



Sandwell Children's **Safeguarding** Partnership

'Working Together to Keep Children Safe'

Version Control			
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V1.3	07/01 /2019	Janet Russell	Statutory requirement, preparation SSCB to MASA. Final following SSCB on 17/12/2018 and period of consultation
V1.4	17/01/2019	Janet Russell	Following consultation with the Health Forum
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Foreword - Safeguarding Partners

We are in the midst of national change regarding our shared responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Partner agencies in Sandwell have worked closely together, and in a timely way, to agree and develop a new arrangement that will enable us to co-ordinate our services, hold each other to account for them, learn and improve, and operate as a significant leadership body to safeguard Sandwell's children and young people. As someone new to the Borough I have been impressed by the honesty and energy shown by partners to thoroughly review past arrangements and make sure that the future partnership is robust and meaningful.

The Child and Social Work Act 2017 and the subsequently revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance means that local authority areas must transition from Local Safeguarding Children Boards to Safeguarding Partner and Child Death Review Partner arrangements by 29th September 2019. I am very pleased to be able to say that Sandwell will be able to achieve this requirement by 1st April 2019; this is the result of real commitment, and not just because we have a duty to change. It's important that this document recognizes the strength of our partnership – it is a great starting point for our new arrangements.

Whilst the new requirements are clear that responsibility to join-up local safeguarding arrangements rests with the Chief Officer of police, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the local authority, these agencies have recognized the vital role of schools and the voluntary and community sector and have ensured that they will be members of the new Partnership. In Sandwell, we also benefit from the provision of children's social care services being delivered by Sandwell Children's Trust, and they are a further important and vital partner. These six key stakeholders will comprise the new Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

There has also been much consideration of the way in which the new Partnership should work to reduce bureaucracy, be agile and creative, and to make every meeting count. This has resulted in a governance structure that we hope will enable us to be efficient as well as effective, and it is linked to other strategic partnerships so that the whole-system can work to improve outcomes for children and young in Sandwell. Our new governance arrangements will also enable us to listen and respond to the voices of children and young people and it will ensure that our workforce can develop the knowledge and expertise needed to provide the right support at the right time.

Alongside these new local arrangements, a regional approach to the Child Death Review process is being developed, and we will ensure a robust and coherent interface with that arrangement once it has been finalized. Whilst systems and structures are improved the key imperative has now changed, safeguarding is everybody's business, and the strong leadership that will be in place through our new Partnership arrangement will continue to promote and uphold this message across Sandwell.

Lesley Hagger
Director of Children's Services

1. Background

Wood Review

The Wood Review of local safeguarding children boards raised concerns about the role LSCBs played in protecting and safeguarding children. The review highlighted a number of concerns about the safeguarding system, in particular relating to the leadership role from some DCSs, there was a variance in systems and structures which became complicated and unwieldy (ie the serious case review and child death functions) with a significant lack of evidence of learning and improved outcomes for children and young people. LSCBs were deemed not sufficiently effective. Alan Wood recommended the abolition of LSCBs and their replacement by a stronger statutory partnership of the key statutory agencies - police, CCGs and local authorities – who would in turn determine local safeguarding arrangements.

Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Government accepted the recommendations from the Wood review and in response made key Legislative change to Children Act 2004 through and as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal Assent in April 2017. Section 30 of the Act removes the requirement for local areas to have LSCBs. Sections 16 – 23 introduce a duty on 3 key partners (local authorities, police and CCGs) to decide with other partners as locally determined to work together in a local area to protect and safeguard children. These arrangements must identify and respond to the needs of children in the area and identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area.

Thereafter the Department for Education published Working Together to Safeguarding Children in July 2018. This is statutory guidance which sets out the requirements for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Transition Timeline

The DfE's timeline for agreeing, publishing and implementing the new safeguarding partnership arrangements is set out in the additional guidance on the transition arrangements, Working Together transitional arrangements 2018.

Key points to note are:

- 12 months from commencement of provisions of Act for 3 Safeguarding Partners to agree arrangements. This must be done by 29th June 2019
- The arrangements must be published, and notification sent to the Secretary of State
- Within 3 months of publishing arrangements, the 3 safeguarding partners must implement the arrangements
- There will be a 12-month period for LSCBs after new arrangements are in place to complete and publish any outstanding Serious Case Reviews
- There will be a 4-month grace period for CDOPs (under the LSCB) to complete child death reviews
- The child death review partners (the local authority and the CCG) will have 12 months from the end of June 2018 to agree the arrangements for child death reviews and 3 months to implement them (by the end of September 2019)
- Once the arrangements have been published and implemented, the LSCB will no longer exist.

The transition guidance details the arrangements which should be followed during the transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partners and child death review partners (including timelines for managing existing child death reviews) and during the transition from the current system of Serious Case Reviews to new national and local review arrangements.

It is envisaged that the new arrangements will result in improved multi-agency systems which will enable the partnership to understand outcomes and the lived experience of the children in Sandwell.

2. Introduction

In June 2018, the SSCB Independent Chair sort approval from the Chief Executive of the SMBC to commence transition planning for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Sandwell Children’s Trust appointed an Independent Consultant to lead a project on the transition from SSCB to the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA). Partners from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Children’s Trust, West Midlands Police and Clinical Commission Group came together to form a steering group to oversee the Project (the MASA Stakeholders). The project plan implementation was supported by Officers of the SSCB Business Office and agency representatives across the SSCB. The key issues for the transition from LSCB to MASA are summarised below:

Key Issue	Summary of Discussion
Agreeing a shared vision	Agreement was reached for a Shared vision values that will underpin the masa moving forward
The model for the new arrangements	The SSCB were consulted with on the proposed structure for the new arrangements. The MASA Stakeholder Group agreed the final structure. The model is a much smaller strategic partnership. The structure retains a number of sub-groups to carry out its functions. The sub-groups have been subject to revision and development to enhance the scope of their responsibilities.
Timeframes for transition to new arrangements	There were a number of imperatives that influenced the timeliness of this transition. Sandwell have agreed to publish its arrangements end of January 2019 with a view to the new partnership arrangement being implemented by 1 st April 2019
Staffing	The SSCB business office team has recently been subject to review. Agreement was reached for additional administration and quality assurance officer. The role of CDOP Coordinator is currently hosted within the new MASA this will be subject to change in the new business year. The role of the Business manager, quality assurance officer and learning and development officer will all be retained under the new arrangements
Independent Scrutiny	Will be incorporated within the responsibilities and core function of the Independent Chair

This Constitution sets out the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership. The document promotes the interdependence of organisations and agencies including the VCS in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and their families. The MASA details how the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership will operate, what powers and functions it holds, its sub-structure, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.

3. Statement of Purpose

The statutory objectives and functions of SCSP are outlined in legislation Children and Social Work Act 2017 and statutory guidance Working Together 2018.

The Safeguarding Partners are required to agree on:

- The coordination of safeguarding services – how work together and with other relevant agencies (relevant agencies are those whose involvement may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’s needs -locally)
- act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others
- implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents

Purpose of MASA is to support and enable local organisations in a system that ensures

1. children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted
2. partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
3. organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
4. there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
5. learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
6. information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families
7. Local data from all agencies is developed strategically and is used to identify and respond to vulnerability and risk to further help and protect children.

4. Vision and Values

Shared Vision

One of the first areas the MASA Stakeholder Group agreed upon was the need for the new partnership arrangement to have a shared vision and clear value base in which all practitioners across Sandwell’s children’s workforce could identify with, understand and commit to. We thought we would take this back to children for their views and include them in the development.

