

## North & South of Tyne Strategic Safeguarding Forum

### Guidance Notes for MASA plans

1. The purpose of this report is to provide guidance information to support the development of local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement, following the commitment of partners to develop local arrangements as a part of a wider footprint approach to MASA.

By following the same format this will help with sharing and inform how the wider MASA may develop.

Whilst there may be differences it is hoped that a consistent approach at this stage of planning, will support closer working arrangements and a North and South of Tyne strategic approach.

The guidance meets with the requirements of Working Together 18 and the questions are intended to guide your considerations and first submission.

We intend to bring together a group of key stakeholders from each local arrangement to undertake a sharing and learning exercise to:

- a) identify any possible improvements in the second draft of the plans and
- b) to inform some of the key choices and direction in formulating the wider footprint plan

The proposed timeline for this is as following

- 2<sup>nd</sup> week April submission of first draft to sharing/development meeting
- 1<sup>st</sup> week May sharing and learning analysis and feedback of plan difference.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week May draft North & South Plan
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week May Completion of second draft to agree local governance

Working Together 2018 provides guidance and this reflects the changes in approach and the more permissive approach, therefore in formulating initial and subsequent plans partners are required to consider the range and basis of activities and commitments contained in their plan.

Drawing on a brief analysis of published plans, reflecting the work done locally to date and taking into account some of the likely key issues that may be the focus of discussions re the wider MASA plan, it will be helpful to consider how the plan addresses the following:

- Each plan should make it clear the balance between **scrutiny** (find out what is happening) and **Learning** (making sense of why and does this lead to assurance, challenge or change).
- The plan need not seek to achieve transition and outcomes within the first 12 months, and a 3-year period with annual or more frequent time span is suggested.
- The position re current required frameworks (PMQA and L&I) are no longer prescribed. Evidence elsewhere suggests clarity about any framework that is proposed to underpin the

new arrangements and overall approach is helpful. (NB the evidence available nationally seems to involve a consideration of vision, principles, focus on practice, interpretation of scrutiny, assurance, challenge, learning. Where this is focused and on what basis and how this will be more effective, efficient, transparent and outcome focused, as key areas usefully addressed within the local context).

**The term Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) has been used to denote the correct technical label for arrangements. This does not preclude the use of a local title to describe the new MASA. It is advisable to avoid the use of the term Board as technically from September this term will not be recognised in the legislation and guidance.**

## **2. Shared Vision**

**Identify a shared vision, principles priorities and behaviours by all partners is considered essential to provide cohesive multi agency safeguarding arrangements for the local arrangement.**

Guiding questions

- Does your plan show how positive outcomes for children and young people are a key element in the wider local formula and how the focus on safeguarding joint working is informed by and informs this?
- How does your expression of vision and priorities reflect your current learning to result in a more effective, efficient and outcome focused arrangement?

## **3. Strategic Links**

To be effective, these arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and wellbeing boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and MAPPAs. What are the links to these Boards/Partnerships?

How will the local arrangement fit with other partnerships?

How will these arrangements build on your current learning to result in a more effective, efficient and outcome focused arrangement?

## **4. Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies**

Detail who are the partners and how they will interact and work together. To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies.

Governance, leadership, approach to independent scrutiny, reporting, dispute resolution, application of the equity principle, arrangements for decision making re Practice Safeguarding Reviews will all need to be addressed. This can also involve considering the form and frequency of how the SSP will provide governance and leadership and the relationship of this to how the arrangement will work especially in regard to Relevant Agencies.

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

It may be helpful to think about and identify

- why these organisations and agencies have been chosen; and how they will collaborate and work together to improve outcomes for children and families
- How 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
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families

### **How all early years settings, schools (including independent schools, academies and free schools) and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements**

It is likely that the plan will want to address this important area in some detail, the previous guidance had a different basis for differentiating between partners i.e. the list of agencies that were statutory board members. The new guidance forms a differentiation between the 3 Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies and does not prescribe a “board model”, therefore there is a need to re think differentiation, relationships, commitments and participation.

