

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020/2021



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1. SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS' FOREWORD

The period covered by this report was one of significant challenge for the Country. In Newcastle, practitioners and managers across the City showed remarkable ability in adapting their responses to meet the challenges created by the pandemic. Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership demonstrated its ability to respond and to be creative in providing leadership through this difficult time. Our ability to safeguard children and support vulnerable families continued and, moreover, we were able to progress our priorities and strengthen the co-ordination and efficacy of services.



Pat Ritchie

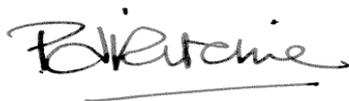
Newcastle City Council
Chief Executive Officer

We have seen the launch of Children and Families Newcastle bringing radical change to our Early Help offer and embarked upon a programme of whole system change in Children's Social Care, as part of the Department for Education's Strengthening Families, Protecting Children, programme.

The Partnership demonstrated its resilience and commitment to improvement by progressing with its plans for an extensive peer review. As such, it is from a position of strength that we continue our work over the coming year.

We also proceed with the benefit of the Wood Review into the early achievements of Safeguarding Children Partnerships which along with our own local learning provide a clear road map for the coming years.

This will be my last year as Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council and I would like to thank all our staff, across all our agencies for their continued commitment to the children and Families of Newcastle during what has been a period of challenge and change.



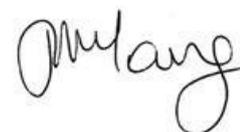
Judith Hay OBE
Director of Children,
Education and Skills
Newcastle City Council



Deborah Alderson
Detective Chief Superintendent
Safeguarding, Northumbria Police



Julia Young
Exec Director of Nursing,
Patient Safety & Quality
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*Statutory Partners' Lead Officers with
Responsibility for Children's Safeguarding*

2. INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

This report, on the work of Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership*, covers the period April 2020 to March 2021.

During this period the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has been significant, with continued high levels of activity and the increasing challenge and complexity arising from this. However, in this challenging situation the strength of Newcastle's Safeguarding Children Partnership has been highlighted, with excellent collaboration and co-operation being very apparent. I would like to thank, and commend, front line staff for their hard work and commitment, and for their creative approaches to delivering safe services, during times when face to face and usual ways of working were simply not possible.

Of course, it is not the volume of the work undertaken by partners that is important. It is the impact of this work which is crucial to ensure that we keep children and young people in Newcastle as safe as possible. This increasing emphasis on scrutiny will be further enhanced, as issues that may have been hidden during lockdown are exposed, along with the impact of isolation and illness on mental health and education. The Partnership will continue its focus on further developing high quality frontline practice, around the dynamic range of issues associated with prevention and protection, and with a greater emphasis on audit and review, to measure the impact of services on outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

The Newcastle Safeguarding Partnership will continue to work to ensure that children and young people across Newcastle are safeguarded, and that our city is an increasingly safe place for all to flourish.

This will be my last Annual Report as Chair, as I have chosen to step down from the role and am "handing over the reins" to my successor. It has been a privilege to hold this position for the last three years and I pay tribute to the commitment and determination of all involved in the safeguarding of children and young people in Newcastle.

Helen Lamont.



Helen Lamont

Independent Chair, Newcastle Safeguarding Partnership



3. NEWCASTLE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

3.1 WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together 2018* as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- ensuring the children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Newcastle Safeguarding Partners, in accordance with Working Together 2018, published their Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children and Young People in June 2019.

The Newcastle Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is a multi-agency partnership, with responsibility for safeguarding children and young people throughout the city. Leadership is provided by three statutory partners, Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police, and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. Their work is coordinated by an Independent Chair (a full list of partner agencies is shown in Appendix i). The NSCP works closely with other relevant groups to ensure a coordinated, city wide, approach to a range of issues which cross the boundaries of age, and are therefore not the specific remit of any one particular group. These include Safe Newcastle and the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board.

The NSCP is also an active member of the regional Tyne, Wear, Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership.

Our Purpose: Is to help to protect children and young people at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation

Our Vision: Is to ensure that Newcastle is an increasingly safer city for children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect

Our Principle: Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and has a co-ordinated approach.

The NSCP is supported by a number of sub groups and task and finish groups, one of which is joint with the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board to provide a joined up approach to the business as shown above .



* Working Together 2018 is statutory guidance for multi-agency working. It exists to highlight the expectations of working with agencies in your local area, and on a national level, to keep children safe

4. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Partnership has an agreed set of strategic priorities, which form the basis of the Annual Plan, and which are informed by a range of sources. These include:

- The Newcastle Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements for Children and Young People
- Findings from internal and external case reviews
- A regular and defined programme of audit and inspection
- Regular review of performance information
- National drivers and research
- The views of children and young people.

A set of core business objectives underpin these strategic objectives, and these are progressed by the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership subgroups. The Strategic Annual Plan is a 'live' document monitored and updated by the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership on a quarterly basis.

The overarching key strategic priorities are:

1. Protecting Vulnerable Children and Young People
With the objective of minimising the risks of harm to children and young people
2. Learning and Improving
To ensure that children and young people influence the strategic planning on issues that affect them, that we learn from scrutiny of multiagency practice, and that practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective in their practice.
3. Leadership
To ensure that NSCP continuously improves on its effectiveness, has clear lines of communication, works strategically with partners, and has effective governance arrangements in place, which support a robust planned approach to its work.

The following section (5. Spotlight on 2020/21) demonstrates a range of work that has contributed to progress against each of these objectives.

5. SPOTLIGHT ON 2020/2021

This section of the Annual Report focusses on key areas of work undertaken during 2020/21. However, these must be seen in the context of the very significant amount of day to day work undertaken by staff throughout the year. We cannot overestimate the amount of “routine” work that goes into keeping children and young people safe in Newcastle.

5.1. Building Resilience During the Coronavirus Pandemic

It is acknowledged that many children and families will have been hidden during the periods of lockdown particularly with the partial closure of schools and the requirement to work from home which reduced the opportunities for victims of abuse and domestic violence to escape from their perpetrators and seek additional support. The culmination of these events together with financial hardship, job losses, bereavement, lack of contact and support from family and friends has been described as the pressure cooker effect and it is expected the legacy effect from Covid on children's health and well-being will be significant.

