



# **Terms of Reference for Darlington Safeguarding Partnership**

(V8 Revised June 2023)

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## 1. Introduction

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP) was established in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (as amended by Children and Social Work Act 2017) and Chapter 3 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Safeguarding responsibilities are placed on Police, Health and local authorities to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The three organisations have equal responsibility for setting out the safeguarding arrangements in Darlington and this document outlines how they will achieve those arrangements.

## 2. Statutory Requirements

Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance (2018) requires the statutory safeguarding partners to set out their arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as considered appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

Although the statutory guidance is applicable for child safeguarding, the Statutory Safeguarding Partners in Darlington agreed the arrangements will also cover Adult Safeguarding arrangements in accordance with the Care Act 2014 (Safeguarding Adult Board), which requires local arrangements for safeguarding in ensuring the partnership works effectively to protect adults with needs for care and support from abuse and neglect. The joint arrangements provide a greater opportunity of strengthening partnership working across adults and children. The new arrangements were implemented on 1st July 2019.

The three leads appointed as the Statutory Safeguarding Partners in Darlington are:

- Group Director for People - Darlington Borough Council
- Director of Nursing - North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Tees Valley
- Detective Chief Superintendent - Durham Constabulary

## 3. Purpose

The Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies (see Appendix 1) will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support in Darlington and ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in Darlington.

The Darlington Safeguarding Partnership has a focus on safeguarding, to ensure that children and adults with needs for care and support are protected from abuse and neglect and their welfare promoted.

The new arrangements provide an opportunity to work together differently and to strengthen partnership working across adults and children to promote a 'whole family approach' to safeguarding which will improve outcomes for children, adults and families.

## 4. Vision

The Darlington Safeguarding Partnership's vision for the Children and Adult Safeguarding Arrangements will ensure:

***'Darlington is a place where children and adults live their lives safely'***

## 5. Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies

### Statutory Safeguarding Partners

The three Statutory Partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements, underpinned by equitable and proportionate funding including additional contributions from relevant agencies. The strategic role and responsibilities of the Statutory Safeguarding partners are:

- responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in Darlington locality
- coordinate and monitor the effectiveness of multi-agency work to protect and safeguard children and adults with needs for care and support
- ensure all agencies 'think family' so that children and adults receive coordinated services that assess and address the needs of the whole family
- ensure early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- ensure information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families
- ensure organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- ensure learning and improvement is embedded in a way that local services can become more reflective and implement changes in practice
- lead improvements in the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practice
- ensure the voice of children and adults is at the heart of all partnership activity

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners will meet regularly to direct and drive forward the work of the Partnership, ensuring the vision is upheld and they will monitor and scrutinise delivery of the Strategic Plan and agree priority actions. The meetings will be chaired by the Independent Scrutineer/Chair.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners will commission the strategic and operational groups to ensure the priority areas of the Strategic Plan are delivered and ensure effective scrutiny arrangements are in place.

There is an expectation that the Statutory Safeguarding Partners receive regular updates of the progress of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership and any challenges. The Partnership's Business Manager will facilitate this and meet with the Statutory Partners for that purpose. In addition, the Chairs of the Quality Assurance and Performance Management Group, Learning & Development Group and Strategic Child Exploitation Group will provide an update from their groups via a Chairs update report for each meeting.,

### Relevant Agencies

Relevant Agencies are those organisations which the Statutory Safeguarding Partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support, relative to the local need. The Relevant Agencies identified are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The purpose of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is to support and enable local organisations to work together in a system where children and adults with needs for care and support are safeguarded and their welfare promoted. Partner organisations will collaborate and share a vision of how to achieve improved outcomes for children and vulnerable adults.

