

North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership



Scrutiny & Assurance Framework 2020 - 2022

Acknowledgements

This document has been informed by:

Quality Assurance Framework developed by London Safeguarding Children Board (2011)

Scrutiny & Assurance Framework developed by North Lincolnshire MARS, Early Adopter (2018)

Ideas and principles from 'Outcomes-Based Accountability' (OBA) has been used, along with some of the associated terminology. See 'Trying Hard is Not Good Enough', Mark Friedman (2005) Trafford Publishing.

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1. Overview

The North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NEL SCP) arrangements have been developed to create an arena conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge that aims to improve outcomes and experience for children and families, support staff to strive for excellence in practice, and to hold a mirror up to ourselves through a lens of transparency. The arrangements include opportunities to proactively support local agencies and organisations to grow and improve, as well as a partnership approach to learning and multi-agency safeguarding system growth and development.

We want to develop a culture of challenge and holding partners to account and we are embedding new systems and processes for professional challenge across the Safeguarding Children Partnership; utilising the evidence of scrutiny and assurance arrangements that already exist in our safeguarding partner organisations.

The ongoing drive and commitment for continuous improvement is to ensure better outcomes and experiences for our children, young people and families, and strong arrangements for our staff. This Safeguarding Children Partnership Scrutiny and Assurance Framework (known hereafter as the Framework), supports, enables and acknowledges a range of mechanisms to ensure scrutiny and assurance including independent scrutiny, which includes:

- Data & Intelligence sources
 - NEL SCP Core Data Set
 - Agency specific data (As required. Such as the Children's Social Care 'Vital Signs')
 - Safeguarding Children Partnership Self-Evaluation Framework (SCP SEF)
- Audit & Benchmarking
 - Section 11 Process
 - Benchmarking against national standards
- Sharing of partner specific assurance
 - Annual Assurance Statement from each of the 3 statutory partners
 - Internal oversight findings and assurances
 - Regulator or external body findings and judgements
- Assurance visits
- Thematic/focused activities – “deep dives”
- Professional Practice Learning Processes
 - Case Note reviews
- Hearing the Voice of the Child Processes
- Hearing the Experience of family's mechanisms (For example, complaints and compliments)
- Engagement with staff/voluntary sector in hearing the staff voice
- Events to share Intelligence from other NEL Safeguarding/SAFER Boards i.e. Safeguarding Adult Board or Community Safety Partnership
- Independent Scrutiny & Peer Review

These mechanisms enable holistic, proactive and responsive approaches to scrutiny and assurance, providing opportunities for data and intelligence gathering, and triangulation along with the sharing of good practice, in the spirit of continuous learning and improvement.

This Framework enables safeguarding partners to:

- have assurance of whether all agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- have assurance of whether all agencies are joined up and working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across the safeguarding system
- have a direct line of sight to frontline practice
- have live conversations with frontline practitioners and understand their experience
- listen, communicate and receive direct feedback from children, young people and their families
- test the interconnectivity between performance, practice and the voice of the child, young person and family
- understand the work being undertaken by the SAFER Boards and find opportunities to share information and work jointly at a strategic level
- take account of independent scrutiny which helps to determine the effectiveness of our arrangements including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
- have confidence in the authenticity of the annual report we publish

This Framework outlines mechanisms for the sharing of individual safeguarding partner's organisational scrutiny functions, the outcomes of which will contribute to this Framework and to the learning across the wider partnership. It is in the interests of the NEL SCP to support partner organisations to improve and where a partner has significant improvement and development gaps, they will be asked to provide a service performance and quality intelligence report to the SCP for assurances.

This Framework provides clarity regarding our arrangements and outlines who will conduct the scrutiny and assurance function, how the findings will be analysed and reviewed, and how any recommendations will be considered and taken forward.

This includes the process and timescales for a review of the effectiveness of the NEL SCP arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Professional and Independent Scrutiny

The role of professional and independent scrutiny is critical to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the NEL SCP arrangements, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

For a fixed period of 6 months, and as a pilot to test out a new role, the safeguarding statutory partners will identify a minimum of one senior professional, from each of the 3 statutory partners, who will play a significant role in the delivery of this Framework, by providing a level of professional insight to the wider scrutiny arrangements including the scrutiny of data and information. These 3 senior and experienced professionals will understand practice and the strategic issues affecting safeguarding in NE Lincolnshire and will work together for a period of time each week to deliver, challenge and advice on the execution of the Scrutiny & Assurance framework. Hereafter, these will be called Professional Scrutiny Officers (PSO's).

The PSO's will become a small team of senior professional officers and will be recognised as the officers who support the delivery of the scrutiny and assurance framework, which will be led by the SCP Board Manager. The primary role of the PSO will be to analyse and interpret the intelligence, information and data being presented to the SCP, and to form an informed position statement and recommendations for the SCP to consider. The PSO's will be guided by the scrutiny and assurance work asked of them by the SCP sub-groups. PSO's should have suitable attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding of the children's safeguarding system. These are new roles which will need to bring high-level thinking and challenge to the assurance process

and will assist the SCP board and its sub-groups to translate data and a wide range of intelligence, into the meaning for our strategic approach, local practice, for children's outcomes, and for services. PSO's will be from a range of backgrounds, which will ensure different perspectives and provide a degree of flexibility and capacity to contribute to the scrutiny and assurance arrangements as required. It is recognised that the NEL SCP may need to consider training opportunities for PSO's. We will evaluate the PSO role after the 6-month pilot period to understand its impact and effectiveness on our ability to gain assurance and improve practice.

