



NCASP

NORTHUMBERLAND CHILDREN AND ADULTS
SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP



Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)

2024-2026



**North East and
North Cumbria**



Northumberland
County Council



Contents

1.	Statutory Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Partners	3
2.	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)	4
3.	Leadership, Governance & Accountability.....	4
4.	Relevant Agencies	7
5.	Geographical Area.....	8
6.	Voice of the children, adults and families	8
7.	Scrutiny of arrangements.....	8
8.	Independent Scrutiny.....	9
9.	Training	9
10.	Funding and business support	10
11.	Arrangements for Safeguarding Adult Review, Child Safeguarding Practice Review, and Child Death Review	10
12.	Information Sharing.....	13
13.	Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership	13
	NCASP Structure.....	13
	Group's roles, functions, and responsibilities.....	13
14.	Links with other Partnerships	14
15.	Strategic Business Plan	15
16.	Annual Report.....	15
17.	Dispute resolution.....	15
18.	Review of the arrangements	16
19.	Useful links	16
	Appendix 1 – Relevant Agencies	17
	Appendix 2 - Independent Scrutineer Role	19
	Appendix 3 – INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK.....	20
	Appendix 4 – NCASP self-assessment tool.....	22

Introduction

The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) introduced new flexible arrangements for safeguarding children. In Northumberland we introduced a model for safeguarding that allows us to develop a family focused approach to working across the wider policy and partnership landscape. This fits with the duty of Safeguarding Adults Boards to oversee and lead adult safeguarding across the area and to be interested in a range of matters that contribute to the prevention of abuse and neglect.

The model develops new ways of working and identifies opportunities that reduce duplication and improve practice and outcomes for children, young people and adults across the safeguarding pathway.

Our safeguarding arrangements have been developed to build on the strengths of the previous arrangements under the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) and the Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The new Partnership arrangements acknowledge that children and adult arrangements are underpinned by different legislation and statutory guidance, however, recognises the similarities and shared benefits of a joint safeguarding approach across the life course.

This document sets out how we will work together and with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, adults, and their families in Northumberland. We are committed to the aspirations and content set out in these arrangements and will engage widely to ensure its success. We are also committed to the need to respond flexibly and creatively to new challenges as they arise.

Our safeguarding arrangements are designed to offer us the chance to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children and young people and support those who most need our help into adulthood and beyond.

We agree and state our intention to ensure these plans help us continue to promote and improve the safety, welfare and health of children, adults and families in Northumberland.



Vanessa Jardine

- Chief Officer
- Northumbria Police



Helen Paterson

- Chief Executive
- Northumberland County Council



Samantha Allen

- Chief Executive
- North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

1. Statutory Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Partners

Children's Safeguarding Partnerships:

[*Working Together to Safeguarding Children \(2023\)*](#) specifies that Safeguarding Partners are required to work with relevant agencies within their locality to safeguard and protect children, including early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.

The statutory guidance identifies the three Safeguarding Partners as the *Local Authority*, *Integrated Care Board*, and *Police*, all of whom have equal and joint responsibility for fulfilling the role.

Safeguarding partners are responsible for child protection policy, procedure and guidance at a local level. Working together with other relevant agencies, the safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

Safeguarding partners are required to publish their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and a yearly report evidencing the effectiveness of these arrangements, including any child safeguarding practice reviews.

Safeguarding Adult Boards:

[*Section 43 of the Care Act \(2014\)*](#) requires every Local Authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) for its area. The SAB operates at a strategic level, helping and protecting adults in its area from abuse and neglect through co-ordinating and reviewing a multi-agency approach across all member organisations.

The SAB has 3 core duties:

- ☐ Publish an annual strategic plan;
- ☐ Publish an annual report;
- ☐ Conduct Safeguarding Adult Reviews of serious cases in specific circumstances.

Local authorities are responsible for the establishment of SABs (Safeguarding Adults Board). The Care Act 2014 specifies that there are three core members: the LA (Local Authority), CCG (now known as Integrated Care Board), and the police (specifically the Chief Officer of police). It also notes that for a SAB to fulfil its responsibilities and duties effectively, other agencies will need to be involved in its work.

Northumberland Joint Partnership arrangements:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Care Act 2014 both set out requirements for all local safeguarding partners to work together to safeguard and promote the safety and wellbeing of local children and adults at risk of harm or abuse, including identifying and responding to their needs.

However, one of the key differences is that whilst the duty for establishing a Partnership in Children's legislation is held *equally* between the LA, ICBs and Police, for an Adult Board that *responsibility remains with the Local Authority* and includes those same statutory members as core partners.

2. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)

There is a shared and collective responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. Responsibility for this joined up approach locally rests with three **Safeguarding Partners**¹ who have a duty to have robust arrangements in place.

Our **MASA** sets out how the Safeguarding Partners will work together, and with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, adults and families.

In developing the model for Northumberland the safeguarding partners acknowledge their shared responsibilities within the new arrangements including:

- ☐ ensuring 'join up' between the many local organisations and agencies who have a duty under [section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#) to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions;
- ☐ agreeing on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services;
- ☐ acting as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others;
- ☐ setting the strategic direction, vision and culture of the safeguarding arrangements
- ☐ implementing local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents; and
- ☐ ensuring statutory responsibilities of the SAB (including Safeguarding Adult Reviews).