## 6. Strategic Partnerships

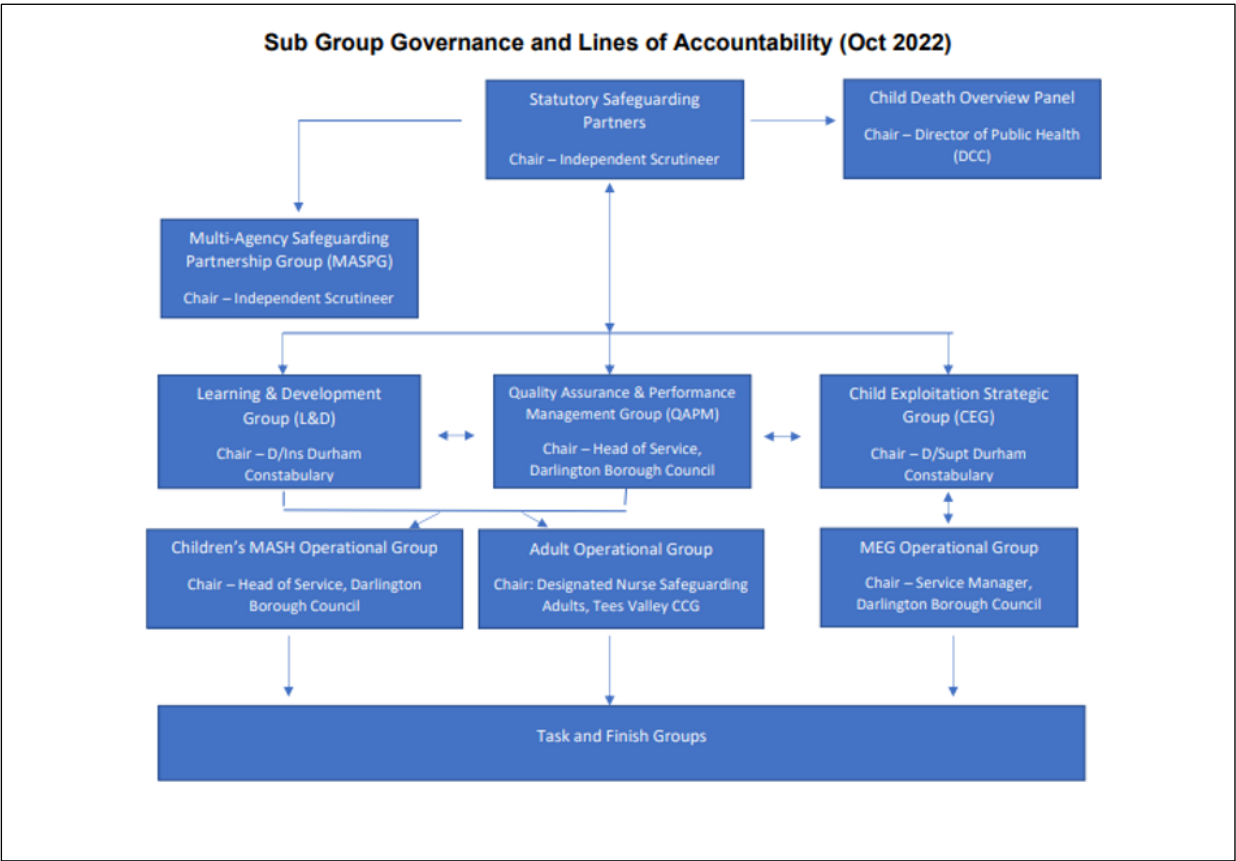
To be effective, safeguarding arrangements should link to other strategic partnerships.

A local **protocol** is in place which identifies how the each of strategic boards/partnerships in Darlington will link in with the Safeguarding Partnership.

- a) Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board
- b) Darlington Community Safety Partnership Board and Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG)
- c) Darlington Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements Strategic Board (MAPPA)

## 7. Structure

The structure has been developed to provide an inclusive model. The structure diagram demonstrates each layer of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership which will enable all organisations to be fully involved. The Statutory Partners will ensure there is full representation from all relevant organisations on all subgroups and working groups.



## 8. Independent Scrutineer/Chair

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair has been appointed by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. Their role is to provide leadership, coordination, support and scrutiny to all organisations within Darlington Safeguarding Partnership and to ensure transparency and accountability. The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will also ensure partnership activity is aligned with national policy requirements and best practice, ensuring safeguarding procedures are embedded in all organisations and that equality and diversity issues are addressed in all the Partnership's work.

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair must be of sufficient standing to provide robust scrutiny and must have no other significant engagement with local agencies. The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will ensure that the safeguarding arrangements are robust and consistent with current Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Guidance and the Care Act 2014 and that learning, evidence, research and community engagement inform policy and practice.

The current Independent Chair/Scrutineer is Ann Baxter, who was appointed in May 2019.

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will be paid an agreed daily fee and undertake the role for a period of up to three years, subject to an Annual Review by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will be independent from the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and will have expertise in child and/or adult safeguarding and an understanding of local need and effective partnerships.

