

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD
LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD – ROLE AND FUNCTION

SCOPE

The Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a Safeguarding Children Board. Chapter 3 of Working Together 2015 sets out in detail the arrangements for the work of each Local Safeguarding Children Board. This chapter provides a summary only.

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1. SCOPE OF THE ROLE

In order to fulfil its statutory functions, North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (NELSCB) should use data and, as a minimum, should:

- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
- Assess whether NELSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations;
- Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

2. OBJECTIVES

Where The core objectives of the NEL Safeguarding Children Board (NELSCB) is to coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of what the member organisations do individually and together.

Specific objectives of the SCB are to:

- Develop and agree inter-agency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, consistent with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), including:
 - The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
 - Training of those working with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
 - Investigation of allegations concerning persons working with children;
 - The safety and welfare of privately fostered children;
 - Cooperation with neighbouring children's social care services authorities and their Board partners.

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- Participate in the planning of services for children in the local authority area;
- Communicate the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child;
- Develop procedures to ensure a coordinated response to unexpected child deaths;
- Monitor the effectiveness of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Undertake appropriate reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learnt. Collect and analyse information about child deaths.
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3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Whilst the NELSCB has a role in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of local individuals' and organisations' work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, it is not accountable for their operational work.

Each Board partner retains its own existing lines of accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by their services.

Whilst the NELSCB does not have the power to direct other organisations, it does have a role in making clear where improvement is needed.

4. NEL LSCB CHAIR

In order to provide effective scrutiny, the NELSCB should be independent. It should not be subordinate to, nor subsumed within, other local structures.

Every LSCB should have an independent chair who can hold all agencies to account. The NELSCB has had an independent chair since 2010.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to appoint or remove the NELSCB chair with the agreement of a panel including NELSCB partners and lay members. The Chief Executive, drawing on other NELSCB partners and, where appropriate, the Lead Member will hold the Chair to account for the effective working of the NELSCB.

5. MEMBERSHIP

When The NELSCB is made of organisations which will designate particular, named people as their SCB member so that there is a consistency and continuity in membership.

Members have a strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisation. They should be able to:

- Speak for their organisation with authority;
- Commit their organisation on policy and practice matters;
- Hold their organisation to account and hold others to account.

As well as the local authority with responsibility for Children and Young People's Services, members of the SCB must include:

5.1 STATUTORY MEMBERS

These are the statutory organisations which are required to co-operate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions. The Board partners are:

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- District Councils in local government areas which have them;
- The Chief Officer of Police for a police area any part of which falls within the area of the local authority;
- The local Probation Provider and Community Rehabilitation Companies;
- The Youth Offending Team for an area any part of which falls within the area of the local authority;
- NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups for an area any part of which falls within the area of the local authority;
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts all or most of whose hospitals or establishments and facilities are situated in the local authority area;
- CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service);
- The governor or director of any Secure Training Centre in the area of the local authority; and
- The governor or director of any prison in the local authority area which ordinarily detains children.

The Local Authority should ensure that those responsible for adult social services functions are represented on the NELSCB, because of the importance of adult social care in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Similarly health organisations should ensure that adult health services and in particular adult mental health and adult disability services are represented on the NELSCB.

5.2 OTHER MEMBERS

The Local Authority should also secure the involvement of other relevant local organisations and the NSPCC where a representative is made available. This is the case within North East Lincolnshire.

The LSCB should either include on its Board, or be able to draw on appropriate expertise and advice from, frontline professionals from all the relevant sectors. This includes a designated doctor and nurse, the Director of Public Health, Principal Child and Family Social Worker and the voluntary and community sector, and any to whom the local authority has delegated children's social care functions. NELSCB have representation from the above bodies within its sub group structure.

In addition, two representatives of the local community should be appointed as full NELSCB members (their role is described in of Working Together 2015) and the NELSCB must also appoint representation from schools. This means taking steps to ensure that the following are represented: the governing body of a maintained school; the proprietor of a non-maintained special school; the proprietor of a city technology college, a city college for the technology of the arts or an Academy; and the governing body of a further education institution the main site of which is situated in the authority's area. Independent schools should also be included as appropriate.

Local authorities should take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB includes representatives from all types of school in their area. A system of representation should be identified to enable all schools to receive information and feedback comments to their representatives on the LSCB.

Lay members will operate as full members of the LSCB, participating as appropriate on the Board itself and on relevant committees. Lay members should help to make links between the LSCB and community groups, support stronger public engagement in local child safety issues and an improved public understanding of the LSCB's child protection work. NELSCB have had lay members since 2012. The NEL LSCB have three lay members.

NELSCBs should engage with faith groups, children's centres, GPs, independent healthcare organisations, and voluntary and community sector organisations including bodies providing specialist care to children with severe disabilities and complex health needs.

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In areas where they have significant local activity, the armed forces (in relation both to the families of Service men and women and those personnel that are under the age of 18), **UK Visas and Immigration** (formerly the UK Border Agency) should also be included.

5.3 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS

The organisations not represented on the NEL Leadership board are represented on the NEL operational board and sub groups.

