

North Tyneside
**SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD**



Annual Report 2017-2018



North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017 - 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to the annual report of North Tyneside LSCB. Each year we publish a report which demonstrates how as a partnership we have been able to:



Be sure children and young people in North Tyneside are protected and kept safe as possible

Be sure that all organisations, their leaders and their practitioners are working effectively together to safeguard children and young people.

Be sure that people are open to learning, transparent about what they do and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.

1.2 As well as showing how the partnership has met its statutory responsibilities, we need to show the difference joint working has made to how children and young people in North Tyneside are protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

1.3 Our partnership is made up of the leaders, or their senior representatives, from all organisations who are directly involved with the lives and welfare of children, young people and their families in the borough.

1.4 There is a shared legal responsibility for all those who work with children and young people to be able to demonstrate how they safeguard them. Some partners such as the Local Authority, the Police and Health Service organisations, and the professionals that work within them, have particular roles and responsibilities. Overall the Local Authority has to make sure that partnership working is effective. Ensuring that there is an effective LSCB in place does this. Through this all partners are able to benefit from the focus and

feedback the partnership provides in making sure that children and young people are as safe as possible.

1.5 Through its required functions the LSCB focuses on Early Help activities and the times when it is necessary to intervene in family life on a statutory basis. Through its links with, and contribution to, the other strategic partnerships the LSCB seeks to reflect and ensure that the principles of safeguarding and joint working are embedded in all strategies and policies.

The [Our North Tyneside Plan](#) continues to provide an effective mechanism for joining up the steps being taken to improve the life chances and circumstances of families in the borough, including the priority to be cared for, protected and supported.

2. The Local Context



Although North Tyneside is one of the least deprived boroughs in the region and generally there is an improving picture of health and wellbeing, the situation remains that some areas vulnerable groups and communities continue to face significant challenges. Current data tells us that:

- There are 44,800 children, age 0-19 living in North Tyneside
- 17.1% of children are living in poverty which is below the regional average but above the national average. There is a significant increase to nearly half in the most deprived parts of the borough.
- Breastfeeding is lower than the England average and more mothers continue to smoke during pregnancy compared to the England average
- Teenage conception rates are continuing to fall
- Nationally, the rate of young people being admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm is increasing, and this is also the case in North Tyneside. Nationally, levels of self-harm are higher among young women than young men.
- There are 150 children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan (as of 31/3/18)
- There are 284 children looked after (as of 31/3/18)
- It is estimated that around 7,900 children and young people in the borough have a long standing illness or disability.
- There has been an increase in the number of children with special educational needs over the last five years
- The educational attainment gap between North Tyneside's vulnerable learners and their peers persists. (i.e. Looked after Children, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those in receipt of pupil premium).

There are 44,800 children aged between 0-19 in the borough of which 11,500 are under the age of five.

There are over 3,000 children and young people with mental health and behavioural disorders

- Hospital admissions for under 18's are significantly higher in North Tyneside compared with the England average including admissions due to injury, substance misuse and as a result of self harm
 - The rate of obese children doubles between Reception and Year 6. One in 10 children are obese in Reception, and 1 in 5 by Year 6

3. Our Priorities 2017/18

The Board agreed four priority areas. Information on some of the progress made against these priorities can be found below:

Priority One – Improve accountability, challenge and communications to develop the effectiveness of the Board.

- We have continued to develop and make improvements to our website to strengthen the visibility of the NTSCB and the importance of safeguarding. The site received 24,030 views in the last year. The section for professionals was the most popular. An average of two news articles was posted each month.
- We have recruited a further two lay members who joined us in September 2017 and who will play an important role in helping the Independent Chair and other members make sure the Board has an independent voice and considers things from all points of view.
- We are developing our ‘Professional Conversation’ approach to Early Help alongside a revised Escalation Policy in response to learning from a Learning Review.
- We have responded to national consultations e.g. Working Together 2018, and engaged with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and promoted the [Truth Project](#) an opportunity for victims and survivors to share their experience and to be heard.

Priority Two – Prevent harm and the protection of vulnerable groups

- We have maintained an oversight of Early Help, Children’s Social Care Transformation and the 0-19 Agenda.
- We delivered ‘SAFE Week’ in collaboration with the Safeguarding Adults Board. Throughout the week various activities were arranged to raise community awareness of safeguarding including the development of an educational resource package for use in schools and colleges to develop young people’s awareness of safeguarding issues.