To be effective, these arrangements should link to other strategic partnerships and organisations that have responsibilities to address issues relevant to safeguarding children and adults.

3. Leadership, Governance & Accountability

Strong leadership is critical for the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to be effective in bringing together various organisations and agencies.

Lead safeguarding partner (LSP)

The LSP is the head of each statutory safeguarding partner agency, responsible for holding their own organisation or agency to account, speaking and making decisions on behalf of their agency, and meeting the statutory and legislative duties of their agency.

LSPs from different agencies are jointly responsible for the proper involvement of all relevant agencies, and work as a team, as opposed to as a voice for their own organisation.

The LSPs for Northumberland are:



¹ Northumberland County Council; NENC Integrated Care Board; Northumbria Police

Joint functions of lead safeguarding partners (LSP)

1. Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
2. Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
3. Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny; shared annual budget; yearly report; and local threshold document.
4. Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, LCSPRs and national reviews ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
5. Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
6. Ensure all relevant agencies (including education settings) are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The LSPs will meet regularly to undertake these functions. As the boundaries of both the police and ICB extend over multiple local authority areas, LSPs will meet at a more regional level to discuss all arrangements within their remit and ensure consistency of funding and resources. This will be done via the Tyne, Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNSP).

The LSPs have appointed Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) who represent their organisation at the NCASP Executive meetings. They are sufficiently senior to speak with authority, take decisions on their behalf and can hold their organisation to account.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs)

The DSPs for Northumberland are:

Northumbria Police

Chief
Superintendent &
Area Commander
(Sam Rennison)

Northumberland County Council

Executive Director of
Children, Young
People and Education
(Audrey Kingham)

Executive Director of
Adults, Ageing and
Wellbeing (Neil
Bradley)

North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Director of Nursing
(Richard Scott)

Joint functions of delegated safeguarding partners (DSP)

1. Delivery and monitoring of multi-agency priorities and procedures to protect and safeguard children in the local area, in compliance with published arrangements and thresholds.
2. Close partnership working and engagement with education (at strategic and operational level) and other relevant agencies, allowing better identification of and response to harm.
3. The implementation of effective information-sharing arrangements between agencies, including data sharing that facilitates joint analysis between partner agencies.
4. Delivery of high-quality and timely Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs, with the impact of learning from local and national reviews and independent scrutiny clearly evidenced in yearly reports.
5. The provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding professional development and training.
6. Seeking of, and responding to, feedback from children and families about their experiences of services and co-designing services to ensure children from different communities and groups can access the help and protection they need.

The DSPs will meet regularly to undertake these functions; this includes attending NCASP Executive Group meetings.

NCASP Partnership Chair

One DSP within the partnership will be appointed partnership chair for multi-agency arrangements. This role will be undertaken for 2 years and then rotated between the DSPs.

The partnership chair will facilitate partner discussions, provide greater continuity, and act as a single point of contact for the partnership.

Functions of Partnership Chair role

- To develop strategic links, support and hold to account all LSPs in fulfilling their safeguarding duties for children.
- Ensure that local arrangements are designed to work collaboratively and effectively by encouraging and supporting the development of partnership working between the LSPs, DSPs, independent scrutiny role and MASA subgroups.
- Chair the meetings of the DSPs, including any additional meetings convened as a response to specific and exceptional circumstances, with the help of the business manager and independent scrutiny role.
- Offer appropriate challenge to ensure that the partners are accountable, and that the local arrangements operate effectively.

Chief Superintendent and Area Commander **Sam Rennison** has agreed to take on the role of partnership chair for the next 2 years (from Autumn 2024); The role will then rotate to another DSP in 2026.

The Safeguarding Partners will discharge their broader responsibilities through the Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) and its groups (see: [section 13](#)); these are made up of those relevant agencies set out in statutory regulation (see: [section 4](#)). Groups and task and finish groups will report to the NCASP on a regular basis, via Business Groups and Executive Group.

In situations that require a clear, single point of leadership all three Safeguarding Partners will decide who leads on specific arrangements or issues.

A partnership forum that consists of the NCASP Partnership Chair, the Independent Scrutineer and Chairs of Safer Northumberland Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, Children and Young People Strategic Partnership and the Youth Justice Board will consider cross cutting safeguarding and community safety issues for Northumberland as a whole.

This is one of the ways in which the Safeguarding Partners will work more closely with partnerships to strengthen our approach to working across the life course and reducing the likelihood of harm to children, young people and adults. The forum will meet once a year (or more often, if required) and will report into its' constituent partnerships as appropriate.

The Safeguarding Partners may delegate decision making to the NCASP and its groups to ensure their responsibilities are fulfilled in a timely way.

Northumberland County Council provides legal, communications and media advice to the Safeguarding Partners and the NCASP, however, individual organisations reserve the right to seek advice provided by their organisation. Northumberland County Council also acts as the Data Controller for Freedom of Information requests.

4. Relevant Agencies

Relevant agencies² are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the Safeguarding Partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, adults and families in Northumberland and must act in accordance with the arrangements.