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will:

- a) consider how well the Statutory Safeguarding Partners are providing strong and effective leadership, and agree with them how this will be reported
- b) report to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners
- c) chair the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group
- d) contribute to the Safeguarding Partnership's annual report
- e) review audits and performance data, including safeguarding self-assessment audit activity
- f) determine the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review Serious Child Safeguarding cases and Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- g) be involved in the escalation and conflict resolution process
- h) have a direct line of sight to frontline practice, through practitioner forums
- i) support culture change throughout the Partnership to embed scrutiny as a positive process with learning as its outcome.
- j) listen to the experiences of children, young people, adults with care and support needs and their families, to ascertain how effectively local arrangements are working for them.

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will be subject to an annual appraisal with the Group Director for People, Darlington Borough Council. Partnership members will have the opportunity to contribute to the process.

### **Independent Scrutineer/Chair's action and decision-making**

Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible. Should a consensus not be reached, a vote may be called, and the decision carried by the majority of those present. Voting will be restricted to a representative from each agency present at the Partnership meeting. The Independent Scrutineer/Chair of the Partnership will have the casting vote.

## 9. Partnership groups and Governance Arrangements

### Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group

**Chair:** Independent Scrutineer/ Chair

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group will have a wide membership of Relevant Agencies which will include; education, probation service, health providers, fire service and voluntary sector.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners will attend the Multi-Agency Partnership Group meetings. The Independent Scrutineer/Chair will provide the lead and Chair meetings to enable critical challenge and hold respective agencies to account.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group will meet three times per year, with a flexible approach for current and identified priorities and not be a business meeting. Meetings will be themed around agreed local and national safeguarding priorities and areas identified through data and performance with updates from Strategic sub group chairs, through an overview report, sharing details of key priorities along with key themes coming through. Frequency of the meetings will be reviewed annually.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group members are individuals who are able to speak for their organisation with authority and are of sufficient senior position to hold their organisation to account. Where a Partnership member is unable to attend a Partnership meeting, they must aim to be represented by a suitable deputy. This should be in exceptional circumstances only.

The Lead Member for Children's Services and the Lead Member for Adult Services will be members of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group, to ensure fulfilment of their statutory roles in safeguarding and to enable further scrutiny on the wider partnership activity. This will support the Statutory Safeguarding Partners in objectively ensuring effective scrutiny arrangements.

### Strategic Sub Groups

#### Quality Assurance and Performance Management Group

**Chair:** Representative from Darlington Borough Council

##### Principles

The Quality Assurance and Performance Management Group will assess the extent to which partner agencies are fulfilling their statutory duty in relation to Safeguarding Children and Adults with needs for care and support.

##### Purpose and responsibilities

- To review all agency internal procedures and policies by commissioning regular audits/quality assurance activity, observations and peer challenge to ensure effectiveness and adherence.
- To analyse performance management data.
- To develop improvement actions where required and plan learning activity and procedural change where necessary in partnership with the L& D group.

- To oversee the effectiveness of the Operational Groups and ensure clear lines on communication on issues for escalation.
- To work closely with the L & D Group to align key pieces of work and ensure effective learning and change.
- To provide a robust oversight of safeguarding effectiveness to the SSP through structured exception reporting and thematic reviews.
- To contribute to the effective flows of intelligence between groups, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group and Darlington Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

### **Membership**

Membership reflects the multi-agency involvement of the safeguarding partnership. Agencies are represented at a level of seniority and must be able to speak with authority on behalf of their service or organisation or have the required leadership to implement any recommendations. Details of membership are outlined below. The group will co-opt additional members as and when necessary.

- Durham Constabulary
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley (NENCICB)
- Darlington Borough Council – Child and Adult Social Care, Young People’s Engagement and Justice Service, Housing, Public Health, Performance & Transformation, Commissioning
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)
- Primary Care
- Probation Service North East
- Education
- County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (CDDFRS)
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Support

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The QAPM group will meet Quarterly and if required, extraordinary meetings may be scheduled as and when required.

Meetings will be quorate if at least three agencies are represented. Any member of the group may propose agenda items. The Chair will confirm and agree the final agenda.

The work of the group will be supported by data analysts who will have responsibility for collating, reviewing and analysing multi-agency data and provide dashboards to demonstrate key child and adult performance indicators.

Time limited working groups will also be established to undertake key pieces of work as directed by the QAPM group Chair.

### **Accountability and Reporting**

The QAPM group is accountable to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. The Chair of the group will provide regular progress reports to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group and meeting of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners.



## **Learning and Development Subgroup**

**Chair:** Representative from Durham Constabulary

### **Principles**

The Learning and Development Group will support organisations with an integrated approach so that all policies, strategies, procedures, and workforce skills are effective, efficient, and relevant with current safeguarding arrangements. This allows us to protect those most vulnerable in our communities to be safe and ensures that the standards in law are maintained.