- Domestic Abuse - in preparation for a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) a self-assessment of multi-agency practice was completed which enabled 'oversight' of multi agency arrangements.
- Assurance was sought in relation to the arrangements for children missing out on education. These arrangements enable the local authority to identify children who may not be accessing education and to ensure through case discussions and information sharing that robust measures are taken to ensure education is accessed and any other areas of concern are addressed.

Priority Three – The views of children and young people are contributing to learning and best practice.

- We have engaged with the Young Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Young People to understand the views of the young people they represent.
- The Young Mayor and Cabinet Member contributed to a Safe Week video aimed at raising community awareness of the safeguarding agenda.

Priority Four – Learning and improvement positively influences multi-agency practice

- Espresso events continued to be delivered to disseminate learning outcomes from national and local reviews.
- Work continues with regional colleagues to identify learning from Reviews and how this can be effectively shared across the region.
- We have supported the implementation of Signs of Safety by the Local Authority.
- We delivered our annual NTSCB Conference to 88 delegates with the theme of '**Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children and Young People.**'

4. Significant steps taken in the year - “Setting the balance between the whole system and front line practice”.

4.1 Acting strategically as a partnership

4.1.2 Learning from experience gained over the past few years the LSCB has aligned its work on the basis of the things that “are most likely to make the most difference”. As a result this year the LSCB has supported and scrutinised changes relating to the further development of Early Help, the transformation of social care, changes for services for 0-19 year olds, the introduction of Signs of Safety and new ways of key services sharing information at the point when people ask for help or share a concern for a child. As well during the year the LSCB has been concerned to support the innovative changes being adopted to address the emotional and mental health and well being of children and young people.



4.1.3 The LSCB has also supported the review of the [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) priorities, and will contribute to the renewal of the Children and Young Peoples Plan and Community Safety priorities. This has, and will be shaped by the desire to reduce duplication, increase clarity and find common and shared ways of approaching the need to plan, coordinate and scrutinise in order to be assured that things are making a difference

4.2 Promoting common core safeguarding standards and principles to strengthen local accountability and whole system assurance that joint working works well and is led by a common view and understanding of “what good looks like”

4.2.1 The LSCB has maintained its long-term strategy to embed the common standards and requirements represented by the Section 11 duties placed on all organisations that work with children and young people. This involves maintaining an on going self assessment and reporting on this on an annual basis. There has been continued progress in moving from a compliance model to one of ongoing self assessment that supports organisational and sector specific accountability arrangements and promotes more consistent learning.

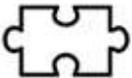
4.2.2 The planned next steps to promote sharing and cross-organisational challenge did not take place for reasons of limited resources and this is planned for 2018/19. The analysis of this year's Section 11 returns gave assurance and examples of how each are addressing the common standards and principles. All partner agencies reported full compliance with the following standards;



- A named person with sufficient seniority identified to champion safeguarding.
- Clear policies and procedures in place to show how to report welfare and safety concerns.
- Staff are encouraged and required to attend safeguarding and child protection training.
- Safer recruitment training to all staff involved with recruitment.
- Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse

4.2.3 Significant progress has been made with education providers with a marked increase in the audit participation rate, within excess of 90% of all schools submitting a return. This is the first year that an online tool was used and although there were some initial teething problems to resolve, the electronic version has allowed for better analysis and comparison. Those schools that did not respond have been contacted and support offered to promote completion in 2018/19. Overall compliance with standards is high and an average of 88% of schools assessed themselves as green against the eight standards. There were also some common themes identified:

Common Themes

	Key issues / improvements 	Good practice 
Safeguarding training	Needs arranging, updating or refreshing for staff, volunteers and Governors in some schools, and training logs need to be created or updated.	Regular training and updates provided for all staff. Teaching staff take part in 'What would you do?' scenarios.
Information and communication	Safeguarding information needs to be provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by all service-users. Child-friendly versions of policies need to be created. More regular consultation to gather feedback from parents.	Regular communication between Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), staff and Governors. Policies, documentations and contact details readily available and easily accessible online and in hard copy.
Policies, systems and procedures	Require review or update. Child-friendly policies need to be written in consultation with pupils and disseminated. Curriculum requires review to ensure all aspects of personal safety are taught, and at an appropriate level.	All policies are regularly reviewed and updated, and easily accessible online and in hard copy. The school council is actively involved in producing child-friendly versions of policies. There are regular risk assessments of school premises and activities.



