




## **Governance & Accountability Framework and Terms of Reference** **June 2023 – March 2024**



Issue Date	Author	Date of next Review	Lead Officer
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## Contents

Purpose .....	4
Current Partnership Arrangements .....	4
Vision .....	4
Our Values .....	4
Key Priorities.....	5
Statutory Requirements .....	5
Statutory Arrangements.....	6
The Executive .....	7
The Executive Plus (Operations Group).....	8
SubGroups .....	9
Funding and Resources.....	10
Annual Report .....	10
Issue Resolution (formerly known as the Escalation Policy).....	11
Review of Arrangements .....	11
Appendices .....	12

## Purpose

The purpose of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP) is to support the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and families who require care and support, and to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding practice in North Somerset.

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

NSSCP provides effective and informed leadership to the local safeguarding system and delivers a shared responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people at risk in North Somerset. The Partnership will also seek to engage with children, young people, and their families to inform its work and will use partner agency's existing consultation mechanisms to assist them with this. The central purpose of NSSCP is to provide 'added value' to local safeguarding arrangements.

## Current Partnership Arrangements

From April 2023 an Executive and Executive Plus Partnership will be in place, to ensure the Partnership meets its statutory requirements. Should changes take place the full partnership arrangements will be carefully planned and implemented over a period of 12 months.

See *Appendix 1* for an overview of the NSSCP Partnership structure.

Following the Local Government Association Review consideration may include:

- Map alignments and governance arrangements with other existing partnerships and groups, across the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) local authority areas.
- Identify and monitor any risks associated with the existing partnership arrangements.
- Review the Independent Chair and Scrutiny arrangements.
- Ensure that Safeguarding Business support is strengthened and that the Business Manager is equipped with the right support to undertake Job role and responsibilities effectively and safely. (Business Support models to be explored).
- Ensure the Partnership engages with our communities and builds on the lived experiences of children and their families.

## Vision

The vision for the North Somerset Safeguarding Partnership is that children and young people who reside in North Somerset grow up in a safe environment, free from abuse and neglect. Children, young people, and their families will receive the right level of support & intervention, at the right time, by skilled professionals to ensure that children and young people have the best start to life, so that children and families have the ability to thrive and develop and an ability to reach their full potential.

## Our Values

**Transparency & Respect** – we will foster a culture of openness, respect and transparency. NSSCP partners are required to work openly together, to learn from collective and individual experience, and to seek and receive assurance on the overall effectiveness of work to safeguard and protect children in North Somerset.

**Integrity & Honesty** – we will be honest and open with each other on areas of challenge, transformation and system change to inform decisions on future initiatives and collaborative working.

**Challenge and Innovate** - we will respectfully and constructively challenge each other to drive continuous improvement and deliver the best outcomes for North Somerset's children.

**Collaboration and Partnership** – The three Safeguarding Partners and all Relevant Agencies will work proactively, effectively, and collaboratively together. We will value differences to help drive improvements for children and young people.

**Care and Listening to the voice and lived experience of the child** - Everything we do will benefit children and young people in North Somerset. We will ensure that our work is child centred, and we continually seek to care and engage, and involve our children and young people and their families.

## Key Priorities

The NSSCP Strategic Plan has been developed to focus on a set of agreed priorities that have been agreed at the NSSCP Development event on 10.03.2023.

These Priorities have been identified from themes arising from the Partnership's existing scrutiny and quality assurance programs and key priorities identified in children's safeguarding practice reviews. The strategic objectives will remain the same for the three-year period of the plan but the activities that sit underneath them will be reviewed and refreshed annually during that period.

The structure of the strategic plan allows the Executive to focus on key strategic areas of partnership activity but also remain flexible to respond to emerging needs and refine existing programs of activity in line with feedback received from children, their families and partner agencies.

To support the delivery of the Business Plan's more detailed work plans, aligned to the Partnership's strategic priorities, will be developed for each Sub and Working Group. The NSSCP will take a leadership role in the delivery and quality assurance of partnership work in these areas. Progress against this plan will be reviewed and monitored by each individual subgroup / Task and Finish Group in the first instance. Where necessary and appropriate, the Execs Plus Group (Operations Group) will highlight both areas of concern and areas of good practice and success to the full NSSCP Executive meetings for further action.

## Statutory Requirements

Safeguarding Children's Partnerships:

*Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018)* specifies that Safeguarding Partners are required to work with relevant agencies within their locality to safeguard and protect children. The statutory guidance identifies the three Safeguarding Partners as the Local Authority, and transition to Integrated Care

Boards from Clinical Commissioning Groups, and Chief Officer of Police, all of whom have equal and joint responsibility for fulfilling the role.

