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# South Tyneside's Safeguarding Plan 2019

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**South Tyneside Council**



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## **Introduction, background and context**

### **Introduction and strategic context**

South Tyneside has a strong history of multi-agency working, with robust and well-established safeguarding arrangements in place across the Partnership.

Guidance published by central government in 2018, **Working Together to Safeguard Children<sup>1</sup>**, introduced requirements for local safeguarding partners to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. The report places a joint statutory duty on Councils, CCGs and Police to establish appropriate safeguarding arrangements, replacing current Local Safeguarding Children Boards. For the purposes of our proposal and future arrangements, our safeguarding partners<sup>2</sup> are:

- South Tyneside Council
- South Tyneside NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Police

This paper sets out our proposal for local safeguarding arrangements during a transition year commencing September 2019, and our plan for longer-term safeguarding arrangements from September 2020.

### **Purpose and vision in South Tyneside**

Our Safeguarding Plan sets out our shared intention to work together and with wider partners to safeguard and promote the positive outcomes for children and young people.

We have a clear, shared vision to provide all children and young people with excellent services, as set out in our partnership Best Start in Life Strategy<sup>3</sup>:

*We want South Tyneside's children and families to have the best start in life and aspire to a bright and prosperous future. To ensure everyone reaches their full potential, we will work together to provide the best possible learning and recreation opportunities, with targeted protection, care and support for those in greatest need.*

### **Regional landscape**

We have made positive progress towards strengthening regional collaboration across the Northumbria police-force area, utilising Department for Education Early Adopter funding. This programme is exploring which key safeguarding functions can be more effectively undertaken across a wider footprint, and which functions need to retain a place-based focus at a local authority level.

A regional Safeguarding Forum, comprising Local Authorities, CCGs and Police across Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland, was established utilising Department for Education Early Adopter funding in 2017. The Forum agreed a provisional model for South Tyneside in February 2019, which provided scope for a regional footprint in partnership with other local safeguarding arrangements.

Local services have been independently identified as performing well. In September 2017, Ofsted completed an inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children Board, with both receiving a 'Good' judgement<sup>4</sup>. At their last

inspection in January 2019, HMICFRS identified that Northumbria Police were making sustainable improvements in child protection and safeguarding outcomes<sup>5</sup>. The overall rating for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is 'Requires Improvement'<sup>6</sup> however CQC did identify key areas of good practice such as caring services (Outstanding) and responsiveness (Good).

## **Our proposed model**

### **Transitional Period**

The transitional safeguarding model will be implemented from September 2019 – September 2020. This will include changes in both the structure of our local Partnership as well as ways of working, as outlined in the proposed governance chart on page 8. Whilst we will retain much of our current structure over this timeframe, we will work towards closer integration with our Safeguarding Adult Board functions.

It is proposed that our new model will be overseen by an Executive Board, comprising:

- South Tyneside Council (2x representatives)
- South Tyneside CCG (2x representatives)
- Northumbria Police (2x representatives)
- Independent Scrutineer
- Advisory members and relevant agencies to join the group as required

The Executive Board will act as the decision making body to oversee our multi-agency plan, review process and assess strengths and areas for development across the Partnership. This scrutiny function will include oversight of local as well as regional performance information and the development of long term safeguarding arrangements. The Board will also deliver against an agreed work programme, with progress reported to other Partnership forums as appropriate<sup>7</sup>.

The safeguarding partners have the responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the children and young people's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, though the lead representative remains accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency.

The three safeguarding partners will sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding that will help clarify key issues and outline the process for escalation of concerns to other local and regional Boards and governance structures.