Recommendations

- 1 Consultation with schools to review the online self-assessment tool and identify any opportunities for improvement.
- 2 Further training and guidance for those completing online audits may improve the quality, consistency and accuracy of self-assessment.
- 3 Information and support for schools that did not participate in the audit, to highlight the importance of completing a self-assessment.

4.2.4 On a further positive note all of the GP Practices in North Tyneside were asked to complete a self-assessment against the Section 11 standards. This has been undertaken by all Practices and the results are being collated by the Named GP. Outcomes will be shared with NTSCB once completed. We have also revised the tool specifically for use by the voluntary and community sector. The revised template was piloted and has received positive feedback as a useful tool for the sector to benchmark practice against nationally recognised safeguarding standards.

4.2.5 Analysis of the Section 11 data assured the LSCB there were no significant concerns that children were likely to be unsafe. We are assured that the LSCB partners, schools and colleges can demonstrate their ongoing and regular assessment of progress, impact and learning on the basis of shared standards and a common approach. This strengthens accountability and learning within respective governance structures and at a collective level. It provides the opportunity to build on strengths and act on weaknesses as well as new developments. The LSCB will continue to extend and implement the approach across the voluntary and community sector, improve the model, make more of the shared learning and act to highlight and understand where improvements may be indicated as needed from the annual analysis.

4.3 Case Reviews and acting on learning

4.3.1 The case review responsibilities held by the LSCB have been supported by its Case Review Sub Group. The work of the group has brought about improved notification and reporting arrangements and internal quality assurance arrangements to ensure continued learning and improvement in how the LSCB:

- Receives and coordinates notifications where joint working practice may indicate there is a need to better understand “what works and what hasn’t” and put appropriate learning in place.
- A stronger process and arrangement for reaching decisions about whether a review is required and the format it will take.
- An improved commissioning and management process for reviews; so that these use an approach that will help get to the heart of matters and ensure that those involved are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of the whole system.
- The move to the LSCB taking more responsibility for identifying and acting on the findings of reviews that is targeted, proportionate and manageable.
- Contributing to a partner owned culture of transparency and recognition that all practice presents opportunities to learn to do things better and differently.

4.3.2 During the year the NTSCB commissioned one Serious Case Review (SCR) in relation to siblings Claire and Sarah which is due to be completed in October 2018. The final report cannot be finalised until the ongoing criminal proceedings are completed in September 18.

In relation to a second case, Kevin, where the criteria for a SCR was judged to be met, agreement was reached that a Scottish Child Protection Committee (comparable to the LSCB role) would undertake a SCR with a contribution from North Tyneside. Kevin was a young child who was placed with a relative in North

Tyneside by the Scottish local authority. He sustained significant injuries, which were assessed as non-accidental and initial enquiries seemed to indicate the learning would be most relevant to the placing authority. This report has been completed and agreed by both the LSCB and the HCPC. Publication of the Executive Summary is pending the outcome of local Police and CPS decisions related to possible prosecutions. Local learning will be shared via briefings and learning events.



4.3.3 The LSCB now has in place a continuously improving arrangement to respond to practice where there may be a need for formal review. The evidence indicates that this is discharged proportionately taking into account past learning and the other evidence and feedback provided through the LSCB functions. This in turn has continued to demonstrate each partner's capacity and support for review, scrutiny and a willingness

to learn and to be held to account. The LSCB has continued to review the progress of learning and actions as a result of review. There has been regular and positive liaison with the National Panel of Experts (NPE) who supported all decisions made.

4.3.4 The evidence and results of reviews during the year served to remind all partners of the complexity and potential fragility of joint working arrangements. It also served to demonstrate the importance of the LSCB being able to maintain its view of practice through performance and quality as well as the direct involvement of board members, their representatives, practitioners and children. There remains an ongoing challenge to achieve the wider picture and to encourage partners to engage with this, particularly where the evidence may suggest that assumptions of progress may need revisiting either collectively or by individual partners. Participating partners have continued to demonstrate their commitment to learning from practice and review on the basis of transparency, objectivity and in reference to their understanding of the potential for local joint working arrangements to continue to improve.

4.4 Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

4.4.1 The Board are responsible for reviewing child deaths and we carry out this function in partnership with our counterparts in Newcastle and Northumberland, through a North of Tyne Child Death Overview Panel. North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group has played a central part in supporting and providing a significant element of funding, alongside contributions from the three Boards, to ensure the panel is well resourced and independently chaired.