Strong effective multi-agency arrangements are responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people in a collaborative way. This approach requires flexibility from all relevant agencies, to enable joint identification and response to existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.

When identified by NCASP as a relevant agency, an organisation must act in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements. As part of this, the organisation should:

- ☐ have a clear understanding of its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children locally, and how it will discharge them
- ☐ co-operate with safeguarding partners to improve, implement, and monitor effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements
- ☐ share information and data about safeguarding issues and concerns affecting the children involved in their organisation to contribute to local priorities
- ☐ ensure local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are fully understood, and rigorously applied within their organisation

Where a Relevant Agency has a national remit (such as the British Transport Police and CAFCASS) memorandums of understanding will set out how they will contribute to the local arrangements.

The Relevant Agencies for Northumberland are set out in [appendix 2](#)

Relevant agencies are well represented within our partnership arrangements (see [section 13](#)) and work closely with us to understand the factors impacting on safeguarding of children, young people, and

² WT Chapter 2: [MASA \(Relevant Agencies\)](#)

adults in Northumberland. Together, we identify the necessary actions and collaborate to enact positive change and monitor the impact.

5. Geographical Area

The boundaries for NCASP will be those of Northumberland County Council. However, work will continue across the Northumbria region³ via the Business Managers networks and the Tyne, Wear & Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership. See: [Northumberland Map](#) & [Map Key](#)

6. Voice of the children, adults and families

The voice of the child/adult is at the heart of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Involving children, adults and families is essential to safeguarding in Northumberland both in contributing to delivering NCASP's vision and in helping to scrutinise and review the partnership arrangements themselves.

NCASP aims to make use of the existing systems, groups and forums to gather the views of children, adults and families to encourage them to have their say, share their views and experiences, challenge and support local decision makers and shape and influence strategic planning, commissioning and service provision.

These include:

- Multi-agency audits and reviews
- Schools councils, youth groups, support groups
- Service user panels

Supported by information from data sources such as:

- Strategic Participation Groups
- Participation teams (across the partnership)
- Performance teams (across the partnership)
- Commissioning

7. Scrutiny of arrangements

When developing local scrutiny arrangements, NCASP considered a number of options and agreed a blended approach to scrutiny, these are:

- ❑ An **Independent Scrutineer** (see [section 8](#) and [appendix 3](#)) and an **Independent Scrutiny Framework** ([appendix 4](#))
- ❑ NCASP **self-assessment** ([appendix 5](#)) – *The learning from this will then be reflected in our annual report.*
- ❑ Partners' **safeguarding audits** – this is carried out sub-regionally every two years. The same audit tool is used across six areas, sent out at the same time and responses collated (Northumberland lead on this) – this can be themed audits, to help inform agreed regional priority areas of work.
- ❑ Regional **peer review**/challenge arrangements - including regional collaboration via Tyne, Wear & Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNSP), Association Directors of Children's Services/Adult Social Services (ADCS/ADASS) and Business Manager Networks.
- ❑ Independent scrutiny through the local authority and Integrated Care Board **scrutiny committees**

³ The region covers the 6 local authority areas of North and South of Tyne: Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland; the ICBs for those areas; and Northumbria Police.

- ❑ **External inspections** and reviews – [Ofsted](#), [Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC), [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#) (HMICFRS).

Our Scrutiny and Quality Assurance Framework sets out our aspirations and provides a range of mechanisms providing opportunities for scrutiny/assurance, case tracking and deep dives into themes, cohorts and areas of focus.

8. Independent Scrutiny

There is statutory requirement⁴ for multi-agency arrangements to be independently scrutinised. **NCASP have appointed an Independent Scrutineer to fulfil this role.**

Functions of independent scrutineer

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

The Independent Scrutineer for Northumberland is **Sue Kirkley**. For more information about this role see [appendix 3](#)

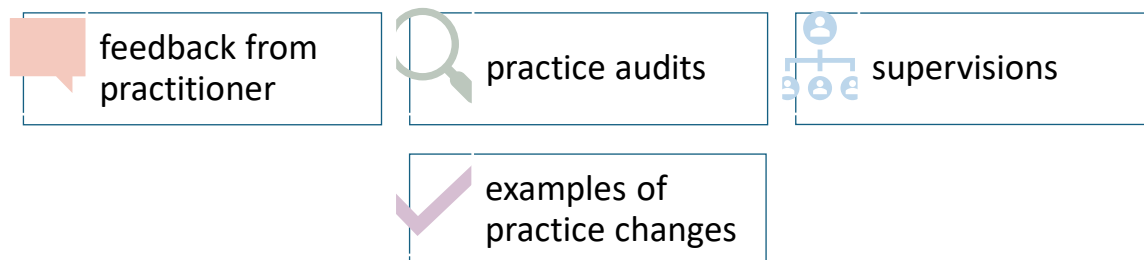
9. Training

Safeguarding partners commission multi-agency training and learning activities based on needs analysis and agreed via NCASP's Practice Learning Group. This needs analysis is informed by the NCASPs priorities and takes into account practice issues arising from (for example) local safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency case audits, inspections, local and national priorities, safeguarding audits, feedback from training activities and emerging issues.

