

# **Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership**

## **Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children**

**June 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the new Rotherham Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children which are established in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

In this document we have set out the way in which partners in Rotherham will work together to identify the needs of children in Rotherham and to provide children with the help and protection they require.

There have been very significant improvements in the ways in which partners work together to protect children in Rotherham since 2014. The three statutory partners and the wider partnership of local agencies and organisations within Rotherham are committed to building on the progress already made and to securing further improvements that will ensure that children and families are given help as early as possible and are protected effectively when they need to be.

We will:

- Work together and with the wider partnership to safeguard children in Rotherham
- Ensure that the partnership demonstrates openness and transparency in all its work
- Work with children and families to make sure our services are responsive to their needs
- Keep a strong oversight of performance and safeguarding practice to provide high levels of assurance
- Ensure that we allocate adequate resources and expertise to fulfil our responsibilities
- Keep a continued focus on learning and improvement

## 2. Signatories



**Chris Edwards**, Chief Officer,  
NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

*Chris Edwards*

Date: .....



**Sharon Kemp**, Chief Executive, Rotherham  
Metropolitan Borough Council

*Sharon Kemp*

Date: .....



**Tim Forber**, Assistant Chief Constable,  
South Yorkshire Police

*Tim Forber*

Date: .....

### 3. Background

The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, requires that the three safeguarding partners (Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Chief Officers of Police), make arrangements to work in partnership together along with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), is the statutory guidance which outlines what the responsibilities of safeguarding partners are, delivered through the new safeguarding arrangements. This includes a shared accountability between the three key partners, the requirement to have independent scrutiny and the transition from Serious Case Reviews to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The three key partners must publish their arrangements by June 2019 and implementation of those arrangements must be effected by September 2019. Transitional guidance has also been published to set out the change from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to the new safeguarding children arrangements, which includes new accountability arrangements for Child Death Reviews and the move away from Serious Case Reviews.

### 4. Safeguarding Partners responsibilities

The safeguarding partners in Rotherham are:

- **NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group**
- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**
- **South Yorkshire Police**

The geographic area for which the safeguarding partners have safeguarding responsibilities is the Rotherham Local Authority area. The NHS services in the area consist of the NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group, the Rotherham Foundation NHS Trust, and the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Trust. The Police force for the area is South Yorkshire Police.

The plan for Rotherham recognises the importance of strong leadership for the new arrangements to be effective in bringing together the various organisations and agencies and the lead representative from each of the three safeguarding partners will play an active role at all levels of the new arrangements.

The key responsibilities of the safeguarding partners are to:

- Ensure that there is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
- Agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services.
- Act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others.
- Implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- Achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families ensuring they receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.

The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families

In order to work together effectively, the safeguarding partners with other local organisations and agencies will develop processes that:

- Facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries

- Ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families
- To be effective, these arrangements must link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. In Rotherham we have regular meetings that bring together the chairs of the children's and adults' safeguarding boards, the chair of the health and wellbeing board, the chair of the children and young people's transformation board and the chair of the safer Rotherham partnership. These meetings, supported by the business units for the various boards, ensure that priorities and business plans are shared and aligned.