## **5. Leadership and Governance**

The plan has to identify how the new arrangements will be determined, structured and subject to appropriate governance, accountability arrangements and review. Therefore, the plan is likely to address and include the following:

- The leadership arrangements put in place by the SSP's in determining the new arrangement
- How this will work including a clear process for dispute resolution if the 3 Safeguarding Partners can not agree
- The relationship between the partners in terms of responsibility for managing staff, budget and resources
- The position of the new arrangements in relation to legal requirements re data protection, public interest exemptions, information management, GDPR. (See [Information](#) Sharing advice)
- Given the new arrangement may not have the “status” of the present arrangements whether any steps are being taken or considered to ensure there is no conflict of interest in terms of the outcomes of “independent scrutiny” and assurance.
- The position of the new arrangement in respect of any remaining or necessary powers that may be required to fulfil the guidance and legislation
- The position to be taken in respect of any arrangements for independent scrutineers, chairs and or involvement of lay members, given that these are not mandatory.
- The position to be taken and arrangements for procurement of services or resources related to the activity of the new arrangement

## **6. Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

There is key learning so far due to be published imminently by the national panel. This is one of the workstreams for the North & South of Tyne Safeguarding Strategic Forum which will help support a consistent approach with potential to support reviews on a wider basis.

The national panel are keen to see learning identified quickly and improve the practice. What will a local review look like and who will make the decisions.

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.

Meeting the criteria does not mean that safeguarding partners must automatically carry out a local child safeguarding practice review.

There will already be groups that exist that fulfil the requirements under Working Together 15. Are the right people round the table? What is the preferred methodology for local reviews? How will rapid reviews be conducted?

The duty to notify the National Panel rests with the Local Authority to how will this be managed and how will disagreement with the other statutory partners resolved? If there are disagreements with the national panel how will this relationship be managed? It is likely that the following will need to be addressed:

- Decision making and notification system management
- Capacity and arrangements for Rapid Review
- Capacity and arrangements for commissioning reviews, delivery and quality assurance
- Capacity and arrangements for managing relationships including National Panel
- Capacity, arrangements and fit with overall purpose, authority and responsibility of new arrangements for the implementation of learning and its impact.

The Plan will identify how all aspects of the requirements re Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews will be addressed, how these arrangements will be reviewed in themselves as well as how they fit within new leadership and governance arrangements.

## **7. Scrutiny, Assurance and learning**

### **Performance Data and Intelligence**

Whatever the particular approach and framework adopted in the local arrangement is, it is likely that capacity and arrangements for the identification, collection, collation and analysis of data and information will be an important element.

It is likely that the work done on agreeing a common set of data indicators across all arrangements will be one of the key baselines. The Plan will need to describe and explain the arrangements for, and the processes followed. How this will result in and relate to the overall effectiveness of the new arrangement in terms of outcomes that are measurable. In the context of being assured of joint working practice as opposed to a measure of process.

It will also be helpful to consider what resources will be needed and how this part of the approach to scrutiny and assurance will fit with other parts.

The plan may also want to acknowledge the basis on which the arrangement will arrive at specific areas of enquiry and scrutiny and how this will be balanced with a wider view of joint working arrangements and practice.