The SCP will also require the wider group of safeguarding partners and representatives from selected relevant agencies, to engage in peer review processes to afford a level of independence when reviewing local arrangements.

In addition, to assist us during 2020/2021, the SCP Board will be working with an Independent advisor to the 3 statutory partners to support the development of the NEL SCP Board and its arrangements.

Local arrangements for individual agency scrutiny are outlined in section 4, and for independent scrutiny in section 5

2. Thematic Areas of Safeguarding, and Good Outcomes.

The safeguarding of children is complex. The framework of the 9 tiles below aims to recognise and work with the complexity of interacting human and organisational histories, behaviours and relationships, and keep the NEL SCP focused on the local drivers and issues affecting practice - we refer to these as the thematic areas of safeguarding.

Each year the NEL SCP will identify the most relevant high-level “Thematic Areas”, based on our local intelligence and experience, to populate the 9 tiles. The tiles will guide our thematic activities and approaches to seeking assurances, considering from a number of different angles affecting local safeguarding drivers and arrangements collectively.

The 9 themed areas can be changed each year to keep them current, although some might remain a constant e.g. workforce. The 9 tiles can be used in 2 different ways by the NEL SCP.

1. All 9 tiles can be used to create a framework for undertaking a deep dive into an area of safeguarding, so for example a deep dive into sexual abuse could look at sexual abuse from the angle of all 9 tiles including; who are the vulnerable groups, what are the specific risk, what are the barriers to partnership working etc.
2. An individual tile could be selected for a deep dive, for example looking into all Vulnerable Groups or reviewing all Risk Issues faced by the NEL SCP.

The NEL SCP and its sub-groups will need to review and update the tile content and agree how the 9 tiles will be applied to the NEL SCP’s scrutiny and assurance activities for the year, as part of the annual planning. The PSO’s will work together to describe and create Good statements in respect of each of the tiles, to enable the SCP Board to compare the local performance against. These statements should paint the desired picture for each tile, and should be informed by the views of children, parents and frontline staff as they are more likely to express ‘good’ in language that keeps the human focus.

Data and intelligence from the previous year’s assurance activities should guide where to look and should therefore help inform the content of the 9 tiles each year.

Figure 1: Thematic Areas 2020/2021– providing different perspectives on children’s safeguarding.

The Partnership’s desired Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is robust and effective. • Children are and feel safe. 	Vulnerable Groups	Specific Risk Issues
Partnership Working: How well professionals or organisations work together	Workforce: relationships, clear thinking and capacity	Safeguarding process & practice issues; support, supervision, professional standards

The “use of Resources”, Evidence-based practice - issues to consider	Organisational Culture issues to address	Connections with Poverty/poor housing
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Appendix 3 includes guidance on each of the thematic areas, articulating what good might look like in terms of outcome statements.

Outcomes

The NEL SCP will identify annually the outcomes it is working towards. The outcomes will be clear statements of our intentions for the desired population and will be limited to a small number; each having a number of clear desired outcome statements underneath to clarify what work the NEL SCP wishes to focus on to achieve the overall outcome.

We will seek assurances through data or other assurance information to chart progress against the Outcomes. The SCP will describe in a statement what Good looks like for each of the Outcomes. These statements should set out the vision and ambition in terms of quality and outcomes and which will help to contextualize and understand our current performance against.

Scrutiny and assurance activity each year should be planned to provide assurances connected to our Outcomes

The SCP has identified 2 outcomes and focused outcome statements that it aims to achieve during 2019 -2021 as follows:

- The safeguarding partnership is robust and effective
 - We understand the needs of the population and act to deliver on unmet need.
 - Practitioners tell us they are confident in local processes and understand what is out there to support children and their families.
 - Agencies and individuals understand their respective roles, thresholds and collective responsibilities.
 - We learn when things go wrong and embed changes to improve practice across the system.
 - There is a high level of support and challenge in the multi-agency system.
- Children are and feel safe.
 - Children in NEL receive services that are designed to ensure timely, safe and effective care and support.
 - The Children’s Safeguarding Partnership is apprised of significant events.
 - Children tell us they feel safe.

The 2 outcomes above reflect our current position of needing to grow and develop the SCP and its governance and recognising our current gaps in safety.

The outcomes are complex and multi-faceted, and the partnership must adopt a full range of methodologies outlined in this Framework to address them.

3 Partnership Scrutiny and Assurance Functions

The construction of our assurance framework includes where possible, the underpinning by good practice and evidence-based quality standards. The challenge is to obtain information from an appropriately balanced range of sources and angles, using a range of methods and methodology best suited to the content areas. The mix of methodologies will help the SCP to understand the complexity of safeguarding from the different angles of the child, the family, the staff and the NEL community, and should enable us to benchmark our performance against similar safeguarding partnerships.

This section outlines the methodologies that will be used to seek this wide range of assurances. Where possible the framework and its processes will be electronic. Some assurances included may be regularly captured as part of an agency’s business as usual, and some may be specifically collected for the NELCCSP.

Appendix 1 sets out the Annual planner of scrutiny and assurance activity.

SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK	
Data, information and intelligence	<p>The SCP and its sub-groups will have regular access to a defined set of data, information, and intelligence to help it to review practice, receive assurances and know where to look in respect of deep dives.</p> <p>Data will be collected by each of our agencies, shared and then analysed by our PSO’s in order for the sub-groups to produce intelligence and recommendations for the NEL SCP Board, which provides the Board with assurances and identifies risks.</p> <p>The full range of data, information and intelligence can be described in 4 main categories as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEL SCP Core Data Set - a broad range of core data and information arranged around the different elements within this Scrutiny & Assurance Framework, that helps the SCP understand its population, understand how well it’s safeguarding arrangements are delivering or are performing against national or locally agreed standards, how effective the partnership arrangements are, and will flag for the SCP how a particular area of focus is performing. In addition, the data set will provide assurances connected to the agreed SCP Outcomes and linked priorities. • Agency specific data (as required) - provide assurance on the performance of any of the 3 statutory partners (children’s social care, health, and police) where there are concerns about a partner’s performance or regulators judgement. This will also include assurances regarding individual schools or colleges, because of the significant role that schools or college play in a child’s life. • Self-Evaluation Framework/SEF- provides NEL SCP with its own

	<p>evaluation of its arrangement and performance and should be received by the Board to provide insight into the effectiveness of the NEL SCP Boards arrangements.</p> <p>All of the above will be received by the SCP administration. The information will then be presented to the PSO's, or in some instances if agreed, directly to the appropriate sub-group for them to interpret the findings into relevant safeguarding intelligence and assurances or risk, which should be reported to the SCP Board.</p> <p>It is important to note the role played by the PSO's, in agreeing assurances or identifying risks. These professionals will have the safeguarding children experience to know how to contextualize the theme and trend findings and how to turn the themes and trends into useful intelligence that can inform decision making by the SCP Board.</p> <p>Some of the above data sets should be received at each meeting and some less frequently – this will be defined by the sub-groups and agreed by the SCP Board.</p>
<p>Audit & Benchmarking</p>	<p>The Section 11 self-assessment - is an annual paper exercise to ensure agencies and organisations with a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are compliant with their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within their organisation. Agencies and organisations with a duty under Section 11 are detailed in appendix 2.</p> <p>This exercise will be underpinned by the signatures of risk tool, which enables the NEL SCP Board to identify areas of risk and further development, as well as areas of best practice. The tool considers the following risk domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and governance • Performance and outcomes • Commissioning and quality • Priorities and partnerships • Resource and workforce management • Culture and challenge <p>There are opportunities to develop bespoke domains for specific areas of focus as identified.</p> <p>We will make use of the findings from Section 11 and signatures of risk framework as part of the preparations for our Assurance Visits to either single or multi-agency services. For example, a site visit might focus on Leadership if the findings from an agencies S11 audit showed areas for development.</p> <p>Benchmarking - NEL SCP will receive reports via the Intelligence and Performance Group (IPG) in respect of benchmarking activity undertaken that links to the agreed Outcomes or as part of any deep-dives into any of the 9 tiles.</p>

	<p>Benchmarking activity should compare NEL to England and where the information is available to its statistical neighbours and should provide an action plan that would be monitored by the IPG with exception reports presented to the NEL SCP Board.</p>
<p>Partner Specific Assurances</p>	<p>Annual Assurance Statement from each of the 3 statutory partners will provide assurance to the SCP regarding the partners own internal arrangements to demonstrate their accountability and achievement of statutory safeguarding objectives. This will include where relevant demonstrating achievement of national standards or benchmarks.</p> <p>NEL SCP will also request stakeholder partners, including the 3 statutory partners, attend to assure the SCP Board in relation to a specific issue highlighted by the agency’s own internal assurance processes, or regulator processes. This could include any plans in respect of section 11 responsibilities, any regulator inspections, or challenges to the stakeholders’ contribution to the local arrangements.</p> <p>The SCP Board would require a written report or presentation with clear actions identified that would be monitored by the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG).</p> <p>In addition, the SCP might ask a stakeholder partner to attend and present information regarding the impact of a national or local change, or the judgement of a review or inspection. This will enable SCP to provide support or challenge and agree any further supportive action the SCP should take.</p>
<p>Assurance Events – assurance visits to services and activities</p>	<p>Over a two-year period, there is commitment to undertake Assurance Visits to agency specific services or multi-agency services/centres, for those agencies locally identified through Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, to specifically focus on safeguarding children assurances.</p> <p>These events provide an opportunity for safeguarding partners, Professional Scrutiny Officer’s (PSO’s), and relevant agency representatives to visit specific agencies to ‘walk the floor’ and talk to practitioners. It will also provide an opportunity to meet with children and families. Young people, as scrutineers, are also encouraged and supported to contribute to these arrangements where appropriate.</p> <p>It is an opportunity for the agencies to showcase good practice, indicate how they listen to children and families and to talk about further developments. This gives the PSO’s and others undertaking the visit, and including the young people where appropriate, a sense of a specific agency contribution to the safeguarding system.</p> <p>We will make use of the Section 11 and signatures of risk framework as part of the preparations for our assurance visit. The outcomes of these visits will help to shape the focus of further assurances, though the format for the visits are flexible and exact arrangements will be agreed by the safeguarding partners, PSO’s and any relevant agencies that may contribute to the assurance visit and the identified</p>

agency.