Locally, the lead representatives have delegated their functions to the:

- Corporate Director Children, Adults and Health, South Tyneside Council
- Director of Nursing & Quality, South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group<sup>8</sup>
- Designated Chief Superintendent, Northumbria Police

Each lead representative will have the authority to:

- Speak with authority for the Safeguarding Partner they represent
- Take decisions on behalf of their agency
- Hold their organisation to account on implementation of these arrangements

Our proposed model will operate at the following three levels:

- **Executive Board:** The 'business' of the Board will be overseen by a small Executive Board, as outlined above. The Board will have responsibility for ensuring that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place for the borough and will also oversee the business functions such as finance, workforce, governance and performance for the Partnership<sup>9</sup>.

- **Practice Partnership:** A practice based approach will be taken to the overall work of the Partnership at a local level. We will develop a ‘learning hub’ model focusing on thematic safeguarding priorities for the borough that will be able to evidence impact for front line practice. This will not be a static model and could engage a wide range of partners at a number of different levels based on particular themes. The learning from the ‘Bexley model’ implemented in 2018 will inform the development of our approach.
- **Safeguarding Partnership Delivery:** As part of the Early Adopter programme business managers from across the Northumbria Police Area are working on potential new arrangements for work currently undertaken in LSCB sub-groups. This work is tasked with considering a revised set of sub-functions that could operate locally, sub-regionally or regionally.

Working Together replaced the requirement to have LSCB Independent Chair with an Independent Scrutiny function in the new arrangements. Locally, we will retain our Independent Chair until March 2020 as part of the transition year until the longer-term Independent Scrutiny function is determined. Future independent scrutiny arrangements will be confirmed during the transition year.

### **How will the new Partnership work?**

Our current multi-agency threshold guidance document<sup>10</sup> will be reviewed in line with the implementation of the Safeguarding Partnership to ensure that we continue to support children and families.

The Safeguarding Partnership will be required to prepare an annual report which covers safeguarding performance information, key milestones and developments across the Partnership, and areas for development in the coming years.

The Safeguarding Partnership will put in place a clear set of criteria outlining which will determine whether to carry out a local child safeguarding practice review and when a case should be referred to the Child Safeguarding National Review Panel. We will adopt a model of appreciative enquiry, for local review which will include examples of ‘near misses’ and very good practice.

The proposed governance model is shown in Diagram 1.

### **Practice Approach**

One key difference between our new Safeguarding Partnership and the previous LSCB arrangement is the focus on practice. Whereas the LSCB was involved in engaging Partners at a strategic level, our proposed model will provide a heavier focus on practice, providing clear links between Partnership leads and operational safeguarding delivery.

