

DRAFT

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Scrutiny Arrangements – May 2019

The three Safeguarding Partners:

- Local Authority
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Clinical Commissioning Group

have agreed a broad local direction of travel, with further exploration of regional arrangements as they develop. Scrutiny arrangements will be vital in ensuring that core child protection responsibilities remain at the forefront of the new Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. Scrutiny arrangements fall into three broad areas:

- Independent scrutiny arrangements
- Local scrutiny arrangements
- Regional scrutiny arrangements

Independent Scrutiny

The Safeguarding Partners are required jointly to ensure independent scrutiny to assure the effectiveness of the new Somerset safeguarding arrangements. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) states that:

The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

The independent scrutineer should 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 and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported. (WT 2018).

It is currently not planned to have an independent chair of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive but the three key Safeguarding Partners are exploring the option of an Independent Chair for the Quality and Performance function and/or independent auditors. Regulatory inspections (e.g. Ofsted, CQC, JTAI, HMIC) will also contribute to scrutiny arrangements.

The role of independent scrutiny is critical to provide assurance in assessing the effectiveness of the new safeguarding arrangements in Somerset, including arrangements to support Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Independent scrutiny will be most effective when it operates of all tiers of the partnership, from the

Executive to frontline practice to ensure the partnership's line of sight to children in Somerset.

It should be noted that, unlike the current Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board, there is flexibility under the new arrangements to appoint more than one individual to carry out independent scrutiny activity.

It is expected that an independent scrutineer will have the experience and skills to carry out robust scrutiny. In the longer term, it is expected that the five Local Authority areas in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary region will look to appoint a pool of independent scrutineers with sufficient experience, knowledge and skills to undertake scrutiny activity across the region.

Local arrangements for independent scrutiny will:

- provide objectivity, act as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to drive continuous improvement provide an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Somerset
- listen to the experiences of children, young people and families to ascertain how effectively local arrangements are working for them
- establish a framework for direct conversations with practitioners and how effectively the arrangements are working for them as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' with the increased focus on line of sight to frontline practice
- provide challenge to partners regarding thresholds for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- make links with parallel learning from the Child Death Overview Panel.

Independent scrutiny will provide assurance of the safeguarding arrangements at all tiers. Examples of independent scrutiny at each tier of the new arrangements are illustrated below:

Tier 1 – Executive level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent scrutiny and challenge through attendance at Executive Group• Risk management• Decision-making regarding cases which progress to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews• Disagreement resolution
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Tier 2 – Strategic Partnership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive critical friend • Promotion of reflection to drive improvement • Scrutiny of the annual report • Scrutiny of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews • Independent presence (or chairing) of Quality and Performance group for assurance of robustness of multi-agency arrangements
Tier 3 – Delivery level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct line of sight through contact with children, practitioners e.g. participation in safeguarding conversations, Section 11 peer challenge, 'look and see' activity

Local scrutiny

Partners in Somerset understand the key role of independent scrutiny in providing assurance, monitoring and challenging the quality of multi-agency work, in order to be assured of the effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the area. The Partnership will work to the principles set out below.

The SSCP will be focussed on learning as its outcome and scrutiny activity will be conducted in the spirit of positive improvement. A systemic approach will be taken to understanding, analysing and acting on learning across the Partnership. Somerset has experience of using tools such as appreciative inquiry to draw out evidence-based good practice and take this forward in a multi-agency partnership. The lived experience of children and young people in a multi-agency context will be at the centre of scrutiny activity in Somerset. Likewise, the views of and learning from frontline practitioners will be central to scrutiny arrangements and ensure that the line of sight on children and young people is maintained.

Locally, a framework will be developed which builds on existing scrutiny and quality assurance activity which includes, but is not limited to:

- multi-agency audits
- thematic and learning reviews

- Section 11 audits and associated multi-agency peer challenges to audit findings
- peer reviews
- Section 157/175 audits of education providers
- a twelve-monthly report in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' guidance.

The three Safeguarding Partners will also utilise and develop further internal scrutiny arrangements for each partner, as set out below:

- Police and Crime Commissioner
- County Council Scrutiny Panel
- Sustainability and Transformation Partnership
- NHS Quality arrangements

Key areas where independent challenge is currently offered are shown below.

Statutory functions of independent chair (WT 2015)	Decisions required/ options	Requirements under WT 2018
Decision on SCR/Child Safeguarding Practice Review following submission of Case for Consideration and rapid review (15 day timescale)	Executive to commission, agree and sign-off Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews informed by the outcome of the rapid review.	No longer a statutory requirement <i>Locally, safeguarding partners must make arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. They must commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken.</i>
Preparation and presentation of annual report to Health and Wellbeing Board	To be made 'widely available' on SSCP website	No longer a statutory requirement but a key aspect of new partnership governance arrangements

	The Chair of the merged Executive Group reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis, supported by the SSCP Business function.	<p><i>Safeguarding partners should make sure the report is widely available, and the published safeguarding arrangements should set out where the reports will be published.</i></p> <p><i>A copy of all published reports should 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.</i></p>
Presentation of annual report to scrutiny panel		No longer a statutory requirement

Partners are asked to consider how these functions will be carried out in the transition period to new arrangements.

Regional scrutiny

In addition, the Safeguarding Partners are exploring the possibility of a system for regional partners (outside Somerset but within the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area) to scrutinise the local Somerset arrangements. Regional opportunities for independent scrutiny will become clearer over the next few months e.g peer reviews, external challenge around Section 11 audits. Terms of reference for any regional activity will need development to ensure that collective resources are maximised and efficiencies made. These will be contractual arrangements. **Most scrutiny will be provided locally at the start of the new arrangements.** It is also proposed that to secure independent scrutiny, the regional Consortium considers a moderation system for the regional independent scrutineers, provided by non-related agencies.

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