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults in respect of local need.

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.

### Statutory Arrangements

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out requirements for all local safeguarding partners, including Keeping Children Safe in Education to work together to safeguard and promote the safety and wellbeing of local children at risk of harm or abuse, including identifying and responding to their needs.

The duty for establishing a Partnership in Children's legislation is held equally between the Local Authority, the Integrated Care Board and Police.

In North Somerset the three safeguarding partners are:

Chief Constable Avon and Somerset Police,  
Chief Executive North Somerset Council,  
Chief Executive Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucester Integrated Care Board.

They have delegated their functions to their Senior Designated Officers within:

- North Somerset Director for Children's Services
- North Somerset Chief Nurse BNSSG Integrated Care Board
- Chief Inspector North Somerset Neighbourhood Policing

### Partnership Meetings

The frequency of Partnership meetings will be scheduled as set out below, though the Independent Chair may call an extraordinary meeting at any time in response to a specific or exceptional circumstances arising outside of ordinary Partnership business.

All Partnership meetings, including subgroups, will be considered quorate if representatives from at least the three statutory agencies attend. If a meeting is not quorate, any discussions and tentative decision taken must be ratified at the next meeting.



Minutes of each meeting will be prepared and submitted for approval at the next meeting. The approved minutes will be entered as a permanent record and published.

Business support to the Partnership will be provided by North Somerset County Council, and these arrangements will be agreed by the Safeguarding Partners

Whilst the delegated officers have the responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the NSSCP arrangements, the Safeguarding Partners representatives remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their respective agency.

Members from Statutory Partners and Relevant Agencies must be sufficiently senior and delegated to speak with authority, to make decisions and consider resources on behalf of their agency. Each Statutory Partner and Relevant Agency should nominate a standing deputy to represent the Member in their absence.

For NSSCP to work effectively there must be commitment, consistency and continuity in membership. The role of each Member must be to contribute actively to the work of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and provide constructive support and challenge to Partner Agencies regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.

The Partnership will report annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board, and work closely with the Children's Partnership as required. We will be reporting to our respective organisations i.e. the chief nurse will report to the Outcomes, Quality and Performance Committee and on to the ICB Board

## The Executive

The Executive undertakes the overall safeguarding responsibility, statutory and strategic function and oversees the NCSSP Partnership. The role of the Executive is to provide high level strategic direction, set priorities, and oversee assurance and exception reporting.

**Chair:** For North Somerset the chairing arrangements will be undertaken by the independent Chair of the partnership.

### **Purpose of the Executive:**

- Provide strategic leadership for the development of services for children and young people in North Somerset
- To develop multi-agency approaches to support children and young people to develop and grow
- To agree an annual plan to further develop services for children and young people
- To monitor and review existing services and identify potential improvements

### **Membership:**

Core Membership will be the three statutory partners who are the decision makers:

- Chief Nurse, BNSSG ICB
- Director of People Department; Local Authority
- Chief Inspector North Somerset Neighbourhood Policing

**In addition for advice and support:**

- Independent Chair for the Partnership
- Children's Partnership Business Manager
- Partnership Liaison Manager for Avon & Somerset Police who supports the partnership and also advises the Police.

Core Members are required to provide a substitute to represent them if they are unable to attend for any reason. Others may be asked to attend the Executive to provide specialist information.

**Quoracy:**

In order for the Executive to be quorate, the core members or their nominated deputies must be present.

**Frequency of Meetings:**

The Executive will meet 8 weekly. Additional extraordinary meetings will be arranged if required.

**Reporting arrangements:**

- On an annual basis and by exception as necessary to:
- North Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board
- North Somerset Executive
- ICB Board
- Police Constabulary
- National Panel
- What Works Centre for Children

**The Executive Plus (Operations Group)**

The Executive Plus provide strategic leadership for the development of services for children and young people in North Somerset and to ensure the Executive and Senior Officers group and workstreams are working closely together with shared priorities.

The function of the Executive Plus is to monitor the work of the children's partnership, including the business plan and to ensure progress against the business plan is met. The Executive Plus should also address any barriers that arise and support resolution. They should also ensure the NSSCP arrangements also meet the statutory requirements as set out in *Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018*.

**Chair**

The Executive Partnership will meet bi-monthly and the chairperson will oversee and ensure the agendas cover all priorities and national and regional developments, hold partners to account, and have an independent view of effectiveness of children safeguarding arrangements. The membership of the Partnership including Relevant Agencies, is set out in *Appendix 2*.