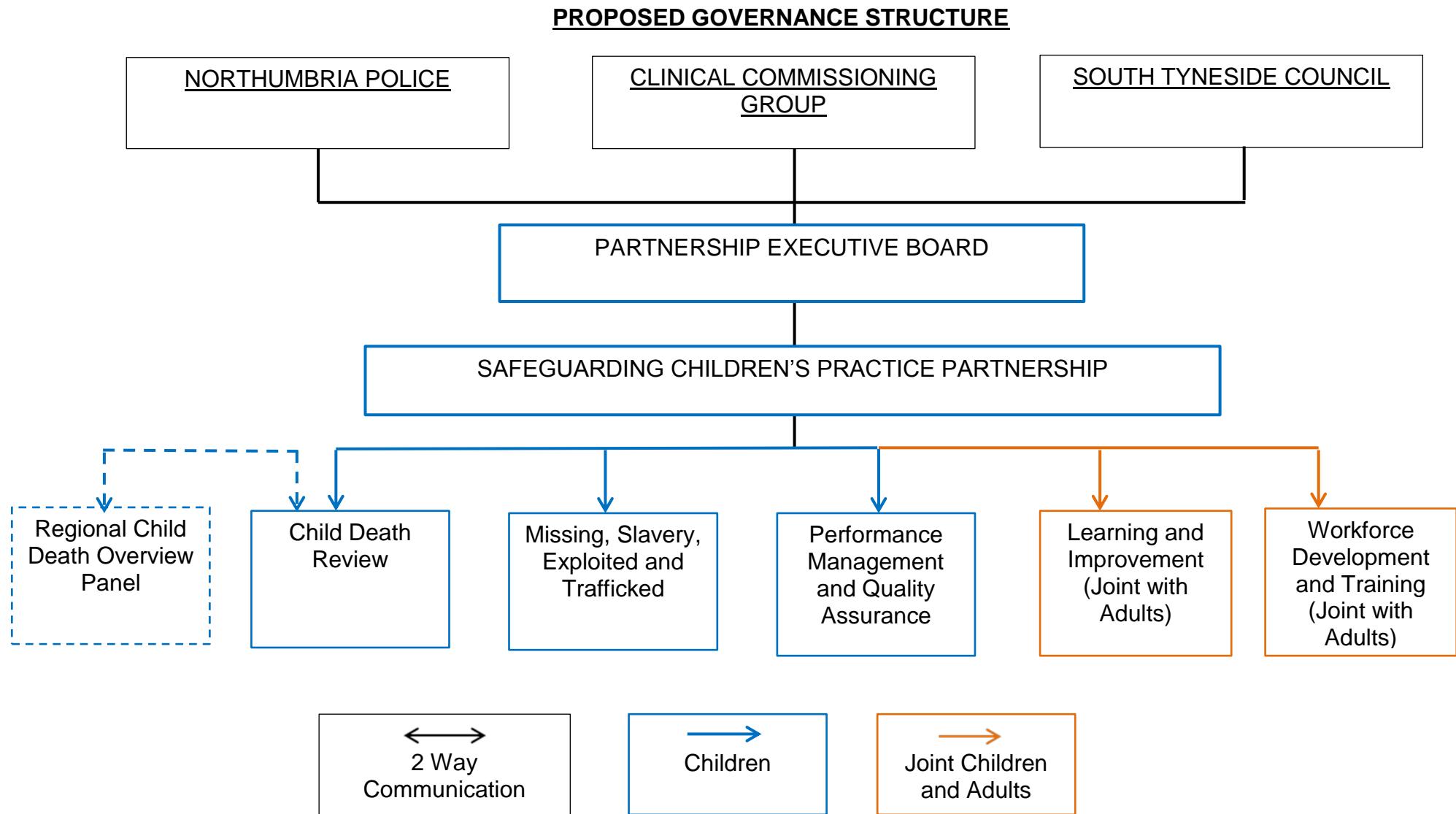
We will achieve this through our learning hub approach, which focuses on key priorities across the Partnership (e.g. domestic abuse). The model will also allow for progressing and developing our collaborative work with the local Safeguarding Adults Board, as well as other Partnership Boards, including:

- South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board
- Community Safety Partnership
- South Tyneside Youth Justice Board

To drive this work, a multi-disciplinary Practice Partnership Board will be established, and will meet a minimum of three times per year at the conclusion of each learning cycle. The detail of how this will work will be finalised and agreed by December 2019, with implementation of the South Tyneside Practice Partnership from early 2020.

It is proposed that the new model will maximise the expertise of all partners and stakeholders in South Tyneside, through the introduction of a 'Practice Partnership'. This will focus on key safeguarding priorities in the borough, with a flexible approach to ensure that the Safeguarding Partnership draws on professionals with relevant knowledge and experience to support thematic pieces of work.

Appendix A sets out some of the practical arrangements the Safeguarding Partners will follow.



## **Operation, delivery and representation**

### **Independent Scrutiny**

Working Together 2018 outlines changes to transition from an LSCB model to a Safeguarding Partnership model. One key change for the local safeguarding partners is that of a local independent scrutiny function. This function will provide critical challenge and appraisal of the local Safeguarding Partnership. The three safeguarding partners are responsible for determining local arrangements including involving other agencies. The role of independent scrutiny will form part of these arrangements and will do the following:

- Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of services to protect children and young people
- Assist when there is disagreement between the leaders responsible for protecting children in the agencies involved in multi-agency arrangements
- Support a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge.