The proposed format for the Assurance Visit is as follows:

- The specific agency identified for scrutiny is endorsed by the three safeguarding partners.
- A proposed date is identified to ensure availability of safeguarding partners, PSO's, other contributing partners and young people (if the agency identified is one of the safeguarding partners, a representative from that agency will not be involved in the assurance visit).
- A letter will be distributed to the identified agency confirming they have been selected for an assurance visit and the date will be proposed.
- If the Section 11 and signatures of risk framework needs to be updated, it will be distributed to the identified agency (this should be no later than six weeks prior to the proposed date).
- The completed Section 11 and signatures of risk framework will be submitted to the Safeguarding Children's Board Manager (this should be no later than three weeks prior to the proposed date).
- Taking account of the outcomes of the Section 11 and signatures of risk framework and any other relevant sources of information, preparatory work will be undertaken by the PSO's to provide opportunities for reflective observations and lines of questioning.
- Programme for the assurance visit will be agreed with the identified agency and safeguarding partners and then distributed to those involved.
- Assurance visit to take place.
- Led by the PSO's, key highlights, findings and immediate areas for consideration and action will be fed back to the specific agency representatives at the end of the event. Key highlights and emerging themes will be communicated across partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.
- Led by the PSO's, a report will be collated to identify areas of strengths, areas for development and any specific areas for consideration and action. This report will take account the findings from the PSO's, safeguarding partners, any other relevant partners and young people scrutineers.
- The report will be distributed to safeguarding partners for their agreement to distribute it to the specific agency. Any ongoing review work and/or action plan will be presented to the next NEL SCP Board as appropriate.

Any identified actions will be followed up by the SAIG and the agency will have a responsibility to incorporate the findings and any action taken into their annual Section 11 and signatures of risk framework.

This is an organic process and specific arrangements for these events will be flexible to take account of learning and local need to ensure quality outcomes for children and families.

Thematic Focused activities - deep dives.

Over a two-year period, there is commitment to undertake three thematic assurance activities that provide an opportunity for the NEL SCP Board to gain a sense of the safeguarding system pertaining to a specific child protection or safeguarding issue across all safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies.

This might be classed as a “deep-dive” into a specific area and could take many different forms from table-top to benchmarking to audit. The thematic areas identified in the 9 tiles described previously (section 2) will provide the NEL SCP with relevant areas to focus on for these activities.

The proposed format for the thematic focused activity is as follows:

- The specific theme is identified and scoped from the 9 tiles or including all 9 tiles in respect of 1 safeguarding area.
- A format for the activity will be proposed by the PSO’s and endorsed by the three safeguarding partners. This should best reflect opportunities for scrutinising the specific themes.
- Dates to be identified to ensure availability of the PSO’s and the key contributing partners to ensure access to relevant multi-agencies and functions as identified in the proposed format.
- Taking account of the specific theme and the proposed areas for consideration, preparatory work will be undertaken by the PSO’s to provide opportunities for reflective observations and lines of questioning.
- Programme for the thematic assurance event will be agreed with the identified agency and safeguarding partners and then distributed to those involved.
- Thematic activity to take place.
- Led by the PSO’s, key highlights, findings and immediate areas for consideration and action will be fed back to the specific agency representatives at the end of the activity, if relevant.
- Led by the PSO’s, a report will be collated to identify areas of strengths, areas for development and any specific areas for consideration and action. This report will take account the findings from the PSO’s, safeguarding partners, any other relevant partners and young people scrutineers.
- The report will be distributed to safeguarding partners for their agreement to distribute it to all contributing agencies. Any ongoing review work and/or action plan will be presented to the next NEL SCP Board as appropriate. Key highlights and emerging themes will be communicated across partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.
- Any identified actions will be followed up by the SAIG.

This is an organic process and specific arrangements for these events will be flexible to take account of learning and local need to ensure quality outcomes for children and families.

<p>Line of Sight Practice Learning Events – case note reviews</p>	<p>A practice learning process will be undertaken three times a year that culminates in a line of sight event. This is led by a PSO and panel members who will include safeguarding partners, their representatives and senior representatives from other relevant agencies.</p> <p>The line of sight event will consider a minimum of five children’s cases in relation to a specific theme from the 9 tiles, and which will be agreed by the safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Following a process of single agency case audits, line of sight panels meets with practitioners to discuss the cases. The event enables partners to engage in active challenge and ensure they have interface with multi-agency practitioners from across the safeguarding system. The expected outcomes of the line of sight events is that it will identify areas of best practice, further improvement relating to multi agency practice and agree strategic action across the partnership pertaining specific themes.</p> <p>There is also an opportunity to schedule ‘pop up’ case discussions as required. These case discussions can be called as a means of resolving issues or barriers identified in a specific case or cases or as an additional scrutiny mechanism linked to a particular theme or area of focus. They will be led by PSO’s or one of the safeguarding partners. Other safeguarding partners will also be in attendance along with representatives from other relevant agencies.</p>
<p>Voice of the Child - Quality Assurance Processes</p>	<p>We will establish a Voice of the Child (VOC) programme that gives young people the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and influence the services they access. The process also enables agencies to reflect on and improve their provision to better meet the needs of children and young people.</p> <p>The young inspector’s team are commissioned by agencies to undertake a young voice quality assurance visit, which could be alongside officers as part of the assurance visits already discussed above or could be separate. Agencies can be selected for a visit if deemed to be an area of interest by young people (though agencies do not have to take it up).</p> <p>Once the agency confirms their interest, young inspectors undertake a desktop review of the service, including their online communications and distribute staff and service user surveys to the agency for completion prior to the inspection visit. A team of young inspectors undertake the inspection visit that follows a set criteria, though this can also be bespoke to the individual agency. Feedback from the desktop research, observations and findings is compiled into the inspection report, which is written by young people (supported through the SCP PSO’s) and the agency is awarded a star rating. The report highlights areas of strengths and areas for consideration and action. The young voice quality assurance process can also be supported through a mystery shopper programme.</p> <p>This will enable young people to reflect on their observations and</p>