### **Purpose and responsibilities**

- Governance responsibility for all reviews undertaken, reviewing the learning outcomes and suggested recommendations for improvement before presentation to Statutory Safeguarding Partners/Independent Chair.
- Establish process for dissemination of learning from reviews and identify any training need requirements. Identify and address aspects of frontline practice that require improvement.
- Oversight of multi-agency procedures to ensure they reflect changing needs and comply with legislation, changes in practice and learning from reviews, audits or inspections.
- Work closely with the QAPM group to align key pieces of work and ensure effective learning and change.
- Ensure procedure and practice guidance for Serious Child Safeguarding Incident and Safeguarding Adult Review referrals is relevant and up to date.
- Following notifications to the National Panel, ensure that a Rapid Review is undertaken to consider whether the Serious Child Safeguarding Incident meets the criteria for a local review, or whether the case may raise issues which are complex or of national importance that a national child safeguarding practice review (CSPR) may be appropriate and feedback decision to the Statutory Partners.
- Following agreement by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, consider whether Safeguarding Adult Review referrals meet the criteria for a review in line with the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Protocol.  
Consider those cases that do not meet threshold for CSPR/SAR however require learning to be explored and determine appropriate processes to be undertaken.
- Embedded learning.
- Identify training needs and develop and deliver high quality multi-agency safeguarding learning and development activities that incorporate relevant research, national good practice and learning from case reviews and safeguarding adult reviews or meet the needs of emerging issues.
- Evaluate multi-agency learning and development activities to seek assurance that training delivery is of high quality and has led to improvements of individual practice.
- Regularly review and develop multi-agency procedures to ensure they reflect changing needs, comply with legislation, changes in practice and learning from reviews and inspections or research findings
- Identify and celebrate areas of good practice.

### **Membership**

Membership reflects the multi-agency involvement of the safeguarding partnership. Agencies are represented at a level of seniority and must be able to speak with authority on behalf of their service or organisation or have the required leadership to implement any

recommendations. Details of membership are outlined below. The group will co-opt additional members as and when necessary.

- Durham Constabulary
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley (NENCICB)
- Darlington Borough Council – Child and Adult Social Care, Housing, Commissioning, Workforce Development, Performance & Transformation, Legal
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)
- Primary Care
- Probation Service North East
- Education – Schools and Further Education
- County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (CDDFRS)
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Support

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Learning and Development group will meet quarterly however, it is expected there will be extraordinary meetings to review referrals for Child Safeguarding Practice Review/Safeguarding Adult Review or other review where there is learning to be explored.

Meetings will be quorate if at least three different agencies are represented. Any member of the group may propose agenda items. The Chair will confirm and agree the final agenda.

Time limited working groups will also be established to undertake key pieces of work as directed by the Learning and Review group Chair.

### **Accountability and Reporting**

The Learning and Development group is accountable to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. The Chair of the group will provide regular progress reports to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group and meeting of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

## **Operational groups**

### **Children's MASH Operational Group**

**Chair:** Representative from Darlington Borough Council – Head of Service

#### **Principles**

The group is a multi-agency group with a shared responsibility for information sharing and communication as well as for service delivery and safeguarding children. The group will operate on a no blame culture basis, using restorative approaches.

#### **Purpose and responsibility**

- The Children's MASH Operational group is a multi-agency meeting to promote effective communication between all partner agencies contributing to decision making and involvement with children and families at the Front Door.

- The Children's MASH Operational group's purpose is to ensure all agencies are able to fully contribute and fulfil their roles and responsibilities and that any barriers to this are identified and actions taken to resolve any issues.
- The Children's MASH Operational group is responsible for identifying and sharing good practice as well as identifying and sharing areas for development and ensuring these are shared within individual organisations.
- The Children's MASH Operational group will be responsible for identifying any trends at the front door and ensure feedback by exception is given to the Quality Assurance and Performance Management/Learning and Development Groups to respond to any such trends. The trends will also determine the focus for multi-agency audits as undertaken by the group, which may focus specifically on a small number of individual cases. Findings from the audits will be shared with the Quality Assurance and Performance Management and Learning and Development Groups who will determine improvement actions where required.
- Task and Finish work as directed by Quality Assurance and Performance Management and Learning and Development Groups
- The group will not respond to individual professional challenges as there is an established multi-agency process, however the group will identify themes of practice and activity and create multi-agency action plans to respond to these.
- All persons attending the meeting agree to maintain confidentiality.
- The group will help identify needs around workforce development and partnership working.