Following consultation with children and young people across schools in Sandwell, the name of the safeguarding partnership was agreed as Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) with the strapline for the vision being ‘Working Together to keep Children Safe’.

Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership *‘Working Together to keep Children Safe’*

In addition to the name change and strapline the Partnership has also produced a vision statement and set of values which will become integral to how the Partnership plan, coordinate, provide strategic leadership, review and implement learning for services to children young people and families. Our vision is as follows:

“Our vision is for all children to be safe at home and in their communities, where they are loved, cared for and have the stability to grow healthily and to achieve their ambition”.

Stakeholders agreed that the future arrangements should define the way the Partnership will do things through a set of core values that are understood, embedded and drive the Partnership, organisations/

agencies and practitioners, at all levels, that provide services to children and families. The value statements are as follows: -

- a) *We will put children at the heart of what we do*
- b) *Together we will make Sandwell safer for children*
- c) *We will always listen, learn and improve*
- d) *We will have respect for each other and recognise and respond positively to difference*
- e) *We will be positive about the future, and have aspirations for Sandwell's children, be solution focused, committed and innovative.*
- f) *We are going to make a difference!*

The following is the values with further explanation of their aims, this will become an implicit approach to any culture and practice changes made across Sandwell's multi-agency safeguarding arrangement.

- a) ***We will put children at the heart of what we do***
We will listen and value what families tell us, and act to improve their experience of services and the way our staff work families. We know that by listening to children and families and by agencies working together we can identify and respond to those children and families that need help to prevent children being harmed and quickly act when we suspect a child is or may be suffering harm.
- b) ***Together we will make Sandwell safer for children***
Children have stated that we all need to work together to keep them safe!
SCSP believes that the welfare and protection of children is the everybody's responsibility. We will promote the work of the Partnership to all those working with children and the general public. Only by working together with partners and communities can children be safe at home, school and in their communities. We will work with families to provide the right support at the right time, so that children are cared for effectively, where they can grow in stable homes and be healthy, form strong relationships and attachments and feel as though they belong. Children will be protected from avoidable harm and reach their full potential.
- c) ***We will always listen, learn and improve***
The SCSP will support and engage agencies in developing and improving their safeguarding practices.
We will ensure that all staff are committed, confident and competent to work with families.
We will listen and value what our staff tell us and act to improve practice within the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We will endeavour to develop and promote a learning culture, which seeks to identify areas of vulnerability, and learn lessons in order to pre-empt potential problem. We will develop a safe environment to promote evidence-based learning.
We will provide robust scrutiny and challenge to try and keep children safe at all times and promote the best interest of children.
- e) ***We will have respect for each other and recognise and respond positively to difference***
We will strive for a culture of respectful, and reflective challenge and scrutiny, whereby we are able to hold each other to account to ensure the best is achieved for the Children and families of Sandwell
We will ensure that everybody has a voice and is treated with respect.
We will work with families to understand their circumstances, culture and values.

We will talk to families about our plans and will work together to make sure the best support is provided when it is most needed.

The Partnership will seek assurance that the 'Early Help' offer is meaningful and targeted.

f) *We will be positive about the future, and have aspirations for Sandwell's children, be solution focused, committed and innovative.*

We want the best for Sandwell's children and families. We will be ambitious for them and their future aspirations. We will understand the child's journey, provide help and support and opportunities to support plans for their future and celebrate in their success.

g) *We are going to make a difference!*

We will make a difference and will increase public confidence in the child protection system by ensuring a proper balance is achieved between intrusion into family life and the necessary protection of children from harm. SCSP will make a difference by being a responsive, learning Partnership that strives continually to improve. The Partnership will continue to develop on mechanisms which monitor its own and partner agencies performance and will use any emerging lessons to improve practices and outcomes for children. Importantly, we will seek the views of children and their families to inform how services can better meet their needs.

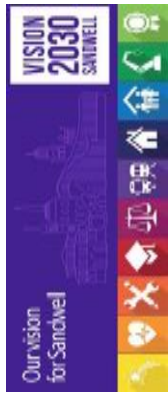
5. Geographical Area/Boundaries



Sandwell is located to the west of Birmingham and shares its borders with Birmingham, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall. Sandwell is a metropolitan borough with six towns; *Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich* and is one of seven local authorities that make up the West Midlands conurbation.

It is a Borough that faces significant challenges. Sandwell has high and widespread deprivation with increasing demands for council services. The Council has faced some difficult issues including significant change to the leadership team, continued austerity and protracted standards cases. The Council

acknowledges that Children's social care services have been inadequate for far too long, with insufficient improvement. Despite this context there is an optimism that 2018-19 provides an opportunity for the Council to make progress and move forward, improve its reputation and build on its strengths and successes.



The Council has established a strong vision for the future of the Borough. This is articulated through the recently developed 'Vision 2030'. There are good levels of awareness across the organisation and amongst external partners of the Vision which sets out ten strategic outcomes for the borough. There is now a need to ensure 'Vision 2030' drives and determines the Council's future role and purpose - as well as prioritisation, resource allocation and performance management - to improve outcomes for Sandwell's towns and communities. The Council now needs to progress the thinking, planning and practice at pace with partners in order to capitalise on the awareness, enthusiasm and high expectations it has generated through the stakeholder engagement undertaken to shape the Vision and ambitions.

The SCSP co-exist in the context of Sandwell wider strategic partnership arrangements, a number of which have focused areas of work relating to children young people and families, this includes health and Well-being Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, Sandwell Safer Partnership. The Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Partners will also link or provide representation on safeguarding children, with other partnerships that have a remit to help and protect children and their families i.e. Chanel Panel, Family Justice board and Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements.

Safeguarding in Context



Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 41% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Indian and Pakistani.

The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national figures with 31% in primary schools and 26% in secondary schools.

This compares with national averages of 19% and 14% respectively.

Sandwell has experienced an increase in economic migrants, with the majority arriving from Poland; this group increased from 208 individuals in 2001 to 5,673 in 2011. In 2011, people born in EU accession countries accounted for 2.6% of the usual resident population of Sandwell. There have also been additions to the established communities, including the number of individuals born in India increasing by 4,556 to 15,190 and in Pakistan increasing by 1,722 to 5,295.



Contextual Safeguarding, we know children may be a vulnerable to risk of abuse and exploitation both within and outside of their families. It has become apparent that Sandwell has a cohort of exploited young people who we are not equipped to respond to as fully as we would like. There are a number of young people who we know,

through our close partnership working with the police, are being exploited to run county lines, become involved in gangs, violence and are part of our missing cohort. We have identified those young people who are high risk and are currently open to SCT and we are working with partners to strengthen our offer to this cohort of vulnerable young people.



Neglect, has been identified as a a key priority to target improvement, it has been feature in both National and local Serious Case reviews, local learning reviews and multiagency audits undertaken. Neglect may be a factor or a direct cause of death or severe injury in children and young people, and it has been identified as a prevailing or risk factor when there is hidden harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. There is an association between

neglect and damage to the child's lived experience and their physical and emotional wellbeing. It is important that Sandwell practitioners raise their understanding identify and effectively respond to neglect and it is the SCSP intention to drive improvement by implementing the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 across the partnership.

6. Effective Support and Levels of Need - *arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area - how the threshold document setting out the local criteria for action aligns with the arrangements.*

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.

