



Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Our new arrangements

January 21

Introduction

Following on from the 2016 Wood Review, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 introduced a new duty to be placed on three agencies: Local Authorities, the Chief Constable and Clinical Commissioning Groups to make arrangements for the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area. These three agencies are to be known as Safeguarding Partners.

In Staffordshire, we have come together as a single Safeguarding Board to deliver a system that protects children, especially the most vulnerable.

Protecting, safeguarding and ensuring the wellbeing of children are complex tasks that can only be successfully achieved by agencies working together in a coherent and effective manner.

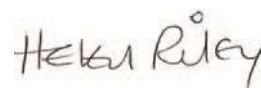
Our new arrangements have been informed through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including current Safeguarding Board partners and Executive Group members, Head Teacher Forums and Designated Safeguarding Leads. The partners that cover Staffordshire are supportive of our arrangements that consider a broader Staffordshire footprint to reduce duplication of effort and improve efficiency of the partnership, but also

has the flexibility to recognise local difference and drive for better partnership outcomes for vulnerable children.

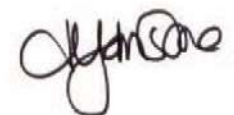
We have put in place safe and effective new arrangements to safeguard our children and the Board has adopted the title of Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and this will be effective from 1 January 2021.



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Safeguarding children, especially the most vulnerable, is a core duty and responsibility for all agencies in Staffordshire.

Protecting, safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of children are complex tasks that can only be successfully achieved by agencies working together in a coherent, honest and effective manner.

The vision of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board:

“All partners are committed to working together so that every child in Staffordshire is safe, well and able to reach their full potential”.

The Board recognises that for it to be successful it will strive and attain to the following values:

- Transparency
- A Listening culture
- Accountable
- Empowering

To deliver this vision, the Board safeguards and promotes the welfare of children by focusing on prevention, early intervention and statutory intervention. This will consider the need to promote equality of opportunity and meet the diverse needs of all children living in our communities.

Safeguarding Arrangements

To identify and prevent harm and impairment of health or development and ensure that all children are provided with safe and effective care as they are growing up by:

- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to identify abuse and neglect wherever they may occur.
- Working to increase the understanding of safeguarding children issues and looked after children in the professional and wider community, promoting the message that safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility.
- Helping to ensure that organisations working or in contact with children operate safe recruitment and safe workforce practices that consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of organisations' implementation of their duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004
- Helping to ensure that children know who they can contact when they have concerns about their own or others' safety and welfare.
- Helping to ensure that adults (including those who are harming children) know who they can contact if they have a concern about a child or young person.
- Supporting the development of effective local strategies in respect of key national safeguarding children agendas.



The purpose of local safeguarding children arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families

Working Together 2018

To be proactive and commission and request assurance on targeted work:

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are potentially more vulnerable than the general population, for example: children living away from home; children who have run away from home; children who have adversely come into contact with the police; children in the youth justice system; children excluded or missing from education; young carers; children with SEND and children and young people affected by gangs.



- Through the development and evaluation of threshold and procedures for work with children and families where a child has been identified as being 'in need' under the Children Act 1989 and Early Help.
- To protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (section 47, Children Act 1989), including:
 - Children abused and neglected within families, including those harmed, in the context of domestic abuse; as a consequence of the impact of substance misuse or parental mental ill health
 - Children abused outside of families by adults known to them; including those in fear of or subject to forced marriage and honour-based violence
 - Children abused and neglected by professional carers, within an institutional setting, or anywhere else where children are cared for away from home
 - Children abused by strangers
 - Children abused and or exploited by other young people
 - Young perpetrators of abuse
 - Children abused through sexual exploitation and child trafficking
 - Young people experiencing adverse childhood experiences that can impact on their lives, such as risk of offending, and
 - Young victims of crime

Governance

The Safeguarding Children Board is committed to multi-disciplinary partnership working in order to overcome 'silo' working and to deliver effective outcomes and a positive impact on the lives of young people.

The Board will liaise with other partnerships, as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), such as the Staffordshire Safeguarding Adult Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board to further streamline services, identify and address gaps and reduce duplication.

