



Nottinghamshire
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN Board

CONSTITUTION

Partnership relationships, roles and responsibilities

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CONSTITUTION OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARD

1. Introduction & Governance Arrangements

The purpose of this document is to set out how the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) operates, how decisions are made and detail what inter-agency arrangements are in place to make sure that individual agencies effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Nottingham.

The document does not include the detailed guidance in “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010” (Department for Education) which all partner agencies and Board representatives should be familiar with.

The Role

The role of the NSCB as laid out in Working Together 2010 is to:

- Co-ordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Ensure the effectiveness of that work

This is to be achieved through:

- Developing **policies and procedures** for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- **Communicating and raising awareness** with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Developing procedures to ensure a co-ordinated response to **unexpected child deaths**
- **Monitoring the effectiveness** of what is done to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and offering advice with regard to making improvements
- Undertaking **Serious Case Reviews**
- Collecting and analysing **information about child deaths.**
- Delivering and quality assuring **training**

The effective implementation of the NSCB’s objectives will contribute to an overall outcome of ensuring the well being of children and young people.

2 The Role and Performance of individual NSCB Members

The NSCB will evaluate its performance in carrying out its functions. Where the Independent Chair considers that any NSCB Member needs assistance to fulfil their role in a key area the chair will address this with the member concerned. The following areas of performance are considered to be key in this context:

- Basic knowledge of safeguarding children agenda
- Familiarity with the relevant government guidance
- Familiarity with the Nottinghamshire Children and Young People’s Plan
- Attendance and contribution at Board meetings.
- Responding to requests for information

Where such concerns are identified the Independent Chair will delegate initial responsibility for resolving the identified issue to the NSCB Manager, who will report

back directly to the Independent Chair within 2 weeks of the issue being identified. If the matter remains unresolved the Independent Chair will liaise directly with the identified member within 2 weeks. Where the matter remains unresolved for 2 weeks, or there is no plan in place that will lead to it being resolved, the Independent Chair will liaise directly with the Chief Executive, or equivalent, of the organisation. This principle will also apply to any failure to respond to requests for information, i.e. it will be escalated through the Board manager and Independent Chair

All NSCB members, statutory and appointed, will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check upon appointment and, thereafter, every 3 years. The check will be carried out by the agency that members represent who will confirm in writing to the NSCB administrator that the check has been completed. Lay members CRB checks will be processed by the NSCB Manager.

3 The NSCB Executive

The executive will be chaired by the Vice-Chair of the NSCB. Other members of the executive will be drawn from the agencies listed below. They may or may not be the same person who represents the agency or sector on the full Board. If it is a different person then the full Board representative must nominate someone of sufficient seniority to make decisions on behalf of that agency. The Vice Chair of the Executive will be an NSCB Member

Agencies that will be represented on the Executive are

- Children's Social Care and Health
- Nottinghamshire County Council, Children and Young People's Services, Group Manager Quality assurance and Safeguarding
- Police
- Nottinghamshire PCT
- Bassetlaw PCT
- Lay members
- Sub-group Chairs

4 Subgroups

The NSCB subgroups and panels will be maintained to operate under direction of the NSCB Executive and undertake both statutory and agreed roles and functions in relation to:

- Child Deaths (Child Death Overview Panel)
- Serious Case Reviews and other significant cases (Standing Serious Case Review Sub-group)
- Quality Assurance
- Training

All subgroups and panels will identify objectives relevant to their area of expertise within the board business plan and develop yearly work plans designed to support and achieve those objectives for, and / or on behalf of the Board.

5 Cross Authority Group

The Cross Authority Group with Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (NCSCB) meets quarterly in order to

- Ensure connectivity between both Boards
- Agree the priorities for Cross Authority work and monitor the progress of this
- Consider any new developments that may impact on the agreed priorities.
- Ensure consistency
- Share good practice
- Develop joint working arrangements where appropriate.

Current membership of the meeting is the NCSCB and NSCB Managers and the Service Head for Safeguarding in the City and Group Manager Quality assurance and Safeguarding for County.

