

Chapter 3: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangement

This chapter covers the details for the replacement of Local Children Safeguarding Boards (LCSBs) with local safeguarding partners; the aim of which is to create flexible new local safeguarding arrangements led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). It places a duty on those three partners to make arrangements to work together, and with any relevant agencies, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area.

Relevant agencies are defined as those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children having regard to local need. All three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

In situations that require a clear, single point of leadership, all three safeguarding partners should agree who would take the lead on issues that arise. Should the lead representatives delegate their functions they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency.

The three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

Local Arrangements

Local arrangements can cover two or more local authorities, and safeguarding partners can join and collaborate on their arrangements, providing the relevant safeguarding partners have agreed this. Where more than one local authority joins together, the local authorities can agree to delegate their safeguarding partner duties to a single authority individually and collectively. Each local authority must continue to fulfil its statutory and legislative duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve. The same applies for clinical commissioning groups and chief officers of police (in respect of their safeguarding partner duties only).

To be effective, these local arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and wellbeing boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and MAPPAs.

The local safeguarding partners must ensure there is independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the local arrangements. The safeguarding arrangements should be published by the safeguarding partners, and the guidance sets out what should be covered in the publication.

Partners must report at least annually on what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. The guidance sets out what should be included in this report.

A copy of the report should be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care within 7 days of being published. Safeguarding partners should make sure the report is also widely available.

Relevant Agencies

A section has been added describing how the safeguarding partners should work with relevant agencies in their area. Relevant agencies defined as those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. The safeguarding partners must set out in their published arrangements which organisations and agencies they will be working with to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; this is expected to change over time if the local arrangements are to work effectively and responsively for children and families.

A list of relevant agencies is set out in the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#). Many agencies and organisations play a crucial role in safeguarding children, and safeguarding partners may include any local or national organisation or agency in their arrangements, regardless of whether they are named in relevant agency regulations.

Organisations and agencies who are not named in the relevant agency regulations, whilst not under a statutory duty, should nevertheless cooperate and collaborate with the safeguarding partners particularly as they may have duties under section 10 and/or section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The safeguarding partners should be clear how they will assure themselves that the relevant agencies have appropriate, robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place and how information will be shared amongst all relevant agencies and the safeguarding partners.

The local arrangements should be shared with all partners and relevant agencies and information should be given about how to escalate concerns and how any disputes will be resolved, as well as details of the independent scrutiny and whistleblowing arrangements.

Schools, colleges and other educational providers

This section has been strengthened following responses to the consultation, so there is an expectation that local safeguarding partners will name schools, colleges and other educational providers as relevant agencies. Once designated as a relevant agency, schools and colleges, and other educational providers are under a statutory duty to cooperate with the published arrangements.

Information requests

Safeguarding partners may require any person or organisation or agency to provide them, any relevant agency for the area, a reviewer or another person or organisation or agency, with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the safeguarding partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including those related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews. The person or organisation to whom a request is made must comply with such a request and, if they do not do so, the safeguarding partners may take legal action against them.

Independent scrutiny

The published arrangements should set out the plans for independent scrutiny, including how the arrangements will be reviewed; and how any recommendations will be taken forward.

The decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, however safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective,

acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

Funding

The three safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area should make payments towards the expenditure needed to support the local multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children. The safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, as well as any contributions from each relevant agency. . The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

Transitional Arrangements

From 29th June 2018, local authority areas must begin their transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partner and child death review partner arrangements. The Safeguarding partners must publish their arrangements, and should notify the Secretary of State for Education when they have done so, by sending the published link to safeguarding.reform@education.gov.uk. They should also notify the chair of the relevant LSCB(s). They must have published their arrangements by **29th June 2019**, but may do so at any time before the end of that period.

Following publication of their arrangements, safeguarding partners have up to three months from the date of publication to implement the arrangements. The implementation date should be made clear in the published arrangements. All new local arrangements must have been implemented **by 29th September 2019**.

If the safeguarding partner arrangements are in place and ready to operate before the child death review partner arrangements for a local area, the safeguarding partners may begin work, without waiting for the child death review partner arrangements to begin. Once the arrangements have been published and implemented, the LSCB for the local area will cease to exist.

In the meantime, LSCBs must continue to carry out all of their statutory functions, including commissioning SCRs where the criteria are met, until the point at which safeguarding partner arrangements begin to operate in their local area. They must also continue to ensure that the review of each death of a child normally resident in the LSCB area, is undertaken by the established child death overview panel (CDOP), until the point at which new child death review partner arrangements are in place.

LSCBs will need to plan how and when to hand over all relevant data and information they hold to the safeguarding partners. They should comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation, and provide a clear audit trail on the handling of all documentation. They should set out any decisions on SCRs, which are outstanding at the time of handover.

Note:- The LSCBs should ensure the retention of pertinent historical records, including (for example) any that might be relevant to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. They should also arrange to pass on copies of these records to the new safeguarding partners for their area.