In April 2020 the Designated Nurse (Newcastle Gateshead CCG) initiated regular information sharing meetings with provider organisations including both Local Authorities, Police, Foundation Trusts, 0-19 years' service and education. This provided an opportunity to discuss how services were being delivered locally, what was happening on the ground and facilitated the escalation of issues at an early stage which could then be fed into various forums. Headlines from this meeting were also shared at the safeguarding children partnerships to facilitate communication between agencies. Where issues were identified further exploration and assurance was sought. This meeting acted as a support mechanism for staff to share what it felt like for them and they have continued at a reduced frequency as practitioners have found them useful.

5.2. Peer Review

Legislative changes brought about the establishment of the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership in August 2019, replacing the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board, and included a commitment from the Partnership to commission a peer review after one year of the “new” arrangements to ensure their effectiveness, and that they were fit for purpose, to improve outcomes for children and young people in the City. During this period the Covid pandemic struck, and the period of transition to the new arrangements was, unavoidably, elongated.

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) outlined that the scope of the review should explore the following issues, which formed the basis for the key lines of enquiry.:

- Leadership and Governance
- Roles and Functions
- Independent Scrutiny, Challenge and Effectiveness
- Ensuring the Voice of Children and Young People is Heard
- Opportunities for Local and Regional Join Up and Collaboration

The Peer Review, undertaken by an independent reviewer, went ahead as planned during 2020, reporting in November 2020, and making a number of recommendations to further strengthen existing safeguarding arrangements. All recommendations were accepted and ratified, by NSCP, in January 2021.

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The Review recognised that the “strong existing arrangements, identified in a good judgement by Ofsted in 2017, have afforded Newcastle a strong platform on which to develop new arrangements”. Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations, which include the establishment of an Executive Group, consisting of the Statutory Partners, which will strengthen leadership and accountability, and the establishment of the role of independent scrutineer.

5.3. Children and Young People’s Event: Alcohol Changes Lives

In March 2021 the fourth annual Young People’s Event took place in Newcastle. This event, chaired by Emma Gibson Youth Leader, Safeguarding Portfolio holder, Newcastle Youth Democracy Group, was a powerful and successful event, attended by well over 100 delegates. In her foreword to her report on the event, Emma explains:

“Although the 2021 Newcastle Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Conference: ‘Alcohol Changes Lives’ took place on the online platform Microsoft Teams, this did not prevent it successfully going forward. Despite the Covid- 19 pandemic providing challenges, this online setting came with benefits, and chairing the conference allowed me to learn valuable things from this informative and insightful event and everyone involved.

The idea for the theme of this conference emerged from the NSCP conference in 2019 which addressed the problem of knife crime. The voting process and surveys that allowed the young people and organisations present there to evaluate the conference and identify themes for the upcoming year, proved that the impacts of alcohol was a prescient issue for young people and an utmost priority to be tackled in the region.

The issue of alcohol has undeniably been exacerbated in the past year, notably in the Covid- 19 lockdown periods, where a general decline in mental health has led to an increase in alcohol consumption and, if not directly affected, more young people have been exposed to domestic drinking. The impacts of alcohol such as addiction, social isolation, mental health issues and vulnerability to exploitation have affected various young stakeholders, which was evident in the content presented at the conference. The impacts of alcohol upon young carers was especially detailed, as the conference coincided with Young Carers Day, showing how support is crucial for young people caring for those with alcohol addictions, something which has greatly increased over 2020.”

Emma Gibson Youth Leader, Safeguarding
Portfolio holder, Newcastle Youth Democracy
Group

Practitioners and decision-makers made pledges to support young people’s priorities, concerns and requests for support. These are set out below.

“The conference in 2022 will be The Impact of Mental Health on Young People during the Covid Pandemic



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Ensure that children are referred to the right support services when seen in acute services with alcohol related problem	Continue to ensure this message is shared with educational professionals so that they can use it to shape their work.	Raise awareness about alcohol misuse and the risks posed to young people.
Encourage Young people I support to access other projects/activities to give them a different focus	Work with colleagues in the partnership to continue to promote the safety and welfare of children and young people in Newcastle	To try to promote referral to alcohol services for young people when they are seen in ED intoxicated
Encourage no drinking under 18. Sharing what I've learnt. Being a welcoming non-judgmental practitioner who is easily approachable. Outside of work - as a widow of someone who lost their life to alcohol - I pledge to be more understanding and patient with my own family.	Continue to work with enforcement to stop shop sales to minors and increase training to security staff re safeguarding of minors	Provide a listening ear and appropriate advice/support for those families and young people affected adversely by alcohol
Listen to the views of children and young people in relation to not only their alcohol use but on the use of others	Ensure CPD Education to staff and PSHE lesson on such topics to students continue to be of high quality. Better support and sign posting for those students effected	Source: Taken from the report of the CYP event

5.4. Implementing the Reforms

Implementing the Reforms, Department for Education (DfE)

Following the Wood Review into the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), the government introduced legislation through the Children and Social Work Act which reshaped the way in which local agencies worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This was the legislation that brought about changes in Children's safeguarding, and which established the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership in August 2019 and replacing "the Board".

In December 2020 NSCP was given the opportunity to bid for DfE funding, and DfE advised that "To encourage and incentivise new models of working to align with the requirements we [DfE] will be providing grant funding to selected safeguarding partners to develop and test innovative approaches to implementing their plans".

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Newcastle's bid was successful, and a grant awarded, to support work in Newcastle to strengthen the voice of the child, and family.

This will provide the opportunity to design and embed a new approach to scrutiny, including co-designing an innovative multi-agency framework that maximises opportunities for the partnership to work alongside children, families, and frontline practitioners. As a result, these groups will have a greater role in driving, influencing and scrutinising partnership arrangements. Work is underway and will continue through 2021-22.

5.5. Training and Education

The largely face to face and e-learning training programme has been under review, with the intention of establishing a formal process of training needs analysis and a robust process of evaluation. However, this still requires completion as work was interrupted by the pandemic. This also expedited change across all sectors and forced a more virtual approach to training delivery. Since lockdown safeguarding training has been offered via Teams workshops, Webinars, and the already established e-learning route, with a significant increase in e-learning requirements. There have been many lessons learned about what works and the challenges in bringing about change. A revised website has been established which has helped to overcome some previous barriers to change and work continues to review the training offer to ensure effectiveness and value for money. The issue of robust evaluation and impact on service need remains an intractable issue to be addressed. Training and Education will continue to be addressed as the Peer Review implementation progresses.