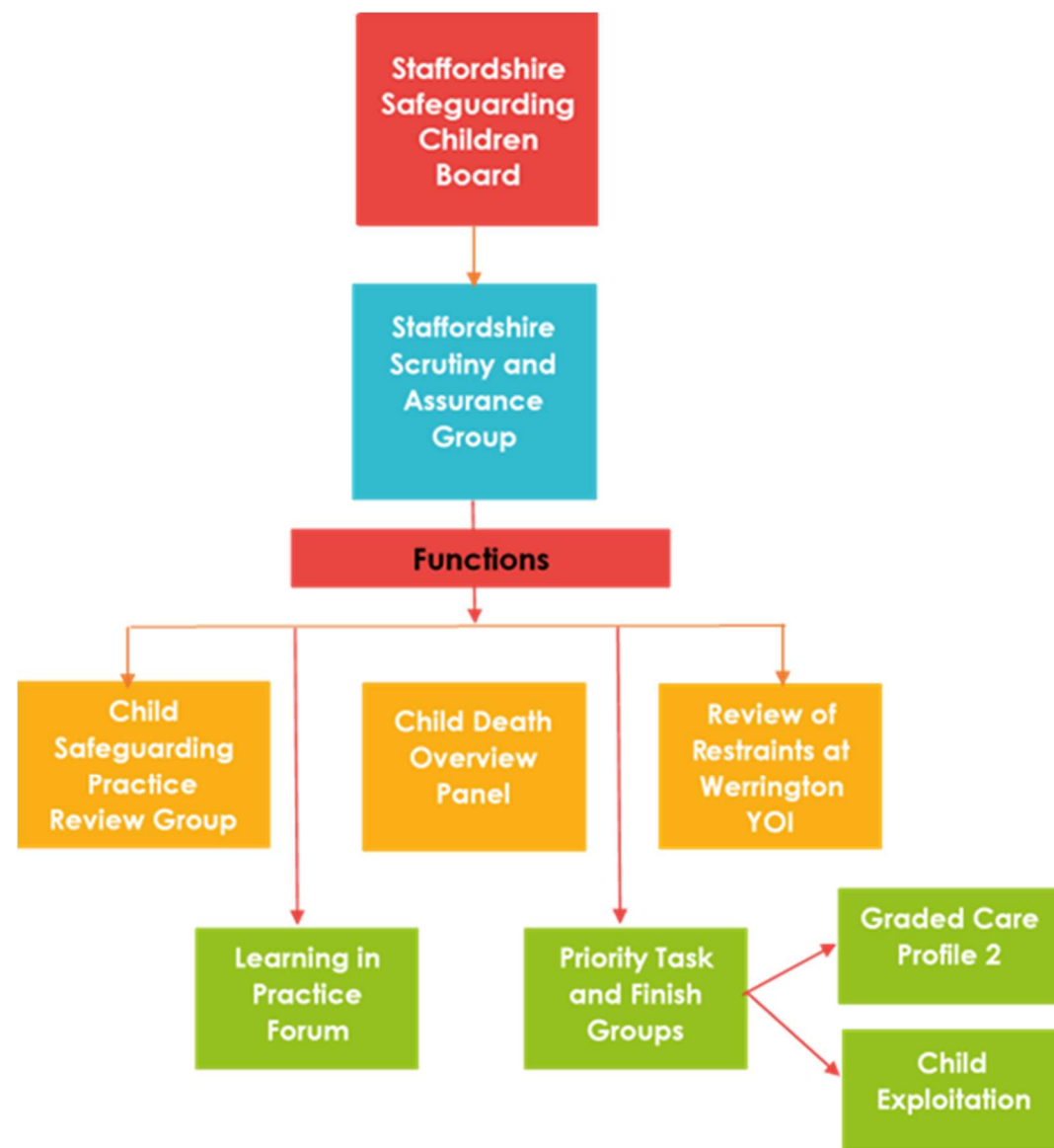
The Board recognises the importance of working with a full range of partners to protect children and promote their best interests, agree priorities and share resources.

Principles

The Safeguarding Partners will achieve:

- A child centred approach for services that are based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children and families.
- Advocating a collective responsibility for safeguarding being everyone's business

Our Structure



Priorities

The priorities for 2021-22 were agreed by the Board and will remain flexible for the duration of the Business Plan, and the detail will be set out in specific work plans of the subgroups and, where required task and finish groups.

The plan also aims to ensure that the safeguarding partners continue to oversee and drive improvements in its "Core Business".

Additionally, using its statutory functions the Board, will scrutinise the arrangements for keeping children safe, and seek assurance, from each partner, as well as from other strategic groups with responsibility for children and families, that their needs are being met through a coordinated provision of services, and that through engagement and empowerment, they continually strive to achieve the best possible outcomes (Chapter 3, Working Together 2018).