The method of delivery of multi-agency training is based on what is most appropriate and effective and includes e-learning, face to face training, virtual training, conferences, case studies and action learning activities.

NCASP will continue to be creative and innovative in developing learning interventions. This is evaluated in a variety of ways and includes:

⁴ [WT Chapter 2: Independent Scrutiny](#)



Impact of learning is monitored, and the findings reported back to the NCASP Executive annually.

See: Training Programme

10. Funding and business support

The Safeguarding Partners will directly contribute to the local arrangements for safeguarding. Safeguarding Partners funding will contribute to the costs associated with the implementation and ongoing development of the joint Partnership, including the arrangements for Independent Scrutiny.

The work of NCASP is supported by a jointly funded Business Support Unit which provides strategic and administrative support. This includes two business managers (Children and Adults) who support the partners to ensure the components of the structure can deliver their responsibilities and achieve the partnership aims.

The safeguarding partners are committed to equitable and proportionate funding of this business support and the work of the NCASP as a whole. Funding allocations will be agreed by Safeguarding Partners via the Executive group.

The three partners will discuss, identify, agree and maintain the budget for each financial year (April-March). This funding will also include the cost of child safeguarding practice reviews/Safeguarding Adult Reviews, which will be agreed as and when required.

The three safeguarding partners and Relevant Agencies will also, as required, provide in kind contributions to support the work of the local arrangements (e.g. training capacity).

These arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Executive Group.

11. Arrangements for Safeguarding Adult Review, Child Safeguarding Practice Review, and Child Death Review

There is a statutory duty to review serious cases for both adults⁵ and children⁶. Safeguarding partners are required to make arrangements to identify and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.

The Safeguarding Adult Review Group (SARG) and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group (CSPRG) oversees these processes and ensures NCASP complies with statutory requirements.

The reviews seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. They are not conducted to hold individuals, organisations or agencies to account, as there are other processes for that purpose (including through employment law and disciplinary procedures, professional regulation and, in exceptional cases, criminal proceedings).

⁵ [Section 44: The Care Act 2014](#)

⁶ [Chapter 5: Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents](#)

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR)

A **SAR** must be undertaken when:

- ☐ An adult or adults with care and support needs die as a result of abuse or neglect and there is a concern that partnership agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult(s); **OR**
- ☐ An adult or adults with care and support needs has not died, but the NCASP knows or suspects that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect with a concern that partnership agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult.
- ☐ **SARs are not enquiries into how an adult died and who is responsible. That is a matter for the Coroner or criminal courts.**

There are two types of SAR:

Mandatory

- there is a duty to carry out a SAR as conditions apply
- Section 44 (1), (2) and (3) of the Care Act 2014

Discretionary

- the duty does not apply, but carrying out a SAR would still be beneficial
- Section 44 (4) of the Care Act 2014

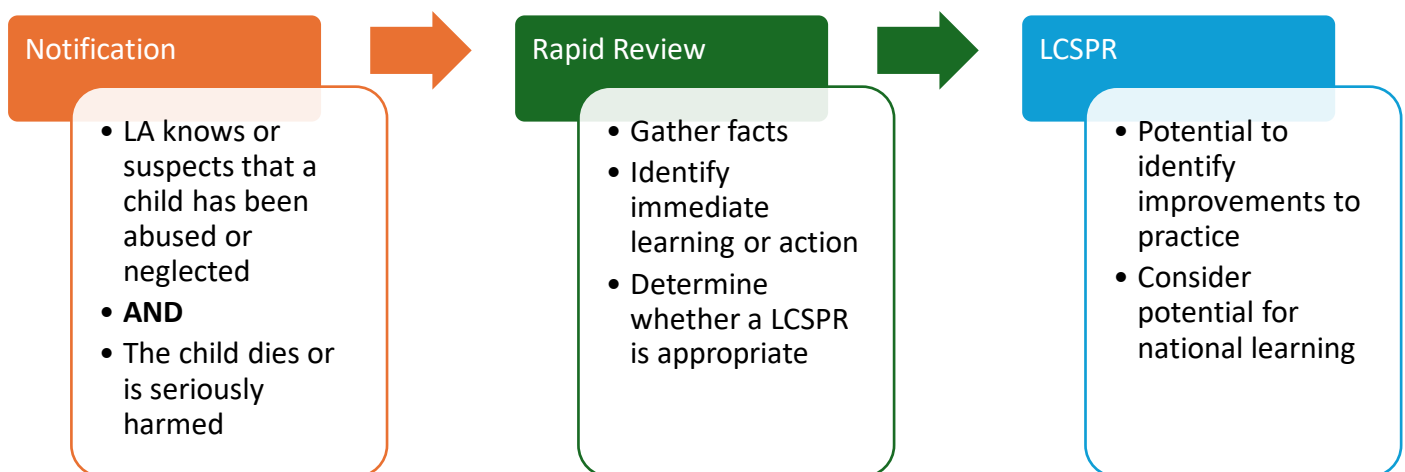
Both are statutory in nature.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR)

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- ☐ Abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; **and**
- ☐ The child has died or been seriously harmed.

There are three key stages in the process of learning from serious child safeguarding cases:



In some cases, the rapid review process may identify key local learning that can be quickly acted upon, removing the need for further review.