Thresholds

The new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements does not change how partner agencies respond to identified needs and risk of children, young people and their families. All those that work with children and their families or carers are required to work to the multi-agency thresholds document to ensure that children and families get the right support at the right time. The multi-agency thresholds document sets out four levels of need and provides clear guidance to individuals agencies and practitioners the level of need and whether additional support and/or intervention services are required.

1. **Universal Need** – wherever possible this will be met by universal service provision
2. **Universal Plus with additional needs** -
3. **Targeted additional needs** -
4. **Complex and significant needs**

It is acknowledged that children may move up and down from one level to another and that agencies (including universal services) can and will offer support at more than one level of the continuum of need. As soon as any professional is aware that a child has any additional needs he/she will talk to the child and their family and offer advice and support to meet that need.

Levels one and two of the continuum of need suggests that partner agencies should expect to intervene and provide support and advice to the family (including signpost to other providers for additional support) to prevent escalation of support or intervention by specialist services. Levels three and four indicate a point at which Sandwell's Targeted services and Children's Social Care will become involved in families and will carry out assessment to plan effective intervention.

In all circumstances children and young people, parents and carers will be informed of a practitioner's intention and plans to make a referral for assessment and intervention unless to do so would place a child at risk of harm.

7. Accountability/Reporting Arrangements

The SCSP is independent of any single agency and is not subordinate to nor subsumed within any local structures. The Safeguarding Partners are equally and jointly responsible for the implementation and demonstrable success of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

“The Safeguarding Partners are equally and jointly responsible, and must make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.”

WT 2018

The SCSP to reflect the joint and equal responsibility will report on the progress on its Business Plan and other related activities being undertaken across the partnerships multi agency safeguarding arrangement to the:

1. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Scrutiny Committee
2. Sandwell Children's Trust Board
3. Police Crime Commission
4. Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body

8. Independent Scrutiny of the Effectiveness of the MASA

Working Together 2018 specifies that the SCSP must be subject to an independent scrutiny arrangement, produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangement in Sandwell. The report will identify weakness, the causes of the weakness and the action taken to address them as well as other proposals for action, recognising achievements made and providing a realistic assessment of the challenges to be overcome.

The SCSP is committed to ensuring that the work is properly planned and reviewed and as such will subject the multiagency safeguarding arrangements to annual independent scrutiny.

Annual Report

Each year an SCSP Annual Report will be published. It will include

- a) evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- b) an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- c) a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- d) ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision
- e) Safeguarding partners will be expected to include a review of the use of restraint where applicable within their establishment in their annual report returns.

The annual report will be presented to the Safeguarding Partners own agency governance and accountability bodies namely the Local Authority Overview, Sandwell Children's Trust and Scrutiny Committee, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The SCSP Annual Report will be made publicly available on the each of the Safeguarding Partners organisation websites.

9. Chairing and Leadership

"The best local safeguarding arrangements are developed from a shared vision and shared values. It is about all agencies involved being ambitious to secure the very best responses to children at risk of harm in their community. Local safeguarding arrangements work well when there is a clear line of sight on both the operational and the strategic response locally. Agencies need to know the quality of their frontline practice. They must understand the direct experiences of children and their families in their local area.

Without good leadership, safeguarding arrangements will fail. This means that each of the 3 lead safeguarding partners must step up to the task in hand: the police, health and the local authority. It means working together to ensure a joined-up local response to reduce the risk of harm to children. This is about leaders who understand their local context. Children and their families do not live in silos, so it is critical that leaders create an environment in which multi-agency working can flourish.”

Yvette Stanley CC 2018

Strong Leadership is critical to the success of SCSP MASA, and to ensure good collaborative approach with the range of agencies and organisations that provided services to CYPF. The SCSP Chair and the Safeguarding Partners will lead and by example and practice ensure commitment to the work of the SCSP. This will be demonstrable in their own organisational performance in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children both operationally and strategically and how effectively the Partnership can identify and respond to emerging need and risk. The SCSP has full commitment from Chief Officers from the statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies and Relevant Partner agencies, and the Lead member of the SMBC. There is an ambition to improve the quality of services and make a difference to the lives of the children in Sandwell.

The SCSP Chair will have sufficient standing and expertise in the area of child safeguarding to command the respect and support of all partners. The Chair will act objectively and distinguish their role as SCSP Chair from any other employment or interests.

The Chair will ensure that the work of the partnership is aligned with the Vision 2030, Children Young Peoples Plan and Improvement Plan. The Chair will ensure the SCSP has a clear strategic plan and business delivery programme with measurable objectives of which the Partnership will monitor and track its priorities and core business objectives.

10. Individual Roles of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners

LOCAL AUTHORITY

The Local Authority is the body that provide children’s and other types of services, including children’s and adult social care services, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services.

Sandwell also host Public Health within its Local Authority arrangement. Public health is the lead for the Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA) and reports to HWBB on 0-19 agenda/action plan. Some elements of Public health work are incorporated in key action across commissioned health provider services

SANDWELL CHILDREN’S TRUST (SCT)

Sandwell Children’s Trust have responsibility for the delivery of statutory social work services for children deemed in need, who are at risk of harm or have been harmed.

The Sandwell Children’s Trust has been identified as the fourth Safeguarding Partner due to its relationship with the Local Authority. The Children’s Trust is an independent organisation set up to run children’s services. In Sandwell, the organisation has taken the form of a company owned by the Council. The Local Children’s Trust arrangements are underpinned by the ‘duty to cooperate’ (section 10 of the Children Act 2004).

Sandwell Children’s Trust have responsibility for the delivery of statutory social work services for children deemed in need, who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. The SCT carry out the statutory duties of the Local Authority for children and young people, by assessing their need for services against the agreed threshold to services arrangements.

The Children's Trust provide services for the following areas of work:

- child protection
- services for children in need and children in care,
- services to children who have left care,
- family support services
- fostering and adoption services
- Youth Offending Services

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE (WMP)

West Midlands Police are one of the statutory 'Safeguarding Partners'.

The local Police and Crime Commissioner has a legal responsibility under section 1(8) (h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to "hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The OPCC's Police and Crime Plan contains a range of strategic priorities which encompass the safeguarding of children.

Protecting vulnerable people is at the centre of WMP's vision to prevent crime, protect the public and help those in need. WMP has a dedicated unit in the Public Protection Unit which is responsible for protecting and safeguarding those who are most vulnerable.

The PPU comprises of dedicated teams of Domestic Abuse (DA), Sexual Abuse (SA) and Child Abuse (CA) Investigators across each of the seven Local Authority areas, a dedicated Adults at Risk Team (AAR), a specialist Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) and a Central Referral Unit (CRU).

The safety of children and young people in the Sandwell area is a key priority and WMP continue their commitment to raise standard across the force area of its officers to protect and safeguard children into the new multiagency safeguarding arrangements. Police officers and staff from Neighbourhood Policing Teams across WMP have received training to raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Early Trauma. The objective of the training was to educate staff in how individual vulnerabilities can draw people into criminality and how early recognition and intervention by the police can prevent the likelihood of this occurring.

Locally the Safer Sandwell Partnership is working closely with safeguarding partners to identify and respond to emerging trends within the six Towns which make up the Borough of Sandwell. Community Operations Group meetings are held monthly, there is ongoing work to development and robustly manage the information available from partners to enable greater focus on the needs and lived experiences of all children young people and families in the borough.

CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP (CCG)

CCGs was legally established in April 2013 as part of the Government's reforms of the NHS. Clinical Commissioning Groups are clinically led membership organisations made up of general practices. The duties of clinical commissioning groups to commission certain health services. Currently Sandwell CCG are responsible for hospital treatment, rehabilitation services, urgent and emergency care, community health services, mental health and learning disability services. The CCG does not provide these services, it pays organisations to deliver them for patients on its behalf.