## **5. Relevant agencies**

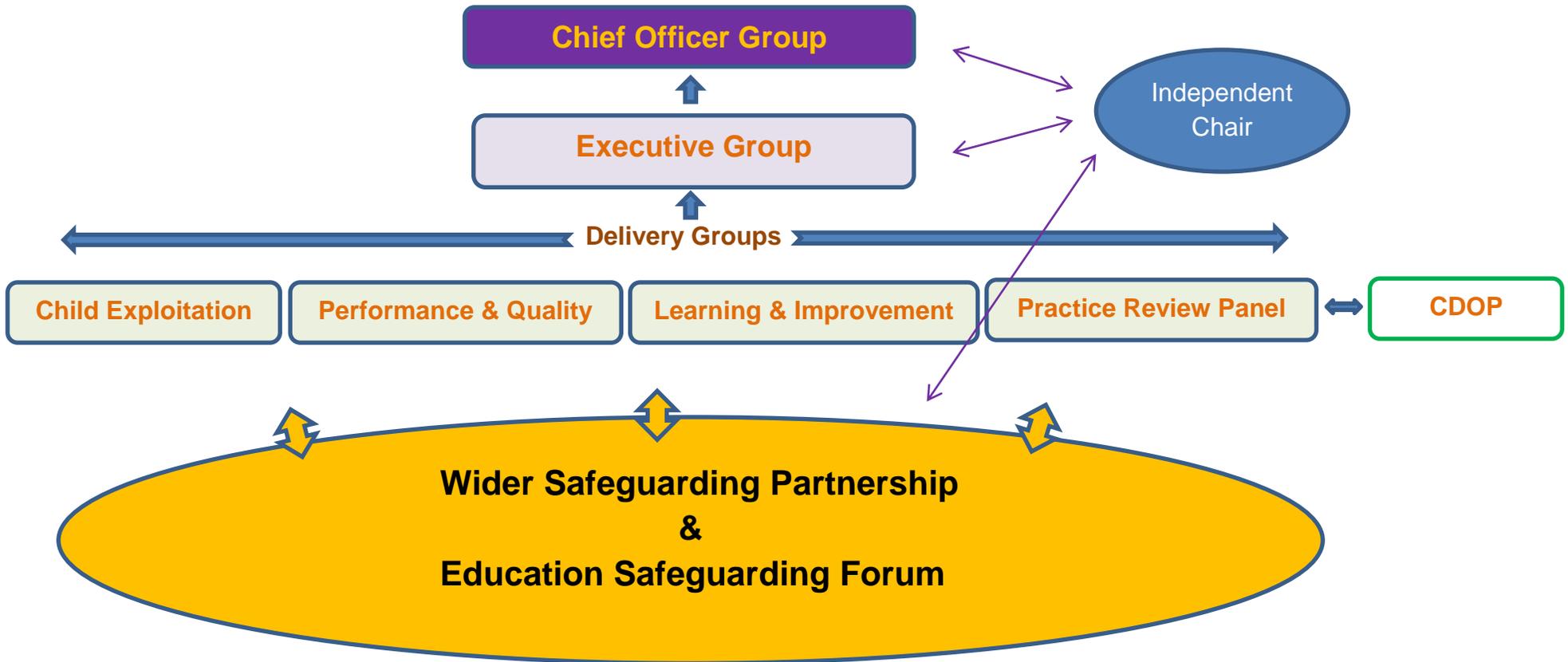
Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. Strong, effective multi-agency arrangements are ones that are responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people. For local arrangements to be effective, they will engage organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to provide targeted support to children and families as appropriate. This approach requires flexibility to enable joint identification of, and response to, existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children. Every agency is able to participate across the partnership safeguarding arrangements as can be seen in section 8 and are aware of their responsibilities within the arrangements. The relevant agencies include all Educational Establishments, NHS Trusts, Private and Voluntary Sector providers of services in Rotherham.

All applications to register a children's home in the Rotherham local authority area must undertake a location assessment in accordance with the Children's Homes (England) Regulation 2015. In addition, all children's homes in the area will be required, as part of the local safeguarding assurance framework, to undertake a safeguarding self-assessment once every 2 years.

A comprehensive list of the relevant agencies can be found at Appendix 1.

These agencies and organisations are statutorily required to act in accordance with these arrangements (Working Together 2018, Chapter 3, paragraph 19 and Children Act 2004 section 16G).

## 6. Structure



## **7. How the Safeguarding Children Partnership will work**

The Chief Officer Group will meet twice annually to provide strategic oversight and will agree the local vision and priorities for safeguarding children in Rotherham. It will ensure that there are strategic links with other partnership boards in relation to safeguarding children and will be the mechanism for escalation of safeguarding issues or risks from the Executive Group and the Independent Chair. The Chief Officer Group will also agree the funding and resourcing arrangements for the partnership and will agree and publish reports, at least annually, on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements.

The Executive Group will meet every two months and will analyse emerging and current safeguarding issues to advise the Chief Officers on priorities. It will ensure that the local safeguarding arrangements are compliant with statutory guidance and meet local need, setting out the priorities within the Business Plan. The Executive Group will receive regular reports on the progress of the Business Plan, providing challenge to the Delivery Groups, and manage a risk log in relation to key aspects of safeguarding, overseeing escalations and managing dispute resolution. It will ensure that the Delivery Groups are supported by the required partnership representation and will set and monitor the budget in accordance with the business plan.

The Delivery Groups will each meet at a frequency needed to deliver the objectives in the business plan and this, along with their responsibilities, will be set out in their respective terms of reference. Each Delivery Group will develop a work plan aligned to the Business Plan and will report to the Executive Group on progress, highlighting key achievements, risks or issues. The frequency of reporting will be determined by the Executive Group. The Delivery Groups will need to work closely with one another and will, if the need arises, initiate task and finish groups which draw on expertise from across the partnership.