5.6. Website Review

A revised website has been established in collaboration with NSAB, and has brought about improved access with work ongoing to establish the brand and strengthen this platform, in accordance with Peer Review recommendations.

5.7. Newcastle Education Safeguarding Partnership (NSCP Sub Group)

During the partial closure of schools across the city due to the second lockdown, schools have maintained a focus on safeguarding pupils. COVID reflections during NESP meetings have shown that regular contact and support was provided for families with social care involvement, with schools also providing support and guidance for vulnerable pupils. All pupils requiring devices were provided through schools.

Operation Encompass, which aims to ensure that schools have timely information about all Police attended incidents of domestic abuse, is in place in Newcastle and works very well to enhance safeguarding and support to children that experience domestic abuse at home. By definition Operation Encompass only covers children of school age, and for some time the Partnership has recognised that more needs to be done to address this issue for children under the age of 4. However, this is a complex issue as the Operation Encompass approach is not directly transferrable to this group of children, as not all children under the age of 4 attend a nursery and, also, nurseries are not regulated or governed in the same way that schools are. In previous years we were advised that, as this was a national project, the problem was not able to be addressed in the short term. However, during this year work to address this is being piloted in a number of geographical areas, which will include Newcastle. The Partnership continues to work col-

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laboratively to find a solution for this problem, and to ensure that children under the age of 4 receive similar enhanced support from professionals.

A working group, currently made up of education and children's social care reps, has been put in place to further develop and improve information sharing across agencies to progress the way in which children and families with social care involvement can be supported. The desired development is that all agencies become involved to improve information sharing.

Schools have been consulted about what issues they face with Early Help Plans and the lead practitioner role. A questionnaire was produced and shared with head teachers across the city to collate and understand the issues schools have.

The NESP has had a continuing dialogue based around COVID and the challenges it has represented for schools over the last 12 months. Schools have shared best practice and discussed and shared the support they have provided or external support they have accessed. Topics have included:

- Rise in the number of pupils exhibiting anxiety and wellbeing struggles.
- Parents wellbeing and mental health problems and the knock on effects
- Attendance – what can be done to help outside of what schools are doing in house

Members of the NESP have been involved in a number of training inputs from safeguarding agencies and the support they can provide for schools and the vulnerable pupils. Training has been on:

- Private Fostering
- Neglect Graded Profile Tool
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) pathway
- Young Carers
- Early Help
- Learning From Serious Case Reviews

5.8. Learning Improvement Group (NSCP Sub Group)

During the reporting period three reports from the Learning and Improvement group (LIG) have been shared at the NSCP. An overview of activity includes the following:

- Scrutiny of the section 11 audits which demonstrates the extent to which its partners are fulfilling their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
- Oversee the pilot of a multi-agency report for review child protection conferences which produced positive feed back from families and professionals.
- Successful completion and submission to the partnership, for the approval of the self-harm

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pathway and the management of childhood obesity and safeguarding care for overweight and obese children pathway to be included on the local resource page of the procedures.

- Review of the joint training and evaluation framework which has led to further consideration for future delivery. One significant factor is the global pandemic and the adjustments required to comply with social restriction measures and another is the feedback from the peer review.
- Review and agreement of the audit schedule for the year ahead which is informed by any learning highlighted from case reviews both local and national, research, findings from deep dive audits, analysis of the child protection and children in care data presented to LIG by the local authority which is discussed at each meeting.

When collating FGM data it was identified that not all aspects of 'health' were included to capture relevant information. Task and Finish group was set up to look at FGM data collection across health services to ensure robust process in place.

The numbers of private fostering arrangements are reviewed annually by LIG and further work is ongoing to continue to raise awareness of this by all agencies.

5.9. Case Review Group (NSCP Sub Group)

During the reporting period the case review group has met three times and, in addition, has held two rapid review meetings to consider whether the cases submitted met the criteria for a local or national child safeguarding practice review (formerly know as serious case reviews) or a learning review. Neither case met the criteria for a local safeguarding practice review, however local learning was identified.

Two serious cases reviews have been published during this time, Laura in April 2020 and Baby D in October 2020. Each review and associated learning are considered by the case review group and organisations highlight both single agency and joint learning. This then informs any further actions for the learning improvement group and informs future training requirements.

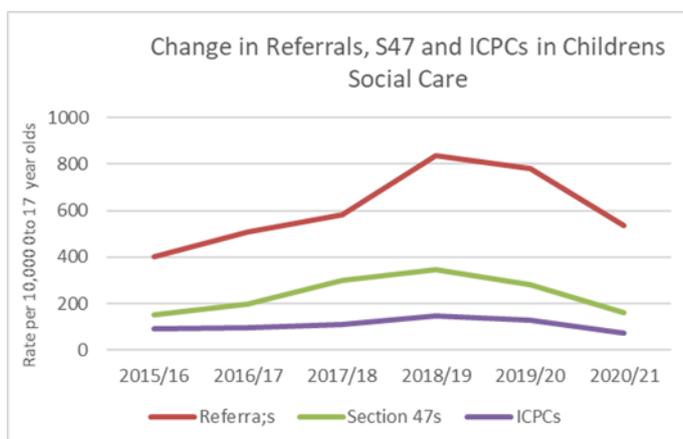
Following the publication of Laura SCR, where a young female was sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend who was a known sex offender, a task and finish group was established to look at the learning, and a webinar held to address intrafamilial sexual abuse. The webinar was delivered by a consultant paediatrician with expertise in sexual abuse, the NSCP business coordinator and trainers and the NSPCC. It attracted approximately 200 delegates and was very well received.

6. WHAT THE LOCAL DATA TELLS US

The NSCP performance scorecard contains a cross section of multi-agency data relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Whilst data does not supply the full picture, scrutiny of this enables the partnership to identify trends in safeguarding, and in understanding the picture for the city as a whole, that require further investigation. Some of the findings and trends for the year are included below.