	<p>experiences when accessing local services and will contribute to the NEL SCP Board's oversight.</p>
<p>Understanding the experience of families</p>	<p>The views and experiences of the safeguarding system from the child's family members is important to hear and should help to shape the way we practice and the way we offer services. Their experience can help NEL SCP determine if outcomes have been achieved</p> <p>The NEL SCP has identified two main areas of family's voice to focus on – complaints and compliments. Systems and processes already exist within the 3 statutory partners and the PSO's will be tasked with collating any safeguarding process or practice related complaints and compliments, including PALS concerns (Patient Advice & Liaison Service) in the CCG, into 1 single report on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>This report will be presented to the SCP for discussion and understanding of the key issues and actions taken by partners.</p>
<p>Engagement with safeguarding practitioners - Hearing the voice of staff.</p>	<p>The voice of front-line safeguarding practitioner staff is an essential source of information and should be regularly heard. They frequently have the solutions to problems or barriers and can highlight the early signs that something is wrong. Effective staff voice can contribute to innovation, productivity and partnership working and often impacts on increased job satisfaction, greater influence and better opportunities for staff development.</p> <p>Staff voice is different to Employee Voice in that this engagement is to hear the issues practitioners want to raise, rather than a focus on employment issues. If employment issues are raised the SCP will alert the relevant agency.</p> <p>The SCP also commits to keeping front-line staff regularly up to date with the work the SCP is doing and provide the opportunity for staff to provide feedback.</p> <p>To achieve the above, the SCP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold 3 staff engagement events each year where front-line staff can attend over a lunch period and can see and hear the work of the NEL SCP Board. They can hear about progress made and challenges faced and can better understand and contribute to the Boards annual work plan/calendar. They can question and challenge the SCP regarding its work. • They will be given an opportunity to provide feedback at the event regarding the work undertaken and this will inform the SCP Boards evaluation of its effectiveness. • Staff will also be given the opportunity each year to participate in an anonymous survey which will aim to capture their experience of local safeguarding arrangements. This will also inform the SCP Boards evaluation of its effectiveness. <p>As part for the assurance visits described previously staff on duty at that time will also be asked for feedback connected to the theme of the assurance visit.</p>

	<p>All of the above information will be collated by the PSO's and will be provided in a report to the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG), for their analysis and reporting to the NEL SCP Board.</p>
<p>Intelligence shared from other NEL safeguarding/ SAFER Boards</p>	<p>It is recognised that there are interdependencies between the 3 SAFER Boards in NEL – Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) Board, Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). A number of agendas or themed areas are relevant for scrutiny and assurance by more than one or even all 3 boards in some cases e.g. domestic abuse.</p> <p>Therefore an agreement will be reached between the 3 SAFER Boards that we make the best use of resources and intelligence and share information regarding, risks, issues, improvements and progress and that we align our work plans, where this is relevant to do so. Reports from subgroups of the SAFER boards should therefore be written and shared at all 3 Boards or their subgroups, for assurance.</p> <p>There is also opportunity to share the support arrangements for the 3 Boards, for example the SCP's PSO resource.</p>

4 Individual Scrutiny and Assurance Functions

There are other mechanisms for scrutinising our Safeguarding Partnership arrangements through individual safeguarding partner’s organisational scrutiny functions as follows:

<p>NELC Council Democratic Scrutiny and Internal Audit Functions</p>	<p>Scrutiny panels support the work of the executive and the council as a whole. They allow citizens to have a greater say by holding public enquiries into matters of local concern. The scope of scrutiny panels is wide reaching and covers the work of the council, local health services in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act legislation and crime and disorder in accordance with the Police and Justice Act 2006.</p> <p>The role of scrutiny panels is to scrutinise the effectiveness of council policies, strategies and performance, along with executive recommendations and decisions within their scope. They are also required to scrutinise the effectiveness of partnership working with organisations and the impact of policies adopted by organisations where the council has a legitimate interest.</p> <p>All statutory safeguarding partners selected relevant agencies and other named organisations and agencies would fall within this scope.</p>
<p>Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body</p>	<p>North East Lincolnshire CCG has comprehensive arrangements in place for children’s safeguarding scrutiny and assurance within the CCG itself-recognising that the CCG is a commissioner and not a provider of health care - and for the health services it commissions. Arrangements are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive quarterly performance and assurance report and an annual report is provided to the CCG Clinical Governance Committee Quality, Performance and Finance Committee, a sub-committee of the CCG Governing Body. The Governing Body also receives the annual report. • The Safeguarding Children Annual Report and the CDR report is presented to and discussed at the CCG Governing Body. • The CCG Governing Body has an Executive Lead for safeguarding, which is the Director of Quality & Nursing, who is required to receive Level 4 training annually to support this role. • All CCG Governing Body members receive an annual update regarding safeguarding children and adults. • Requirements for assurance regarding safeguarding in commissioned services are required to be set out in the individual contracts for commissioned services and these inform the CCG Vital Signs data set and report to the NEL SCP Board and sub-groups. • Major NHS providers are required to provide an annual self-assessment of safeguarding compliance to the CCG, and quarterly safeguarding performance information. Non-NHS providers have been required to provide evidence of compliance on request. From