## **Membership**

Membership reflects the multi-agency involvement of the Safeguarding Partnership.

Details of membership are outlined below. The group will co-opt additional members as and when necessary.

- Durham Constabulary
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley (NENCICB)
- Darlington Borough Council – Children's Social Care, Young Peoples' Engagement and Justice Service
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)
- Primary Care
- Probation Service North East
- Education
- County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (CDDFRS)
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Voluntary Sector – Harbour, We are With You
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Support

Named representatives from each organisation should where possible identify a deputy to attend if they are unable to. New representatives and agencies can be nominated and agreed within group meetings.

### **Frequency of meetings**

The MASH Operational group will be held monthly for an hour and a half.

### **Accountability and reporting**

- It is the responsibility of the core members to share actions from the meeting with relevant managers/workers.
- It is the responsibility of the core members to arrange cover in their absence.
- It is the responsibility of the core members to share good practice and learning across their service areas.

### **Adult Operational Group**

Chair - Representative from North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley

### **Principles**

The group is a multi-agency group with a shared responsibility for information sharing and communication as well as for service delivery and safeguarding adults. The group will operate on a no blame culture basis, using restorative approaches.

#### **Part 1 Operational Group**

- The group will identify themes of practice and activity and create multi-agency action plans to respond to these.
- The Adult Operational Group will have a line of sight on the most vulnerable to include: homeless/rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse and clinically vulnerable to establish line of sight (discussions taking place on how best to share and filter information).
- The group will be responsible for identifying trends or themes and ensure feedback by exception to the Quality Assurance and Performance Management Group/Learning and Development Group.
- The group will monitor and review the multi-agency Performance data reports/dashboards on a quarterly basis and the Chair will present key themes or areas of concern by exception to the QAPM/L&D. Any trends or issues will also determine the focus for multi-agency audits as undertaken by the group, which may focus specifically on a small number of individual cases. Findings from the audits will be shared with the QAPM/L&D to determine any further action to be taken.

#### **Part 2 Significant Provider Concerns**

- The Group will focus on those settings in Executive Strategy Meeting (ESM) and settings where concerns have been raised.
- The group will discuss and identify appropriate actions to inform direct work with a range of providers.
- The group will monitor responsiveness of providers to any identified issues and actions.
- The group will test those providers where concerns have been raised as to whether they may have reached the threshold for ESM.
- Appropriate processes will be in place to escalate issues that have not been addressed which may include a visit to the setting by identified partner agencies.

Membership reflects the multi-agency involvement of the safeguarding partnership.

### **Part 1 Operational**

Agencies are represented at an Operational level and should be those who have responsibility to deal with issues at that level. The group will co-opt additional members as and when necessary

- Durham Constabulary
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley (NENCICB)
- Darlington Borough Council – Adult Social Care, Contracts and Commissioning, Housing
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Primary Care
- Probation Service North East
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service
- Voluntary Sector – We are With You
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Support

### **Part 2 Significant Provider Concerns**

- Darlington Borough Council – Adult Safeguarding and North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board: Tees Valley
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Others - partners to be co-opted in as and when required/appropriate, dependent on agenda (i.e. Police, CHC, CQC (Hospital setting regulators), DBC Legal and DBC Quality Assurance)
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Support

Named representatives from each organisation should where possible identify a appropriate deputy to attend if they are unable to. New representatives and agencies can be nominated and agreed within group meetings

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Adult Operational Group will be held 6 weekly for 3 hours.

### **Accountability**

- It is the responsibility of the core members to ensure information and actions are shared appropriately within their organisation.
- It is the responsibility of the core members to arrange cover in their absence.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to inform the Learning and Development and the Quality Assurance and Performance Management Groups of specific actions.
- It is the responsibility of the core members to share good practice and learning across their service.

## **Other Groups**

### **Strategic Child Exploitation group**

This is a joint group with members of both Durham and Darlington Safeguarding Partnerships.

**Chair:** Representative Durham Constabulary – Detective Superintendent

**Purpose:**

The Primary purpose of the Child Exploitation Group is to monitor, improve and evaluate the strategic response of partner agencies in tackling children missing from home, care and education and the reduction of child exploitation across Durham and Darlington.

**Membership**

Membership reflects the multi-agency involvement of both Darlington and Durham Safeguarding Partnerships. Agencies are represented at a level of seniority that enables attendees to speak with authority on behalf of their service or organisation.