During 2020/21, work has been continued within Children's Social Care and with partners to manage demand and ensure referrals and escalations are appropriate. We have seen a continuation in the reduction in rate of referral, assessment and S47* enquiries, along with number and rates of children in need and children on a child protection plan. Regular audits ensure that these reductions are being made safely,

and additional support has been put in place to ensure that children in need continued to be identified during periods of lockdown and school closure.



Police data shows number of Child Concern Notifications (CCN) force wide reduced in the first lockdown in March 2020, but have increased since schools have been fully open. In the year to January 2021, there was an increase of 3%, 962 CCNs, across the Northumbria police area. This year there has been a continued reduction in overall offences against children. Across the region, at Q3 there had been an 18% reduction from 2019/20 to 2020/21 (-1482 offences), and this proportion is similar in Newcastle. Again, it is most likely that COVID 19 and the lockdown periods throughout 2020 have contributed to this reduction.

In the year to January 2021, the number of Domestic Abuse incidents where a child has been involved remained similar to the previous year, although there was 8.4% increase in all Domestic Abuse incidents (HRNs). Coercive control training was delivered which focused on attitudes of staff dealing with domestic abuse victims, and this resulted in an increased level of recognition and recording of coercive control offences.

There are no significant year on year changes relating to children going missing or child sexual exploitation. The number of complex abuse meetings has decreased this year, and the average number of people involved has fallen from approx. 8 last year to approx. 6 this year per meeting.

The number of children in care is remaining stable at around 116 per 10,000 or 672 children. Rates of children starting care are low (32 per 10,000) and more children are being adopted, although timescales remain higher than comparators.

The disruption to schooling and exams due to COVID19 means that many education indicators are not being published this year, so we are unable to update our comparisons.

Use of custodial sentences continues to fall with no children serving a custodial sentence at the end of 2020/21, compared to 12 in 2017/18.

* S47 - A Section 47 enquiry means that CSC must carry out an investigation when they have "reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm".

7. PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES

Our Partners have provided the following updates about their Safeguarding activity during 2020/2021

7.1. Newcastle upon The Hospitals NHSFT (NuTH)

The Trust continues to contribute to NSCP priorities both at Board and Subcommittee level, through attendance at multi-agency meetings and contribution to multi-agency training and inspection.



The Trust's Safeguarding Children's team have continued to provide support to Services/Wards and departments across the Trust, building relationships, strengthening networks and providing caseload review, debrief from critical incidents and learning from and contributing to child Safeguarding Practice reviews/Learning reviews.

Despite a challenging year, we have continued to see an increase in the rate of referrals via our duty system (triple the previous year). We have continued to provide all previous functions, using virtual platforms where appropriate for training and supervision, during the ongoing pandemic restrictions. The balance has been improved between the needs of the acute and community sections of the Trust. We have been involved with a number of cases with catastrophic/fatal outcomes and have supported practitioners during safeguarding processes and in the aftermath of these.

Data and narrative was recently provided for a national Knife Crime/Violent Youth Crime Meeting, we continue to work with our colleagues from both adults and children's Emergency Departments and Northumbria Police to ensure robust processes are in place. Bespoke training was arranged in conjunction with Violence Reduction unit, knife/serious youth crime/exploitation which will roll out across the Trust over summer/autumn of 2021.

The Children's Safeguarding team has seen more changes in personnel over the last year, with the appointment of a new Safeguarding Nurse Advisor. We have also inducted a Safeguarding Nurse working across the whole lifespan (12 month secondment). The Head of Safeguarding was seconded into the Trust's COVID response team, thus providing opportunities for the team to take more strategic responsibility, lead and supported by an Associate Director of Nursing.

We have contributed to the Trust's COVID response, by changing our shift patterns and working virtually where possible, we have provided sessional support to the hospital vaccinating team and delivered Safeguarding training for 730+ staff, recruited across the region for the COVID Hubs.

We continue to provide a health perspective and supporting information to ensure robust multi-agency decision making in a virtual MASH and will be part of the work around developing the process further to include a larger group of partners. MDT meetings for Strategy and discharge planning have continued virtually between Safeguarding team and NSCP partners.

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We are releasing a Nurse advisor from the team to complete 'Train the Trainers programme' for Graded Care Profile 2 (Neglect) and have assisted in the role out of ICON (which supports parents to understand crying babies and help to prevent head injuries) within the Trust. The team have also been instrumental in pulling together the work from health services around Female Genital Mutilation, in response to a Newcastle case review.

The vacancy of the Safeguarding trainer post has had a big impact on the team in terms of capacity. We have maintained the in house training schedule for Level 3 and hope to contribute to multi-agency training in as a priority in the future, in whatever capacity is required as it is re-introduced.

The Safeguarding Children's team have been involved in a number of Child Safeguarding Practice Review's (CSPR's) and learning events over the past 12 months, both internally and acting as Trust single point of contact for cases from other areas. We have maintained a presence as part of the Trust Child Death Overview Panel as required, liaising with teams/practitioners and giving tailored support where there have been practice issues and disseminated the learning as required.

We have re-introduced safeguarding forums, which had been paused due to the pandemic. These are valued by staff and extremely useful as an opportunity for staff to access the current themes learning from cases.

We are currently working with our IT and Information Governance colleagues to roll out a new internal alert process in relation to risks to children and young people, both in acute areas (on e-record) and also in conjunction with community colleagues, to ensure flags on records are implemented and managed appropriately in line with our GDPR responsibilities.

We have an effective audit schedule, examples include, 0-19 Safeguarding records, acute medical records and an audit of Emergency Department cases. Audits are presented and scrutinised at the NuTH safeguarding committee, including the learning and implemented improvements from these, to ensure robustness and rigour.

The Children's Safeguarding team are well respected across the Trust, and particularly in the Great North Children's Hospital. We have received a number of compliments about the support we provide to teams and individuals over the course of this year and plan a staff survey in 2022 to assess any unmet needs or any changes that the workforce would like to see need to be made in terms of our practice/ approach.

7.2. Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group

During what has been an unprecedented year with the Covid19 pandemic the importance of protecting children and young people has never been so great. The CCG has worked with partner agencies to seek assurance that alternate plans were put in place to continue to reach those children and families most at risk using robust risk assessments, personal protective equipment where required and the increased use of virtual technology to maintain vital links. Due to the 'stay at home' essential message children and families were less visible which meant practitioners sought out new methods to protect vulnerable children and inform the safeguarding process. One example of this was the introduction of GPs using MS Teams to dial into child protection conferences and other safeguarding meetings. This process was developed with children's social care, a Named GP and the safeguarding children team in the CCG. Preliminary feedback has demonstrated this can be productive in allowing the GPs to contribute to the meeting and inform decision making. Further evaluation will take place as this progresses.



