

Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees
Safeguarding Children Partnership

Memorandum of Understanding



Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees
**SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN**
PARTNERSHIP



Purpose of this Memorandum

Safeguarding children; promoting their welfare and protecting them from significant harm; is dependent on the effective collaboration between agencies. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 emphasise the importance of joint working and set out the requirement for local areas to establish a 'Safeguarding Partnership'. The three named statutory safeguarding partners; the Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the chief officer of the Police; have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their local area.

The statutory safeguarding partners are to agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services and act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others. They must set out how they will work, together and with, any relevant agencies; organisations whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to articulate a commitment on the part of the signatories (the statutory safeguarding partners and named relevant agencies of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership) to collaborative interagency working to improve children's outcomes and to ensuring the effective translation of policy, legislation and guidance into day-to-day practice.

Principles Underpinning the Memorandum

All signatories agree that the following key principles will guide any activities they may undertake pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding:

- Safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare is a shared responsibility.
- There is a mutual recognition and respect for the contributions of all partners, both statutory safeguarding partners and named relevant agencies, to the safeguarding agenda.
- Awareness and appreciation of the role and responsibilities of others is essential for effective collaboration between organisations and between practitioners.

Aims of the Memorandum

The overarching aims of this Memorandum are to ensure that children and young people in Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees are safeguarded from harm, that their welfare is promoted and their outcomes improved. The Vision of the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) being for:

“Every child in Hartlepool and Stockton to be safe from harm, and to feel safe, secure, well cared for and able to reach their full potential.”

Robust collaborative working is fundamental to achieving such aims and, in entering into this Memorandum of Understanding the signatories acknowledge their commitment to:

- Ensuring their agency is committed and engaged in the children’s safeguarding agenda
- Embracing, at both strategic and operational levels, that safeguarding children is dependent on effective interagency working
- Fostering and embracing a culture of learning and improvement
- Ensuring that all frontline professionals have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children
- Boosting the skills and performance of all staff working in children’s services
- Ensuring attendance and participation in the Engine Room and Active Learning Sets (as and when required)
- Ensuring the dissemination of information from and to the Partnership

Governance

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership’s statutory safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for the local safeguarding arrangements and are accountable for the work of the partnership.

Working Together 2018 emphasises the importance of an integrated approach to service provision to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families. Fragmented provision of services creates inefficiencies and risks disengagement by children and their families from services. A key role of HSSCP is to monitor the effectiveness of the partnership’s co-ordinated safeguarding services to ensure children and families receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.

Whilst the partnership has a role in co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of work undertaken by local individuals and organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, it is not accountable for their operational work. Each partner, both statutory safeguarding partners and named relevant agencies, retains their own existing lines of accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by their services. HSSCP does not have a power to direct other organisations but has the power to require a person or body to comply with a request for information where the information is essential to carrying out statutory safeguarding functions and the power to recommend change for improvement in light of identified learning.

Each signatory has a responsibility to ensure their own organisation is informed of the work of HSSCP and particularly to highlight through their organisation's governance arrangements, any risks associated with that organisation not meeting its statutory responsibility in relation to safeguarding children.

HSSCP are required to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. This will report on the effectiveness of arrangements in Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; providing a comprehensive analysis of the safeguarding context, recognising achievements made and providing a realistic assessment of the challenges to be overcome and setting out the financial contribution.

Governance Links to other Partnerships

Effective two way links will be maintained with other partnerships who, at the heart of their work, support children and families. Regular dialogue and understanding of work taking place by each of the partnerships will inform targeted work, avoid duplication and provide greater opportunities for collaborative work to take place.

These Partnerships, Boards, Panels and Groups (non-exhaustive) are:

- Child Death Overview Panel
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Local Family Justice Boards
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements**
- Stockton & Hartlepool Children's Hub
- Tees Procedures
- Tees Safeguarding Adults Board
- Tees Strategic VEMT
- YOS Boards

Membership

HSSCP membership includes the statutory safeguarding partners defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017). For Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees these are:

- Hartlepool Local Authority
- Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority
- Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group
- The chief officer of Cleveland Police

It also includes the relevant agencies named by the statutory safeguarding partners. These are:

- Adoption Tees Valley
- British Transport Police
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Children, young people and families
- Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service
- Colleges, schools and Early Years settings
- Community / Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- Faith organisations
- Hartlepool Local Authority:
 - 0-19 service
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Public Health
 - Sports and Leisure
 - Youth Offending Team
- Local Housing providers
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- NHS England
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT)
- North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- Residents of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees
- Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority:
 - 0-19 service
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Public Health
 - Sports and Leisure
 - Youth Offending Teams
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)
- Teesside Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
- The Police & Crime Commissioner

HSSCP executive will be composed of senior managers from the four safeguarding partners. The HSSCP Engine Room shall be composed of managers nominated by each safeguarding partner organisation and will include managers from relevant agencies as and when required.

Members representing individual organisations must have sufficient delegated authority to effectively represent their organisation and to make decisions on their organisation's behalf.

The Independent Chair and Independent Critical Friends will be of sufficient standing and expertise to command the respect and support of partner agencies. They will act objectively and distinguish their role of independence.

Responsibilities of all Signatories

To achieve the aims, **all** partners, both safeguarding partners and relevant agencies are committed to ensuring within their member agencies/organisations that:

- Key messages and learning from HSSCP are disseminated in-house.
- Key messages, any area for concern or suggested lines of enquiry are shared as per the **Communication Strategy** to HSSCP.
- Staff participate in active learning sets, focus groups, audit or any other learning activity when required.
- Staff participate in training and development, including development days and the bi-annual learning events.
- Staff work in an open and transparent way and are accepting of independent scrutiny and review to inform future practice.
- Staff challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.

In addition to the above, all safeguarding partners are committed to:

- Taking any areas for concern raised by relevant agencies into consideration when determining lines of enquiry to be investigated.
- Informing relevant agencies, whose involvement is required in planned active learning, of the key lines of enquiry to be investigated.
- Sharing key messages and learning with all relevant agencies as per the communication strategy and make recommendations for change and improvement work to be completed.
- Organise and provide needs-led multi-agency training, development days and forums to ensure learning is addressed.

Duration and review

This Memorandum of Understanding will be effective on the date it is signed by the named members and, subject to any other agreement made between the Signatories, will continue in effect for an initial period expiring on 30th September 2019.

This Memorandum of Understanding will be revised in September 2019 following a 6 month initial review of the HSSCP arrangements and an annual review will take place thereafter in the light of emerging legislation, guidance and directions and the developing needs of children, young people and their families.

The 6 month initial review will be overseen by the Independent Chair to ensure sufficient scrutiny and challenge. It will include analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the new arrangements. The review will consider the appropriateness of membership to key groups such as the Engine Room, the effectiveness of structures and processes including communication and engagement, the appropriate identification of themes and learning, leading change for improvement and the impact of the above upon front line practice, most importantly on the children and young people of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees.

References

Children Act (2004) and Children and Social Work Act (2017), London: The Stationery Office
Department of Children, Schools and Families (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children, London: The Stationery Office

