

Meeting: Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee

Date: 11th July 2019

Title: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Arrangements

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Service: Commissioning and Asset Management

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

To update the committee in relation to the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in North Tyneside

2. Recommendation

For information only

3. Details

Background

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires all Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) to be replaced with new local multi agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA). These arrangements are led by the three named statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups).

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also reinforces the duty, which currently exists, under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, on local organisations and agencies who deliver services to children (called relevant agencies) to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. Responsibility for ensuring effective arrangements in place lies with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The three safeguarding partners are required to 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.

The North Tyneside arrangements

The safeguarding partners, in consultation with the Independent Chair and agencies who attend NTSCB have developed a plan which outlines the arrangements in North Tyneside (see attached). As required, this plan was published on 24 June 2019 and the arrangements will be in place by 27 September 2019. Until this date North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB) remains the statutory body for ensuring the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children.

In drawing up our plan we have sought to:

- Recognise and build on the strength of, and learning from, the present arrangements as these reflect our commitment to an inclusive approach to partnership.
- Make sure that there is continuity as we move into the new arrangements and to make the most of the opportunities these represent.
- Look at the experiences of others and take into account the emerging opportunities arising out of the North and South of Tyne approach to MASA.
- Welcome a strategic approach to safeguarding, prevention and early intervention across adults, children and young people as represented by a “Think Family and Community” approach.
- Ensure that our new arrangement is firmly focused on multi-agency practice locally. This will ensure that we can be responsive to learning and ensure that our strategic leadership and priorities ensure are will focused on outcomes that ensure a swift and proportionate response to vulnerability, risk and needs.
- Build on the developments that mean as a whole system we can become more proactive to understanding vulnerability, risk and needs, especially in our local context as a borough.

A regional approach

The North and South of Tyne Strategic Safeguarding Forum has supported partnerships in developing their new arrangements. The focus of the work was how system leaders could collaborate on a wider regional footprint to reduce barriers and develop a more effective and joined up response to prevention, early intervention and safeguarding. It has been agreed this regional work will continue and partners in North Tyneside are committed to supporting the development of a ‘one footprint’ approach.

North Tyneside LSCB and transition

The current LSCB will meet and undertake its current responsibilities until the required implementation date (27.9.19) or before if the Statutory Partners decide to commence the new arrangements. Any Serious Case Reviews commissioned

before this date will be subject to an interim arrangement as these remain the responsibility of the existing LSCB.

The LSCB and its members have been fully sighted on developments and have been able to offer support, and the last two meetings will continue to provide and promote this opportunity. Members will also continue and complete a programme of scrutiny and assurance, so as to hand over to the statutory partners past and current learning.

Opportunities and challenges

The changes in legislation and guidance create a number of opportunities to build on the successful approach to scrutiny, assurance and learning in respect of safeguarding partnership approaches to joint working. The new arrangements build on key learning and seek to increase the reach and focus of scrutiny by focusing on the quality of practice and the quality of learning that results from this approach to examining key strategic, thematic and practice issues. They also represent the opportunity to integrate and rationalise a wider approach to how we are assured that priorities for meeting the needs, vulnerabilities and risks that children and young people have in the borough.

One of the important changes is the placing on the three statutory partners to exercise a shared responsibility for safeguarding joint working arrangements and the assurance that these are effective. The new partnership is not a replacement for the LSCB as this requirement and its statutory underpinning is removed; the continuing role of 'independence' is set in the context of scrutiny and a role of independent advisor.

As such the new partnership offers potential to embed and align the protection of children and young people with the promotion of their welfare; which remains a primary basis of the legislation that applies to all agencies, organisations and practitioners in the borough.

The LSCB welcomes the commitment of statutory partners to take forward the learning from the LSCB on the basis of an inclusive and innovative approach to partnership. The recognition that the opportunity to be able to objectively review practice and arrangements is maintained is important as this can be one of the hallmarks of protecting vulnerable children and young people.

The LSCB recognises that the plan for the new arrangement reflects the view that the coming 12 months will be an important period of transition, and that all concerned will be attendant to any potential risks that might undermine continuity and maintenance of the current standards.

4. Appendices
MASA Plan