The CCG is also responsible for ensuring compliance with safeguarding standards within the CCG and all its commissioned service and is responsible for ensuring there is adequate provision of a Designated Safeguarding Nurse and Doctor.

Children young people and families in Sandwell also receive a range of services health provider agencies. Their responsibilities are varied between commissioned services by the CCG and Public Health.

Public Health host the ‘Best Start in Life’, through services provided by health visitors and school nursing. They work closely with the CCG commissioned services through Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust of Sandwell’s midwives and acute services, the Councils Children’s centres and early help providers. The approach is that of both targeted and prevention strategy relating to children young people and families where there is an assessed need. In order to improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families, the Public Health strategy includes a partnership approach to:

- ✓ healthy pregnancy,
- ✓ school readiness,
- ✓ healthy adults and good emotional and mental well-being,
- ✓ providing the right support at the right time

11. Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership

The SCSP is to be the decision-making body overseeing the multi-agency plan to protect children and safeguard their welfare. The Sandwell Children’ Safeguarding Partnership is led by the 3 named statutory partners, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, West Midlands Police and Sandwell’s Clinical Commissioning Group. Sandwell has a fourth Safeguarding partner in, the Sandwell Children’s Trust.

The Four Safeguarding Partners and Lead Representatives are as follows:

Name	Designation	Agency
Lesley Hagger	Director of Children Services	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Frances Craven	Chief Executive	Sandwell Children’s Trust
Michelle Carolan	Chief Officer – Quality	Sandwell Clinical Commissioning Group
Richard Youd	Chief Superintendent	West Midlands Police

As set out in Working Together 2018, the lead representatives are able to delegate their functions although they retain accountability for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. In Sandwell, the respective agencies have identified the following Senior Officers who have been given delegated authority to ensure consistent and full participation with the new MASA in the event of lead representative absence.

The Senior Officers have delegated authority to speak on behalf of the Safeguarding Partner they represent, make decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters, and hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate in and implement the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Senior Officers with delegated authority are:

Senior Officer	Designation	Agency
Jan Britton	Chief Executive	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Steven Gauntley	AD Level TBC	Sandwell Children’s Trust
Eileen Welch Gene Kelly	Designated Nurse	Sandwell Clinical Commissioning Group
Derek Lambert	Detective Chief Inspector	West Midlands Police

The SCSP will review progress and assess strengths and areas for development in the local safeguarding system. This analysis will inform the priority outcomes as set out in the Vision 2030, Children and Young People Plan and the Sandwell Improvement Plan. The Partnership will contribute to an annual report on progress on delivering on the related plans which will be published on the SCSP website. The SCSP

meetings will be informed by the reflections and improvements identified by the 4 sub-groups within its infrastructure that are tasked to deliver on the scope of the SCSP function, namely the:

1. Quality of Practice Performance & Assurance Group
2. Learning Development & Training Group
3. Serious Incidents Review Group
4. Child Death Overview Panel

Partnership meetings

The Partnership will be chaired by an Independent Chair with business support from the SCSP Business Manager.

The Partnership will meet bi-monthly.

Actions will be agreed at each meeting for Partnership members and the sub-groups, reference groups and strategic priority operations groups to follow-up on between meetings.

After each Partnership meeting, Partnership Members will be expected to pass on any updates to their own organisations.

Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies

The children Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 sets out the list of relevant agencies that are required to work under the scope of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Although Safeguarding partner organisations are not referred to in the regulations it is understood that practitioners from the statutory agencies are subject to Sandwell's multi-agency safeguarding arrangement. Not all agencies are listed in the regulation or within Sandwell's MASA as many services are commissioned and or overseen by a Statutory Partner.

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the Safeguarding Partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. For local arrangements to be effective, the Safeguarding partners have engaged organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to protect provide targeted support to help children and families as appropriate. The Safeguarding Partners have agreed its core membership of organisations and agencies it wants to work with and invite onto its Strategic Partnership as 'Relevant Partners' to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There is an expectation that the arrangement will change over time, if the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangement is to work effectively in identifying and responding to needs and risks for children and families.

Membership

The SCSP has a core membership, this includes the Director for Education, Designated Nurse for the Sandwell CCG and the Senior Officer from the Voluntary Community Sector. The role of these Senior Officers is key and gives consideration to the SCSP function to 'support and engage', particularly the agencies/organisations that form large organisational networks and are providing safeguarding services to children, young people and their families across Sandwell.

The SCSP will also retain the co-opt role of a lay member on the Partnership as a participant observer.

The Lead Member for SMBC will be a participant observer with no decision-making rights on the SCSP.

Agency	Membership Status	Designation
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Safeguarding Partner	Director of Children's Services
Sandwell Children's Trust	Safeguarding Partner	Chief Executive
West Midlands Police	Safeguarding Partner	Chief Superintendent
Sandwell Clinical Commissioning Group	Safeguarding Partner	Chief Officer – Quality
Sandwell Clinical Commissioning Group	Relevant Partner	Designated Nurse –Safeguarding
Sandwell Clinical Commissioning Group	Relevant Partner	Designated Doctor
Education Advisory Group Chair	Relevant Partner	Director of Education
Voluntary Community Sector Chair	Relevant Partner	Chief Executive
Sandwell Safeguarding Health Partnership Chair	Relevant Partner	Designated Nurse
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Participant Observer	Lead Member
Lay Member	Participant Observer	Lay Member
Neglect Steering Group	Priority Group Co-opt member	Chair /Sponsor/Relevant agency
Strategic Exploitation Board	Priority Group Co-opt member	Chair/Sponsor/Relevant agency

The SCSP will be flexible and will co-opt other Relevant Agencies to attend the Partnership Meetings where there is a requirement to give attention to an agenda item or address emerging need and risk.

Relevant Partners are responsible for sending a deputy with delegated authority to SCSP meetings in their absence. Relevant Partners are also responsible for updating the SCSP on any significant changes to personnel and/or operational delivery within their organisation (particularly where this is a direct implication for the multi-agency safeguarding system).

The SCSP has two priorities of which it is driving improvement. The priority groups are responsible for the strategic coordination of the identified strategies for the respective priority areas. The priority groups will report directly to the Chairs Consultation Forum. The chairs of the priority groups, sponsor and or the relevant partner agency(ies) involved in the improvement plan will be deemed as co-opt members and invited to attend SCSP meeting to provide reports on the group or individual agency progress. The SCSP will focus on scrutiny and accountability of the work.

12. SCSP Membership Role and Responsibilities

Members of the SCSP are named individuals from relevant organisations, this will enable the partnership to secure the right levels of consistency and accountability in terms of leadership. The members will hold a strategic position within their own organisations and therefore able to:

- a) Consulting with and speaking for their organisation with authority.
- b) Disseminating information and committing their organisation on policy and practice matters.
- c) Hold their organisation to account on the effectiveness of their safeguarding children arrangements
- d) Ensure effective contribution of agency data and quality assurance activity and enable the SCSP assessment of performance to be as objective as possible.
- e) Challenging their own and other agencies and hold them to account on the effectiveness of their safeguarding children arrangements
- f) Recommending or deciding upon the necessary steps to put right any problems.
- g) Strive to pursue excellence in safeguarding children in Sandwell by promoting high standards of safeguarding work and foster a culture of continuous improvement

13. SCSP Relationship with other Partnerships

There are several executive fora and strategic boards that relate directly or indirectly to the work of the SCSP, multi-agency working and are significant in keeping children safe and or link to the strategic priority within the SCSP business plan. Please see the table below. The SCSP

The SCSP's role with other partnerships is to:

- Contribute a safeguarding perspective to the work of that partnership.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the arrangements made by that partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Identify any crossover issues which can be jointly addressed.