The purpose of SARs and LCSPRs is to:

- ☐ Learn from cases where agencies could have worked together more effectively;
- ☐ Consider whether serious harm could or could not have been predicted or prevented, and develop learning that enables the partnership to improve its services, and prevent abuse and neglect in the future;
- ☐ Identify any issues in multi or single agency policies and procedures;

- ❑ Agree on how the learning will be acted on, and what is expected to change.

These reviews help us to identify improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving. The reports are published and available to the public.

The Practice Learning Group promote, coordinate and support the embedding of learning from all safeguarding reviews and partnership activity.

- ❑ More information about the SAR process: [Safeguarding Adult Reviews \(SAR\)](#)
- ❑ More information about rapid reviews and LSCPRs: [LSCPR Framework and Practice Guidance](#)

Child Death Review Arrangements

The purpose of a child death review is to help prevent further such child deaths and improve the experience of bereaved families, and professionals involved in caring for children. The responsibility for ensuring child death reviews are carried out is held by the **child death review partners**, who are the local authority and the Integrated Care System/Board.

[Statutory and Operational Guidance](#) sets out the full process that follows the death of a child. It builds on the statutory requirements⁷ and clarifies how individual professionals and organisations across all sectors involved in the child death review should contribute to reviews.

In order to comply with the statutory guidance – that Child Death Overview Panels should cover a geographical footprint that enables it to typically review at least 60 child deaths per year – the CDR partners for the following localities have agreed to establish one CDOP to cover their combined geographical footprint:



This CDOP, known as the **North and South of Tyne CDOP**, will typically review at least 60 deaths per year which will better enable thematic learning in order to identify potential safeguarding or local health issues that could be modified in order to protect children from harm and, ultimately, save lives.

The CDOP will carry out its functions mindful of the potential impact upon the bereaved family and in accordance with the [CDR Statutory Guidance](#). The CDOP is the final assurance point once all multi-agency information has been collected, collated and analysed at a local level via the Child Death Review Meeting and professionals who have known the child and family, including the key worker. CDOP use eCDOP to support them in the collation of information and learning.

CDOP will report into Public Health and the Health and Wellbeing Board and report to NCASP on an annual basis. Learning from CDOP will be shared with the Practice Learning Group via the designated nurse (safeguarding) and Business Manager (Children) to ensure timely response to any identified actions or implications for practice.

NCASP will publish CDOP Annual Reports here → nland.uk/NCASP

⁷ [Chapter 5 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

12. Information Sharing

NCASP members shall keep confidential any information obtained because of inter-agency co-operation unless disclosure of the information is necessary to discharge the functions of the Safeguarding Partners (as set out in Working Together and Care Act) and the local safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding partners may require any person, organisation or agency to provide them, any relevant agency, reviewer or another person or organisation or agency, with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the Safeguarding Partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, adults and families in Northumberland, including local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

The person or organisation to whom a request is made must comply with such a request and if they do not do so, the Safeguarding Partners may take legal action against them. As public authorities, Safeguarding Partners must be aware of their own responsibilities under the relevant information law and have regard to guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office when issuing and responding to requests for information.

The NCASP's [Information Sharing Protocol](#) has been developed to address information sharing both at strategic level and operational level within the arenas of Safeguarding Children and Adult Safeguarding.

The agencies with the potential to be involved in safeguarding investigations have signed up to the use of this protocol, agreed with the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

This protocol is underpinned by *service specific operational agreements* that are designed to meet the specific data sharing needs of that service.

13. Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership

NCASP is our key statutory mechanism for overseeing safeguarding arrangements and driving change in Northumberland. It brings Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies together at both a strategic and operational level to deliver a focused, co-ordinated response, to innovate system change, deliver efficiencies and support effective multi-agency practice.

NCASP structure is included at [appendix 1](#)

Group's roles, functions, and responsibilities

The role, function, and responsibilities for each tier are outlined below:

Role	Function	Responsible for
Executive group	Monitor and decision makers	❑ High level strategic decision making and oversight. Review progress against the business plan and priorities, ❑ assurance areas and data exceptions, ensuring performance is evidence based and outcome focused. ❑ Request specific information/set actions of the NCASP. Ratify safeguarding review recommendations/activities. ❑ Monitor resources/financial activity of the partnership.

Business Groups	Innovators	☐ Oversight of subgroup/group work plans. ☐ Agree highlight messages from the NCASP activity for the period. ☐ Plan towards and drive progress of the NCASP strategic business plan. Provide assurances to executive group. ☐ Contribute to the evaluation and ongoing development of the NCASP. ☐ Share responsibility to identify/propose solutions to challenges. ☐ Escalate concerns.
Full Partnership (virtual) Groups	Networkers	☐ Provide a link to and understanding of operational practice. ☐ Disseminate information and good practice. ☐ Contribute to the identification of learning within the NCASP.
	Drivers	☐ Progress the delivery of strategic priorities. ☐ Develop appropriate workplans. ☐ Monitor and review performance of work plans, to identify and review achievements, risks, and impact. ☐ Ensure membership reflects the theme and promotes effective working relationships. ☐ Seek assurances related to the theme, that can be evidenced across the NCASP.
Business managers	Coordinators	☐ Support, advise and challenge. ☐ Provide a consistent link between the tiers. Co-ordinate ongoing developments. ☐ Motivate, empower, and influence the activities of the NCASP members. ☐ Raise awareness of regional and national developments relevant to the partnership.
Independent scrutineer	Challenger	☐ Provide constructive challenge. ☐ Contribute and evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements and activities of the NCASP. ☐ Arbitrate when there is disagreement between the statutory partners.

