director of Safeguarding, Northamptonshire Children's Trust**
- Primary School representation

- Secondary School representation
 - Special Schools representation
 - Independent Scrutineer
- ** Voting members accountable for decision-making*

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group are accountable to the Lead Safeguarding Partners Assurance Board and jointly responsible for ensuring effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through:

1. Delivery and monitoring of multi-agency priorities and procedures to protect and safeguard children in the local area, in compliance with published arrangements and thresholds.
2. Close partnership working and engagement with education (at strategic and operational level) and other relevant agencies, allowing better identification of and response to harm.
3. The implementation of effective information sharing arrangements between agencies, including data sharing that facilitates joint analysis between partner agencies.
4. Delivery of high-quality and timely rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews, with the impact of learning from local and national reviews and independent scrutiny clearly evidenced in yearly reports.
5. The provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding professional development and training.
6. Seeking of, and responding to, feedback from children and families about their experiences of services and co-designing services to ensure children from different communities and groups can access the help and protection they need.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) Group meets on a bi-monthly basis. There has been a significant improvement journey in Northamptonshire and consistency of leadership is important. Therefore whilst our partnership is working towards one of the accountable Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) taking over as chair, the current arrangements of an independent chair will continue with one of the DSPs stepping into the newly created role of vice-chair. This arrangement will be regularly reviewed.

The Full Partnership

The Full Partnership consists of representatives from all key agencies, as well as those broader partners as set out in Working Together 2023.

The group meets twice yearly to reflect on the previous six months and look forward to the next six months in terms of priorities and need.

Sub Group Chairs

The partnership consists of eight sub groups whose chairs meet on a quarterly basis to share activities, updates and joint work streams. The group is responsible to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group.

The Sub Groups of the partnership

The sub groups of the partnership are accountable to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group and support, drive and seek assurance of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, as set out in Working Together 2023, across Northamptonshire.:

- there is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm
- when a child is identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a prompt, appropriate and effective response to ensure the protection and support of the child

- organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account
- the voice of children and families combined with the knowledge of experienced practitioners and insights from data, provides a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvement within arrangements and practice
- information is sought, analysed, shared, and broken down by protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families, and to understand outcomes for different communities of children
- effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies
- senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture which supports local services to become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of local practice and its impact on children and families

All sub groups meet on a bi-monthly basis:

- Child Death Overview Panel – Chaired by a North Northamptonshire Public Health Consultant, is responsible for the statutory review of the deaths of all children resident in Northamptonshire under the age of 18.
- Child Exploitation – Chaired by a Police representative, is responsible for addressing and strengthening our response to themed priority two as outlined above.
- Local Learning Review – Chaired by an Integrated Care Board representative, is responsible for undertaking statutory Rapid Reviews and managing Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs).
- Neglect – Chaired by a West Northamptonshire Council representative, is responsible for addressing and strengthening our response to themed priority one as outlined above.
- Quality & Governance – Chaired by a Northamptonshire Children’s Trust representative, 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
- Safeguarding in Education – Chaired by a Safeguarding in Education representative for North Northamptonshire Council, is responsible for engaging schools, two-way communication and hearing the voices of children and young people.
- Safeguarding: Participation & Collaborative Engagement (SPACE) – Chaired by a Police representative, is responsible for the partnership’s social media, local campaigns and events (including the publication of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) and engaging the voluntary sector.
- Training and Development – Chaired by a West Northamptonshire Council representative, is responsible for ensuring the workforce has access to relevant, up-to-date safeguarding training, both online and face-to-face.

The Terms of Reference for each of the Sub Groups are reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis.

Independent Scrutineer

The Independent Scrutineer, accountable to the Lead Safeguarding Partners Assurance Board, is commissioned to monitor and challenge the quality of agencies work to enable effective multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the county and:

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

Role of Business Office

The Business Office is hosted by North Northamptonshire Council, with line management and oversight by the Commissioning and Partnerships Directorate, overseen by the Director for Children's Services.

All documentation created by the Business Office in relation to Business Office activity is approved by North Northamptonshire Council Line Management.

All partnership documentation created by the Business Office is approved by the Chair of the group the documentation is being presented to.