4 Statutory Boards

A protocol is in place between the SCSP, ***Sandwell Safeguarding Adult Board Health and Well-being Board and Sandwell Safer Partnership***. The protocol sets out clear expectations on the **4 Statutory Boards** and how they will work together. This will include agreement of the joint priority to improve synergy and drive improvement on service delivery to CYPF. The accountability and reporting arrangements including arrangements for scrutiny and challenge.

Each of the partnerships/boards are independent of each other but they will ensure that they take a whole family approach when setting priorities and reporting on performance. The respective partnerships business planning recognises this, and shares aims, and objectives linked to safeguarding.

Other Executive Fora/ Strategic Boards

Local Family Justice Board

Local Family Justice Boards (LFJB) were established to support the work of the Family Justice Board by bringing together the key local agencies, including decision makers and front-line staff, to achieve significant improvement in the performance of the family justice system in their local areas.

Office Police and crime Commission

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 links the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner to protecting and promoting the welfare of Children and young people. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a legal responsibility to hold their chief officer to account for their duties in terms of protecting children. Specifically, section 1(8) (h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states that: 'The police and crime commissioner must, in particular, hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.'

OPCC's have a legal **responsibility** to hold their chief officers to account for their **duties** in terms of protecting **children** and vulnerable adults. ... The **PCC** works closely with other partner organisations through Local **Safeguarding Children's** Boards to oversee actions in place to improve the well-being of **children**.

Young Offender Management Board

Young Offender Management Board (YOMB) is a multi-agency partnership board comprising of Sandwell Metropolitan Council, Health, Probation and Police and is chaired by Martin Hurcombe, West Midlands Police. The Chief Executive of the SCT is a member of the partnerships and the YOMB functions will be represented by the Chief Executive.

The YOMB is responsible for ensuring that the local partnership fulfils its statutory duties including its safeguarding responsibilities and any lessons arising from serious incidents involving children and young people in the criminal justice system.

Role of Youth Offending, Custody Services and Residential Homes - *how any youth custody and residential homes for children will be included in the safeguarding arrangements*

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council does not operate any residential homes for looked after children, there are a number of Sandwell's children that are in private sector residential care. The SCSP will seek assurance from relevant partners about the arrangements for safeguarding children known to the youth offending service, involved in a custody incident or placed in a residential home within or outside the borough.

Corporate Parenting Board

This forum has a responsibility to monitor and review the quality and effectiveness of services for looked after children and care leavers delivered by Corporate Parents; the council, partner agencies and commissioned services.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked-after children and young people, and care leavers.

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in turn.

Children in care are more likely to go missing than children not in care, child victims of modern day slavery are particularly vulnerable and children in care are disproportionately likely to be at increased risk of sexual exploitation than those not in care.

Council representatives on local multi-agency safeguarding partnerships should make sure there is oversight of arrangements for children in care and monitor how well safeguarding arrangements are being implemented and reviewed.

14. Role of Priority and Reference Groups

Priority Groups

The SCSP has a number of commissioned Priority Groups which will enable the delivery of the SCSP chosen priorities identified with the 2018-2020 Business Plan. They include the following groups:

1. **Safeguarding Children from Exploitation** – Coordinating the work to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, Modern day Slavery and Missing from home and Education
2. **Safeguarding Children from Neglect** – Implementation of the NSPCC Graded Care Profile assessment tool, to improve the identification and response to neglect.

Reference Groups

Reference groups are defined in the MASA governance and are required to support the SCSP on delivery of its priorities to a network of agencies or organisations deemed as 'Relevant Partners' and contributors to the multi-agency safeguarding children. The Reference Groups will promote the work of the SCSP across its network. They will act to support and engage providers within the network to have clarity with regard to the multi-agency safeguarding system. In addition, the reference groups will proactively support the SCSP communication pathway and have a mechanism to share and seek information to enable an efficient and consistent response to emerging safeguarding matters and inform the SCSP priorities. Reference Groups will also raise awareness on the outcome of child safeguarding practice reviews and support learning opportunities across the network. These groups include:

1. Education Advisory Group

Role of Early Years, Schools and Other Learning Establishments - how all early years settings, schools (including independent schools, academies and free schools) and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements.

Early years and education providers play an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The EAG will seek assurance from schools and early years safeguarding practice through the engagement of schools and early years provision in the work of the partnership. School safeguarding issues are discussed across a number of meetings or forums within Sandwell, the EAG will coordinate where the SCSP matters are best suited to target specific issues arising from the safeguarding agenda. Education and early years providers will feed in their views via the early years, primary and secondary leads on the established Education Advisory Group. The Education Advisory Group will be the main link to the Partnership. The EAG will be responsible for reviewing the impact of any developments from the Partnership meetings to the school's and early years network. It will also continue to seek assurance on school safeguarding practice, review developments regarding compliance and quality in terms of safeguarding work identified within the context of the school's completion of the mandatory S175 audit. The Director for Education is a relevant partner and member of the new strategic partnership.

The EAG meets quarterly TOR to be revised suggestions for agenda with the network or organisations.

2. Sandwell Safeguarding Health Partnership SSHP

The Sandwell Safeguarding Health Partnership is an established group carried forward into the new MASA from the SSCB. It will be called upon to represent the views and provide briefings to the SCSP on behalf of the health commission and provider community. The SSHP will be the main link to the SCSP for providers to report on local issues relating to health and healthcare and safeguarding issues relating to CYPF.

The SSHP is a reference group of the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership and has shared responsibility from all partners within the health economy in Sandwell.

The subgroup has primary accountability to the SCSP for issues emerging from safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Sandwell, this includes the interdependency that relates to services to parents and carers. The group will support on effective delivery of the SCSP priorities through promoting the following:

- a) Effective communication across the health economy, to ensure that the work of the SCSP is well publicised, any learning is disseminated, and the voice of children, young people, practitioners and the wider community are able to influence the Partnership's work.

- b) To ensure effective arrangements are in place for responding to key safeguarding risks (for example early help, CSE, Modern Slavery and domestic abuse) and there is consistency in safeguarding practice across the health economy.
- c) The health economy will have a clear understanding of the safeguarding systems and can evidence how this is used to drive and influence the Boards priorities.
- d) Ensure appropriate mechanisms for measuring impact of learning and training in health organisations and development of a good communication system across subgroups and the board.
- e) Have the “Health Voice” for all providers and commissioners with the ability to escalate and challenge for good safeguarding outcomes.
- f) Have an overview of all health recommendations that come from Statutory and Regulatory Bodies by developing overarching action plans and reporting progress to the SSCB and appropriate Agencies.

A further function is to allow members of the Forum to report back to their respective organisations on a regular basis.

3. Voluntary Community Sector (VCS)

The VCS has an important role working with children, young people and families. In Sandwell they co-exist and are interdependent with a range of agencies and organisations that provide services to children and families (including statutory providers). The VCS role is well understood and welcomed at various stages of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children young people and families and is integral to the Early Help strategy. The SCSP senior representatives has relevant Senior representation from the VCS as relevant partners and they will be called upon to coordinate two-way communication from the SCSP and the network of its voluntary and community organisations that provide support and services to CYPF. The VCS representation will help the SCSP to ensure its aims are shared, fully understood and inform VCS agency development and practice.