The Wider Partnership will meet 3 times annually as a minimum. It will operate on a conference or workshop style in order to fully engage the wider partnership in Rotherham, taking account of different perspectives on key priorities and emerging issues. Participation of agencies will be proactive and tailored to particular themes or issues and organisations from across the Wider Partnership will be encouraged to bring their knowledge and expertise to both these meetings and also to participate in relevant Delivery Groups.

The Education Safeguarding Forum will meet on a termly basis. It is a forum where safeguarding leads from schools, early years and other educational settings can engage in topical discussion and information sharing in relation to statutory safeguarding responsibilities, key priorities and emerging themes. It is also an opportunity to listen to an educational perspective on safeguarding issues within the system and an opportunity to disseminate key messages and best practice. Risks and issues will be reported to the Executive Group and the relevant Delivery Groups.

## 8. Safeguarding Children Partnership membership and responsibilities

<b>Chief Officer Group: Frequency x 2 annually</b>	
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>
<p>Independent Chair</p> <p>Chief Executive (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council)</p> <p>Chief Officer (NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group)</p> <p>Assistant Chief Constable (South Yorkshire Police)</p> <p>Lead Member for Children's Services (Participating Observer) Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Representative from Office of South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (for budget items)</p> <p>Others in attendance as required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves the local safeguarding arrangements to meet statutory requirements and local need.</li> <li>• Approves the local vision and priorities for safeguarding children.</li> <li>• Is accountable for the effectiveness of the arrangements in the local area.</li> <li>• Approves the funding and resourcing arrangements for the safeguarding partnership.</li> <li>• Ensures strategic link with other partnership boards in relation to safeguarding children.</li> <li>• Mechanism for escalation and resolution of relevant issues from Executive Group/Independent Chair.</li> <li>• Approves and publishes reports, at least annually, on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements.</li> <li>• The Chief Officer Group will meet twice annually.</li> <li>• The Independent Chair will chair the Chief Officer Group.</li> </ul> <p>Should the lead representatives delegate their functions they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. If delegated, it is the responsibility of the lead representative to identify and nominate a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements.</p>

**Executive Group: Frequency – once every 2 months**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>
<p>Independent Chair</p> <p>Director of Children’s Services (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council)</p> <p>Chief Nurse (Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group)</p> <p>Chief Superintendent - District Commander (South Yorkshire Police)</p> <p>Chief Nurse (The Rotherham Foundation NHS Trust)</p> <p>Chief Nurse (Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Trust)</p> <p>Assistant Director, Safeguarding (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council)</p> <p>Designated Nurse – Nurse Consultant (Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group)</p> <p>Business Manager (Advisor)</p> <p>Others in attendance as required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse emerging and current safeguarding issues to advise Chief Officers on priorities.</li> <li>• Ensure that the local safeguarding arrangements are compliant with statutory guidance and meet local need – sets the local vision and priorities.</li> <li>• Receives reports on the progress of the business plan and its impact, issues of concern and new and emerging issues</li> <li>• Manages a risk log in relation to key aspects of safeguarding and oversees escalation and dispute resolution</li> <li>• Develops and ensures the delivery of the safeguarding partnership business plan</li> <li>• Develops and oversees the production of a public report, at least annually</li> <li>• Ensures delivery groups are supported by the required partnership representation</li> <li>• Provides detailed monitoring and challenge of the delivery groups activity against the objectives in the business plan</li> <li>• Receives updates from and has a mechanism to raise issues with the local Channel Panel, MAPPA Board, Local Family Justice Board.</li> <li>• Sets and monitors the budget in accordance with the business plan</li> </ul> <p>Should the lead representatives delegate their functions they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. If delegated, it is the responsibility of the lead representative to identify and nominate a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements.</p>

**Delivery Groups: Frequency (see below)**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>
<p>Membership and frequency of meeting of each Delivery Group is defined in its Terms of Reference and is drawn from the three safeguarding partners and across the wider partnership</p>	<p><b>Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (monthly)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of Serious Safeguarding Cases (Rapid Reviews) and recommendation to Independent Chair Assurance Group for Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews</li> <li>• Development of Recommendations and Action Plans arising from cases</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance and Quality Delivery Group (6 weekly)</b> Multi-Agency Auditing of safeguarding practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of partnership Performance Management Framework and challenge within the partnership.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Assurance for organisations S11, S175 (schools), Voluntary &amp; Com Sector safeguarding self-assessment.</li> <li>• Receive findings from cases reviewed at the Practice Standards Group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Exploitation Delivery Group (quarterly)</b> Development of responses to and review the effectiveness of partnership working in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Sexual Exploitation</li> <li>• Missing Children</li> <li>• Child Criminal Exploitation</li> <li>• Trafficking/Modern Slavery</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning and Improvement Delivery Group (quarterly)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Review Action Plan(s) Implementation</li> <li>• Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures</li> <li>• Development and evaluation of Safeguarding Training</li> <li>• Website and Newsletters, Safeguarding Awareness Week</li> </ul>