6 NSCB Task & Finish Groups

NSCB Task and Finish groups will be created in order to undertake a specific, time limited piece of work as directed by the NSCB Business Plan and priorities. The aim, work plan and chair of these groups will be agreed at the NSCB Executive.

7 Performance of the NSCB Executive, Panels, Sub Groups and Task and Finish groups

The NSCB Executive will evaluate their performance in carrying out its functions. Where the Chair of the Executive considers that any member needs assistance to fulfil their role in a key area they will address this with the member concerned.

The following areas of performance are considered to be key in this context:

- Ability to commission services from own agency
- Ability to commit resources
- Business planning skills
- Accountability to agency and NSCB
- Ability to ensure agency compliance
- Ability to disseminate information to their agency.

The Executive will evaluate the performance of the Sub Groups and Task & Finish Groups in carrying out their functions. Where the Executive considers that any Sub Group or Task and Finish group needs assistance to fulfil their role in a key area the Chair of the Executive will discuss this with the NSCB Manager and agree an appropriate process for providing support.

The NSCB Panels and sub-groups will evaluate their performance in carrying out their functions. Where a chair of an NSCB Panel or sub-group considers that any of their members needs assistance to fulfil their role, they will discuss this with the NSCB Manager and agree an appropriate process for providing support. Dependent on the panel the following areas of knowledge and performance are considered to be key in this context:

- Child Death Procedures
- Serious Case Review Procedures
- Audit skills and experience
- Ability to write policy/procedures

- Knowledge of safeguarding agenda.

Any significant unresolved issues with the performance of any sub group of the NSCB or member of such subgroup will be brought to the attention of the Independent Chair of the NSCB by the NSCB Manager.

8. Membership, including Substitute Members

Membership of the Board is defined in Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010. This lists all of those agencies that must be represented on the Board, specifies particular professionals who should also be members and sets out the requirement to appoint Lay members. Those members representing agencies are required to be of sufficient seniority to be able to

- Speak for their organisation with authority
- Commit their organisation on policy and practice matters
- Hold their organisation to account

Paragraph 3.87 of Working Together allows that where there are multiple organisations of a particular kind in the local authority area they do not all have to be represented at Board meetings. In such circumstances those agencies must agree how they will maintain their engagement with the Board. In Nottinghamshire this principle will be adopted to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of Board meetings. Continued engagement from all agencies with the NSCB is essential and this will be promoted through the sub-structure from all agencies and there will be an identified District Council representative at Board meetings. District/Borough Council's will meet quarterly to discuss issues relevant to their organisations and identify any issues that they wish to be put on the Agenda of the NSCB. This group will identify a chair and the individual(s) who will represent the group at Board meetings. There will be a specified representative and deputy to promote continuity of attendance at Board meetings. The NSCB Manager will attend these meetings. All members of these groups will continue to receive NSCB papers.

The individual members of the NSCB have a duty to contribute to the effective work of the Board. This should take precedence, if necessary, over their role as a representative of their organisation. Members are accountable to each other and to the organisation that they represent for the work of the NSCB, Executive, Sub Groups and Panel. It is not possible to carry out these roles effectively without attending meetings regularly and therefore this is expected of all representatives

Members of The Board, Executive Panels and Sub Groups are responsible for appointing a named deputy, of the same or a similar status and authority, to carry out their role if they are unable to attend a meeting. Deputies will need to be CRB checked as with full Board members. This person should be fully briefed prior to the meeting, with all relevant papers shared with them.

Attendance at Board meetings, sub-groups and panels will be reported to the Board every 6 months. Where a board member does not attend 2 meetings in a rolling 12 month period the NSCB manager will liaise with the individual within 2 weeks of the Board meeting where this is reported to clarify why this is and agree measures to improve attendance. Where attendance does not improve the NSCB chair will liaise directly with the chief executive of the relevant agency within 2 weeks of the Board meeting where this is reported, in order to agree a course of action to ensure adequate representation of that agency on the Board.

9 Additional Members

Any change to the membership of the Board or Executive will be agreed at the Board or Executive respectively. Membership of sub groups or the Panels will be agreed at the relevant meetings. Any changes will be carefully considered in order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance kept between the need to engage relevant agencies and ensuring that meetings are business like and focussed.