To support delivery of this function, the three safeguarding partners will work together to develop a range of key questions in terms of the scrutiny function. Each safeguarding partner will make decisions on how to best implement a robust system of independent scrutiny within their own organisation, all 3 partners should ensure that any scrutiny function is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

The new arrangements will continue to reflect the current commitment and healthy culture of challenge and scrutiny

### **Safeguarding Partnership Delivery Infrastructure**

#### Child Death Review

In addition to reporting through our Safeguarding Partnership function, this group will also feed into a Regional Child Death Overview Panel. The group will review any child deaths in the borough, to identify learning across the Partnership.

#### Missing, Slavery, Exploited and Trafficked (MSET)

The local group will continue in the transitional year and strengthen the link with adults at risk of exploitation in order to give the same level of scrutiny to adult cases. This in turn will help to develop a local exploitation profile that can be fed into the regional work around exploitation.

#### Performance Management and Quality Assurance

This sub group currently focuses on safeguarding issues of a local, regional and national interest. We will build on our successful approach to multi-agency audits, quality assurance of all partners, scrutiny of external inspection reports, and input from children and young people. In addition it will also assess the impact of support being provided to children and families.

#### Learning and Improvement (joint group with adults)

This group will have a focus on co-ordinating the outcome of any scrutiny and assurance activity, oversight and learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Review / Safeguarding Adult Reviews and to potentially contribute to the regional Learning and Improvement Framework. The group will also have responsibility for the local process for identifying and making decisions on whether to undertake reviews, how lessons are learnt and embedded in the online safeguarding policies and procedures.

### Workforce Development and Training (Joint group with adults)

The Safeguarding Partnership will work together to determine local training needs, along with the monitoring and evaluation of any training. The multi-agency training programme for 2019/20 is already in circulation, with positive uptake across the Partnership. Dependent upon future regional agreed developments it could be that generic safeguarding training can be co-ordinated and delivered on a regional level and any specialist training e.g. related to multi-agency frontline practice and / or learning from child safeguarding practice reviews can be commissioned at a local level. This activity could then be subsumed within the remit of the Learning and Improvement Group. There is an effective programme for course evaluation and impact of training on frontline practice that could be developed further to meet future aspirations of the Partnership.

### **Multi-agency Representation**

In order to deliver effective safeguarding arrangements, and improve outcomes for children and families, it will be necessary for the Safeguarding Partnership to engage with additional agencies and organisations with a responsibility for planning and/or delivering services for children and families.

The South Tyneside Practice Partnership will engage with local organisations to improve frontline practice and the impact of this practice. Our approach will allow for flexibility around partnership working to identify and respond to emerging needs in the borough, and to agree future priorities for the Partnership.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018<sup>11</sup> set out the list of relevant agencies that are required to work under the auspices of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It is important to note that:

- Although safeguarding partner organisations are not referred to in the regulations, their staff are subject to the children's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA).
- Certain key agencies are not listed in the regulations, as their functions are commissioned or otherwise overseen by one or more of the safeguarding partners. For example, GPs, dentists and mental health providers are already represented through the inclusion of CCG's, NHS England and the Foundation Trust.
- The list of relevant agencies is intentionally focussed at a strategic, agency-based level. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all bodies and individuals which come into contact with children and young people.

There are relevant agencies in South Tyneside who can actively contribute to helping and protecting children. The list of local agencies may change overtime to reflect the journey of travel.

Other organisations and agencies not identified in the relevant agency regulations will be included in the local safeguarding arrangements. Examples of these include the Fire and Rescue Service, South Tyneside Homes and the voluntary and faith sector.

Where a relevant agency has a national remit such as the British Transport Police and CAFCASS the safeguarding partners will collaborate and take account of that agency's individual responsibilities and potential contributions towards a number of local safeguarding children arrangements.

Early years providers play a crucial role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as defined by their duties under Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006. There are robust arrangements in place at a strategic and operational level to engage with early years providers to ensure they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities, for example through section 11 Safeguarding audits and statutory Ofsted Inspection reports. The effectiveness of these mechanisms will be reviewed during the transitional year.