	<p>2019/20, all CCG commissioned providers will be required to provide an annual self-assessment of their safeguarding compliance to the CCG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCG leads a Serious Incident reporting process that oversees the investigation of any serious incidents including those that are safeguarding relevant. Where serious incidents are related to homicide connected to mental illness, NHS England lead an independent review, but the CCG is a stakeholder in this process. • The CCG undertakes a planned programme of visits to clinical services during which safeguarding arrangements are scrutinised as part of the wider quality agenda.
<p>Humberside Police</p>	<p>Humberside Police has comprehensive arrangements in place for children’s safeguarding scrutiny and assurance within the force and its partnership activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive monthly performance and assurance report and monthly crime audits examine the quality, quantity and performance position, which is then overviewed at a Force level. • The Safeguarding Children Annual Report is presented to and discussed at the local and force management meetings. • Daily scrutiny is applied through the local and force level pacesetter meetings to individual safeguarding and crime incidences that have concerns for safety. • The force also conducts force wide scrutiny to its crime recording practices and safeguarding processes through local and independent scrutiny teams, and peer reviews are common practice.
<p>Agency specific data sets – such as the Children’s Services ‘Vital Signs’ Report</p>	<p>These reports can provide assurance on the performance against.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any agency specific standards • any partnership working measures <p>Each of the 3 statutory partners may be required to share agency specific reports (children’s social care, health and police) or schools (because of the significant role that schools play in a child’s life) to provide oversight and assurance to the SCP.</p> <p>This information should be based on any national guidance or statutory guidance, for example the Intercollegiate document sets out the requirement of health in respect of training standards. It should also be based around local drivers to improve partnership working e.g. % relevant social care records that identifies the child’s GP.</p> <p>The agency specific data should be received by the PSO’s and the data brought together into a single report, summarizing the themes and trends noted. This should then be presented to the appropriate sub-groups for them to interpret the findings into relevant safeguarding intelligence and assurances or risk, which should be reported to the SCP Board.</p>

5 Professional and Independent Scrutiny

The role of professional and independent scrutiny is critical to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the NEL SCP arrangements, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

Independent scrutiny is part of a wide system that includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners, including the impact of each agency's routine inspections by Regulators, and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

The role of professional and independent scrutiny:

- a. is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in North Lincolnshire
- b. relates to the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
- c. to act as part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections
- d. is to provide objectivity, act as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to promote continuous improvement
- e. is to consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership
- f. is to report to the safeguarding partners any recommendations from their scrutiny and assurance activities
- g. is to scrutinise the NEL SCP arrangements and its annual report

This will also help us to ascertain how our NEL SCP arrangements impact on the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families.

Arrangements for independent scrutiny are summarised overleaf as follows:

PROFESSIONAL SCRUTINY

Professional Scrutiny Officer(s)

Safeguarding partners will be jointly responsible for identifying Professional Scrutiny Officers/PSO(s) who should have suitable attributes, skills, practitioner/case worker knowledge and understanding of the children's safeguarding system. It is anticipated that there will be a small pool of PSO's from a range of backgrounds, which will ensure different perspectives and provide a degree of flexibility and capacity to contribute to the scrutiny and assurance arrangements as required.

PSO(s) will play a significant role in this Framework and may be required for around 25 days per year. Through leading and contributing to the following elements of this Framework, the PSO(s) will ensure a professional scrutiny perspective relating to:

- Data analysis
- Section 11 Process
- Assurance Visits
- Line of Sight Practice Learning Events
- Benchmarking & Thematic activity

This provides the PSO's with an opportunity to scrutinise the children's safeguarding system at all levels, including front line practice and with a direct interface with children, young people and families.

The PSO's will be required to:

- Provide professional scrutiny and evaluation pertaining to agency specific and thematic assurance events
- Provide professional scrutiny and evaluation pertaining to practice learning line of sight events
- Scrutinise the arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
- Scrutinise how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership
- Contribute to reciprocal peer review arrangements where arranged
- Prepare reports pertaining their scrutiny activities
- Attend NEL SCP Board meetings to present their findings
- Prepare their own annual report that will outline their scrutiny activity and any impacts and outcomes arising from it, a summary of which will be referenced in the NEL SCP arrangements annual report
- Scrutinise the NEL SCP arrangements and annual report prior to publication
- Attend to represent a professional scrutiny perspective within individual safeguarding partners' scrutiny arrangements, if required.

In all meetings and representations, PSO's will communicate ownership of their independent and objective perspective.

PSO's should have the following knowledge, skills and experience:

- Worked at a senior level in an organisation which has safeguarding responsibilities (e.g. health, social care, education, police)
- Experience of safeguarding at a strategic board level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level knowledge and experience of working across the children’s multi agency safeguarding system • Understand the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together to safeguard children including the impact of management, supervision, resources, skills and training • Experience of communicating and engaging with practitioners, partners, children, young people and families • Ability to communicate at all levels using various mechanisms, including written and presentation skills • High level understanding of relevant legislation, guidance and policy frameworks within which multi agency services operate and the critical levers for change • High level understanding of relevant inspection frameworks • Awareness of political environment • Reflective, analytical and evaluation skills • Ability to distil information and findings from a range of sources in order to inform their report on the scrutiny and assurance activity • Be able to handle information securely and take account of information governance processes • Be able to communicate ownership of their independent and objective perspective in all meetings and representations <p>PSO’s will use their creativity and innovation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise and identify opportunities to develop innovative ways of communicating and engaging with children, young people families, safeguarding partners organisations and other agencies • Formulate evidence-based recommendations and opportunities to enhance the local safeguarding system • Work flexibly and meet deadlines in a changing environment <p>In the event of any dispute between the safeguarding partners and/or relevant agencies or any local disputes relating to multi-agency practice, the PSO’s may also assist with the dispute resolution process.</p>
<p>Peer Review</p>	<p>NEL SCP will seek out opportunity for peer review on an annual basis, including opportunity for a reciprocal peer review model sub regionally, regionally or nationally.</p> <p>This could involve PSO’s, safeguarding partners or utilise senior representatives from relevant agencies to provide peer challenge to other local areas multi agency safeguarding arrangements and vice versa. In considering a reciprocal approach, we anticipate learning from peers who scrutinise our children’s safeguarding system, but also learn through scrutinising others.</p> <p>In the event of a peer review, the scope would need to be clarified and a term of reference agreed to ensure the best outcomes for all parties concerned.</p>