10. Agency Performance

Where the Board identifies an issue of concern with regard to the performance of an agency with regard to their safeguarding responsibilities the Independent Chair will contact the agency representative on the NSCB within 1 week of the concern being identified to agree how this matter should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive, or equivalent, of the agency concerned. When this has been agreed the Independent Chair and Agency representative will continue to liaise as regularly as required but at no less than fortnightly intervals until this matter has been resolved or an action plan agreed which it is felt by the Independent Chair is likely to address the issue. A report setting out the issue and response will be presented to the next meeting of the Board

11. The Independent Chair

An Independent Chair, recruited specifically for this purpose, chairs the Board. The Independent Chair will be appointed by a panel of Board members chaired by the Director for Children', Families and Cultural Services. The Independent Chair will have a 3-year tenure. They maintain regular contact with the Nottinghamshire County Council Director for Children's Services, the Group Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding and the NSCB Manager.

12. Vice chair and Chairs of Sub-groups

The Vice Chair of the NSCB will have a 3-year tenure. The Vice-Chair will be selected via nominations. If there is more than one nomination then a secret ballot will be conducted at the next available Board meeting. If more than one candidate receives the same number of votes then the Independent Chair will have the casting vote.

Chairs of sub-groups will have a 3-year tenure. The selection process will follow that outlined above for the selection of the Vice Chair of the NSCB.

13. Decision Making

Members of The Board will operate according to the governance arrangements of their organisation. Some decisions that the Board will need to make can be made with the delegated authority that Members hold on behalf of their agencies. Some matters will need to be referred into their agencies decision-making frameworks.

The NSCB aspires to involve children and young people within their decision-making processes and the NSCB Engagement strategy details the aims of the Board in relation to participation

Wherever possible, decisions will be made by consensus. Where this is not possible decisions of the Board will be taken by a majority vote but in all cases the majority vote must include the consent of the Independent Chair. In the event of a deadlock the Independent Chair, or in his/her absence the Vice Chair, will have a casting vote. This will not be appropriate, however, if the decision relates to an area of operational responsibility for the Vice Chair as this may present a conflict of interest. In these cases, the decision should be deferred to a future meeting where the Independent Chair is available.

The minutes of the Board will include the date on which the decisions taken should come into effect (“the implementation date”). The implementation date must give reasonable notice to the partner agencies so they have the opportunity to discuss the issues in their own agencies before the decision is due to be implemented. Decisions will be implemented on the implementation date unless an affected partner agency sends written notice to all Board Members before that date requesting a further meeting of the NSCB for the matter to be reconsidered and giving the reasons why this is requested. Such notice will operate to suspend implementation of the decision pending a special meeting of the Board.

If a notice requiring reconsideration of a decision is received by the Independent Chair, he/she will give partners agencies 15 working days notice of a special meeting of the NSCB for this matter to be considered. Where the Independent Chair considers the matter requires urgent consideration he/she can determine a shorter time period.

Each member of the NSCB Executive, the Panels and Sub Groups shall have one vote. Where possible, decisions will be made by consensus. Where this is not possible decisions of these partnerships will be taken by a majority vote. All decisions MUST be recorded in the minutes. In the event of a deadlock the Chair, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair, will have the casting vote. Where a member of the NSCB Executive is dissatisfied with a decision they may ask for the decision to be referred to the Board for resolution.

14 Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Board, Coordination Group, Panels and Sub Groups for voting will be that at least half of the full membership is present, but where any of Children’s Services, the Police or the PCTs are absent they must be informed of and involved in of any key decisions.

15 Budget

The budget will be set annually (but may be revised throughout the year) at the discretion of the Board according to the needs of the NSCB in order to fulfil its functions.

16 Urgent Matters

The Independent Chair of the NSCB, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair, is authorised to speak on behalf of the NSCB in relation to all urgent matters after liaison as far as practicable with all other available NSCB members. In all cases this would include liaison with the Director of Children’s Services and, wherever practicable, the NSCB Manager

In exceptional circumstances the Chair may call an extraordinary meeting of the Board or Executive. A Board or Executive member may call a meeting by submitting to the chair a written request which is supported by at least two voting members. Such extraordinary meetings will be held within 15 working days of the request being received by the chair.