The NELSCB has made appropriate arrangements at a strategic management level to involve others in its work as needed. For example, there may be some organisations or individuals which are in theory represented by the statutory Board partners but which need to be engaged because of their particular role in service provision to children and families or role in public protection. There will be other organisations which the NELSCB needs to link to, either through inviting them to join the NELSCB or through some other mechanism. For example

- The Coronial Service;
- Dental health services;
- Domestic Violence Forums;
- Drug and alcohol misuse services;
- Drug Action Teams;
- Housing, culture and leisure services;
- Housing providers;
- Local Authority legal services;
- Local MAPPA;
- Local sports bodies and services;
- Local Family Justice Council;
- Sexual health services;
- Crown Prosecution Service;
- Witness Support Services;
- Local Criminal Justice Board;
- Other health providers such as pharmacists;
- Representatives of service users.

The NELSCB will also need to draw on the work of key national organisations and liaise with them when necessary for example Child Exploitation and On-Line Protection Centre.

5.4 THE ROLE OF MEMBERS

The individual members of each NELSCB have a duty as members to contribute to the effective work of the NELSCB, for example, in making the NELSCB assessment of performance as objective as possible, and in recommending or deciding upon the necessary steps to put right any problems. This should take precedence, if necessary, over their role as a representative of their organisation. Members of each The NELSCB should have a clear written statement of their roles and responsibilities.

6. ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS AND NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Local authority elected members and non-executive directors of other NELSCB partners should not be members of NELSCB. Their role, through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the local authority or a scrutiny committee or a governance board, is to hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the NELSCB.

The Lead Member for Children's Services within the local authority will have a particular focus on how the local authority is fulfilling its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and will hold the Director of Children's Services to account for the work of the NELSCB.

The Lead Member for Children should be a participating observer of the NELSCB. In practice this means routinely attending meetings as an observer and receiving all its written reports.

7. WAYS OF WORKING

A The working practices of NELSCB members have been considered locally with a view to securing effective operation of the NELSCB functions and ensuring all member organisations are effectively engaged.

The NELSCB in addition to its core sub groups will establish short term task groups to carry out strategic tasks relating to safeguarding.

All of the sub groups which are established by the NELSCB work to agreed terms of reference, with explicit lines of reporting, communication and accountability to the NELSCB. Chairs of sub-groups are member of the NELSCB operational board.

The NELSCB has in place arrangements to ascertain views of parents and carers and the wishes and feelings of children (including children who might not ordinarily be heard) about the priorities and effectiveness of local safeguarding work, including issues of access to services and contact points for children to safeguard and promote welfare. The NELSCB will also consider how children, parents and carers can be given a measure of choice and control in the development of services.

The LSCB has agreed with the local authority and its partners the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered. This should include services for children who have been or may be sexually exploited, children who have undergone or may undergo female genital mutilation and children who have been or may be radicalised. Local authority children's social care has the responsibility for clarifying the process for referrals.

The LSCB has published a threshold document that includes:

- The process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided;
- The criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
 - Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need);
 - Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm);
 - Section 31 (care orders); and
 - Section 20 (duty to accommodate a child) of the Children Act 1989;
- Clear procedures and processes for cases relating to the sexual exploitation of children and young people.

LSCBs with youth secure establishments in their area should ensure that thresholds and criteria for referral and assessment take account of the needs of young people in these establishments.

8. ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

The NELSCB produces an annual business plan setting out:

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- A work programme for the following year to include measurable objectives;
- Relevant management information of child protection activity in the previous year;
- Progress against objectives established for the year ending.

9. NEL LSCB ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the NELSCB must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area (this is a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004). The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.

The report should also list the contributions made to the NELSCB by partner agencies and details of what the NELSCB has spent, including on Child Death Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and other specific expenditure such as learning events or training.

LSCBs should conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include in the report information on the outcome of these assessments. This should include an analysis of how the LSCB partners have used their data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse. The report should also include appropriate data on children missing from care, and how the LSCB is addressing the issue. Where the LSCB has a secure establishment within its area, the report should include a review of the use of restraint within that establishment and the findings of the review should be reported to the Youth Justice Board.

10. MONITORING AND INSPECTION

The NELSCB's work to ensure the effectiveness of work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by member organisations will be a peer review process, based on self-evaluation, performance indicators and a joint audit. Its aim is to promote high standards of safeguarding work and to foster a culture of continuous improvement. It will also identify and act on identified weaknesses in services.

Where it is found that a Board partner is not performing effectively in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and the NELSCB is not convinced that any planned action to improve performance will be adequate, the NELSCB chair or a member or employee designated by the chair should explain these concerns to those individuals and organisations that need to be aware of the failing and may be able to take action.

Ofsted will undertake a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board at the same time as the inspection the local authority. This review will be conducted under 15(A) of the Children Act 2004.

11. INFORMATION SHARING

Where Every LSCB should play a strong role in supporting information sharing between and within organisations and addressing any barriers to information sharing. This should include ensuring that a culture of information sharing is developed and supported as necessary by multi-agency training.

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In addition, the LSCB can require a person or body to comply with a request for information. This can only take place where the information is essential to carrying out LSCB statutory functions. Any request for information about individuals must be 'necessary' and 'proportionate' to the reasons for the request. LSCBs should be mindful of the burden of requests and should explain why the information is needed.