The team consists of four full-time members:

- Business Manager
- 2 x Project Officers
- Administrator

The role of the Business Office is to:

- Support and co-ordinate requirements of the full structure of the partnership as set out in the structure chart above (*this does not include the Working Groups set out under the remit of each sub group*).
- Progress the management of Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Support training in liaison with the Training & Development Sub Group.
- Support statutory partnership audits.
- Review and update the NSCP Website in liaison with the SPACE Sub Group.
- Develop bulletins and create regular newsletters.

Annual Report

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Strategic Leads will publish an annual report. The report will be a succinct resume of partnership activity over the previous twelve months.

Strategic Leads, partner leads and Sub Group Chairs are required to provide updates on their agency activity, including evidence of the difference agencies have made individually and collectively to improve the outcomes for the children and young people of Northamptonshire.

The information is collated and written up by the Business Manager and presented to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group for discussion and sign off. Once agreed, the Annual Report is published on the NSCP website and presented to:

- North Northamptonshire Council Cabinet – presented by Director of Children’s Services for North Northamptonshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Council Cabinet – presented by Director of Children’s Services for West Northamptonshire Council
- North Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board – presented by Director of Children’s Services for North Northamptonshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board – presented by Director of Children’s, West Northamptonshire Council
- Northamptonshire Police Force Strategic Board – presented by Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police
- Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board Quality Committee – presented by Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Rapid Review Panel (made up of Local Learning Review Sub Group key agency representatives) is responsible for providing quality, well informed Rapid Review reports to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners will consider all Rapid Reviews and recommendations and make informed decisions on whether a case fits the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review and this decision is forwarded to The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel that sits in the Department for Education.

The geographic residential location of the subject will determine the counting North Northamptonshire Council or West Northamptonshire Council vote. Any challenge by the council representative out of geographic area will be discussed by voting safeguarding leads and managed by the Chair.

The same voting will apply to the publication method of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The Local Learning Review Sub Group is responsible for monitoring the progress of all Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and developing a realistic, achievable action plan (with identified required evidence for proof of impact), which will then be passed to the Quality & Governance Sub Group who are responsible for progressing actions through to completion.

Training

Training is reviewed and monitored by the Training & Development Sub Group who is responsible for creating and commissioning bespoke courses in line with current priorities and local review findings, along with a comprehensive package of on-line training courses.

All Strategic, Senior and Team managers are responsible for promoting all training to their workforce and enabling individuals the time and commitment needed to attend training.

Section 11 Partner Audits and Schools audits

Section 11 Partner audits are undertaken on a bi-annual basis, administered by the Business Office, overseen by the Quality & Governance Sub Group. Analysis and scrutiny is undertaken by the Independent Scrutineer and presented to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group.

Schools Audits are undertaken on a bi-annual basis, administered by the Business Office, overseen by the Safeguarding in Education Sub Group. Analysis and scrutiny is undertaken by the Independent Scrutineer and presented to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group.

Quality and Data

All partners are required to contribute to the partnership's comprehensive data scorecard and provide key qualitative data on a quarterly basis, along with a narrative explaining trends.

Speaking to and listening to Children and Young People, Families and Carers

Children and Young People's voices are at the heart of this Safeguarding Children Partnership and therefore they and their families must be included when considering safeguarding and setting annual priorities. Existing arrangements will be strengthened to ensure a pro-active focus on seeking children, young people and their family's voices.

Public facing campaigns and other modes of raising awareness to children, young and their families and carers will be considered against the partnership's priorities and developed by the Safeguarding: Participation & Collaborative Engagement Sub Group.

The development of strategies and policies must clearly evidence how children, young people and families have been engaged and consulted.

Escalation process

'Escalating for the right outcome' is a positive route of resolving operational issues between agencies and gives assurance to the Delegated leads that there is a healthy respectful method of resolving professional differences and that they will be notified and included to step in if the issues prove difficult to resolve at practitioner and service manager level.

<http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/about-northamptonshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/policies/case-conflict-resolution-protocol/>

NSCP website, newsletters and bulletins

A key element of the Partnerships approach to engaging with its partners will remain its commitment to digital media. This will include maintaining a website that partners should recognise as a one stop shop for safeguarding information including all policies, procedures and processes in place within the county.

Through the Business Office, regular newsletters and bulletins will be created to convey messages and themes identified as important to the partnership in ensuring children are safeguarded.

In order to ensure these messages reach practitioners on the frontline, it is imperative that managers and leaders in partner agencies cascade any communications to ensure all staff working within the partnership are aware of the messages being conveyed by the partnership.