Since the start of lockdown resulting in reduced visibility of children and families, a weekly meeting was set up in April 2020 by the CCG Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children which included partner agencies from Local Authorities, Police, Health providers and Education. This created an opportunity for early identification of emerging issues which could be escalated accordingly, an overview of what was happening on the ground and a support mechanism for practitioners to share their experiences. A summary of key themes was shared with the safeguarding children partnership. This has continued throughout the pandemic, reducing currently to fortnightly meetings and its continuation will be evaluated accordingly.

The safeguarding children and adult team within the CCG recognised the importance of raising awareness of safeguarding and providing an opportunity for people to ask for help. NGCCG arranged for safeguarding resources in the form of posters and banners to be displayed at Covid testing sites. It was important to make every contact count as this may be the only opportunity for someone to seek support. This was recognised nationally as good practice by NHS England/Improvement.



Nationally there has been an increase in babies suffering physical abuse from non-accidental injuries since the start of the pandemic. The CCG safeguarding children team has facilitated the roll out of ICON a programme which offers techniques for coping with crying, reducing abusive head trauma and death, targeted at both parents but particularly

fathers, as they are more likely to be perpetrators of this type of abuse. The safeguarding team has worked with local health providers including the acute hospitals and primary care and the Local Authority to promote this programme by delivering a training package and providing resources. This will continue to be embedded and its impact evaluated.



Feedback from practitioners in relation to the weekly catch-up meetings has been positive, *"I have found touching base with everyone incredibly useful over the past months"*.

Feedback from NHS England/Improvement in relation to safeguarding resources at testing sites: *"The idea and approach has been shared with national colleagues who are looking to promote and implement across the country, adapting to ensure all aspects of testing can include key safeguarding messages"*.

7.3. Newcastle City Council

7.3.1. Public Health Team

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, a key priority for public health has been to ensure that the public health needs of our most vulnerable communities are being met. This has been achieved by working with partners and public health commissioned services to deliver needs led interventions to some of our most vulnerable children and young people in Newcastle. Examples of this include:

- Supporting a range of young people's settings with Covid-19 advice and guidance to shape policies, procedures and early intervention, including support via multiagency wraparound teams for children's residential settings, early years services, special schools, and educational settings. The SPOC function continues to provide a rapid response to settings to manage confirmed cases/outbreaks of Covid thus protecting our children, young people and workforce.
- Loss of jobs and the financial pressure on vulnerable families throughout the last year has meant many children have been subject to food poverty – working with our VCS, food banks, LA food delivery team, and holiday hunger programme we have provided a service to ensure vulnerable children have access to healthy food and families access to essentials such as nappies and baby milk.
- We have provided support/interventions around emotional health and wellbeing via our 0-19 service, and through Active Newcastle we have delivered hundreds of activity packs to children across the city
- We have worked with our commissioned sexual health services for young people who have delivered period products, condoms, contraception and STI testing to young people across the city.
- Ensured that young people and families affected by substance misuse have access to relevant support.
- Support for the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) which supports families in care proceedings, where parental substance misuse is a significant factor, the intention to provide multi-disciplinary/intensive support for the family to remain together (where it is safe to do so).

Our specialist in house sexual health team, MESMAC, Shine and Teenage kicks work specifically with vulnerable groups. These teams have continued to support young people throughout the pandemic around sexual exploitation and abuse (Two case studies are provided below).

Public Health Commission a number services which impact on vulnerable children and young people. These include:

- 0-19 Service (School Nursing and Health Visiting) providing a universal health offer as well as a targeted approach to vulnerable children and young people.
- The re-commissioning of D&A services has also included plans for co-location of drug and alcohol

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staff within Family Centres / CFH to bring a more joined up approach to substance use within the family. Additional drug treatment funding has allowed extra family support workers as well as creche budgets and other interventions that aim to support parents into treatment, as well as children/young people.

- Drug and Alcohol Service Provision (services for individuals affected, including children, young people and a young adult offer; as well as a dedicated drug and alcohol young carers support worker).
- Sexual Health Services for vulnerable groups – (include dedicated services for young people, those sexually exploited, LGBT young people and people with Learning Disabilities)
- Commissioning of Balance north east alcohol office and supporting campaigns including ‘what’s the harms’ promoting the issues of alcohol use and the impact on children/young people. Tackling alcohol related harms has also led to ‘alcohol free schools’ within the Health Schools programme.
- Public health review all applications and variations for licensing in the city. This has included the development of an alcohol dashboard which shows where schools, young people’s services i.e. accommodation are so that we can object to any licenses that may increase the availability or accessibility of alcohol in the proximity of these services.
- Public Health provide regular updates to the Children’s Safeguarding Boards around Drug and alcohol provision for children and young people, Self-harm and Suicide prevention plans.
- During 2021, drug and alcohol training and awareness sessions were delivered for community family hub staff who fed back that they had noticed issues linked to increased alcohol consumption within client’s homes.
- We continue to use social media to share key messages around mental wellbeing, sexual health and advice on drugs and alcohol.

We are raising the profile about support for families and children / young people affected by substances at various learning networks.

Case Study 1

17-year-old young woman has worked with Shine for a couple of years, following a referral from CSC, with an extensive history of sexual exploitation and risk taking, including meeting males and posting indecent photos of herself on social media. The young person has experienced sexual violence and rape, which have been reported, there has also been lengthy multi agency involvement over the years and safeguarding. She was also on a safety plan, meaning she was unable to travel to school independently, and had no access to technology or internet.

There have been safeguarding concerns within the family, notably around parental capacity to keep her safe; a younger male sibling was removed from the home some years previously.

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Case Study 1 (contd.)

Shine have worked extensively with the young person around her history, and also moving forward in a safe and positive way, with a focus on sex and safety, sexual identity, body image, self-esteem, relationships, and pleasure. Work has also been done on the differences between positive and negative attention, and self-care.

Prior to Covid, we met regularly and during breaks in lockdown, have met for walks, and maintained phone contact.