4.4.2 In 2017/18 there was a total of 38 child death reviews across North of Tyne. Due to the low numbers it is difficult to ascertain any specific learning, although aggregated learning both regionally and nationally will help provide a wider picture from which to share learning, process changes and good practice.

4.4.3 In relation to CDOP themes, the 0-1 year age group shows modifiable factors relate to infection, consanguinity, co-sleeping, alcohol and smoking by parents. For 15-17 year olds, factors include accidental death deaths, e.g. drowning and trauma. This is a similar pattern to 2016/17.

4.4.4 More information about the Child Death Overview Panel and a copy of the CDOP Annual Report will be available on the website at <http://www.northtynesidelscb.org.uk/>. National guidance in relation to how the CDOP will operate going forward is due for publication in September 2018 and this will inform the development of new arrangements in 2018/19.

4.5 Making sure people have the right knowledge, skills and confidence

4.5.1 Last year's report highlighted how the delivery of the well received multi agency training programme had addressed a reduction in available resources, by seeking to diversify models of delivery, utilise the potential of on-line learning and target delivery more effectively. The programme is developed and overseen by the Training Sub Group which also is tasked with addressing some of the wider and more long term issues as how best to be assured that all those who work, with and have significant contact with children and young people, are equipped and competent in joint working to protect children.

4.5.2 In total **936** learners accessed face-to-face NTSCB safeguarding children training this year, which shows a reduction by 243 from 2016/17. The contributing factors to the reduction of this number are; the conference being postponed into the 2018/19 programme and the introduction of more e-learning modules. The quality and effectiveness of the training is monitored through:

- Electronic evaluations sent four weeks after the training event
- Observations of the trainer’s practice monitored against agreed standards
- Impact on Practice



Approximately four weeks following training, learners are asked to complete an evaluation of the training, and this year, a new question has been added to capture the impact on their practice. Typical responses to this question are outlined below. Overall the impact evaluation is positive, suggesting that the training is meeting the needs of the workforce and is having a positive impact on practice. Practitioners typically reporting that the training is re-affirming their current knowledge

and skills and increasing their knowledge in new and emerging areas. They are also generally reporting an increase in confidence in dealing with safeguarding issues.

4.5.3 Responses to the evaluation are also used to inform future planning and to shape the training delivery methods and resources. This helps to continuously improve the quality of the training. Below are some examples of responses from delegates who attended child protection training:

“This course provided me with a much greater knowledge of Child Protection and the processes involved.”

“Highlighted the importance of communication with other agencies”

“It has given me the confidence to undertake my new role as designated person for my setting.”

“Better understanding of thresholds and guidelines”

“I have a greater understanding of the Early Help pathways and the levels of need in addition to how the system works and who to contact.”

4.5.4 The Training and Development Officer for Schools, with some support from the local authority Workforce Development Team, delivered child protection training to **1650 school staff** in 2017-2018 through their Service Level Agreements. In addition **345** Designated Safeguarding Leads attended briefing sessions and **12** school Governors received safeguarding training. A separate report on training for school staff is available from lisa.wardingham@northtyneside.gov.uk

4.5.5 The responsibility for ensuring that each partners' workforce is sufficiently equipped to meet joint working standards rests with them. This is partially addressed and evidenced by their Section 11 audit submission. There is also an expectation that each organisation will have a clear approach for this. It remains a priority for the LSCB to consider how best to support and be assured that people have the base line knowledge and skills.

4.5.6 During the year the Board supported the development of a 'Professional Conversations' approach in Early Help alongside a revised Escalation Policy, which encourages and supports people to 'challenge' when they feel the response to their concern may not be in the best interests of the child. Previous learning has indicated that too often people settle for outcomes that are based on "I have fulfilled my duty by telling someone else". This can mean that important information is not



shared and more importantly actions may not happen in a timely way. As a result children can continue to suffer harm. The overall evidence suggests that this does not happen on a widespread scale but the LSCB takes the view that an outstanding approach to safeguarding has to include ongoing and constructive dialogues and challenge across boundaries, professions and organisations, to ensure that decisions and outcomes reflect a multi agency and inter disciplinary approach and agreement to what is best for the child.

4.5.7 Bringing a wide range of local professionals together to look at a common issue that will better inform joint working practice and improve its quality was a

central ambition for the NTSCB Annual conference entitled **Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children and Young People**.