<p>Independent Advisor to the NEL SCP Board Chair</p>	<p>The NEL SCP Board has significantly re-shaped itself and its governance arrangements in the last 12 months and recognises it is on a journey of improvement. We acknowledge we have challenges locally and are supporting the transformation of services and of our arrangements, building on our strengths.</p> <p>To assist us during 2019/2020, we will be working with an Independent advisor to support the NEL SCP Board Chair and the 3 statutory partners to continue to develop the SCP arrangements and governance.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>Other areas for consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit/scrutiny across directors of regional local authorities/chief officers of regional CCG's/chief officers across the Humber. • Learn from others in terms of practice – national learning. • Safeguarding partners could contribute to other agencies scrutiny and assurance arrangements <p>It is envisaged there will be a flexible approach to using these mechanisms as deemed appropriate.</p>

6 Learning and Improvement

The key element of our scrutiny and assurance process is continuous learning and improvement. The SCP recognises the importance of fostering a positive culture of learning and improvement and good effective system leadership to ensure the drive and mechanisms for continuous learning and improvement is embedded throughout the North East Lincolnshire safeguarding children system.

The SCP has structures in place to learn and improve, the key groups to facilitate this are the; Safeguarding Review Group (SRG) and the Intelligence and Performance Group (IPG). The SRG gathers learning from national and local safeguarding practice reviews, learning lesson reviews and national audit findings. The SRG identifies key elements of learning applicable locally and shares these with the IPG who develops work streams and working groups to address improvement locally. Both of these groups feed into the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG) which will have representation from across the three safeguarding partner organisations and from other selected relevant agencies. This group is responsible for co-ordinating the outcomes of scrutiny and assurance activity and will monitor, implement and identify areas for development to ensure we positively impact on our commitment towards continuous improvements across frontline practice.

In addition to the functions described above the Safeguarding Review Group Representatives will consider cases referred for a non-statutory multi agency local learning review where the safeguarding practice review criteria is not met. The SRG will be responsible for the coordination and completion of non-statutory learning lessons reviews and for disseminating the learning from these and from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, inspection reports, other national reports and research.

It is recognised that to ensure impactful learning and improvement, staff, families, and children and young people must be listened to. The SCP will engage with children, young people, families and staff to enable continuous learning which places experience at the centre. Examples of the mechanisms we will utilise to do this are included in the table under section 3 of this document.

The NEL SCP is committed to keeping front-line staff informed of its activities and functions, including learning from its work, and to give front-line staff opportunity to comment and feedback, having a two-way dialogue with the SCP. We will achieve this by holding staff engagement events each year which will include the delivery of staff surveys or focus groups which will be shared with the PSO's for analysis, reporting to the IPG. The IPG will provide the NEL SCP Board with a summary of the staff feedback and planned actions to celebrate and share good practice and to address areas of significant deficit. We will ensure we feedback to staff, adopting the 'you said, we did, we did not do' approach to ensure clear messages are received.

Learning from complaints and from family's experience will be received by the NEL SCP throughout the year in the form of a report summarising themes and trends, actions taken and opportunities for learning which can be shared across partners.

There will be other opportunities to share learning across the partnership through learning and development events in order to improve practice. Learning regarding practice and process will also be shared both regionally and nationally as appropriate to ensure system contribution to learning in England.

Overall, learning will contribute to further strengthening the safeguarding system, multi-agency practice and the nuanced approaches that services can develop.

APPENDIX 1 – Example Scrutiny and Assurance Framework Annual Planner 2020 - 2021

MONTH	ACTIVITY EACH MONTH	REPORTING EACH MEETING
	*Data reports are received at every meeting	
November 2020	Update of the SEF	
December 2020	Staff engagement event	
January 2021	Section 11 revised	Complaints report
February 2021	Line of Sight Practice Learning event	Staff feedback report
March 2021	Assurance visit	
April 2021	Thematic Assurance event Staff engagement event	SAFER 3 Board report
May 2021	Update of the SEF	Complaints report
June 2021	Line of Sight Practice Learning event	Staff feedback report
July 2021	Benchmarking/Thematic Assurance event	
August 2021	Assurance visit Staff engagement event	
September 2021	Benchmarking activity Review and revise Outcomes & Good statements Review of themed areas/9 tiles	Complaints report
October 2021	Line of Sight Practice Learning event	SAFER 3 Board report Staff feedback report

Note(s): *This annual planner is indicative only, therefore it is subject to change and other activities and events may be built into the planner in year as appropriate.*

APPENDIX 2 – Agencies and Organisations with a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

From a local perspective, Section 11 places a duty on:

- a. North East Lincolnshire Council including children's and other types of services - children's and adult social care services, youth offending service, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services
- b. North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, General Practitioners, NHS England North (Yorkshire and Humber) and the independent health sector, i.e. other independent health providers including Virgin Care Sexual Health Services, Thames Ambulance Service
- c. Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- d. Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- e. NaViGo Health and Social Care CiC
- f. East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- g. Humberside Police
- h. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- i. British Transport Police
- j. National Probation Service (North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire)
- k. Community Rehabilitation Company (Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire)

These organisations and agencies should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Note - other organisations, agencies and individuals have a duty under Section 11, though these are not applicable within this area as they are not evident within the local footprint e.g. Directors of Secure Training Centres.

Further details regarding the role and responsibilities of local safeguarding partners and Section 11 organisations and agencies are articulated in the NEL SCP Board Memorandum of Understanding.