The VCS Forum will provide a platform for the translation of the strategic conversations and plans with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the operational practice from VCS providers. Its role is particularly relevant in promoting VCS individual agency involvement with the Early Help Partnership which provides a tiered level of endorsement and quality standards to services providing support to children and their families.

15. **Sub Groups**

In order to assist the Partnership with discharging its wider responsibilities, the following sub-groups have been reviewed and strengthened, and will be carried over from the former SSCB;

Chairs Consultation Forum

The Purpose of the Chairs Consultation Forum will be to coordinate the work of the SCSP. This forum will be chaired by the SCSP Independent Chair and will be the opportunity for the senior representatives from the statutory agencies and sub-group chairs to meet prior to each full partnership meeting to plan the agenda and discuss business. The forum will have the flexibility to co-opt other relevant professionals and engage other Strategic Partnership where it is required to coordinate a response to an emerging issue or address a specific agenda item as and when this is appropriate.

The Chairs Consultation Forum is responsible for tracking the success and impact measures for the core business and each priority on the SCSP business plan. The group will also

1. Identify any key safeguarding matters for the partnerships progress
2. determine the agenda and content for the strategic Partnership meetings. There will be the following standing items on the SCSP agenda:

- a. The Quality of Practice Performance and Assurance Activity
- b. Serious Incidents resulting in Local or National Learning Reviews
- c. The impact of Multi agency Learning, Development and Training on practice and outcomes for CYPF
- d. Learning from Child Death Reviews (whether retain within the structure or not)
- e. review the outcomes of the partnerships work and progress made on Strategic Priorities
- f. emerging themes from the reference groups

Quality of Practice Performance and Assurance Group (QPPAG) - *how the safeguarding partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help*

The Quality of Practice Performance and Assurance Group is the spine to the strength and success of the new Sandwell Children’s Strategic Partnership.

The sub-group has responsibility for ensuring that all agencies are safeguarding children effectively by working in partnership. It does this by monitoring performance including carrying out multi-agency audits, interrogating and analysing data from partner agencies. The focus will be on the quality, effectiveness of services and most importantly seek assurance/reassurance that the multi-agency system and service is keeping children safe.

The sub-group will also receive and share information with the Priority Groups and Reference Groups. Reporting progress against the Business Plan will be at the end of July, October, January and April of each year. The Quality of Practice and Assurance Group meetings have been scheduled to make the most of the quarterly data reporting and then report to the Executive Group/ SCSP Meetings in a timely way.

The QPPAG will receive a range of information from across the partnership, from different agencies and organisations and the Partnerships own sub-groups or reference groups on multiagency safeguarding practice. This will be presented in the form of:

- a. Relevant and consistent performance data and quality assurance activity,
- b. views of practitioners and the
- c. voices of children and their families
- d. Evidence from self-assessments including (section 11 and 175 returns), peer challenge
- e. Monitoring reports, single and joint targeted inspection outcomes
- f. Evidence from serious case reviews
- g. Evidence from learning and development
- h. Evidence from LADO
- i. Complaints, compliments

The Group will analyse the information and identify emerging trends relating challenges and the signs of success and make suggestions and recommendations to improve on the multi-agency safeguarding arrangement through development and or commissioning of services.

The QPPAG will be chaired by one of the 3 options

1. Independent Chair – the IC will have additional responsibilities relating to providing independent scrutiny of the MASA. Contribute their findings and produce the annual report for the SCSP.
2. Safeguarding Partner Person with delegated Authority provide leadership
3. Build on the responsibility of the SCSP Business Manager to chair the meeting and coordinate the groups delivery function in line with the revised Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

The QPPAG will meet monthly.

Learning Development and Training Group - *how inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact and how they will undertake any multiagency and interagency audits.*

Learning Improvement Framework – Sustaining the Quality of Safeguarding Practice

The sub-group has responsibility for ensuring that relevant single-agency and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare of children is provided to all staff that work with children and young people. In addition, the Group will recruit and maintain the SCSP Trainer Pool. The learning and development group will gather the information relating

The Learning, Development and Training Group will, coordinate, deliver and commission training and, evaluate the impact of training on multi-agency safeguarding practice.

A training needs analysis will be completed, to ensuring that train remains relevant, and informed by learning from:

- a. Local and National child safeguarding practice reviews.
- b. Statutory and other guidance's
- c. Practitioner views

The group meets bi-monthly

Serious Incidents and Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews - *arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews - the process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews, setting out the arrangements for embedding learning across organisations and agencies*

All practitioners and organisations with the responsibility of safeguarding children need to reflect on the quality of services that are delivered to children and their families and learn from their own practice and that of others. Good practice should be shared so that there is a growing understanding of what works well. But when things do not go as expected, then there needs to be a robust approach to provide objective analysis of what has happened and why so that learning can be gleaned from important lessons, and services can improve or be developed to reduce the risk of future harm to children.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group has a collective responsibility with the Learning, training and Development Group to drive improvements to multi agency children's safeguarding practice. The SIRG will inform the development of training and learning from the outcome of case reviews undertaken locally and or nationally.

In discharging the function for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews the CSPR group will continue to oversee all open serious incidents that are subject to review and monitor the progress of the associated action plans. The CSPR group will be responsible for disseminating the learning from all reviews across the Partnerships sub-groups and their associated networks.

The impact of the learning and how this improves the outcome for children will be considered by each group across Partnerships sub-structure as an integral part of that groups delivery plan.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group has a fixed core membership drawn from organisations across the safeguarding partnership with the flexibility to co-opt other relevant professionals to discuss certain cases as and when appropriate. The group meets quarterly and is expected to report on its activity to each SCSP meeting. Annually, the CSPR group will contribute a report on

- a. the learning from reviews and how this has improved multi-agency services/safeguarding practice and,
- b. how risk of children experiencing serious harm has reduced

The report will be considered in the framework for independent scrutiny and be included in the SCSPs annual report.

The SSCB is formally handing over 5 serious case reviews and 2 local management reviews to the new Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Ofsted has published guidance on how local authorities should report a serious incident of child abuse or neglect, or the death of a child who is looked after. From 29 June 2018, local authorities in England must notify the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel within 5 working days of becoming aware of a serious incident.

The CSPR group has a practice guide for managing individual cases in accordance with statutory guidance Working Together 2018. A Rapid Review Panel is convened comprising of statutory agency representation to consider each case that is referred in to the office to consider whether it meets the criteria to be referred to the National Review Panel or whether an alternative form of multi or single agency case review should be undertaken.

The group process endeavours to have all reviews commissioned completed within 6 months. Early learning from the rapid review and during the local case review process is disseminated as soon as practicable and will not wait until the completion of the case review report. In doing so the Group can optimise impact and the reviewer is able to also consider any organisational changes/developments within the review outcome.

All relevant data is shared when requested and in accordance with the scope of the review. Partner agencies are aware of the information sharing protocol and confidentiality agreement which governs this process.

In addition to serious incidents the group also will hear cases where there has been identified good examples on the multi-agency safeguarding practice so that the practice learning from what has worked well can be understood and shared.

All cases which meet the criteria for Local Safeguarding Practice review will be published.

Child Death Overview Panel /Early Adopter – *Black Country Child Death Arrangements*

The purpose of Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is to undertake comprehensive and multidisciplinary reviews of child deaths in the Sandwell in order to better understand how and why local children die. Findings are used to take action to prevent other deaths and improve the health and safety of our children.