Schedule - Delivery Groups Reporting to the Executive Group						
	February	April	June	August	October	December
Performance & Quality Delivery Group		✓		✓		
Learning & Improvement Delivery Group			✓		✓	
Child Exploitation Delivery Group		✓		✓		✓
Child Practice Review Panel		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Death Overview Panel				✓ (Annual Report)		

## Wider Safeguarding Partnership – Frequency x 3 annually

Membership	Key Responsibilities
<p><b>Core Membership:</b>            Independent Chair            Children and Young Peoples Services            South Yorkshire Police            Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group            The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust            RDaSH NHS Foundation Trust            Named Safeguarding Professionals            Business Manager</p> <p><b>Relevant Agencies:</b>            National Probation Service            Community Rehabilitation Company            CAFCASS            South Yorkshire Fire &amp; Rescue            Colleges and Training Providers            RMBC Adult Services            Voluntary &amp; Community Sector Commissioned services            Children’s homes in local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides wider partnership engagement, perspective and challenge on the key priorities emerging issues and the business plan</li> <li>• Participation in Delivery Groups as appropriate to the role of the organisation and needs of the delivery group</li> <li>• Ensure wide dissemination of safeguarding issues and key messages across the borough</li> <li>• Participation in meetings which focus on a particular theme or issue</li> <li>• Meetings have a workshop/conference style rather than formal board</li> </ul> <p>The wider safeguarding partnership will be flexible and inclusive - for example being responsive to themed meetings by inviting a wider range of organisations and extending invites to members of delivery groups.</p>

## Education Safeguarding Forum – Frequency one per school term

<p>All Schools and Academies            Pupil Referral Units            Special Schools            Early Years settings            Colleges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with the Safeguarding Partnership:</li> <li>• Statutory Safeguarding responsibilities</li> <li>• Emerging themes and priorities</li> <li>• Dissemination of key messages and best practice</li> <li>• Issues and challenges fed back to Executive Group</li> </ul>
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## 9. Independent scrutiny

The role of independent scrutiny, provided by an independent chairperson, will provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Rotherham, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners, Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) and Peer Review activity across the region. Safeguarding partners will ensure that the scrutineer is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement. The independent chair will consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

Key responsibilities of the Independent Chair:

- Agree with the safeguarding partners how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.
- Scrutinise the work of the delivery groups and the progress of the business plan.
- Scrutinise the Annual Report developed by the safeguarding partners.
- Act objectively as a critical friend to promote reflection and drive continuous improvement.
- Lead challenge sessions in relation to organisations' safeguarding children arrangements.
- Have access to and is sighted on relevant (single and multi-agency) safeguarding performance data and quality assurance information to effectively challenge practice and across the partnership to improve outcomes for children.
- Have an influencing role within and across the partnership with regard to multi-agency practice and outcomes for children.
- Participate in reviews by Inspectorates when required, including JTA's. Holds partners to account for Improvement Plans (including attendance at Improvement Boards) arising from Inspection and Peer Review activity.

- Be alerted to serious safeguarding cases, incidences of whistleblowing relating to safeguarding matters and act as a point of escalation when safeguarding partners are unable to find a resolution within the partnership.
- Seek assurance and scrutinises decision making in relation to Serious Child Safeguarding Cases.
- Have a line of sight to frontline practice and outcomes for children – where appropriate is able to observe practice, engage with practitioners, children and their families with regard to their experience of the safeguarding system.
- Communicate with external local/regional/national organisations and governmental departments where appropriate in relation to safeguarding matters impacting on partnership working and outcomes for children.
- Engage with community groups or community representatives in matters relating to safeguarding children.
- Chair the Chief Officer Group of the safeguarding partners.
- Chair the Executive Group of the safeguarding partnership.
- Chair / facilitate wider safeguarding partnership meetings.
- Meet with chairs of other Partnership Boards (SAB, SRP, and HWbB).

Meet with Leaders and Officers relating to specific safeguarding issues across the partnership. Should the Independent Chair be unavailable, chief officers will nominate the most appropriate partner representative to fulfil the Chair's role.

## **10. Multi-agency threshold guidance for help and protection of children**

The development of a common understanding of language across a partnership is important to enable services and practitioners to be clear and unambiguous about what the risks and needs are for a child. This helps practitioners understand the differences between a child and their family needing help and what constitutes harm, ensuring that they receive the right level of support at the right time. This is especially important for those working in universal services, particularly schools and other education settings, who

have regular contact with children and their families and can offer an appropriate Early Help response when problems arise.