### **7.1. Quality Assurance**

Assurance/Audit or what is sometimes referred to as a qualitative approach to understanding how things are working, is an important and significant part of the present arrangements. This is often led and informed by the analysis of data and performance information. It can also be led by a range of other indicators and circumstances such as practice being considered as a part of the case review process, wider narratives or external developments

The approach to Quality and Assurance is presently approached within and through the current required frameworks, this in turn reflect the ways in which each LSCB interprets and responds to assurance of whether all agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Therefore, the parts of the plan that demonstrate how assurance that all agencies are joined up and working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across the safeguarding system may include or address:

- direct line of sight to frontline practice
- have live conversations with frontline practitioners
- talk with and receive direct feedback from children, young people and families
- test the interconnectedness between performance, practice and the voice of the child, young person and family
- The revised guidance does not remove the requirement for all to work within the expectations and prescriptions of legislation. However, there is not as there is now the requirement for the new arrangements to seek assurance of this through the Section11/157 audit.
- The different ways in which practice can be tested

### **7.2. Independent Scrutiny**

This is a widely understood term which is currently variously applied so can have different meanings, understandings and applications.

The plan will as far as is possible benefit from a clear and consistent application of how the use of the term links to functions, forms and behaviours). WT 18 provides a range of guidance that may usefully help those planning to firm up their plan. (See below).

Scrutiny resulting in objectivity, acts as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to drive continuous improvement and this may be informed by:

- listening to the experiences of children, young people and families to ascertain how effectively local arrangements are working for them
- providing opportunities for an independent perspective of frontline practice through direct conversations with practitioners and how effectively the arrangements are working for them
- providing an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in your area

- considering how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership
- reporting to the safeguarding partners any recommendations from their scrutiny and assurance activities
- contributing to a wider system of independent scrutiny which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections
- Addressing how the results of different forms of inspections will be taken into account within the arrangements
- There are several options for partners to consider. In some cases, the new arrangements are appointing an independent scrutiniser and/or developing associated forms of scrutiny such as reciprocal peer review arrangements. Some have an independent scrutineer who leads a small team of seconded specialists from the Statutory partners. Others are making the decision that the new arrangements, can be led by the partners or that they will engage a chair for the arrangement which would embrace the overall approach to scrutiny and demonstrating independence of the arrangements and the outcomes these produce

## **8. Practice Learning, Improvement and multi-agency training**

The Plan will need to set out and explain the position the new arrangement takes in regard to how it is assured (and ensures) that those who work with children within joint working arrangements have the necessary knowledge and skills.

It is likely to be helpful if the plan addresses the following:

- The approach to and source of the lead for multi agency workforce development
- The minimum standards and expectations
- How workforce development needs are identified and by whom
- The role of the new arrangements re the above and any delivery element overseen by the arrangement
- In relation to setting minimum requirements (and if delivery is a part of the arrangements) how assurance will be achieved
- How this will be overseen and resourced
- How this links in with the outputs from other elements of the arrangements for scrutiny and learning
- How this part of the local arrangements may correspond with the activity undertaken by others including other local arrangements including the regional approach.
- How is training identified and linked to strategic priorities? The statutory partners set workforce development and deliver training for their staff.

## **9. CDOP**

CDOP revised arrangements are the responsibility of the LA and the CCG and will need to be considered in terms of the relationship and fit with the MASA. Evaluation and discussion of how best to comply with the revised guidance is ongoing locally.

The plan will need to identify what if any role the new arrangement has in relation to the revised child death review arrangements, including any implications in terms of resourcing

## **10. Funding/resource**

The published arrangements should set out clearly any contributions agreed with relevant agencies, including funding, accommodation, services and any resources connected with the arrangements.

The plan is likely to require consideration of the following

- How, and on what basis and by whom are the arrangements going to be funded
- The approach to and any notional values placed on indirect contributions such as partner time
- The extent to which costs are fixed and or flexible and therefore how the new arrangement will demonstrate transparency, accountability and demonstrate value
- Where arrangements for supporting the new arrangements also include support to other functions (such as Safeguarding Adult Boards) how this will be managed in the context of demonstrating the former point
- How and what basis any shared funding and or costs will be approached across local arrangements and regionally.

## **11. Voice and Engagement**

The views of children and their families are essential to good practice. Everyone working with children and families must act in the best interests of children and young people. They should seek and listen to the “voice of the child “and reflect and respond to it in all aspects of the work.