The person is no longer on the safety plan, and is attending college independently, and has access to technology. The way the young person presents herself has also changed dramatically, following work with both her and mum focussing on body image.

She is now with the Post 16 Team, and Shine attend the regular CIN reviews. The young person continues to choose to work with Shine and decides the form this takes. Both the young person and her mum say they have benefitted greatly from the input and the consistency.

Case Study 2

Early into the pandemic, the 16+ team contacted Shine to query a referral suitability of a young person. The young person had recently turned 17, and had experienced huge loss in her life with her siblings going into care to live with family members. She took on very much of a caring role for her siblings before they were accommodated due to parents using substances. The young person had to deal with lots of abusive and threatening behaviour from her parents.

The young person had disclosed sexual abuse/assault from the partner of an extended family member she was living with at the time. Following her allegation, a police investigation had been launched and the young person spent a lot of the pandemic waiting for a decision from the CPS to say whether this would be taken to court or not.

My work as part of Shine, was to support the social worker, police and other professionals to best support the young person through these times as well as other issues she had going on. She acknowledged suffering from emotional regulation and feelings of strong anger and wanted to tackle these issues. I started to work with her over the phone and text due to the pandemic not allowing us to meet and work around her un-sociable hours as she is a carer within Newcastle. The young person was supported about any new evidence the police had, updates from CPS, housing issues, council tax arrears, behavioural and generally having a support to talk to about what had happened without judgement.

We have also worked on her own relationship concerns and done work around healthy relationships and continue to do this alongside other work.

The young person was told earlier this year (2021) that the charges were being taken to court. I have supported this young person emotionally since then, as she is still unaware if she will need to attend court and give evidence. The court case is due to start early May.

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7.3.2. Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care support children, young people and families in Newcastle to stay safe. We work with families to understand what support a child or young person may need from us or other organisations to be happy, healthy and safe.

Children's Social Care led a quick and collaborative response to supporting children and families during COVID-19. We embedded a swift, proportionate, and multi-agency response to ensure that children were, and continued to be, safe through national and local lockdowns. Our service additionally supported with the delivery of food parcels and activity packs and worked alongside children and their parents and carers to sustain high levels of school attendance and distributed IT equipment to enable home learning for vulnerable children.

This year has seen us invest in and take tangible steps towards embedding relational practice. Through the Family Valued Programme, we are working with staff to embed restorative practice as our practice model in Newcastle – underpinned by a £3.1m investment from DfE. Family Valued aims to create a consistently restorative and relational approach to how we work with families. As well as enabling our practitioners to have the skills, techniques and confidence to hold difficult conversations, raise concerns at the right time and seek to find more family centred solutions we also want to embed a culture that supports and encourages this approach.

We have begun to roll out bespoke training designed to embed the approach appropriately through every level of our organisation and with partners. Staff have already told us how they are using the learning from these initial training sessions to improve how they engage and work with children. Supporting our practitioners to develop their skills and embedding the Family Valued approach is *an improvement priority* over the next year.

We continued investment in our motivated and high performing workforce which has provided time to undertake high quality work with children and families to sustain change and improve outcomes.

We have safely sustained reductions in children entering our care and those subject to Child Protection Plans. Providing help and support earlier to keep children safely at home and respond effectively and swiftly to identified risk.

We have invested significantly in creating more in-house placements for Children in Care that increase sufficiency, improve stability, and provide certainty for children. Newcastle is now the 7th highest council nationally for the use of in-house placements.

We have continued to deliver an ambitious programme of staff engagement resulting in improved morale and tangible improvements e.g. in sickness, turnover and use of agency. Feedback at the height of the pandemic confirmed that staff felt safe and well informed.

Despite the challenges of the last year, we remained focused on continuous improvement and bid

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successfully for funding to further develop services e.g. Social Workers in Schools (SWIS). Newcastle was one of a small number of councils that successfully bid to the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) to pilot SWIS and this is part of our city response to support children and families during and post COVID-19.

Through SWIS, from September 2020 we have embedded Social Workers in 5 secondary schools to improve understanding and quality of referrals, reduce the number of s17 and s47 enquiries and to reduce the number of children that become subject to Child Protection and/or enter care. The project is also supporting high-quality relationships with schools. Schools tell us that this has increased their understanding of appropriate referrals, as well as strengthening their own responses to children who may have support needs, but do not reach the threshold for CSC.

We also introduced our Specialist Residential Support Team, Intensive Family Intervention Team and developed a new Family Drug and Alcohol Court team.

Our focus for the next 12 months will be to further embed our Relational Model of practice which will include offering bespoke restorative practice awareness training to professionals, organisations and partners across our City.

7.4. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Continued with our Youth Engagement programmes (Fire Cadets 13-17, Prince's Trust 16-25, Juvenile Firesetters Education 3-17) online and face-to-face for all of 2020-2021.

Quarterly Safeguarding Meetings with our Deputy Chief Fire Officer (strategic lead on safeguarding) has been increased to monthly meetings to ensure changes, developments, updates and trends are communicated and actioned as soon as practicable.

Safeguarding data now included in Performance Action Group (PAG) to ensure quantity and quality of referrals are improving.

Developed our reporting systems to improve the quality and quantity of referrals.

Delivered training to fire stations on the importance of referring all young people (and adults) that present distressed at bridges, regardless of the number of agencies that attend incidents

We have helped to form a Northern Fire and Rescue Service Safeguarding hub to share best practice and keep updated of developments regionally (including Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire, Manchester, Cumbria, Durham & Darlington, Northumberland, Cleveland and Northern Ireland FRSs).



7.6. Northumbria Police

A key priority for Northumbria Police is to protect and safeguard vulnerable children and young people, to identify opportunities for early intervention / prevention, and pursue perpetrators who cause harm.



We do this with a coordinated partnership response, cognisant of diverse needs and vulnerabilities, to safeguard vulnerable children and young people and tackle perpetrators. Our ultimate aim is to achieve a safe environment for families to thrive without fear of harm and to ensure perpetrators are identified and targeted, and that the opportunity for them to cause further harm is removed or minimised.

Northumbria Police have recently created a new Strategic Innovation Partnership Team (SIP). This ensures that same member of the Safeguarding Senior Management Team (SMT) at DCI level attends all 6 six of the Local Authority's Safeguarding Children's boards.

