



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2019-2022



Priorities

The Safeguarding Partners have agreed their strategic priorities for 2019-2022 as:

- ✚ Protecting vulnerable children and young people
- ✚ Leadership
- ✚ Learning and improving

Protecting vulnerable children and young people

Protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. For those children who are vulnerable this means ensuring that services are targeted, responsive and efficient and everything that can be done is being done to achieve the best outcomes and reducing the risks and challenges they face.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm is beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over or within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

The Safeguarding Partners will continue to take an interest in those groups of vulnerable children and young people at risk of harm from: domestic abuse; child criminal exploitation; sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including intra-familial; children with a disability; child neglect; self-harm and suicide; and babies, to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective.

Leadership

Working Together (2018) states that everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. It is vital that organisations and individuals understand the role they play and that these arrangements are strongly led and promoted by the chief officers in all organisations.

Strong leadership is critical in the new safeguarding arrangements to be effective in bringing together various organisations and agencies. It is important therefore that Safeguarding Partners play an active role. All three Safeguarding Partners have equal and joint responsibility for the local arrangements.

The Safeguarding Partners recognise that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to the teenage years. Effective early help relies upon organisations working together to: identify children and families who would benefit from early help; undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and provide early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve outcomes.

Organisations protecting children need to reflect on the quality of services and learn from their own practice and that of others. Good practice should be shared so that there is a growing understanding of what works well.

Effective safeguarding arrangements must be informed and based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children, young people and parents. This will be achieved through young people's events and consultations: audit and evaluation activity; ensuring key strategies and actions plans are in place and progressed; update reports to the Safeguarding Partners; joint working across strategic partnerships e.g. the Safeguarding Adults Board; task and finish groups and ensuring there is enough, quality training to support professional and practitioner development and effective practice.

The Safeguarding Partners acknowledge that effective information sharing is essential for the identification of need to keep children safe. Fears about information sharing cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and to protect the safety of children.

To achieve strong and effective leadership the Safeguarding Partners will:

- ✚ Provide collective local leadership
- ✚ Have effective governance arrangements and operating structure
- ✚ Be represented at the Early Help Board
- ✚ Contribute to the North and South of Tyne Strategic Safeguarding Forum
- ✚ Have an informed understanding of safeguarding arrangements and performance in single agencies
- ✚ Have clear lines of accountability with other strategic partnerships and be able to demonstrate its influence on the work of those partnerships
- ✚ Operate a robust business planning and outcomes focused approach to the work, routinely using feedback from children, young people and their families to evaluate impact
- ✚ Consider how we build positive relationships with other areas to ensure relevant information is shared
- ✚ Promote a child centred approach to strategic planning, service provision and practice

- ✚ Provide evidence through data, reviews, self-assessments and audits, to assist the understanding of how safe children are in Newcastle so that they can influence and improve outcomes
- ✚ Strengthen participation, ensuring partners have robust and effective systems, processes and policies in place
- ✚ Promote a strong culture of mutual challenge
- ✚ Ensure that all agencies provide evidence of the work they are undertaking to safeguard children and young people
- ✚ Challenge partners and each other and maintain a challenge log

Learning and improving

The Safeguarding Partner's [Learning and Improvement Framework](#) (appendix 6) provides the foundation for driving improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Newcastle. The framework covers a range of methods, which includes case reviews, multi-agency practice audits and self-assessments.

To support this the (wider) Partnership will:

- ✚ Monitor the multi-agency performance scorecard on a quarterly basis
- ✚ Undertake single and multi-agency audits to understand how effectively the whole system is working
- ✚ Facilitate a multi-agency practice week
- ✚ Ensure practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective in practice
- ✚ Undertake local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and other practice related reviews as required
- ✚ Ensure learning from practice reaches frontline practitioners and is used to develop practice and service provision and tests that desired change has taken place
- ✚ Continue to build upon and strengthen how the voice of children and young people shapes and influences the work of the SPs
- ✚ Undertake reviews and evaluations of the effectiveness of training and procedures
- ✚ Listen to frontline practitioners and learn from their lived experience
- ✚ Facilitate partnerships events and development sessions

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