17 Business Plan.

The NSCB will ratify an annual Business Plan prepared by the NSCB Executive. This will detail all work streams required by the NSCB in order to fulfil its statutory functions, as well as areas for development required as a result of local practice and national developments.

18 Dispute Resolution Process

The partner agencies acknowledge that it is their responsibility to resolve any dispute between them promptly and amicably. All NSCB partner agencies have internal dispute resolution procedures and these should be followed where possible, with evidence recorded for each step taken.

19 Performance Monitoring Framework

The NSCB Performance Monitoring Framework will support continual improvement of partnership working to safeguard local children and young people. The key components of the Framework will be:

- Ongoing reporting of performance management information to the Board and Quality Assurance sub-committee.
- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation and impact of the action plans resulting from Serious Case Reviews
- An annual multi-agency audit process
- An annual agency self-assessment, based on the requirements of section 11 of the Children Act 2004

20 The Relationship between the NSCB (The Board) and Nottinghamshire Children's Trust Board (The Trust Board)

The relationship between The Board and The Trust Board is set out in the protocol agreed between the two partnership bodies. This will be reviewed annually in a joint meeting between the two bodies

21 The Board and Executive: Terms of Reference

NSCB

Terms of Reference

The role and function of the Board is to:

- Ensure that work to protect children is co-ordinated across Nottinghamshire and that partner agencies are working together to safeguard children and young people in Nottinghamshire and ensure their welfare.
- Assure itself of the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard children across all partner agencies

The Board will:

- Set the strategic direction for NSCB, taking account of any developments in national policy, practice and legislation
- Consider strategic issues that will impact on local safeguarding arrangements
- Monitor performance with regard to safeguarding and ensure that performance issues are addressed
- Ensure that the impact of the Board is robustly evaluated and evidenced
- Ratify and adopt the Annual Business Plan
- Ratify the Annual Performance targets for the Executive, subgroups and Panels
- Ratify the Annual Budget
- Performance manage the Business Plan and governance arrangements on an exception basis
- Ensure the planning and commissioning arrangements for all partner agencies takes into account safeguarding and the promotion of children's welfare.
- Ratify any developments within the NSCB Child Protection Procedures.
- Address unresolved or emergent issues within the governance and safeguarding arrangements
- Maintain links with Children's Trust Board and other local partnerships in order to embed safeguarding procedures and principles within their constitution, policies and delivery plans
- Nominate chairs for the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), Serious Case Review Standing Panel (SCRSP) Executive and sub-groups

NSCB Members will report to the Board on an annual basis with regard to the efficacy of safeguarding arrangements within their organisation

NSCB Executive

The remit of the executive will be to:

- Provide a line of accountability from sub groups to NSCB, ensuring scrutiny and overview. This will include approval and oversight of task and finish groups. Reporting to the NSCB will be by exception and annually
- Develop the Business Plan for NSCB ratification
- Commission appropriate work related to delivery of the Business Plan
- Develop the annual budget for NSCB ratification
- Proactively contribute to NSCB Annual Report
- Ensure equalities issues are addressed in all plans, procedures and protocols and that Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken to assure the NSCB that consideration of equality is embedded in safeguarding arrangements

- Identify qualitative and quantitative performance indicators to measure and monitor successful outcomes for Children and Young People and report by exception to NSCB
- Identify research and best practice to influence local delivery of safeguarding arrangements
- Approve Training Strategy on behalf of NSCB
- Approve Practice Guidance on behalf of NSCB
- Identify issues that should be brought to the attention of the full Board

In addition to the issues set out above the Executive may have other decision making authority delegated to it by the full Board

21 Service level agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council regarding NSCB staff

NSCB staff will be hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council. The County Council will take responsibility for the management of all such staff. This will include recruitment and selection, ongoing supervision and support, performance management and all other matters associated with the management and delivery of the services provided. The detail of this arrangement will be set out in a Service Level Agreement between Nottinghamshire County Council and the Board.