Partnership membership also includes co-opted members who have an interest in and a contribution to make to safeguarding children and families at risk, and the promotion of their welfare.



## **Purpose of Executive Plus**

- Provide strategic leadership for the development of services for children and young people in North Somerset
- To ensure the Executive and Senior Officers group and workstreams are working closely together with shared priorities
- To monitor the work of the children's partnership, including the business plan and to identify gaps in oversight
- To monitor and review existing services and identify potential improvements
- Subgroup/Working Group Chairs/Vice Chairs will brief Executives of work undergoing activity of subgroups using reporting template
- Subgroup/working Group Chairs/Vice Chairs will provide exception reporting via the reporting template
- Executives will provide support and direction to Subgroup/Working Group Chairs

## **Membership**

Core Membership will be the three statutory partners who are the decision makers:

- Chief Nursing Officer ICB
- Director Of Children Services; Local Authority
- Chief Inspector North Somerset Neighbourhood Policing
- Deputy Chief Nursing Officer or Head of Safeguarding

### **In addition:**

- Independent Chair of NSSCP
- Deputy Director for Children Services
- Safeguarding Children Business Manager
- Partnership Liaison Manager for Avon & Somerset Police
- All Subgroup/Working Group Chairs/Vice Chairs/Organisational safeguarding leads.

Members are required to provide a substitute to represent them if they are unable to attend for any reason. Others may be asked to attend Executive Plus to provide the specialist information.

## **Quoracy**

For the Executive to be quorate there will need to be at least one representative from Health, Police and the local authority present. Actions from Executive Plus and Executive will form a joint rolling action log tracker that will be monitored at all meetings

## **Frequency of Meetings**

The Exec Plus will meet every 8 weeks. Additional extraordinary meetings will be arranged if required.

## **SubGroups**

Subgroup arrangements have been agreed including Terms of Reference and respective chairs and memberships. Two working groups and membership have been agreed currently on a two year cycle. The frequency of meetings are determined by the chair and members.

## **The Subgroups**

- Learning and Development Subgroup
- Quality Assurance and Performance Management
- Child Practice Review
- Communication and Engagement (reconvene as required)

## **Working Groups**

- Neglect
- Child Sexual Exploitation

## **Funding and Resources**

Working in partnership means organisations and agencies should collaborate on the resourcing and financial management of the arrangements.

The three Safeguarding partners will directly contribute to the local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and families at risk. Funding allocations are to be agreed by Safeguarding Partners via the Executive group and will be equitable and proportionate. 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.

Safeguarding Partners funding will contribute to the costs associated with the implementation and ongoing development of the partnership, including the arrangements for Independent Scrutiny and Business Support functions, as well as the statutory review costs. These arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis by Executive Group.

The arrangements will be supported by a jointly funded Business Support unit which will provide strategic and administrative support to ensure the components of the structure can deliver their responsibilities and achieve the Partnership aims.

## **Annual Report**

NSSCP 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 local Rapid 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.
- 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 used this to inform its work and influence practice.

- Any changes to published arrangements.
- The difference the Partnership makes to the safety of children and young people who may be 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 the Safeguarding Partnership website.

A copy of the report relating to Safeguarding Children arrangements will be sent to the North Somerset Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and within seven days of being published, the Local Healthwatch, North Somerset Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and Avon & Somerset Police and What Works Centre for Children too.

### **Issue Resolution (formerly known as the Escalation Policy)**

NSSCP arrangements are based on strong partnership relationships but in the event of any concerns about practice there is an aim to resolve any disagreements or disputes at the lowest level of each safeguarding partner's organisation.

There is an emphasis on partners being respectful of each other's position and as a joint and shared responsibility each partner needs to communicate any significant changes in their agency that may impact on the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements, consult with each other, and listen to each partner's contribution.

If matters cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation, the issue will be brought to the attention of the NSSCP Executive.