Safeguarding partners also acknowledge the pivotal role that schools, colleges and other educational providers play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as detailed in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018<sup>12</sup>. There are well established, collaborative relationships with schools and colleges, which are built on a variety of open and transparent partnership arrangements across South Tyneside. These include the primary and secondary Head Teacher Forums. The Designated Safeguarding Leads network in South Tyneside is currently being refreshed and potentially will provide a key safeguarding reference point for the Practice Partnership.

### **Children's Voices and Engagement**

As a Partnership, we understand our children and young people well. Our shared ambition is to continue to engage with the 'experts by experience', namely children and young people who experience services, in particular those who are harder to engage.

Our evidence of children's voices being influential has been evidenced through the 'Is This Your Story?' drama production which was developed based on our local MSET profile, and performed in a number of schools. Our Super Safety Squad (Junior LSCB) have been proactively involved in anti-bullying campaigns, raising awareness in schools and presenting awards. The LSCB and Community Safety Partnership have worked collaboratively and innovatively with a local school, South Tyneside Ability Football Club, and media students from the University of Sunderland to develop an online training programme promoting online safety for vulnerable young people and young adults at risk.

We remain committed to continue to engage with children, young people and families at an individual, service and strategic level.

## **Future Opportunities**

The transition model, and our vision for longer-term Safeguarding Partnership arrangements, present a number of future opportunities for the three safeguarding partners.

**Local** – it is anticipated that the key focus of the revised safeguarding arrangements will be based on a dual ‘Back to Practice’/ ‘Think Family’ basis where there will be a stronger connection between strategic and operational safeguarding functions that better aligns with safeguarding practice within the Partnership, demonstrating compliance, overview and evidencing impact for children and families.

There is the potential to strengthen the current MSET arrangements both at a local and regional level with greater alignment with Northumbria Police Complex Abuse Investigation Unit.

In addition further collaborative working will be progressed with the Adult Safeguarding Board. The sub groups that have merged, as highlighted above, are working well. The more we progress towards a joint collaborative model the more we can add more substance and evidence to the ‘Think Family’ approach. In addition we will be evidencing maximising the use of partners’ time, commitment and wider understanding of safeguarding across the life course.

It is important to consider the current and/or future arrangements within the organisations of the three statutory partners which may influence any local plans and/or arrangements.

**Regional** – the Business Managers across the region have made considerable progress on securing robust integrated and collaborative arrangements. These have included:

- **Safeguarding Policies and Procedures** – agreed shared regional set of safeguarding policies and procedures. This will ensure greater levels of consistency across the region in terms of practice and provide some level of efficiency in relation to costs, maintenance and review.

**Next Steps:** Following the success of this piece of work the next steps are to explore the development of a regional joint multi-agency threshold / effective help document and referral form.

- **Performance dataset and score card** – this has been agreed and will be introduced May 2019. This will provide more substance opportunities for comparative analysis, trends, themes, gaps and strengths in provision from which a regional approach can be taken to address.

**Next Steps:** improve the quality of the narrative and analysis and explore what elements of the performance dataset could be undertaken regionally and within what areas. Develop the role and actions of the local quality assurance process to align with the potential of a regional thematic approach to areas of data / performance.

- **Learning from Serious Case reviews and learning reviews** – successful regional collaboration has resulted in the production of a regional electronic learning resource based on the theme of vulnerabilities in babies. The resource allows access to all materials produced across the region on this theme. This is both a cost and time effective resource in terms of increasing the level of shared learning across all areas.