The outlined responsibilities are not an exhaustive list but aims to provide an overview of expectations for each role. The terms of reference document sets out the key responsibilities for each group in more detail – See: [NCASP Groups - Terms of Reference](#)

14. Links with other Partnerships

The Safeguarding Partners work together and in collaboration with other strategic partnerships, including (but not limited to):

- ☐ Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
- ☐ Health and Wellbeing Board
- ☐ Safer Northumberland Partnership
- ☐ Channel Panel
- ☐ Youth Justice Board
- ☐ Children and Young People Strategic Partnership (and Early Help Partnership Board)
- ☐ Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

- ❑ Violence Reduction Unit
- ❑ Other Strategic Management Boards (as well as those across the North and South of Tyne and the region to ensure an effective joined-up response to reduce the risk of harm and to improve outcomes).

Safeguarding cuts across all our partnerships and we often have cross-cutting themes/areas of work. When considering/reviewing strategic plans and priority areas of work, it is important that this is done in collaboration to ensure a streamlined approach and maximise effectiveness.

15. Strategic Business Plan

The NCASPs Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction for the NCASP. The plan identifies specific priorities for action and areas of focus and is clear about roles and accountability.

The Strategic Plan emphasises the role of NCASP in **leading** the safeguarding agenda, and in committing to an approach which **learns** lessons, embeds good practice and which is continually influenced by the views of children and young people.

This Strategic Plan is overseen and monitored by NCASP via the Business Groups. Progress on agreed priorities will be included in the NCASPs annual report – See: [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)

16. Annual Report

NCASP will publish Annual Reports, setting out the work that partners have achieved as a result of the arrangements, and how effective the arrangements have been in practice. It will also include details of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews undertaken during the year, and action taken to improve practice.

In addition, the report will also include:

- ❑ A summary of the activities undertaken by the Partnership.
- ❑ Evidence of the impact of the work of the Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and adults at risk.
- ❑ A summary of the Partnership's self-evaluation and the key findings of independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Partnership.
- ❑ A record of actions taken by the Safeguarding Partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any reviews, including resulting improvements.
- ❑ An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence on agreed priorities.
- ❑ Details of how the Partnership has engaged with children and adults and used this to inform its work and influence practice.
- ❑ Any changes to published arrangements.
- ❑ The difference the Partnership makes to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk.

Annual Reports will be signed off via the Partnership governance arrangements and Executive group. The Partnership will ensure reports are widely available in accordance with the relevant statutory legislative requirements and will be published on our website here → nland.uk/NCASP

A copy of the report will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and Foundations (What Works Centre for Children's Social Care) within seven days of being published.

17. Dispute resolution

Transparency, openness, and a willingness to understand and respect individual and agency views are a core aspect of multi-agency working. However, there may be occasions where individuals / agencies working with children and families disagree on how best to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

All partner agencies have a responsibility to resolve any professional disagreement between them promptly and amicably in accordance with the [protocol for resolving professional disagreement](#). In the unlikely event that a disagreement cannot be resolved at local level by senior managers within the respective agencies, it can be escalated to the three Delegated Safeguarding Partners.

Whistleblowing Procedures provide an additional important route for staff to raise concerns in a safe process that protects their position. The Safeguarding Partners and the wider partnership will adhere to their own whistleblowing procedures.