4.5.8 This was attended by over 100 people representative of a full range of agencies who work with children and young people. The main speaker was able to stimulate discussion in relation to both our understanding of trauma and how we develop resilience in children and young people.

4.5.9 The significant and long-term investment in **Signs Of Safety** by North Tyneside Council was recognised by the LSCB as a welcome opportunity to review and refresh joint working arrangements in the longer term. During the year the Board supported and worked to identify how to support the introduction of the new system across all partners.

The focus on child protection alongside more integrated and participative risk assessments and judgments from a “safety” perspective requires changes in the



interactions professionals and the system has with children and their families. This aligns with the Board’s contribution to ensuring good outcomes for vulnerable children. The coming year is likely to require the LSCB to develop a more detailed approach to ensure that joint working arrangements fully benefit from this and other significant changes. The evidence also suggests that partners may need to consider the sustainability of multi agency training and learning in its current form, in order to ensure that across all areas of the workforce there is a robust understanding of how things work and why, and that people are able to fit their own organisational and or professional requirements

with the wider frameworks and processes. This report also evidences the additional and perhaps critical additional dimension of enabling participants to form collaborative judgments that are supported by a collaborative culture that responds positively to challenge and does not lose sight of what children may be telling us.

4.6 Making sure that we have a good view and understanding of what good joint working practice looks like

4.6.1 The Board is required to operate a Performance Management Framework (PMQA) alongside its Learning and Development Framework. Through the work of the Quality, Improvement Learning and Performance (QILP) Sub Group and Board engagement with its output, the approach taken has been innovative in how it targets quantitative with qualitative analysis. The sub group use the NTSCB data set to interrogate safeguarding activity, undertaking further scrutiny on particular areas which are brought to the boards attention suggesting areas of good or concerning performance. This may link to audit work, for example, data indicated a rise in the number of children subject to second or subsequent child protection plans. Whilst this can be an appropriate response to a change in a child's circumstance, it can be an indicator that the initial plan was not sufficiently effective to support sustained change. Some initial scrutiny has been undertaken and further work is required including a better understanding of the overall duration of child protection plans and the outcome when the plan ends – a child becoming looked after, step down to Early Help or sign posted to other services.



4.6.2 Limited resources in terms of time and access to expertise have previously rated this as a high-risk area in terms of the Board's assessment of its performance. The Ofsted inspection endorsed the quality and impact of the approach and this included the caveat related to risk. During the year there were continued efforts to lift volume and quality of impact, but significant changes in personnel in some agencies meant that the outcome was

focused on holding the position rather than advancing it.

4.6.3 This meant that questions and lines of enquiry were carefully selected and targeted to ensure full impact in terms of how the LSCB was able to form a view on how the joint working system was working and where there was potential to build on success and reduce the incidence of weaker practice.

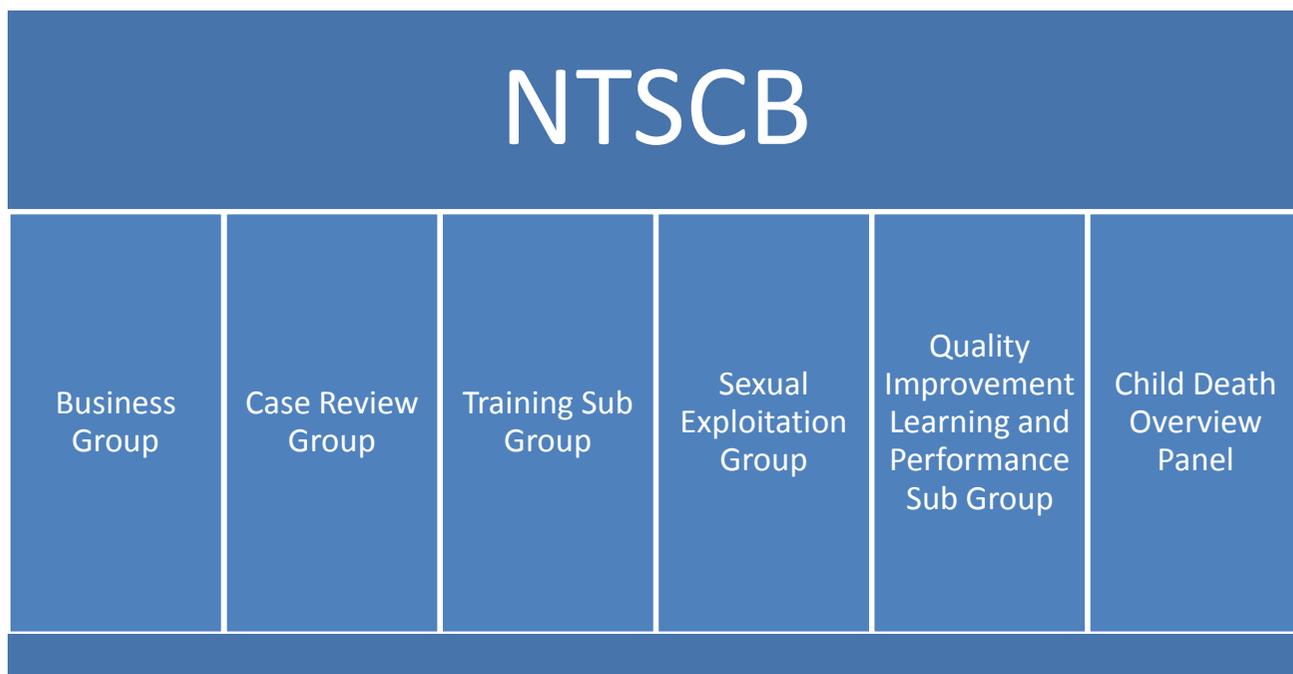
4.6.4 Through the Board and the Sexual Exploitation Sub Group there has been a continued encouragement for agencies who work closely together to address and resolve the ways in which they share and use information with each other. Sexual Exploitation continues to be a priority for both the Children's and Adult Safeguarding Boards; acknowledging that vulnerability does continue post 18. The MSET (Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked) Panel oversees risk