**Next steps:** Develop additional regional learning resources across both children and adults.

- **Section 11 Safeguarding Audit** – a shared S11 audit tool has been agreed across the region. It is anticipated that this will take place at the same time in each area. This will be a great saving of time for those partners who work across the region. Having one audit tool will allow for both a local and regional comparison and analysis of findings. The regional themes can then support the development of future regional priorities.  
**Next steps:** consider building in the S11 audit into wider multi-agency audit process and develop a similar model for a regional Section 175 audit for schools and GPs.
- **Missing Sexual Exploitation Trafficked and Slavery** – there has been an agreed regional approach to the running of MSET groups, incorporating adult exploitation. The areas of transitions and involvement of adult cases of concern needs to be strengthened in order to be a robust regional approach.  
**Next Steps:** explore the possibility of developing one regional strategic MSET group. This group would have oversight on the trend, hotspots and data analysis across the region from which agreed collaborative actions could be implemented and monitored.
- **Local Safeguarding Practice Review Guidance** - work in progress on developing an agreed shared procedure. There is already a joint commissioning platform for securing independent chairs and authors where required.  
**Next steps:** consideration to be given to a shared regional approach to the approval and learning from reviews. The regional resource is a good starting point that has the potential to be developed.
- **Domestic Abuse Prevention** - mapping work has already been completed to explore the potential for a shared prevention regional strategy. Proposals for a joint public awareness campaign expected June 2019.  
**Next Steps:** explore the opportunities for the shared commissioning of Domestic Abuse programmes and sharing of resources. Domestic Abuse is just one of the issues common across the region. Additional issues that could be tackled include neglect, early help and children in custody.

**Multi-Agency Training** – as safeguarding training is common to all Safeguarding Partnerships there is a real opportunity to take a regional approach. This could be a ‘hub and spoke’ model whereby one area co-ordinates the training offer with the potential for the other local areas, the spokes, delivering bespoke local training dependent upon local needs.

An option paper has gone to the Forum but no discussion / decision has taken place as yet.

## **Appendix A: Safeguarding Partnership strategic arrangements**

### **Funding Arrangements**

Our current LSCB is funded from a range of multi-agency partners, and our proposals build on this current arrangement. All partners will continue to commit an equitable and fair level of funding to the South Tyneside Safeguarding Partnership. For this reason, the budget for 2019/20 will remain the same as the previous year, with future funding arrangements reviewed in January 2020.

### **Geographical Area**

The boundaries for the South Tyneside Safeguarding Partnership will mirror the boundaries of South Tyneside Council. However, as a Partnership we are committed to contribute to regional working, learning and improvement: As part of our proposals, we will continue to contribute to:

- the regional Business Managers Network
- the North and South of Tyne Regional Safeguarding Forum

### **Scrutiny and Assurance**

The new Safeguarding Partnership will continue to reflect our shared commitment of learning and improvement, as evidenced by our history of scrutiny and challenge. The current LSCB hold a local risk register and challenge log, and our proposals would support the continuation of this.

### **Dispute Resolution**

All agencies working with children and young people in South Tyneside remain subject to the sub-regional safeguarding procedures and relevant escalation policy – *Resolution of professional disagreements between workers relating to the safety of children*<sup>13</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

<sup>2</sup> as defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017

<sup>3</sup> South Tyneside's Best Start in Life Strategy 2017-20

(<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/38525/Children-and-families>)

<sup>4</sup> <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2761390>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/northumbria-national-child-protection-post-inspection-review.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new\\_reports/AAAG9903.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/AAAG9903.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership, CCG Governing Body, Police, Regional Safeguarding Forum

<sup>8</sup> The CCG will continue to represent NEAS / NHS England / NTW and STFT as part of their formal role

<sup>9</sup> Current priorities for the Board will remain the same as the current LSCB priorities of Board Effectiveness, Multi-Agency Performance Monitoring, Key Local Safeguarding Areas of Concern, and Learning & Improvement

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/35872/Information-for-professionals>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/978011167540>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<sup>13</sup>

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/South\\_Tyneside\\_SCB/files/escalation\\_pol.pdf?zoom\\_highlight=escalation#search='escalation'](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/South_Tyneside_SCB/files/escalation_pol.pdf?zoom_highlight=escalation#search='escalation')