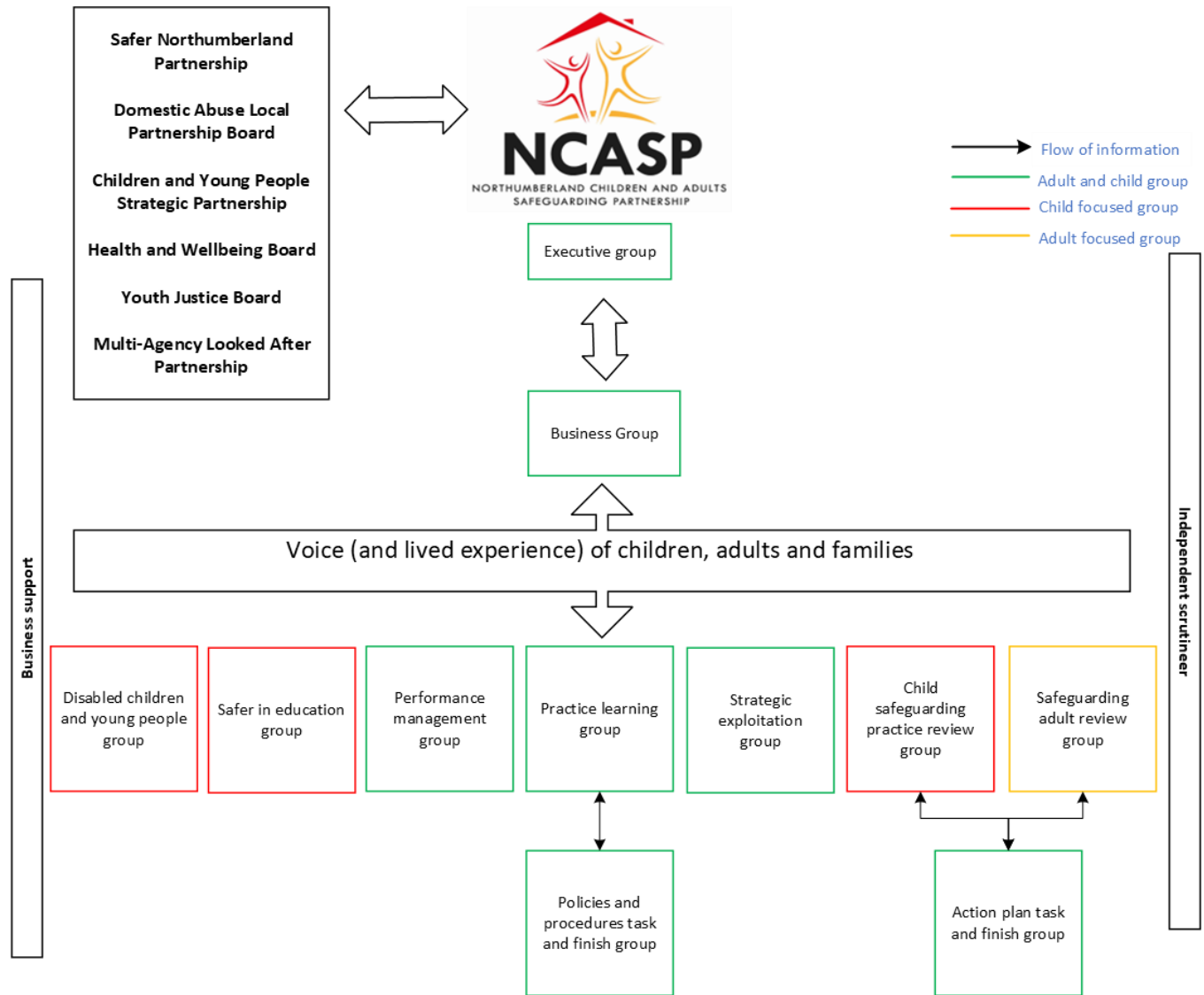
18. Review of the arrangements

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements will be reviewed in September 2026 (or following any changes to legislation/statutory guidance). Any proposed amendment to the arrangements will be in consultation with the wider partners.

19. Useful links

Children	Adults
☐ Working together to safeguard children ☐ Chapter 2: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements ☐ Chapter 5: Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents ☐ Chapter 6: Child death reviews	☐ The Care Act 2014 ☐ Section 43: The Care Act 2014 (SABs)
Multi-agency procedures and practice guidance	
☐ North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual ☐ Core Procedures ☐ Safeguarding Practice Guidance ☐ Thresholds of need - DOCUMENT & Information about thresholds ☐ Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) - FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE & FLOWCHART ☐ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Information Sheet and Flowchart & Referral Form ☐ Resource library (Northumberland)	☐ Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Board Procedures ☐ Core Procedures ☐ Practice Guidance ☐ Safeguarding Adult Reviews ☐ Mental Capacity Act 2005 Resource and Practice Toolkit ☐ Contacts and Practice Resources

Appendix 1 – NCASP Structure



The terms of reference document sets out the key responsibilities for each group in more detail – See: [NCASP Groups - Terms of Reference](#)

Appendix 2 – Relevant Agencies

Education and childcare

- All Primary Education Settings (maintained, academies, independent)
- All Secondary Education Settings (maintained, academies, independent)
- All Special Schools
- All Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision Providers
- All Further and Higher Education Settings
- All Early Years Settings (including maintained nursery schools)
- Virtual School

Health

- North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Primary Care (General Practitioners, Pharmacy, Opticians)
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (0-19 Services)
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CAMHS)
- Public Health Service
- North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)*
- NHS England*
- (*The NENC ICB will continue to represent NEAS and NHS England as part of their formal role, through a memorandum of understanding).

Local Government

- Northumberland Council's Children's Services (including Children's Social Care and Family Help)
- Northumberland Council's Adults Services (including Adult Social Care and Safeguarding)
- Northumberland Council's Housing Service

Public Services

- Northumbria Police
- Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- UK Border Agency
- British Transport Police

Criminal Justice

- Youth Justice Service
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Probation Service

Voluntary Sector

- Healthwatch
- Connected Voice
- The Children's Society
- Other voluntary sector groups by discussion and representation

Wider Partnership

- Northumberland Council's Lead Members for Children and Young People and Adults
- Safer Northumberland Partnership
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Domestic Abuse LA Partnership Board
- Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Faith Groups

Appendix 3 - Independent Scrutineer Role

The role of Independent Scrutineer is to provide independent scrutiny and constructive challenge to support the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support.

The role includes providing assurance regarding the effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements in Northumberland with a particular focus on practice and supporting inclusion of the voice of children and adults in decision making and assurance.