**Meetings**

The Child Exploitation group will meet quarterly. Meetings will be quorate if at least three agencies are represented. Any member of the group may propose agenda items. The Chair will confirm and agree the final agenda.

**Accountability and Reporting**

The Child Exploitation Group is accountable to Durham Executive Board and Darlington Statutory Safeguarding Partners Group.

**Authority**

The subgroup operates under delegated authority from the Durham and Darlington Safeguarding Partnerships to act within the scope of the agreed terms of reference.

**Work Plan**

The subgroup will follow an annual work plan agreed by Durham Executive and Darlington Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

The Chair of the group will provide regular reports to the Durham Executive and Darlington Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

**Objectives**

- to provide a joined-up approach to raising awareness of online harm, child exploitation, risks to missing children, county lines and modern slavery to enable practitioners to spot the signs to prevent further harm
- to ensure there are formal strategies and procedures, (including clear thresholds and timeframes) in place for Children Missing from Home, Care and Education and Child Exploitation
- to ensure that where issues of concern are not resolved at a local level they are escalated to the Child Exploited Group and if required to the Executive/Statutory Safeguarding Partners
- to understand the local picture of missing children, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation
- to understand the contextualised safeguarding model

- to understand what the gaps and barriers are to work together through audits and quality assurance processes to identify learning and provide appropriate responses, solutions and toolkits
- to monitor an agreed joint partnership performance scorecard relating to missing children, child exploitation, child exploitation vulnerability tracker (CEVT) and education data to gain an understanding of changing trends, needs and risk factors
- to use time-limited working groups for any identified project work requested by the sub group.
- Oversight of the Operational Groups by exception reporting

## Child Death Overview Panel

**Chair:** Director of Public Health (Durham County Council)

The purpose of the County Durham and Darlington Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is set out in HM Government Child Death Review: Statutory and Operational Guidance (England). [Child Death Review Statutory Guidance](#).

Working Together 2018 specifies that: *When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned.*

The responsibility for ensuring Child Death Reviews are carried out is held by 'child death review partners,' who are defined in County Durham and Darlington as Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council and North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

Child Death Review partners must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area. The purpose of a review and/or analysis is to identify any matters relating to the death, or deaths, that are relevant to the welfare of children in the area or to public health and safety, and to consider whether action should be taken in relation to any matters identified. If Child Death Review partners find action should be taken by a person or organisation, they must inform them.

County Durham and Darlington CDOP will publish an annual report of the analysis of the Child Death Reviews undertaken and what has been done as a result of the child death review arrangements in their area.

### Objectives

- to collate information about each child death, seeking relevant information from professionals and where appropriate, family members
- to analyse the information obtained, including the report from the Child Death Review Meeting(s), in order to confirm or clarify the cause of death, to determine any contributory factors and to identify learning arising from the child death review process that may prevent future deaths
- to make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified, which may prevent future child deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and local Safeguarding Partners when it is suspected that a child may have been abused or neglected

- to notify the Medical Examiner (once introduced) and the doctor who certified the cause of death, errors or deficiencies are identified in an individual child's registered cause of death. Any correction to the child's cause of death can only be made following an application for a formal correction
- to provide specified data to NHS Digital and once established, to the National Child Mortality Database
- to produce an annual report for Child Death Review partners on local patterns and trends in child deaths, any lessons learnt, and actions taken, and the effectiveness of the wider child death review process
- exception reports to be presented to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, as and when required
- to contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to consider learning from child death reviews, including, where appropriate, approved research carried out within the requirements of data protection
- to engage with regional partners to ensure learning is shared and implemented.

### **Membership**

The Child Death Overview Panel will be accountable to the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Darlington Safeguarding Partnership. Required membership is outlined within Child Death Review Statutory Guidance.

There is an expectation that these agencies attend as per the requirement of the case. In addition, CDOP will co-opt representatives at senior leadership level from other organisations as and when required, case by case. Examples would be, but not limited to Ambulance Services, Mental Health Trusts, Education, NHS England, British Transport Police.

### **Working Groups (Task and Finish Groups)**

Working Groups will be held as and when deemed pertinent or as directed by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group and the sub groups. The groups will address specific issues or support key pieces of work and will consist of smaller groups incorporating key practitioners from within the relevant partner agencies.