management plans for those individual young people whose behaviour is a significant concern because they are regularly going missing, at risk or involved in exploitation. MSET performance is reported to the sub group on a quarterly basis to scrutinise and monitor progress.

4.6.5 Partners are expected to be able to present an analysis and dialogue around their own practice from a multi agency perspective. The excellent developments around responding to children missing from home, care and education during the year highlighted this. Agencies presenting the narrative and the analysis struggled to show how the information related to how they managed risk and outcomes for children aligned with their broader assurance that outcomes were good. This remains a challenge for joint working practice. Too often analysis and the narrative could be seen as being primarily about maintaining single agency reputation as opposed to being able to demonstrate how multi agency arrangements are resulting in safe and improving outcomes for children.

4.7. How have we performed as a partnership so that we continue to offer support, leadership and credible feedback that helps ensure that children are as safe as possible in North Tyneside

4.7.1 The LSCB has continued to meet its statutory responsibilities. The Board and sub group meetings have been regular and largely well attended. The Board has monitored and acted early to explore and address any sign that partners are struggling to maintain the agreed commitments. Consistency of representation as well as full engagement has remained a challenge, therefore during the year some partners have been asked to address issues relating to this. This has had some impact especially at Business Group and sub group level on maintaining pace and breadth of the planned agenda. In some other LSCBs this would be mitigated through the Board staffing infrastructure. This is not an option for this Board therefore mitigation rests with the Business Manager and the Chair. They have acted to ensure that pace, quality and the capacity to respond to unforeseen developments such as case reviews have been addressed.



4.7.2 This means that going forward the Board has committed to trialling a thematic basis for a part of some future meeting to enable board members to play a more active role and further rationalise approaches to ensure effective outcomes.

4.7.3 Perhaps as a reflection of the size of the borough and the high quality of relationships that generally exist at all levels the LSCB has sought to maintain an inclusive approach at Board level. During the year improved liaison and integration in relation to how best to ensure that education providers are better able to be heard and contribute to the safeguarding agenda, has improved.

4.7.4 Too often we forget that partnerships are about people and those board members who are able to maintain regular attendance or ensure that their designated deputy is well briefed, have continued to support this important dynamic. During the year the LSCB successfully recruited two new lay members this reflected a conscious decision to have three lay members. Working with all board members to close gaps between perspectives, awareness of role and significance of issues within a shared and respectful environment that welcomes challenge remains an ongoing challenge that tests individuals and the Board as a whole.

4.7.5 The LSCB continues to manage its financial resources carefully and made provision for review and contingency year on year. The Board continued to develop its approach to, and learning from, out-sourcing in order to better manage overall pace and impact. This has been positive and added to overall capacity as well as commissioning expertise. Over and above the financial

contribution that some partners are required to make, an income stream was maintained in respect of cancellation charges for training. Although we do not 'cost out' the other forms of contribution made by some partners, for example attendance at sub groups and identifying chairs, this has a considerable value to the work of the LSCB.