The Independent Scrutineer will provide scrutiny and challenge across the Partnership, hold partners to account, and provide an independent view of effectiveness of **both children and adults safeguarding arrangements**.

This is an evolving role, which will involve a variety of methods of assurance such as focus groups, audits, consultations and visits.

Broadly, the requirement is for between 30-40 days of work per annum and will involve:

- ☐ Acting as a critical friend, and providing objective scrutiny, constructive challenge, appreciative inquiry, and assuring the effectiveness and quality of local multi-agency arrangements with a particular focus on practice.
- ☐ Supporting the inclusion of the voice of children and adults in decision making and quality assurance, to directly improve outcomes.
- ☐ Scrutinise the outcome, decision making and rationale of Rapid Reviews.
- ☐ Scrutinise the progress and impact of any Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Safeguarding Adult Review action plans.
- ☐ Scrutinise the effectiveness of quality and assurance processes.
- ☐ Driving continuous improvement and learning across the Partnership and strengthening accountability for impact and outcomes.
- ☐ Supporting partners to explore the opportunity to further integrate the children and adults Safeguarding Partnership, paying particular attention to the benefits, risks, governance issues and engagement of practitioners in that development.
- ☐ Providing regular reports to the Safeguarding Partnership Executive detailing progress and highlighting and escalating areas which require focus for improvement.
- ☐ Undertaking an annual review of the new safeguarding partnership arrangements which will contribute to the Annual Report and Strategic plan.
- ☐ Collaborating and contributing to regional independent scrutiny developments and frameworks.

Appendix 4 – INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK

	Key objective	Descriptor (summary statement of key activity)
1	NCASP Leadership	1. Provide independent critical challenge, enquiry, and investigation to the Safeguarding Partnership, ensuring that it fulfils its statutory responsibilities (as established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 the Care Act 2014 and other related guidance). 2. Appraisal of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, with a specific focus on:- ☐ The quality of leadership provided by the three statutory partners, including appropriate representation and attendance at all partnership meetings. ☐ The development of a strategic plan to safeguard children and adults, adequate allocation of resources to implement the plan and to deliver against the agreed outcomes. ☐ Reviewing local governance arrangements to ensure that there is an effective interface between Strategic partnerships
2	Engagement of Relevant Agencies	1. Evaluate how the partnership engages with wider partners (including non-statutory partners) to identify, review, and communicate the priorities and work of the safeguarding partnership. 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of information sharing and communication between all safeguarding partners, including the escalation of safeguarding concerns. 3. Consider the mechanisms to engage with all safeguarding partners and its impact in promoting children and adult wellbeing, keeping them safe from harm and deliver a coordinated and person centred approach to safeguarding. (Including the sharing of findings from local and national reviews, and guidance)
3	Outcomes for Children and adults	1. Consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children, adults and families as well as for practitioners. 2. Evaluate the opportunities and methods to involve children and adults in the work of the partnership, including opportunities to lead or co-produce initiatives. 3. Evaluate the role that children and adults play in assessing and influencing desired outcomes.

4	Quality assurance and information sharing	1. Consider how multi agency performance information, relevant to safeguarding children and adults, is used to develop and improve knowledge and practice. 2. Evaluate the learning from single and multi-agency audits and its direct impact on systems and practice. 3. Evaluate how partnership performance information and analysis is being used to inform the priorities and the partnership business plan.
5	Learning from local & national reviews and research	1. Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review serious child and adult safeguarding incidents. 2. Ensure local and national learning from CSPRs and SARs are widely disseminated and their impact evaluated. This includes the immediacy of learning identified at Rapid Reviews irrespective of the decision to undertake a case review. 3. Evaluate how effectively learning from case reviews improves practice and is integrated into training, policy, and practice.
6	Multi agency safeguarding training & workforce development	1. Review how the three safeguarding partners assesses training needs locally. 2. Consider how the partnership will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training they deliver or commission, including the take up and use of training and the impact on the quality of practice. 3. Evaluate the use of training by children, young people and communities (what does this mean?)

Appendix 5 – NCASP self-assessment tool

The [tool](#) can be used by safeguarding partnership and/or by independent scrutineers as a model for:

- ☐ the safeguarding partnership and/or independent scrutineer to structure their scrutiny
- ☐ the three statutory partners to engage with a self-assessment exercise in preparation for independent scrutiny
- ☐ the wider range of safeguarding partners to assess their engagement and activity with safeguarding children initiatives (this would provide a variety of perspectives)

Each question in each of the six sections can be answered with:

Green:

- a positive affirmation that the statement can be confirmed with evidence to illustrate the positive response

Amber:

- acknowledgement that some parts of the statement can be confirmed positively (with evidence to illustrate the positive response) but that there is still work to be done for full positive affirmation.

Red:

- it is not possible to confirm that any part of the statement can be confirmed with a positive response.

Any response (green, amber or red) will require an action to ensure reaching and maintaining desired outcomes. Actions are automatically pulled through into action tracker (tabs along the bottom).

This tool will help us to review how well our arrangements/independent scrutiny is functioning and to ensure it is having the desired and necessary impact. This tool could also be used for regional peer review, to structure and focus scrutiny and ensure consistency.

[Link to tool](#)