It is, therefore, important that there are clear criteria amongst all organisations and agencies working with children and families in Rotherham for taking action and providing help across the full continuum of need. This will ensure that services are commissioned effectively and that the right help is on offer dependent on the individual needs of each child.

The safeguarding partners have agreed with their relevant agencies the levels for the different types of assessment and services to be commissioned and delivered. A threshold document and continuum of need guidance, which sets out the local criteria for action, will be published as part of the online safeguarding children procedures and promoted to all partners. It will be transparent, accessible and easily understood.

This will include:

- The process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided.
- The criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
  - Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need).
  - Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm).
  - Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders).
  - Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child).
- Clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:
  - The abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.
  - Children managed within the youth secure estate.
  - Children with disabilities.

## 11. Dispute resolution, escalation and whistleblowing

Working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is essential to achieving good outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham. On occasion, there will inevitably be some areas of disagreement or concern between professionals, agencies or organisations in relation to safeguarding responsibilities, whether this is in relation to the decisions or actions of a single agency or organisation or within a partnership context.

Therefore, in order to promote and maintain effective multi agency working, it is vital that these concerns and disagreements are raised and discussed in a timely, open and transparent manner and that appropriate resolution is sought; and escalated to achieve this if necessary. Wherever possible, all efforts should be made to resolve these issues at the lowest possible level between professionals, agencies and organisations, as it is at this level that the child and their family's circumstances are known best.

For individual children's circumstances refer to the multi-agency [dispute resolution protocol](#) which provides guidance and a process for escalation and resolution of concerns. Ultimately if this does not achieve a satisfactory resolution then the Executive Group and Independent Chair should be notified.

Where there are issues which appear to be more systemic in nature then escalation should be made to the Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group and Independent Chair. If an issue cannot be resolved at the Executive Group, the Independent Chair will bring Chief Officers together in order to reach resolution.

The Independent Chair will arbitrate at the Chief Officer Group if an issue cannot be resolved. A log of all escalations and their outcomes will be managed by the Executive Group and reported into the Chief Officer Group and within the Safeguarding Partners annual report.

Each individual organisation or agency must have whistleblowing procedures and guidance available and accessible to their workforce, including volunteers. Further guidance on whistleblowing for organisations within the safeguarding partnership can also be found [here](#). This sets out the definition, legal requirements and what to do. Whilst the guidance provides a number of pathways for whistleblowing, if it relates to the safeguarding of children in Rotherham, a whistle blower may also wish to contact the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Partnership.

## **12. Safeguarding Effectiveness and Assurance**

The Performance and Quality Delivery Group is the lead Delivery Group for providing oversight and challenge in relation to safeguarding effectiveness in Rotherham.

### **12.1 Partner organisations' safeguarding self-assessment**

We will continue with the regular safeguarding assurance reviews of organisations safeguarding arrangements across the partnership. This is undertaken through a self-assessment by each organisation, followed by a peer challenge drawn from across the partnership and led by the Independent Chair. The safeguarding self-assessment standards are both inclusive and applicable to both safeguarding children and adults and are undertaken jointly with the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board.

### **12.2 Performance Management Framework**

The safeguarding Performance Management Framework is developed on a quarterly basis. It includes data and intelligence from across the partnership in relation to practice and outcomes for children across the continuum of need, including early help. It provides a holistic view of the effectiveness of partnership working, including single agency practice and findings from inspections, and a focal point for partnership challenge. Key trends, concerns or messages are communicated from the Delivery Group to the Executive Group.

### **12.3 Multi-Agency Auditing**

Auditing is one of the ways that the effectiveness of multi-agency practice and outcomes for children can be measured. It is a way of locating good practice in addition to areas for improvement and can provide a level of assurance to the way that partners are working together to safeguard children.

The Performance and Quality Delivery Group will develop an annual audit schedule which reflects the priorities of the safeguarding partnership and any emerging issues. Audits developed and agreed within the partnership and organisations are expected to allocate the required resource to undertake audit work within the timescales agreed in the schedule. Recommendations are developed from the findings of audits and transferred to the Learning and

Improvement Delivery Group for implementation. Periodically re-audits will be undertaken to establish whether the necessary improvements have been implemented.

### **13. Listening to the voice of children and families**

Rotherham partners have made a commitment to being a child friendly borough and through our new multi-agency arrangements we will build on the engagement with children and young people that is already in place. We will ensure that children in Rotherham have a strong voice in making sure that all partners understand what it is like to be a child or young person in Rotherham and what needs to happen to make their childhood as safe as possible. Their voice will influence decisions at a strategic, operational and individual level.