Because there is sometimes a risk that this is seen as either an informal or an additional contribution it can mean that the priority and stability attached to these can appear inconsistent or to fall disproportionately on some agencies. Maintaining a wide and inclusive approach at board and sub group level remains an important element of the ways in which as a partnership we can strengthen and enrich joint working to safeguard children.



4.7.6 It is important to note that the LSCB recognises and tries to take into account the impact of austerity on children, families and partner agencies; but equally it has to ensure that shortfalls are highlighted. In this respect the issue for the coming year is not whether the financial resource is adequate but whether partners will be able to maintain and find the time to play their part in a Board and a model that does carry the fixed infrastructure to allow any other approach.

4.7.7 As an LSCB we have not yet reached a position whereby we can be assured that we are learning all we could from the arrangements in place to ensure that there is safe recruitment and when allegations are made about adults who work with children. To some extent the Board is partially reliant on the local authority in how it reports and makes sense of its statutory role and responsibilities in this regard. The Board has continued to encourage the local authority to develop its delivery and management arrangements (which it has) and review how it assesses its experience and data in order that the Board can address, with the whole system, how effective the response is to allegations that are made about people who work with children. More importantly as a partnership we will continue to monitor and highlight the impact of government fiscal policy on service outcomes and partners. We heard during the year of the pressures on the family courts, the difficulty in recruiting staff some partners experienced as well as the need to embrace new areas of need and priority.

4.7.8 Within each partner agency there have been many positive developments relating to what they have learned and how they have been able to maintain their own arrangements and contribution to joint working; a number of thematically focused developments have been significant. These include a growing appreciation that partners, and the partnership, need to review and refresh approaches to neglect, domestic violence and FGM. This also applies to learning from children who are trafficked and are subject to honour based violence and modern slavery.

The LSCB was able to draw on the important learning from CAFCASS during the year in respect of positive responses to children party to private law proceedings. This also served to remind the board of the importance of having a clear line of sight of the times and situations when people become involved with children and their families outside of the times when there is a child protection led response. The positive developments that took place around the Early Help offer and the shared focus on addressing an integrated approach focused on risk was a feature of the Board during the year.

The Board also recognised that it needed to address the ways in which we decide and designate the reasons why decisions are made to protect children through a plan, which may suggest that how thresholds are currently explained may need to change. The Board also felt that the way in which Early Help is developing alongside the welcome introduction of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), lends credence to a view that current models and ways of describing what's expected and how it all works may soon require replacement.



These important developments have also raised some wider questions as to the need for the LSCB and partners to consider whether some of the key assumptions and models for joint working may need further development.

4.7.9 Each year we critically assess the ways in which we have been able to see things from the child's or young person's perspective and whether we have been able to listen to what they say has been important. This has been progressed with a constructive dialogue with young people who lead the shadow youth council and the youth parliament. The active involvement of young people in our annual

conference and regular challenge at Board demonstrates how what we do reflects and impacts on children and young people's experience. In turn this has increased the expectation on all partners to evidence and share how they do this and the results of their work in this area. This has provided the impetus for all partners to ensure that partnership working focuses on positive outcomes for children.

5. The coming year and new arrangements to replace the LSCB

5.1. This report highlights the continued commitment and success of partners to work together in practice and in the form of meaningful partnership. This partnership provides a place and space for partners to reflect on their own contribution in response to standards and constructive objective feedback. Additionally the partnership was able to continue to take steps that it judges will add to the long term sustainability and resilience of a culture that will ensure the ways in which children and young people are protected is the best it can be.

5.2. Critically this has meant continuing to find ways of forming a comprehensive and clear view of a complex landscape to encourage engagement and highlight the importance of safeguarding and protection for all children. When the LSCB works well it finds a way of highlighting an important issue and enabling the diverse range of partners and interests to form a view. Many of the outcomes and benefits from this process are difficult to identify as they might lead to a subtle change in approach or other actions to share information or experience. Some outcomes are concrete as these relate to the things currently necessary for successful practice such as thresholds; multi agency training; scrutiny of performance and quality; and case review. This report illustrates how activity has resulted in a range of positive impacts alongside the continuity of learning and sharing that the Board has demonstrated in each of its successive reports. It also highlights the continued importance of practitioners and leaders being able to reflect on the wider issues so as to ensure that the wider picture makes sense and is formulated on what is best for children and young people.