Earlier in the year Dudley SSCB submitted a joint bid to the Department of Education with Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell for 'early adopter' funding to progress a Black Country approach to reviewing the deaths of children across those local authority's areas in line with the changes identified in legislation Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together Transitional Arrangements Guidance. The bid was successful, and a Steering Group Project Lead and Officers have been commissioned to take forward the projects plan as defined within the bid. The priority is to have a strategic overview of child deaths within the four local authority areas and identify key priorities to take forward for further learning or targeted campaign work. The DoF published further guidance on Child

Death arrangements in October 2018, this will be taken into consideration by the Black Country Early Adopters steering group.

In October 2018 Sandwell and Dudley CDOPs combined its local response to child deaths across the two local authority areas. They have revised the governance arrangements and terms of reference to reflect the change. The joint CDOP will continue to collect and analyse information about the deaths of all children in the combined area and respond to any matters required to reduce avoidable deaths in the area.

The Sandwell and Dudley CDOP will continue to sit within the SCSP governance until such time that a decision is made to transfer its responsibility to a more suitable strategic partnership.

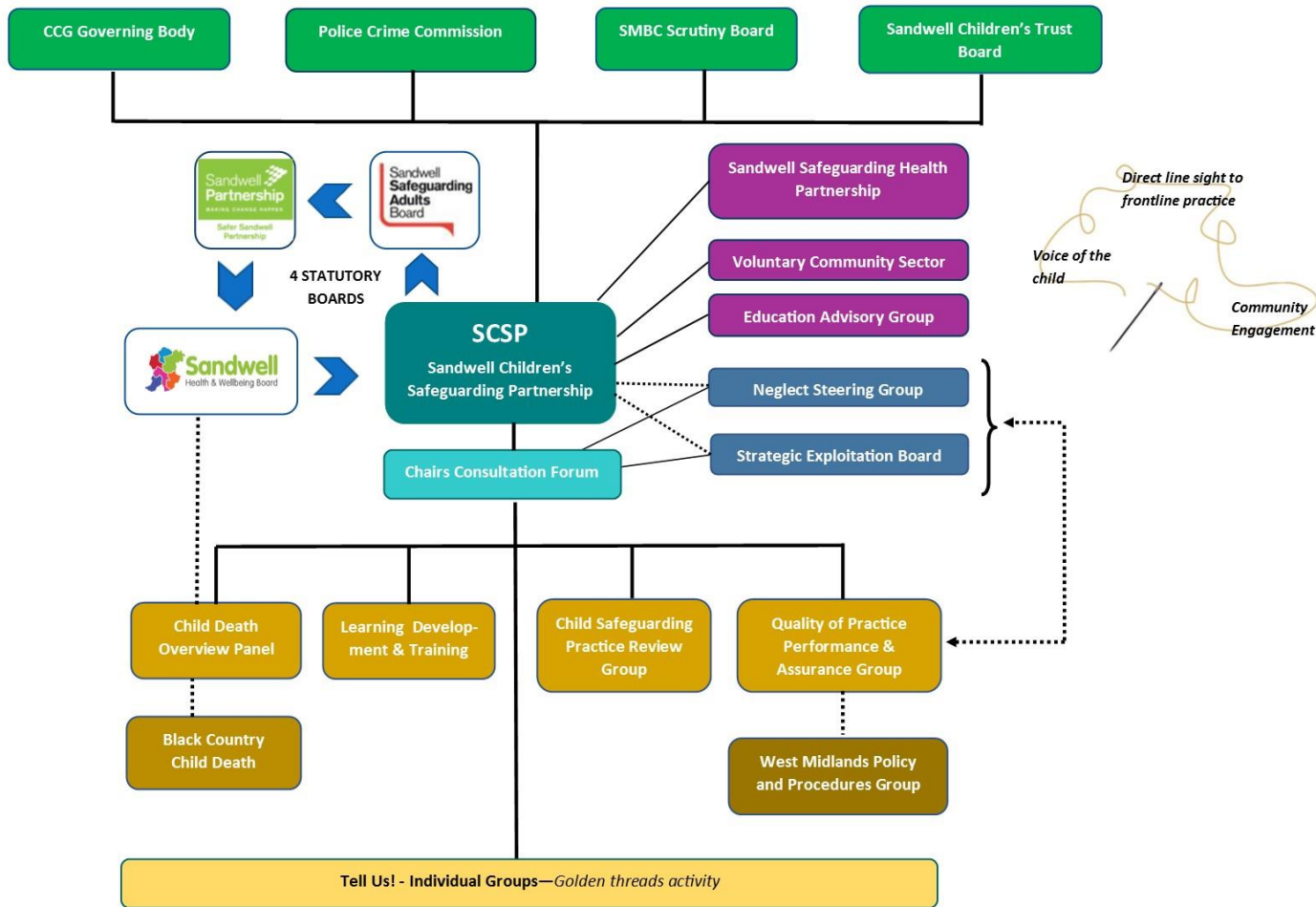
Tell Us!

Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership has defined its participation and engagement with children and families, frontline practitioners and the wider community as a requisite to all work developed and implemented within its governance arrangements.

All sub-groups within the SCSPs governance arrangements will be expected to give consideration to consultation and engagement to obtain the views of CYPF and frontline practitioners and where relevant the wider community on matters of safeguarding children.

The ‘Tell Us!’ work will be coordinated as part of the reporting arrangement into the partnership and will feature significantly in the quality work commissioned or coordinated through the Quality of Practice, Performance and Assurance Group.

16. Governance - The Overarching Governance Arrangements for the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership



SCSP Governance Structure v2.0 (JR)

17. SCSP Strategic/Business Plan and Sub-Group Delivery Plans

The SCSP has ratified an annual Business Plan prepared by the MASA Executives for 2019/2020. Thereafter the Chairs Consultation Forum will take forward the development, review and implementation of the Partnerships overall strategic objectives and direction.

- a) The SCSP will discharge its key statutory functions to designated sub-groups
- b) All sub-groups will operate in accordance with the SCSP accountability governance and framework.
- c) All sub-groups will present and monitor its information in a deliver plan
- d) The SCSP will ratify the delivery plans for the sub-groups detailed in the partnership structure's terms of reference.
- e) All Priority groups will be identified as a result of local needs analysis and /or national developments.
- f) Reference groups will only be set up if deemed they are required by the SCSP.
- g) Where sub-groups are identifying the need for a reference group they should clearly demonstrate to the SCSP how the group supports the SCSP to fulfil its statutory functions and/or are relevant to achieving outcomes in relation to the agreed SCSP priorities.

18. The Golden Threads

The ***voices of children, direct line sight to frontline practice and community engagement*** activity are firmly considered within the context of the SCSP vision and values statements and are a golden thread in SCSP governance and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The SCSP want to ensure it has a strategic understanding of its communities, and what it is like for children and families living in Sandwell and working with agencies. It is also important for the Partnership to know from frontline practitioners about their experiences of working within the multi-agency system.

The intention of the SCSP is to strengthen its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by ensuring that all activity undertaken across the structure focuses on these issues as an intrinsic part of its work. It also will ensure there is raised profile, understanding and responsibility of safeguarding within communities.

There are number of great initiatives within Sandwell to hear the voices of children and their families, partners are committed to engaging with CYPF and bring together the various sources of information to influence the quality of practice and performance within all agencies/organisations working with children and families.

19. Sub-group Standards

Each Sub-group is comprised of a multi-agency membership and is chaired by persons with sufficient knowledge and skills relating to safeguarding children within their agency/organisation.