Safeguarding Partners will continue to work with the following groups:

- Youth Cabinet
- LAC Council
- Different but Equal Board
- Young Inspectors

Safeguarding Partners will receive reports on the following services:

- Child Protection Advocacy Service (Barnardo's)
- Rights to Rights (LAC children's rights service)
- Rotherham Young Carers service

All the quality assurance mechanisms of the partnership, the performance framework, case audits, agency audits and practice reviews will monitor the ways in which children's views are taken into account by services. We will seek increase the ways in which all services listen to the views of the children they are working with through routine feedback, consultation events with young people on specific safeguarding issues and through lifestyle surveys.

The aims of our work with young people will be to shape services based on their experiences, to increase their understanding of safeguarding issues and how to keep

themselves safe, but most importantly to understand how we can shape the environment and communities around children to enable them to be safe.

## **14. Inter-agency learning and development**

There should be a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, so as to identify what works and what promotes good practice; and where improvements need to be made.

In order to do this the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership will utilise a shared local learning and improvement framework across all those local organisations working with children and families. This local framework describes the way that professionals and organisations providing services to children and their families need to reflect on the quality of their services, outcomes for children and learn from their own practice and that of others. It explains the requirements for an integrated local learning and improvement framework and the principles to be used when undertaking Child Practice Reviews, as well as other forms of reviews, audits and quality assurance activity.

The Learning and Improvement Delivery Group is the lead delivery group for taking learning forward from this work and where necessary commissioning inter-agency training.

On an annual basis the Learning and Improvement Delivery Group will develop and publish a learning and development prospectus for inter-agency safeguarding training and workforce development. This will utilise a partnership safeguarding competency framework to enable all organisations to establish what the learning needs are in relation to their workforce.

The prospectus for each year will be based on the priorities of the safeguarding partnership and is flexible and responsive to emerging issues which have been highlighted at any point during the year. Training will be commissioned and delivered collaboratively with other partnership boards, for example, the Safer Rotherham Partnership in relation to domestic abuse.

Inter-agency training is mostly delivered from safeguarding leads within the partnership, however, some specialist training will be commissioned and from external provider where a need is identified and this is a priority. Training is at no cost to any safeguarding partner organisation within Rotherham.

Every participant is required to provide feedback in relation to the training course received and then as a follow up so that all learning activity can be monitored for impact on practice and outcomes for children.

## **15. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

The Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is the lead delivery group for coordinating local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases, at both local and national level, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving. Reviews should seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. They are not conducted to hold individuals, organisations or agencies to account, as there are other processes for that purpose.

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the National Panel) and at local level with the Rotherham safeguarding partners.

The National Panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance. The National Panel should also maintain oversight of the system of national and local reviews and how effectively it is operating.

Locally, the Rotherham safeguarding partners will make arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. We will commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.

### **Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:**

- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and
- the child has died or been seriously harmed

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It should also

cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment should be exercised in cases where impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately certain. Even if a child recovers, including from a one-off incident, serious harm may still have occurred.

**16C (1) of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) states:**

Where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if:

- (a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or
- (b) While normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.

Rotherham local authority will notify any event that meets the above criteria to the National Panel. They should do so within five working days of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. The local authority should also report the event to the safeguarding partners in their area (and in other areas if appropriate) within five working days.

Rotherham local authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The duty to notify events to the Panel rests with the local authority. Others who have functions relating to children should inform the safeguarding partners of any incident which they think should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review.

**The criteria which the Rotherham safeguarding partners will take into account include whether the case:**

- Highlights or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified
- Highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children

- Highlights or may highlight concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Is one which the child safeguarding practice review panel have considered and concluded a local review may be more appropriate

**Rotherham Safeguarding partners will also have regard to the following circumstances:**

- Where the safeguarding partners have cause for concern about the actions of a single agency
- Where there has been no agency involvement and this gives the safeguarding partners cause for concern
- Where more than one local authority, police area or clinical commissioning group is involved, including in cases where families have moved around
- Where the case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings

The Rotherham Safeguarding Partners will take account of the findings from local reviews and from all national reviews, with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally, including the way in which organisations and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The safeguarding partners will highlight findings from reviews with relevant parties locally and will regularly audit progress on the implementation of recommended improvements in conjunction with the other delivery groups. Improvement will be sustained through regular monitoring and follow up of actions so that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

When commissioning a reviewer for the report the Rotherham Safeguarding Partners will consider whether the reviewer has the following:

- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to local child safeguarding practice reviews, including the ability to engage both with practitioners and children and families

- Knowledge and understanding of research relevant to children's safeguarding issues
- Ability to recognise the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together to safeguard children
- Ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals, organisations or agencies involved at the time rather than using hindsight
- Ability to communicate findings effectively
- Whether the reviewer has any real or perceived conflict of interest

When compiling and preparing to publish the report, the safeguarding partners will consider carefully how best to manage the impact of the publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case. The safeguarding partners will ensure that reports are written in such a way so that what is published avoids harming the welfare of any children or vulnerable adults involved in the case. The report will be submitted to the National Panel and Ofsted 7 working days prior to the publication of the report on the Rotherham Safeguarding Partners website.

### **15.1 Transitional arrangements for Serious Case Reviews (SCR)**

Rotherham LSCB will continue to carry out all of its statutory functions, including commissioning SCRs where the criteria are met, until the point at which safeguarding partner arrangements begin to operate in Rotherham. Rotherham LSCB will set out any decisions on SCRs which are outstanding at the time of handover to the new arrangements.

Where an SCR has not been completed and/or published at the point the new safeguarding partner arrangements begin to operate, for example, if they have only recently been commissioned, Rotherham LSCB will seek to complete and publish the SCR within six months of the date of the decision to initiate a review, but has a maximum of 12 months to do so and can function as a LSCB that purpose only. The latest date for completion and publication of an SCR is 29 September 2020. In this 12 month grace period the LSCB will not commission any further SCRs or continue with any other former activities.

Information relating to any incidents where decisions on SCRs have not been taken will be passed to the safeguarding partners. The LSCB will also pass on to safeguarding partners

any information relating to learning arising from such SCRs (including where these are still in progress), so that the safeguarding partners can consider follow-up actions as appropriate.

During the grace period, LSCBs may not commission new SCRs, even if the incident occurred before the start of the grace period, or carry out any other former functions.

If an SCR is not completed or not published by the end of the grace period, the LSCB will pass the complete but unpublished SCR or where it has not been completed, all information relating to the review (which will include learning arising from it), to the safeguarding partners, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the DfE.

In considering such cases, the safeguarding partners will take into account any decision previously made by the LSCB regarding whether or not an SCR should be initiated. Particularly (though not exclusively) if further information comes to light about a case which was notified before the date of transition, they may decide to commission a local review, even if the former LSCB has previously determined not to initiate an SCR of the same incident. The safeguarding partners will determine how to make use of information from SCRs which remain incomplete (or complete but unpublished) at the end of the grace period.

The safeguarding partners may conclude, for example, that the information gathered during the course of the incomplete or unpublished SCR gives rise to the need for a local review. They may therefore decide to appoint a reviewer to undertake a local review, if they decide this is appropriate. The reviewer will be given access to the information from the incomplete SCR for use as appropriate.

The safeguarding partners are not required to publish completed but unpublished SCRs. However, they may do so, if they agree this is appropriate. In the interests of clarity, they should make clear that the review was commissioned and approved by the former LSCB.

## **16. Review of Partnership Safeguarding Arrangements**

The partnership will, through the Executive Group, carry out a brief review six months after the new arrangements are implemented. There will be a full review after one year and annually thereafter which will include the wider safeguarding partnership and education forum.

## 17. Reporting

In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the Rotherham safeguarding partners will publish a report annually. The report will set out what we have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

In addition the report will include:

- 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
- An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on our agreed priorities
- 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
- Ways in which we have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision
- 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
- Any updates to the published arrangements and the proposed timescale for implementation

The report will be published on the Rotherham Safeguarding Partners website.

The report will be submitted to other key local partnerships including the Health and Well-being Board, Safer Rotherham Partnership and the Children and Young Peoples Transformation Board. The report will also be submitted to the Council's Improving Lives Select Commission for scrutiny and a copy of the published report will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care within seven days of being published.

## **18. Funding and resourcing**

Working in partnership means that organisations and agencies should collaborate on how they will fund their arrangements. The three safeguarding partners and relevant agencies in Rotherham should make payments towards expenditure incurred in conjunction with local multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children. The funding will be transparent to children and families in Rotherham, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

The safeguarding partners will agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, and any contributions from each relevant agency, to support the local arrangements. The funding agreement and any decisions will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer Group with a representative of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioners office for that purpose. It has been agreed that for the 2019-20 financial year, the joint funding arrangements will continue on the same basis as for 2018-19 and be reviewed by the partners in readiness for 2020-21.