The Plan may address the following;

- How the arrangements will place an emphasis on listening to children in respect of the standards of joint working practice and scrutiny, assurance and learning arrangements
- Demonstrate a coherent understanding of and approach to why this is important
- Identify the approach taken by the new arrangement to include and or take into account the views of children and young people in terms of governance, setting priorities, reporting and the extent to which they are active contributors to the new arrangements  
Demonstrate and indicate what forms this might take, and the resourcing needed to achieve this
- Indicate how will partners demonstrate that the voice of the child is captured in all frontline practice and how will this be shared across the partnership to improve the arrangements and develop learning.
- The fit with and or overlap with other local and regional approaches

## **12. Annual Report and Review**

What are the arrangements to agree, review and publish the required report that provides evidence of how the arrangement is working, how it is effective, what has been learned and how as a result the MASA will change and develop?

The MASA report can be produced at whatever frequency the MASA decides provided it is no less frequent than 12 months. It also has to demonstrate the application of the approach taken to and understanding of independent scrutiny.

Therefore, the plan may usefully set out the intended approach to reporting which may indicate the need to consider a fit for purpose approach to this.

### **13. Escalation dispute resolution**

What are the arrangements to escalate disputes and resolve?

### **14 . Information Sharing**

How will information and referrals be effectively managed in terms of early help, statutory interventions and thresholds as a consequence how will risk and vulnerability be managed.

### **15. Thresholds**

The new arrangement will need to set out the approach to Thresholds, the plan may usefully consider and address the following:

- The position and approach taken by the new arrangements to thresholds
- How thresholds are understood and what their purpose is
- What are the expectations that arise as a result of any published thresholds and what will be the arrangements for setting and reviewing them?
- The extent to which the approach to thresholds embraces pathways (single and multi agency)
- Whether or not in the light of some of the multi agency partnership and practice developments such as MASH and Early Help what approach and priority the new arrangement may assign to the consideration of different approaches
- The extent to which thresholds (or their replacement) will form a part of the scrutiny and assurance arrangements

### **16. Section 11 (Children's Act 2004) and 157/175 (Education Act 2002)**

The guidance makes it clear that the requirement and responsibilities placed on partners to comply with, demonstrate and evidence such compliance in respect of Sections 11 and 157/175 the statutory duty remains.

The Guidance does not require the new arrangement to directly seek assurance that these are in place and effective.

Therefore the plan will helpfully consider the following

- The new arrangements position for and intentions in respect of how assurance may be sought and how partners will be made aware and supported in this aspect of their responsibilities.
- Whether and if so, what approach will be taken and who will be included and how often this will take place.



## **17. Focus on vulnerability and risk**

The present arrangements are required to demonstrate how and on what basis the needs and risks that vulnerable groups are reflected and addressed alongside activity and output that focused on setting standards and meeting the other mandated responsibilities.

It is likely that the new arrangements will want to demonstrate how priority is given to activity that addresses specific risks and areas of vulnerability so the following may helpfully be addressed:

- Whether, on what basis and how the new arrangements will focus on specific areas of risk and or vulnerable groups
- Whether, on what basis and how the new arrangements will focus on “thematic” issues or areas of practice

### **Concluding comments**

- The first MASA plan can be recognised as a further step in working out what is important for the local arrangement in the light of the required changes. It can be helpful to acknowledge this in any forward or summary.
- It is likely that review points for the plan may need to be thought about given the possible foreseeable and unforeseeable developments, so it may be helpful to reflect this.
- Plans per se can only partially represent and signal the levels of aspiration, ambition especially in respect of change. The evidence suggests that in terms of the former arrangements, outstanding partnerships are able to embrace the “softer” and harder to quantify attributes such as relationships. Equally they can often only partially represent the extent to which there is confidence and capacity to achieve more than a minimum standard and be able to demonstrate how the new arrangements will not get lost in the face of competing and complex demands.