## **10. Voice of Child and Adult**

The DSP will seek to engage with children, young people, adults and their families to inform its work and will use partner agency's existing consultation mechanisms to assist them with this when appropriate to do so. Whenever a Child Safeguarding Practice Review or Safeguarding Adult Review is undertaken, consideration will be given to how best to engage with children, parents and carers, adults and advocates and how to support them in contributing to the review.

## **11. Scrutiny and Assurance**

### **Partnership Assurance**

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership will allow for an environment which agrees to constructive challenge and scrutiny.

The culture of challenge and accountability is embedded within the Partnership's **Professional Challenge Procedure**.



Through the sub group structure, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group (in addition to the role of the Independent Scrutineer) will:

- seek assurance of whether all agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults
- draw on the skills, knowledge and experience of all through collaborative and reflective approaches
- have assurance of whether all agencies are joined up and working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults
- test the interconnectedness between performance, practice and the voice of the child, young person and family and/or Making Safeguarding Personal, in respect of adults with care and support needs.

Any areas of concern will be escalated to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners

## 12. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training

Multi-agency training is important in supporting the collective understanding of local need. The partnership recognises that to be effective, practitioners need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills and need be aware of any new and emerging threats. To enable this, the Partnership has a multi-agency Training Strategy which describes the workforce development standards and expectations that all partner organisations should adopt to ensure their staff access the required training. The Training Programme will support with the continued professional development of practitioners to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and adults with needs for care and support.

The Learning and Development Subgroup will oversee multi-agency and single agency training to ensure there is consistency of training to obtain a clear view of the quality of practice across all partner agencies.

## 13. Finance and Budgeting

The Partnership will have a shared budget to further its objectives. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners will agree contributions annually (autumn period) and the level of funding secured from each partner agency and propose any contributions from Relevant agencies to support the local arrangements.

The funding should be transparent and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements. The cost of local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews will be met as they arise by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

The Annual Report will include a clear breakdown of the budget for the reported year, the total budget and the level of contribution from partner agencies. It will also demonstrate how funds were used.

## 14. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Section 16C Children Act 2004 (as amended by Children and Social Work Act 2017) requires a local authority to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in cases where a child dies or has been seriously harmed in the local authority area and;

- a) abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and
- b) the child has died or been seriously injured.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners must make arrangements to:

- a) identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area
- b) commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.

The local process for identifying and making decisions on reviews is outlined in Darlington Safeguarding Partnership's **Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Procedures**.

Section 44 Care Act 2014 requires that the Statutory Safeguarding Partners arrange for there to be a review of a case involving an adult in its area with needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority has been meeting any of those needs) if:

- 1) there is reasonable cause for concern about how the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (formerly SAB) members or other persons with relevant functions worked together to safeguard the adult AND:
- 2) EITHER;
  - a) the adult has died, and the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (formerly SAB) knows or suspects that the death resulted from abuse or neglect (whether or not it knew about or suspected the abuse or neglect before the adult died). OR
  - b) the adult is still alive, and the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (formerly SAB) knows or suspects that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect.

The local process for identifying and making decisions on reviews is outlined in **Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Protocol**.

### Interface with other reviews

There are a number of types of reviews and investigations that may interface with Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews and it is important to identify any processes which may be running in parallel or being considered. These may include, Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), Mental Health Homicide Review (MHHR), safeguarding and serious incident investigations, disciplinary processes, judicial reviews, complaints, criminal justice processes, YOS reviews, coroner requests and Child or Adult Protection investigations and criminal investigations. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners will consider how best any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews will interface with other reviews as and when appropriate.

## 15. Equality Impact Assessment

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership expects that all partner agencies have up to date equality, diversity and anti-discrimination policies that are upheld at all times by all staff, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is committed to promoting equality in all its work and will undertake Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to establish the effect of policies.

## 16. Confidentiality Statement

The confidentiality of children, young people, their families and adults with need for care and support is of paramount importance to the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership, and it is expected that partner organisations have confidentiality clauses embedded within recruitment processes. All lay members and the Independent Scrutineer/ Chair have signed confidentiality clauses.

Whilst it may be necessary at times for the Learning and Review sub group and the Child Death Overview Panel members to be aware of identities where information comes to the Darlington Safeguarding Partners, names will be redacted or substituted and information which may lead to identification will be withheld. Members are expected to maintain the confidentiality of all children and adults within their professional work for the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership.

## 17. Data Management

Effective communication and information sharing is essential to safeguarding children and adults with needs for care and support. **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Statutory Guidance** states effective sharing of information between practitioners and local agencies is essential, for the effective identification of children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect, assessment and service provision, and recent case reviews have highlighted ineffective information sharing as a factor in cases where children and adults have been placed at risk.