Organisations and agencies will also be expected to ensure that they support the work of the delivery groups and any task and finish groups through appropriate attendance of their staff required to support the work of the safeguarding partners. In addition partners will, from time to time, be asked to contribute to any conferences or events relevant to the safeguarding partnership and offer meeting rooms to facilitate multi-agency meetings.

## **19. Information Sharing**

Effective information sharing underpins partnership working and is a vital element of both early intervention and safeguarding. Research and experience have shown repeatedly that keeping children safe from harm requires practitioners and others to share information about:

- A child's health and development and any exposure to possible harm.
- A parent who may need help, or may not be able to care for a child adequately or safely; and
- Those who may pose a risk of harm to a child.

The Rotherham multi-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures which can be found here contain detailed guidance, which must be followed, in relation to information sharing including:

- The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- The Seven Golden rules for Information Sharing
- Confidentiality and Consent
- National Guidance on Information Sharing

## **20. Management of Data**

Prior to the new safeguarding arrangements in Rotherham being implemented, the LSCB will ensure that all historical records relating to the LSCB and its predecessor, the Area Child Protection Committee, are secure and are transferred to the new safeguarding partnership arrangements, including all information held electronically and in hard copy (including the records of information retained at the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, records management centre). This will ensure that any historical records that may be appropriate for the National Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse are kept securely and are traceable. The new safeguarding arrangements will adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations.

The Rotherham Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children is a statutory body in its own right, and is not a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 21. Appendix 1: Relevant Agencies

### Education and childcare

- The proprietor of an Academy school within the meaning given by section 1A of the Academies Act 2010.
- The proprietor of a 16-19 Academy within the meaning given by section 1B of the Academies Act 2010.
- The proprietor of an alternative provision Academy within the meaning given by section 1C of the Academies Act 2010.
- The governing body of a maintained school within the meaning given by section 20(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- The governing body of a maintained nursery school within the meaning given by section 22(9) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- The governing body of a pupil referral unit within the meaning given by section 19(2) of the Education Act 1996.
- The proprietor of an independent educational institution registered under section 95(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The proprietor of a school approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996.
- The proprietor of a Special post-16 institution within the meaning given by section 83(2) of the Children and Families Act 2014.
- The governing body of an institution within the further education sector within the meaning given by section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.
- The governing body of an English higher education provider within the meaning of section 83 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
- Any provider of education or training—
  - (a) to which Chapter 3 of Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006(c), and

(b) In respect of which funding is provided by, or under arrangements made by, the Secretary of State.

- A person registered under Chapter 2, 2A, 3 or 3A of Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006.
- The provider of a children's centre within the meaning given by section 5A (4) of the Childcare Act 2006.

**The above includes all Schools and Academies, Pupil Referral Units, Special Schools, Early Years Settings, Colleges and Alternative Provision.**

### **Health and Social Care**

- The National Health Service Commissioning Board (known as NHS England) as established under section 1H (1) of the National Health Service Act 2006.
- An NHS trust established under section 25 of the National Health Service Act 2006: **(The Rotherham Foundation NHS Trust, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust)**
- An NHS foundation trust within the meaning given by section 30 of the National Health Service Act 2006.
- The registered provider of an adoption support agency within the meaning given by section 8(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- The registered provider of a registered adoption society within the meaning given by section 2 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- A registered provider of a fostering agency within the meaning given by section 4 of the Care Standards Act 2000.
- A registered provider of a children's home within the meaning given by section 1 of the Care Standards Act 2000. **(Independent Children's Homes named here)**
- A registered provider of residential family centre within the meaning given by section 4(2) of the Care Standards Act 2000.

- The registered provider of a residential holiday schemes for disabled children within the meaning given by regulation 2(1) of the Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children (England) Regulations 2013/1394(b). (Liberty House).

### **Criminal Justice**

- The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) as established under section 11 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.
- Providers of probation services as defined by section 3(6) of the Offender Management Act 2007.
- Youth offending teams as established under section 39 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

(Rotherham does not have a Youth Offending Institute with the borough. Children placed in such organisation out of borough will be monitored by the Youth Offending Service which will also secure assurance on the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Institute.)

### **Police and Immigration**

- The British Transport Police as established under section 18(1) the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003.
- National Crime Agency
- Any person or body for whom the Secretary of State must make arrangements for ensuring the discharge of functions under section 55 of the Borders Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

### **Other agencies or organisations**

- Charities within the meaning given by section 1 of the Charities Act 2011

- Religious Organisations as set out in regulation 34 of, and Schedule 3 to, the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012
- Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.
- Any person or body involved in the provision, supervision or oversight of sport or leisure.

**The above includes all voluntary and community sector organisations, faith groups, youth groups, sports and leisure activities.**