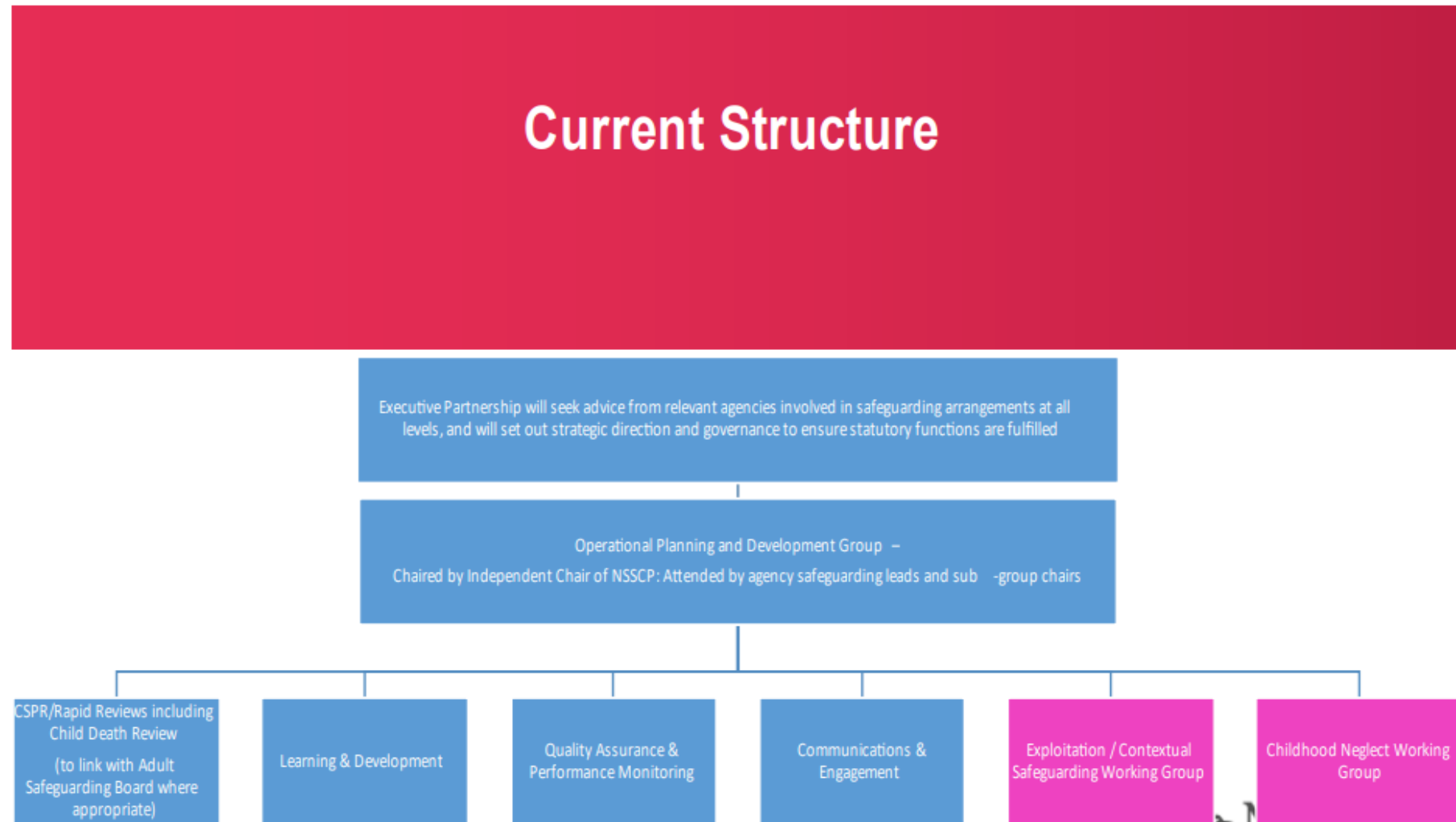
<https://nsscp.co.uk/resources-library>

### **Review of Arrangements**

The arrangements outlined above will be reviewed within 12 months and annually thereafter. As Partnership arrangements evolve, there is an expectation that all partners and relevant agencies raise issues as they arise in a dynamic way.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Current Partnership Arrangements and Sub Groups illustration.



NB Consideration for CSPR's could also link in with Community Safety (DHR's) where appropriate too.



## Appendix 2 – Membership of the Partnership

### North Somerset Children Safeguarding Partnership Members:

Representing:	Name of representative and deputy
<b>Independent Safeguarding Chair (Scrutiny and Assurance)</b>	Ivan Powell (Interim)
<b>C h i l d r e n ' s Services, Local Authority</b>	Director of Children's services
<b>BNSSG Partnership</b>	Chief Nursing Officer – Rosi Shepherd
<b>Avon and Somerset Constabulary</b>	Chief Inspector North Somerset Neighbourhood Policing
<b>Safeguarding Children Business Manager</b>	Maggie Lilburn (Interim)
<b>Subcommittee Chairs ( to present their annual reports)</b>	Education / Safeguarding Officer - Schools
	Learning and Development Multi-agency training report

	Child Death Overview Report
	Designated and Named Dr – Annual report
	Looked after children – Health report
	Children and Young People Report -Children Services
	Domestic Abuse – Lead officer
<b>Children’s Partnership Representation</b>	Lead Officer