Each member will be inducted into the work of the Partnership

Each sub-group has a working mandate which is set out within their Terms of Reference and a related delivery plan.

SCSP members should ensure there is representation from their agency at all sub-group meetings.

Other task and finish / reference groups may be established from time to time to undertake specific pieces of work on behalf of the Partnership, commissioned directly by the partnership or by the sub-group to drive a specific theme arising from the groups work.

Sub-groups will need to oversee the progression of work that they delegate to task and finish groups and ensure that they operate in line with the SCSP governance arrangements.

20. Role of the Chair within the Sub-groups

Each sub-group chair will be required to attend an induction briefing with the Business Officer supporting the sub-group. This will provide the new Chair with relevant information to undertake the role:

1. SCSP induction booklet
2. Templates
3. Clarify standards and expectation for progressing the work of the Partnership
4. Reporting schedules, governance and accountability.

The Chair of the sub group can be nominated by a Safeguarding Partner or Relevant Agency or elected from within the sub-group and will drive the progression of the delivery plan in line with the SCSP business plan.

The Chair of each sub-group is expected to attend the Chairs Consultation Forum to report on the progress and delivery of the sub-groups work and support the Chair and Safeguarding Partners to develop and agree the agenda for the Full SCSP meetings.

The sub-group chair is expected to challenge and hold agency members to account where the delivery plan is not being progressed effectively.

The position of Chair and Vice-Chair for sub-groups will be reviewed annually by the Independent Chair, with new nominations sought where this is required.

21. Quoracy/Decision Making

The SCSP is required to be quorate for the purpose of decision making. For a Full Partnership meeting to be quorate there will be 50% of members present, with at least 3 different partner agencies. The four Statutory Safeguarding Partner representatives must be part of quoracy and any key actions and decision making.

The same principle is applied to each of the sub-groups or reference groups progressing work on behalf of the Partnership. Decision making for groups carrying out SCSP function will only be quorate if there is representation from the four lead agencies.

All sub-groups are expected to ensure key decisions made in the group that impact on the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and / or service delivery are presented through the line of governance as recommendations for ratification by the SCSP.

22. The Timetable for Activity 2019/2020

SCSP FROM 29/04/2019 (Scheduled to take place 9.30am to 12.30pm)		Chairs Consultative Forum (CCF)	
Tuesday 26 February 2019 Venue: West Bromwich Community Centre		Tuesday 26 March 2019 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 15 February	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 15 March
Monday 29 April 2019 Venue: Hazel Room, Metsec Building		Tuesday 21 May 2019 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 19 April	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 10 May
Tuesday 18 June 2019 Venue: TBC		Tuesday 9 July 2019 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 7 June	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 28 June
Tuesday 20 August 2019 Venue: TBC		Tuesday 3 September 2019 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 9 August	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 23 August
Tuesday 15 October 2019 Venue: TBC		Tuesday 19 November 2019 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 4 October	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 8 November
Tuesday 17 December 2019 Venue: TBC		Tuesday 21 January 2020 Venue: TBC	
Date for Reports Submission	Friday 6 December	Date for Reports Submission	Friday 10 January

23. SCSP Business Office

The SCSP has a core team of business officers established from the former SSCB, they will continue to be hosted by SCT, who will take contractual responsibility for the support of all such staff. This will include recruitment and selection with Partnership member participation; on-going supervision and support; performance management and all other matters associated with the management and coordination of the Partnership services provided.

The SCSP Officers will act as aide memoire to the partnership and continue to provide high level policy, procedural, operational and administration support to the SCSP and its core sub-groups. The SCSP officers will be responsible for ensuring the induction process for Chairs and members to the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. They will particularly ensure there is good governance and consistency across the sub-structure in the terms of reference and the development monitoring and reporting on business delivery plans to the SCSP. They will further assure that the approach of all the sub-groups has integral to its arrangement the voice of the child and family and have a direct line sight to the views of the frontline practitioner.

24. Funding and Financial Accountability - how the arrangements will be funded

Funding

The SCSP Safeguarding Partners are the key funding partners from the former SSCB. There has been a continued commitment to the agreed budget and funding formula. The SCSP budget will be set annually (but may be revised throughout the year at the discretion of the partnership) according to the needs of the SCSP to fulfil its functions.

It is however envisaged that the SCSP will need to place a priority on the investment into the performance and assurance framework and anticipated that there will need to be a review of each safeguarding partners individual contribution as adjustment are made to the budget to account for additional expenses that may be occurred through the appointment of an Independent Chair and Independent Scrutineer where applicable. In addition, there is a need to consider the implications of the proposed change to the CDOP coordinator role.

Financial Accountability

The role of the Accountable Body is to ensure that financial probity is established and maintained. Sandwell Children's Trust will be accountable for all funding received from statutory partners as part of the core budget of the SCSP. This includes receipt of the funding, and for setting up and monitoring the financial monitoring systems.

The Accountable Body is not by itself responsible for managing the financial operations of the Partnership or for taking decisions regarding allocation of funding. This means that if there is concern about whether funding is being used properly and for the purpose for which it was given, the Accountable Body will have the final decision on a course of action. However, questions about value for money and allocation of resources will be made by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners within the Partnership meetings.

The Sandwell Children's Trust as the Accountable Body will put in place effective arrangements for safeguarding public money, including establishing a clear line of responsibility and accountability and for the production of a finance report at every meeting. Lines of accountability are as follows:

Director of Children's Services	Accountable Body
Director of	Cost Centre Manager
SCSP Business Manager	Day to day management of budget

25. Dispute Resolution

Where SCSP members are concerned about agency inaction and the impact on a real-time case the SCSP partner must ensure the escalation process entitled '*Resolving Practitioner Disagreement and Escalation of Concerns*', for managing individual cases is followed by its practitioners or managers prior to any escalation between members of the SCSP.

Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint strategic working to safeguard children. It is often a sign of developing thinking within a dynamic process and can indicate a lack of clarity in expectations, approach or procedure.

There must be a robust mechanism to resolve professional difference between partnership members, concerns and disputes before they have significant impact on the delivery of child protection services.

Disagreements can arise in a number of areas, but are most likely arise over accountability, roles and responsibilities, poor communication and the need for action.

It is acknowledged that on occasions issues may arise between constituent partners, or concerns about the effectiveness of a partner agency, which if unresolved may act to impede the effectiveness of SCSP.

It is important:

1. To avoid professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child;
2. To resolve difficulties within the SCSP and between SCSP members quickly and openly;
3. To scrutinise and challenge effectively by identifying the problem areas together, agree a consensus view where there is a lack of clarity and to promote resolution via a clear way forward e.g. an agreed action plan.

SCSP Members should try to resolve differences through discussion, and/or meeting within a timescale that is acceptable to parties. If the matter is not resolved their disagreement must then be addressed by the SCSP Chair.

It is the responsibility of each agency representative to adopt the highest standard of professional conduct, and to attempt to resolve any issue close to the organisational level where it arose, through means of a dialogue with the person or agency that brought up the matter.

26. Amendments to Sandwell's MASA

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it reflects national and local developments and that it remains relevant.

Any changes to the SCSP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements shall be ratified by the members of the partnership. Any member may request a review of the arrangements by writing their request to the SCSP Chair.

The SCSP Chair on receipt of the request will notify members of the partnership and ensure the matter is placed as an item of the partnerships agenda for full consideration.

The four statutory safeguarding partners will report any updates to the published arrangements in their annual report and the proposed timescale for implementation.