The Care Act 2014 enshrines in law the need for organisations to share information to make sure adults at risk (adults with needs for care and support) receive the best possible care and support. It also has a duty to cooperate, to ensure organisations share information where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult at risk of harm. The legislation emphasises the need to empower people, to balance choice and control for individuals against preventing harm and reducing risk, and to respond proportionately to safeguarding concerns.

The Darlington Safeguarding Partnership has developed an **Information Sharing Protocol**, which provides the framework for collaborative working and effective information sharing across the partnership. The protocol has been signed by the Relevant Agencies and is entered into for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is hosted by Darlington Borough Council. Records will be managed in accordance with Darlington Borough Council's retention and destruction schedule. All documents shall be classified appropriately in line with relevant information sharing protocols.

The Darlington Safeguarding Partnership observes the principles and requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In most cases, the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is exempt from the provisions of the FOI Act 2000 as it applies to bodies which perform public regulatory functions.

## 18. Risk Management

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners have adopted an appropriate Risk Management Procedure which will:

- identify risks associated with the achievements of the Partnerships objectives <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- allocate responsibility for the management of the risk <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- report identified risks and how they are managed to the Partnership

Insurance for individual partners is covered by their own <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> insurance arrangements. The Partnership does not have insurance.

## 19. Conduct, Complaints and Disputes

### Conduct

Each partner agency will have its own conduct policy which covers all staff. It is expected this will also cover partner agency representatives while working on partnership business or that of its sub groups.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners reserve the right to challenge any member of the partnership when it is considered that conduct has fallen below what can reasonably be expected. In addition, the partners reserve the right to contact partner agencies when there are concerns about the conduct of their representative, to ensure that appropriate action is being taken.

### Complaints

Where any partner agency, other organisation or member of the public wishes to raise a complaint about the Partnership, its sub-groups or the Business Unit, this should be done in the first instance with the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, who will decide the appropriate action to resolve or answer the complaint.

### Dispute

If there is a dispute between the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, the wider partnership and/or the Independent Scrutineer/Chair, the Statutory Safeguarding Partners will convene a meeting of the parties in dispute. The agenda will be agreed jointly between the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and the parties and the meeting will move to agree a formula for resolving the dispute or clarify the areas of dispute and possible ways forward. Where there is no agreement, the Statutory Safeguarding Partners will ask the parties to agree to the appointment of an independent mediator or where necessary, may escalate to the Leader of the Council, Chief Officer, North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and the Chief Constable.

## 20. Reporting

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership will publish an annual report. The report will set out the work that partners have done as a result of the arrangements and how effective the arrangements have been. The report will be signed off through the governance arrangements by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. The report will include:

- a summary of the activities undertaken by the partnership
- details of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews undertaken during the year and action taken to improve practice
- evidence of the impact of the work of the partnership, including training, on outcomes for children and families from Early Help to looked-after children and care leavers, and for adults with needs for care and support
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period to implement the recommendations from any local and national child safeguarding practice review or Safeguarding Adult Reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and adults to inform their work and influence service provision
- the Independent Scrutineer's assessment of the strength of the leadership by the safeguarding partners over the preceding year
- any changes to the published safeguarding arrangements.

## 21. Exit Strategy

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is a statutory function. Statutory Partners may not terminate this agreement and none of the relevant agencies may withdraw from this agreement with the approval of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners or by a change in the law, which changes the legal standing of the Partnership

## 22. End Note

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years.

## Appendix 1

### Relevant Agencies additional to Statutory Partner Organisations

- Darlington Local Authority - Housing, Public Health, Young Peoples' Engagement and Justice Service
- Health agencies – County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT), North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT)
- Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)
- Early Years Settings
- Education (Primary, Secondary, Further Education, SEN)
- Support organisations for issues such as Substance Misuse, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse (SARC)
- Family Justice Board (FJB)
- Probation Service (North East)
- Voluntary and third sector organisations (including Healthwatch)
- Primary Care (GP's)
- North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)
- NHS England (pharmacy, dentist and optometrists)
- Independent providers including private hospitals, children's homes, nursing and care homes, domiciliary providers
- Youth groups (e.g. sport, scouts, brownies)
- Faith settings
- Minority Communities
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Chairs of other key local boards (Community Safety Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, MAPPA Board)
- Representatives of other National Partners
- Darlington Partnership – which includes business and community organisations
- Coroner

This list is not exhaustive.