Within the new SIP team, there is now a learning and improvement function, overseen by a Detective Inspector who will attend all learning and improvement/ quality improvement sub groups, to work with partners to drive and share internal and external learning and improvement.

The SIP team will help support the NSCP priorities and provides a consistent and innovative approach to Safeguarding and the development of child safeguarding procedures.

Northumbria Police have led on the review of the multi-agency exploitation Hub and have the commitment of all 6 Local Authorities and Health to work together to provide a multi-agency response to children and young people at risk of sexual, criminal exploitation and all aspects of Modern Slavery.

Northumbria Police have provided dedication and commitment to MSET (Slavery Missing Exploitation, Trafficking) sub group. MSET has an operational sub group and a strategic sub group. Both groups are chaired by a Detective Inspector and Detective Chief Inspector and help to safeguard children and young people at risk of Slavery, Missing and Exploitation as well as considering preventative, multi-agency approaches to reduce vulnerability and tackle and disrupt perpetrators who offend against those vulnerable children and young people.

Our Child Abuse Teams have had several notable convictions in relation to offences against children in the past 12 months; most notably Operation Garrison (see insert box below).

This was a multi- agency approach to a male accused of sexual exploitation of children on-line and through his role as a teacher which occurred in Newcastle.

The Head of Safeguarding is a Detective Chief Superintendent who has completed a Public Protection and Safeguarding Leadership programme run by the College of Policing. The Detective Chief Superintendent is responsible for the strategic leadership and performance of the Safeguarding department and is supported in this by two Detective superintendents, who manage the operational and strategic response.

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“Operation Garrison“

This was a multi- agency approach to a male accused of sexual exploitation of children on-line and through his role as a teacher which occurred in Newcastle. The offender was arrested in October 2020 following information received that a category A image had been uploaded to social media. The account belonged to the offender who was employed as Head of History and RE at a local School. At this time it was reported that a number of pupils had disclosed that they had been inappropriately touched by the offender whilst in school. The analysis of devices seized showed he was in possession of in excess of 1000 indecent images of children’s ranging from Category A to C. The images and moving videos showed his sexual interest in children and supported the accounts given by students at the School, who had stated they had been inappropriately touched by the offender. From the images recovered there have been 87 victims identified in relation to both on-line offences and contact offences. The victims were male, aged from 12 – 18 years old, and all showed amazing courage and bravery in speaking out about the abhorrent offending committed against them.

The offender was charged and remanded with a number of offences of sexual assault, inciting a child to commit a sexual act, making indecent images, possession of indecent images and distribution of indecent images. The offender has no previous convictions and had only come to the attention of the police due to the upload of this one image. Education Dept. ensured that parents of pupils of the school and previous pupils of the School were advised of the arrest and charge of the offender.

CNTW ensured that Emotional and Mental Health support was available to children, parents and teachers who may have been adversely affected by the behaviors of the offender. A dedicated help-line was available from 7am-9pm which involved the services of a qualified psychologist/ psychological therapist. The Local Authority Designated Officer was involved to provide advice to the school surrounding policies and procedures in relation to staff members.

Several local authorities involving children’s social care were identified, they carried out assessments and safeguarding relating to the victims of the investigations.

The offender has been convicted of all 18 counts on the Indictment. He is currently awaiting sentence. Enquiries are still ongoing to identify all victims of the offender and ensure that victims are safeguarded and supported by services.

MSET- Operational Group

A priority focus for the NSCP is to address all aspects of exploitation. To comply with the Criminal Exploitation and Serious Violence Strategy, Northumbria Police have ensured increased focus within the NSCP in relation to Criminal Exploitation and have committed to upskilling front line practitioners on their knowledge of Criminal Exploitation.

The MSET risk assessment framework has been updated in the past 12 months to ensure a focus on

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children who are being criminally exploited and involved in gangs and County Lines activity. Through use of this framework a vulnerable 17 year old male was identified who previously may have fallen through the gaps in services.

An outcome from MSET was that he was allocated a youth mentor who was able to build a trusted relationship with the male. Concerns were identified with regard to County Lines with the youth travelling to other force areas. To address those concerns Police produced a trigger plan which was shared with BTP and other Forces.

The allocated mentor identified that the youth had undiagnosed learning needs and this prompted Children Social Care to work closely with Adult Social Care and arrange Capacity assessments for the male and application to Court of Protection.

Through building close relationship with his mentor and because of effective multi-agency working we were able to identify when the male went missing out of the force area on a County Line and put in place plans to recover and safeguard him.

7.5. Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHSFT

For the period of reporting, all agencies have been delivering services under Covid restrictions and increasingly using remote technologies. Throughout this CNTW has protected frontline care and treatment services and ensured face to face contacts have continued to be offered. CNTW has continued to engage with all serious case reviews, learning events, safeguarding conferences and Domestic Homicide reviews. They have also attended all extraordinary meetings to ensure good and effective feedback and assurance to our partner agencies.



CNTW SAPP team has continued to provide advice, support and supervision to clinical services trustwide to ensure that safeguarding and public protection referrals have been made where required and service users and staff are supported.

The Case Review role is now fully embedded within the SAPP team. Learning from local and regional case reviews have been shared Trustwide via the Safer Care and Trust Bulletin.

CNTW is committed to embedding learning identified from incident reviews within the Trust. Learning is shared using the Trust Quality and Safe meetings held within the clinical business groups, clinical networks, and live Learning and Improvement Group sessions.

8. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021/22

The work of the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership does not fit neatly into “one year chunks” and much of the work, already underway in 2020/21, will continue in the year ahead, including the implementation of the Peer Review which introduces a new governance structure, and emphasis on scrutiny and outcomes for our children and young people, and their families. This, combined with the successful DfE bid, will ensure that the voice of the child is more clearly heard.

Some of the more challenging issues will also continue, including defining the budgetary responsibilities and contributions of partners, and the establishment of a robust evaluation process for training to assess the impact on practice.

The Safeguarding environment is dynamic, with ongoing change and new and emerging challenges. This is truer than ever as we emerge from the Covid pandemic and the associated challenges. These include increased mental health issues and greater health and education inequalities for our children and young people. There will be other new and emerging risks too, including that of peer on peer sexual harassment in schools, which will need to be considered. This was recently agreed as an area for future collaborative work by the Tyne, Wear, Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership.