- Neglect (YR2) but specifically the under 1s at risk of and/ or experiencing neglect
- Child Exploitation (YR2) but specifically children who present as both victim and perpetrator

Our Core Business

We are continually seeking assurance that the system is working well to keep children safe and encouraging its partners to be innovative, creative and effective in their shared commitment.

Our Priorities

Neglect - We will ensure a confident workforce with the right tools at the right time and will provide a strengthened governance structure across all children's services.

Child Exploitation - We will concentrate on educational awareness of the 'victim' first approach to perpetrators ensuring a change of perspective across all suspected or actual cases of child exploitation.

Voice of the Child - We will adopt a listening culture and engage with our children, families and workforce to ensure their voice is considered when shaping our strategic direction.



Additional Functions of the revised safeguarding Children Board Arrangements

Thresholds

The safeguarding partners will oversee regular review and dissemination of the Staffordshire Thresholds document. The Threshold acknowledges that all professional need a framework to help them recognise risk and agree an appropriate response and ensure a consistent and clear response to children's safeguarding and wellbeing. Thresholds will form part of the work overseen by the Scrutiny and Assurance Group for 2021/22. This document will be available to all professionals via the Board's website.

Learning and development

The Safeguarding Children Board is fully committed to multi-agency workforce development and will seek a range of ways to deliver key safeguarding messages and test how the learning has been implemented in practice. The training offer will be reviewed during 2021/2022 and the Board will ensure that there is a training offer available to public sector, private sector and voluntary sector, education establishments (0-25) and charities.

Independent scrutiny

In December 2021, an independent review of the new arrangements will take place to assess the effectiveness of delivery against the Boards priorities. The review will inform future developments of the safeguarding multi-agency arrangements.

Safeguarding Partners will identify key lines of enquiry that independent scrutiny will utilise to assure the Board of their effectiveness against the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance. The review will identify where there has been progress in the safeguarding of children in the local area and contribute to setting objectives and areas of focus for the year ahead.

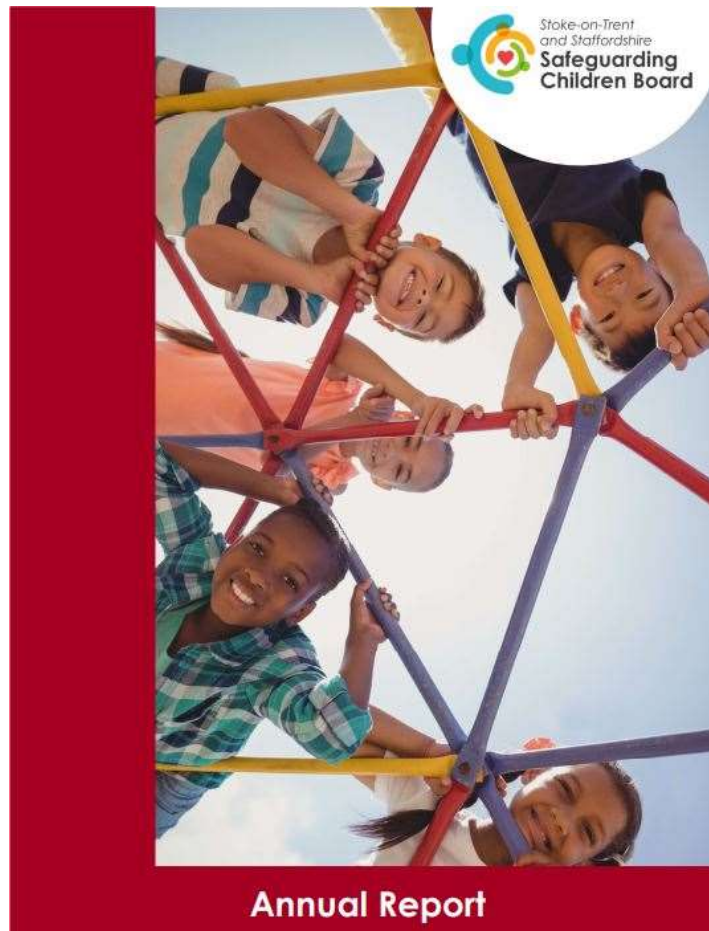
Multi-agency partners working with children and families have specific statutory duties to promote the welfare of children and ensure they are protected from harm under Section 11 and Section 175 of the Children Act 2004. These duties are detailed in Chapter 2 of the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance.

The Board will use feedback from multi-agency audits, inspections/ regulators, children, young people and families as well as views from front-line practitioners to demonstrate its impact on the safeguarding of children.



Annual Report

Each year, the Board will publish an annual report setting out what has been done by the Board, and the partners, to safeguard children and young people during the previous year and how effective the partnership arrangements have been.



