



**PAN-SUSSEX SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP
ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSAL
May 2024**

ABSTRACT

Implementation in Sussex of partnership arrangements as required by statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023



WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2023: PROPOSALS FOR REVISED PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WITH EFFECT FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024

1. A Sussex Children's Safeguarding Executive should be established comprising:
 - (i) The Directors of Children's Services (DCS) for West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.
 - (ii) The nominated Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) for Sussex Police and NHS Sussex ICB.
2. The Chair of the Sussex Executive should rotate between Sussex Police and NHS Sussex ICB.
3. The Sussex Executive should be supported in the exercise of its responsibilities by one of the area Safeguarding Partnership Business Managers, on a rotation of a minimum of two years (see proposal 5 below). The Executive should meet twice a year.
4. The Sussex Executive should have terms of reference along the lines of those proposed at Annex A below. The Executive may establish such subgroups on a standing or task and finish basis as it sees fit, for example in relation to exploitation, neglect or other issues requiring collective strategic development.
5. The three area safeguarding partnership units should each take a lead on one of the following three Sussex wide areas of work:
 - (i) Learning and development (support of a Sussex wide Learning and Development subgroup of the Sussex Executive (replacing the current three place-based groups) plus delivery of a Sussex wide learning and development programme).
 - (ii) Collation and analysis of data relevant to multi agency safeguarding responsibilities, and delivery of the Sussex wide regular section 11 audit of agencies operating in the Sussex area.
 - (iii) Support of the Sussex Executive, and support for the Policies and Procedures subgroup of the Sussex Executive.
6. Each area should establish a broad partnership Safeguarding Engagement Group (SEG) of local agencies including representatives of education settings and local VCSE organisations chaired by the relevant DCS and with terms of reference along the lines proposed at Annex B below. The SEGs should meet twice a year. Depending on the proposed agenda, Sussex Police and NHS

Sussex ICB should provide representatives for these meetings who need not be the county wide DSPs but should be involved in the management locally of services/teams working with children, young people and families and able to provide both a perspective from and dissemination within their agency. The SEGs should replace all current Boards, Steering Groups, and local liaison groups.

7. The DSPs from Sussex Police and NHS Sussex ICB should meet each of the DCSs separately twice a year together with the Business Manager(s) for the local area to plan partnership business at local and Sussex level.
8. The statutory partnership for each local authority area shall comprise the SLPs (and DSPs) for the three statutory partners: Sussex Police, NHS Sussex ICB and the respective local authority, supported by the respective Safeguarding Engagement Groups, which shall include representatives of education settings. Each of these three partnerships will discharge the core partnership functions for their area of:
 - (i) Approving rapid reviews on cases notified to the National Panel.
 - (ii) Approving the recommendations and publication as appropriate of local safeguarding practice reviews into such cases.
 - (iii) Approving proactive and reactive communications in relation to cases subject to review.
9. Additional meetings of the statutory partnerships may be arranged as necessary, in addition to those at point 7 above, for the purpose of signing off rapid reviews/LCSPRs/associated communications.
10. The 'chairs' of each partnership will be the DCS for each area. Meetings of the Partnerships will be the meetings proposed at 7 above together with any required as at 9 above.
11. Each statutory partnership will maintain a standing Case Review Group, involving independent scrutiny as determined by the partnership. The CRG will review all serious incident notifications and oversee rapid reviews and LCSPRs.
12. Each statutory partnership will also maintain a standing 'Quality Assurance' or 'Monitoring and Evaluation' group which will agree, direct and consider the findings of local evaluation activity, focused on the effectiveness of partnership working at local level. Where helpful pan Sussex exercises can of course be agreed, as for example in the case of the recent review of elective home education. Findings from local QA activity can also be shared at the pan Sussex Executive as appropriate.

Draft Terms of Reference for the Sussex Children's Safeguarding Executive

The responsibilities of the Executive will be to:

- (i) Agree consistent procedures and strategies to secure effective multi agency safeguarding of children and young people across Sussex.
- (ii) Monitor the impact of procedures and strategies on the wellbeing of children and young people in Sussex, drawing on analysis of data, audit of agency actions, and intelligence about the lived experience of children, young people and families.
- (iii) Review the allocation of resources across partner agencies to ensure they fairly meet the different needs of children and young people and secure consistent and effective discharge of statutory duties.
- (iv) Together with local Quality Assurance/Monitoring and Evaluation groups, monitor the effectiveness of joint working at Sussex and local level in meeting the requirement of statutory guidance, and agree actions to address any gaps as identified.

Decisions:

The Executive will determine:

- The procedures which all parties will follow across Sussex to protect children and young people.
- The strategic approach to all issues requiring multi agency safeguarding action.
- The model of multi-agency working to discharge statutory duties (for example the operation of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) in each area or multi agency child protection teams as proposed in 'Stable Homes Based on Love' (DFE 2023). Investment decisions by each agency within the partnership will be for the agency in question but constructive challenge and dialogue will be encouraged so that issues can be resolved through consensus wherever possible. Agencies with a Sussex wide remit will base area investment decisions on clear evidence shared with all parties.
- What collective multi agency actions are needed to address gaps in practice identified through quality assurance and independent scrutiny. Respectful mutual challenge will be encouraged so that individual agencies experience high support and high challenge through participation in the Executive.

Annex B

Draft Terms of Reference for statutory Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) including the role of the Safeguarding Engagement Groups (SEGs)

LSCPs

The terms of reference for each LSCP for Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and East Sussex respectively will:

- (i) Provide for a combined annual meeting of Lead Strategic Partners (the LSPs for each Partnership meeting as a single group) which will review collectively the effectiveness of partnership working in Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and East Sussex respectively.
- (ii) Include explicit reference to the role and TOR of the Sussex Executive as at Annex A.
- (iii) Include the decisions set out in paragraph 8(i) to (iii) above.
- (iv) Include the operation of a SEG for each area as set out below.
- (v) Set out arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the operation of the partnership in practice.

SEG

The responsibilities of each SEG will be to:

- (i) Ensure effective local dissemination and understanding of safeguarding procedures and strategies agreed by the Sussex Children's Safeguarding Executive.
- (ii) Gather and share perspectives on the effectiveness of local multi agency safeguarding arrangements including through quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation activities: effectively 'holding up a collective mirror' to practice on the ground at local level.
- (iii) Ensure good collective understanding of the roles, responsibilities, challenges and opportunities of different agencies at local level, across the public and the VCSE sectors.
- (iv) Provide a forum in which safeguarding concerns (other than in relation to individuals) can be safely escalated.
- (v) Built understanding, trust and mutual regard between local agencies.
- (vi) Consider and offer views to inform the work of the Sussex Children's Safeguarding Executive.