We must remember that many of the issues we deal with are not about age, but about vulnerability, as was clearly demonstrated by Operation Sanctuary and the associated Joint Case Review which reported in 2018.

The close collaboration between Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership and other local and regional safeguarding groups, has driven excellent working relationships and a culture of participation on which to build. This, combined with the changes to the governance arrangements of the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership, will ensure that it is well positioned to face these challenges, and maximise the impact of their work, in the year ahead.

APPENDICES

i) Partner Organisations

Agency	Title
Independent	Chairperson
Newcastle City Council	Director of Children, Education and Skills Assistant Director of Children Assistant Director of Education and Skills Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills Senior Legal Advisor
Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust	Group Nurse Director
NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group	Executive Director of Nursing, Patient Safety and Quality
The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Executive Chief Nurse Designated Dr Child Protection
Northumbria Police	Detective Chief Superintendent, Safeguarding
Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company	Deputy Director (North of Tyne)
National Probation Service, North of Tyne	Head of North of Tyne Cluster
Tyne and Wear Fire Service	Group Manager, Service Delivery North
Newburn Manor Primary School	Head Teacher
Public Health	Director of Public Health
Your Homes Newcastle	Customer Services Director Assistant Director Support Services
NSPCC	Service Manager
The Children's Society	Area Manager North East
Angelou Centre	Deputy Director & VAWG Services Manager
CAFCASS	Service Manager

The NSCP is supported by a Co-ordinator, Senior Business Support Officer, Training and Development Officer and a Legal Advisor, Performance Analyst and Press Officer from Newcastle City Council.

ii) Glossary of Terms

CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CIN	Children In Need
CNTW	Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
CSC	Children's Social Care
DfE	Department for Education
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
FDAC	Family Drug and Alcohol Court
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MESMAC	Men who have Sex with Men - Action in the Community
MSET	Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking
NSAB	Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board
NuTH	The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
SAR	Safeguarding Adults Review
SCR	Safeguarding Children Review
SHINE	Sexual Health In NEwcastle
SIP	Strategic Innovation Partnership
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
VCS	Volunteer Community Services

iii) NSCB Projected Income and Expenditure 2020/2021

EXPENDITURE

NSCP Co-ordinator	£	47,000.00
NSCP Training Officer	£	42,000.00
Independent Chairperson	£	10,000.00
National Working Group [sexual exploitation]	£	500.00
NSCP senior business support officer (half a post)	£	12,500.00
Room hire, provisions learning events	£	500.00
Professional annual membership [BASPCAN]	£	273.00
Tri-x regional web procedures [annual fee]	£	3,500.00
Training (VC 3-year license)	£	11,000.00
Young people's event	£	3,000.00
Website	£	3,000.00
Peer Review	£	5,000.00
Misc		£500.00
	£	138,773.00

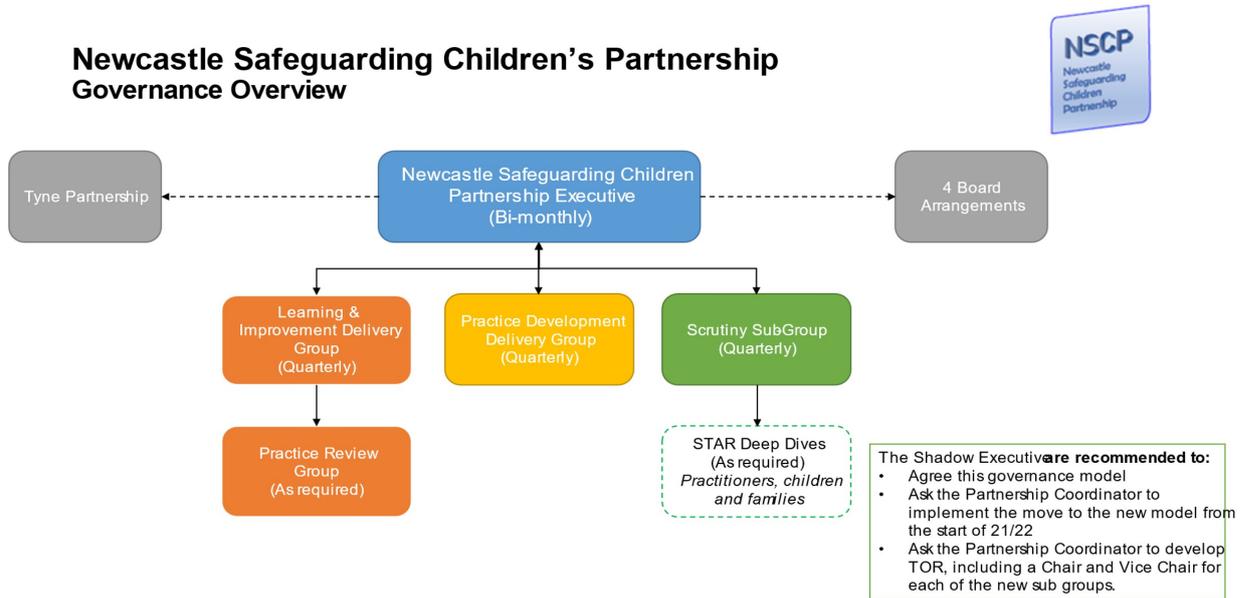
INCOME/CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Newcastle City Council	£	80,248.02
Newcastle Gateshead CCG	£	40,000.00
Police	£	5,000.00
Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company	£	300.00
CAFCASS	£	550.00
National Probation Service	£	1,759.38

OTHER INCOME

NCC Workforce development (contribution to VC license)	£	3,500.00
NCC Adult Safeguarding (contribution to VC license)	£	4,415.60
NCC Early Help and Family Support (contribution)	£	3,000.00
	£	138,773.00

iv) Agreed New NSCP Governance Structure



“Safeguarding children and young people is everyone’s responsibility”

If you are worried or have a concern about a child or young person contact:

Northumbria Police on 101

If there is immediate danger contact

999

For advice or to make a referral about a concern for a child or young person contact:

Children’s Social Care Initial Response Service

0191 277 2500

Anonymous referrals can be made by members of the public

Practitioners should use the online referral form

<https://www.nscb.org.uk/have-concerns-about-child>

Emergency Duty Team

0191 278 7878

<https://www.nscb.org.uk/>