5.3 The report highlights the successful progress there appears to have been in making the output and outcomes from the Board more relevant to and aligned with other strategic priorities and partnerships. There remains potential to continue to explore ways of integrating the different ways in which partners formulate and assess priorities and progress, and in ensuring that

reduce the potential barriers that these differences can make. It is likely that future arrangements will need to carefully consider how best to approach this. In addition to the need to know how things work i.e. core processes and thresholds (when you should do something and who you should do it with) people also need to know more about the different ways in which children can tell or show us that things may not be as they should be.

5.5 Therefore the Board until such a time as it is stood down will need to attribute equal priority to maintaining current responsibilities and activities whilst contributing to the forming of new arrangements. During the year the LSCB has supported and promoted local and regional discussions with this view. Different models and configurations for the new arrangements are being considered and these may need to address a re balancing of the advantages and disadvantages of doing this on the basis of footprint greater than that of North Tyneside. It is also likely to include a consideration of what functions will be retained and if so how these can be deployed to reflect on learning and a view of what makes for successful outcomes for children as a result of partnership and joint working practice.

5.6 This report asks the reader to reflect on the strength and progress of the partnership in the contribution and leadership it has made, to the ways in which partners across North Tyneside have continued to work together to protect children and young people. The report demonstrates how the partnership has provided space, place and ways in which joint working can be maintained and strengthened; on the basis of focusing on the things that are most likely to make the most difference and seeking to build and act on learning outcomes.

6. A final word from the Chair

6.1. The new arrangements do not require or exclude the need for the partnership to be led by an independent person. So this may be my last annual report in such a role. As with the realities of practice to safeguard children, it is often a matter of judgement that is important in what may or may not make a difference. This report traditionally requires such a judgement based on the evidence available to the Board and how this has been used as to the 'sufficiency' of local arrangements to protect children and young people; promote their welfare and the effectiveness of Early Help arrangements.

6.2 There is strong evidence to support a judgement that steps have been taken by partners and the Local Authority in particular, to reach beyond 'sufficiency' towards a stronger, better defined and shared learning approach to joint working to protect children and promote their welfare including Early Help. The evidence

suggests that the local focus and connections alongside the provision of feedback, checks and balances informed by children and front line practitioners has played a significant part in this.

The Board has supported and tested many aspects of this and provided an important 'check and balance'. The Board's views have been heard, reflected on and taken seriously at all levels. The Board will seek to continue to build on this in the hope that the new arrangements will provide a similar influence.

6.3 Working Together as a principle and a requirement can too easily be characterised by apparent compliance with indicators that do not reflect the complexity or the human elements of the challenges safeguarding can represent. Whether at a strategic or operational level, when a child is trying to tell us that something is not right, we all want to be assured that the response is proportionate and optimal. Our experience in the year has continued to remind us that whilst this requires individual responses and judgments, success is contingent on a coherent, consistent and collaborative join up of process, practice and people. The evidence suggests that as partners we are getting better at recognising that assurance and practice is better served by a capacity to recognise and address when we may be at risk of losing sight of what is in a child's best interests.

I would like to formally thank all partners and their representatives for the support they provide and their willingness to share a journey down roads that may not always be smooth. It remains reassuring that in North Tyneside such challenges do not obscure or deter the desire to do the right thing for children and young people. This report affirms this and illustrates how the partnership arrangement has played some part in shaping and encouraging this.



Richard Burrows, Independent Chair
Sue Burns, LSCB Business Manager

Appendix. Finance

All LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCB's with reliable resources that enable the LSCB to be strong and effective (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015). This includes consideration on how the resources for training, including joint training, should be made available with responsibility equally shared among statutory partners. Some partner agencies contribute financially to the Board and the total 2017/18 budget was;

Financial contributions 2017/18

North Tyneside Council	£87, 178
North Tyneside CCG	£31, 823
Northumbria Police	£ 5, 000
CAFCASS	£ 550
NPS	£ 863
CRC	£ 250
Under spend from 2016/17	£ 11,477
Total	£137,141

Partners also contribute in other ways by attending meetings, releasing staff to sit on sub groups, sharing information, responding to local and national consultations, supporting the implementation of decisions and agreements within their own organisations, and being accountable for the performance and quality of joint working arrangements collectively and on behalf of the organisations or sectors they represent.