APPENDIX 3 – Guidance on the thematic areas for 2020/2021, examples of what good looks like

<p>The Partnership’s desired Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is robust and effective. • Children are and feel safe. 	Vulnerable Groups	Specific Risk Issues
Partnership Working: how well professionals and organisations work together	Workforce: relationships, clear thinking and capacity	Safeguarding process & practice issues; support, supervision, professional standards
The “use of Resources”, Evidence-based practice - issues to consider	Organisational Culture issues to address	Connections with Poverty/poor housing

Vulnerable Groups

In this area **good** could look like (applying to all): -

- Professionals working in specialist children’s services are effective in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.

Specific example, Gangs Outcome statements: -

- Violent crime by young people is decreasing.
- The number of young people joining gangs is decreasing/the number of young people leaving gangs is increasing.
- Young people in the area feel safe in their community/to walk the streets.

Specific Risk Issues

In this area, **good** could look like (in respect of **domestic violence**):

- Arrangements and services designed to address domestic violence (eg Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs), perpetrator programmes) are evidencing a positive impact on the incidence of Domestic Violence (DV).
- Domestic violence cases in those families where it was identified as a risk factor.
- Children in families which have experienced domestic violence are doing well in key Every Child Matters (ECM) wellbeing areas eg attending or doing well at school.
- Perpetrators of DV are ceasing their violence.

Partnership Working: How well professionals and organisations work together

In this area **good** could look like:

- Partnership working is delivering concrete positive outcomes for children and their families.
- CAF is delivering improved outcomes for children and their families.

- Children, young people and parents do not experience disjointed and uncoordinated involvement by different agencies.
- Professionals in different organisations in the area know and trust each other, report positive working relationships, and converse with each other in a way that communicates a shared understanding.
- Professionals within agencies report that they have effective, creative relationships with other professionals/teams within their agency.
- Professionals know the range of services available and match them appropriately with the needs of children and families.
- Professionals are confident: to be the lead professional, to challenge, to share information.

Workforce: relationships, clear thinking, capacity

In this area **good** could look like:

- Parents and children say that the work of the social worker/health visitor/midwife has improved their wellbeing eg improved parenting skills, family relationships.
- Parents and children experience consistency of professionals.
- Parents do not feel stigmatised by or fearful of services.
- Parents and children report that they have a positive relationship with their social worker, health visitor, midwife or teacher.
- Professionals in universal services have the skills and confidence to speak with children directly around issues that may contribute to maltreatment and do so.
- There are sufficient numbers of professionals with the right competencies, knowledge, qualifications, skills and experience to meet the needs of people who use services at all times.
- The most complex areas of work in terms of safeguarding are staffed by the most experienced and competent professionals.
- High proportion of permanent staff, low proportion of agency staff.
- Low level of vacancies, staff turnover and staff sickness
- There is compliance with safe recruitment policies and procedures

Safeguarding process & practice issues; support, supervision, professional standards

In this area **good** could look like:

- The learning and development strategies of single agencies and partnerships do result in improved practice, which in turn translates into improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Professionals report, and can evidence, that the learning and development they receive has improved their practice and outcomes for the children and families they work with.
- Practice deficits identified in SCRs and practice audits have been addressed and outcomes has been demonstrated to have improved.
- The learning and development strategies of single agencies and partnerships do result in improved practice, which in turn translates into improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Professionals report, and can evidence, that the learning and development they receive has improved their practice and outcomes for the children and families they work with.

The “use of Resources”, Evidence-based practice - issues to consider

In this area **good** could look like:

- Managers, commissioners and frontline staff know the latest messages from research and can evidence how this has impacted on their management,

- commissioning and practice.
- Individual agencies, partnerships and professionals are using or commissioning service models which are relevant to the needs of children and families in the area and have been formally evaluated elsewhere through robust research methodologies as being effective in delivering desired outcomes.
- Single agencies, partnerships and professionals are 'outward looking' and have a good understanding of good/best practice in other areas.
- Professionals are using a clear theoretical framework as a basis for their work.
- Available resources and partners in our community that could be engaged in the safeguarding of children have been considered and are involved.
- Improved safeguarding outcomes that have no, or low cost have been considered and identified.

Organisational Culture issues to address

In this area **good** could look like:

- The outcomes achieved for children and families is the dominant priority for the organisation.
- Children and parents experience the service as one which delivers what it promises, that treats them with respect.
- Professionals report that the organisation they work for supports and values them; listens and responds to their concerns and ideas; helps them to deal effectively with stress; and develops their skills and knowledge.
- Senior managers take a personal and visible interest in what's happening on the frontline: they meet and talk with frontline staff, they observe what's happening, they accompany staff on visits, and they meet with service users to hear their experience.
- There are arrangements in place to help staff deal with the emotional stress of the work. Staff are able to share their anxieties and feelings (eg such as feeling fear when visiting certain families) without being labelled inadequate.
- There are high standards in terms of competence, and poor competence is addressed.

Connections with Poverty/poor housing

In this area **good** could look like:

- The number of children in poor housing or poverty is reducing.
- Parents living in poor housing report that services are helping to reduce the adverse impact of that housing.
- Children in poverty and poor housing are achieving well in the five ECM outcomes.
- There are proactive arrangements to prevent homeless children and those who move frequently going 'off the radar' of universal services.
- The impact of poverty and poor housing on the safety and wellbeing of children is understood by, and part of the assessment and care planning of, professionals.
- There are local initiatives to reduce the number of children in poverty or poor housing which are having a positive impact.