This report will include information about:

- agreed priorities
- analysis of progress (or lack of progress) against priorities
- decisions and actions taken by partners
- feedback from children and young people and how this has been utilised to inform work and influence service provision
- the commissioning, delivery and impact of multi-agency safeguarding training
- the learning from, and impact of, any child safeguarding practice reviews and other safeguarding issues, for example, the use of restraints in secure establishments

Any changes to the arrangements described in this document will be outlined in the Annual Report and reasons given for those changes.

The annual report will be independently scrutinised and will be distributed across all relevant partners for dissemination throughout their organisations.

Agencies we work with

Working in collaboration with our partner agencies is based on priority areas, learning from reviews and performance activity and informed by the concept of a risk-based approach and about what they can actively contribute in safeguarding children in Staffordshire. The selected organisations have specific and direct responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Education

Our education in Staffordshire is highly considered as our fourth partner with over 600 schools and colleges county wide.

The Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS) provides safeguarding information, support and guidance in order to enhance

safeguarding policy in practice in all Staffordshire schools and colleges. The intention is not to do things to or for people but to empower members of staff to do these things, building capacity and enhancing knowledge. ESAS support the Designated Safeguarding Lead's in education to use Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) policies and procedures to inform their decisions about thresholds and the level of needs for children and families.

Early Years

Early years providers have a duty to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and must ensure that they are alert to any issues of concern in the child's life.

The Board are informed and assured by the commissioning arrangements with Entrust who provide safeguarding workshops

and visits to settings, provide support and guidance to settings around development needs, training and policy through a service delivery agreement.

Probation Service

The Board work closely with the Probation Service who supervises offenders and released prisoners in the community ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of young offenders.

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

Ensuring the safeguarding needs of the children involved in family proceedings is paramount is establishing a safe and well environment and transition through the process.

Werrington Young Offenders Institute

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the use of restraint across all secure establishments in its local authority area to help ensure that relevant agencies in Staffordshire work together to promote the welfare and safety of all children and young people in secure settings. This includes raising the awareness of how to improve current practice and encourage local and national bodies to accordingly fulfil their statutory safeguarding children's responsibilities. Regular visits and observations are carried out at Werrington Youth Offenders Institute.

The Voice of the Child

The voice of the child is embedded throughout everything that the Board does, and this is reflected in the Business Plan. There are established mechanisms in place where children, young people and families can have their say, share their views and experiences, challenge and support local decision makers and shape and influence strategic planning, commissioning and service provision at an individual, service and strategic level, including the voices of pre- or non-verbal children.

Building on the strong foundation of engaging with children and families through existing mechanisms, the safeguarding partners will develop additional means for



working with children and families into a more lasting approach that focuses on understanding issues that matter most to them. Safeguarding partners and relevant agencies will share how the voice of the children and families they support is heard within their agency and those messages will contribute to our overall understanding of their views.

All our work will be underpinned by a consideration of the views and experiences of our children and their families and we expect the delivery of our priorities to actively reflect their voice. There are already strong

processes and networks in place to capture children's views, including:

- Acting upon the analysis of findings from local surveys of children and young people, particularly those who may be vulnerable.
- Seeking the views of our children in care.
- Consultation on new policies and procedures.
- Encouraging family participation in local practice reviews to maximise learning opportunities.

The voice of the child is also incorporated in all SSCB multi-agency training.

Undertaking Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The responsibility for learning lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (The Panel) and at a local level with the safeguarding partners.

The Board have procedures in place to enable the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to:

- identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance.

- commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.

The Board will ensure that necessary steps to capture learning points from cases about improvements are captured and remedial action and learning is disseminated.

The voice of family, extended family and children involved in reviews is always considered during the review along with frontline staff and partners who are involved and their feedback on the process will be monitored and evaluated.

The Board will comply with the requirements set out in Working Together 2018, sending a copy of the full report to the Panel and to the Secretary of State within the expected timescale. Local Child safeguarding Practice Reviews will also be published on the Boards website.

With an ongoing commitment to continuous learning and improvement to practice, outcomes and experiences, the findings of all national and local reviews will be shared with partner agencies. Safeguarding partners will take account of the findings from the reviews with a view to considering how to identify improvements and implement changes locally.

Funding

Working in partnership means we will collaborate on how we will fund our arrangements. The three safeguarding partners will make payments towards expenditure incurred in conjunction with local multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children.

The safeguarding partners will agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which will be equitable and proportionate, to support the local arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.