



Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board Terms of Reference

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination. For this reason the Children Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Section 10 of this Act places a duty to cooperate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people on the Local Authority and its Board Partners. The organisations which are partners are laid out in S 13(3) of the Act.

The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Hartlepool will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the area and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

The definition of safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people adopted by the LSCB and based on Government guidance is:

“Making sure that children grow up in safety and in a way that they are cared for; protecting them from harm or ill-treatment; making sure that their health or development is not damaged in any way and doing this in a way that means that children have the best possible chances in life.”

Effective Safeguarding arrangements in Hartlepool are underpinned by the three key principles which will underpin the activities of the Board and its sub-groups:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility
- All Services must ensure that the welfare of the child and young person is at the centre of any interventions and decisions that are made.
- All Services need to seek the views of children and young people so that they are able to tailor support for prevention and intervention.

2. Role and Scope of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board

The work of the Board fits within the wider context of all children’s services and aims to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in Hartlepool in respect of all the Every Child Matters Outcomes. Hartlepool Safeguarding Board will work across all three categories, having due regard to the central need to protect as outlined above.

The HSCB is **not** accountable for the work of individual organisations and each Board partner retains its own lines of accountability. The HSCB **does not** have a power to direct other organisations.

However, a key role of the HSCB will be to gain the agreement of the partner organisations to protocols and methods of working that will ensure that safeguarding activity is conducted in a consistent and integrated manner across all the organisations represented on the Board.

The Board will function primarily as a scrutiny and decision making body and will delegate responsibility for detailed examination of all aspects of its brief to five principle sub-groups.

Actions identified at Board meetings will be delegated to one or more of these sub-groups with the requirement that they report back with further information and recommendations for further action at a subsequent Board meeting

Statutory Board Objectives and Functions

3.1 Board Objectives

Working Together 2015 identifies the statutory objectives and functions of LSCBs:

- to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare includes **protecting from harm**. The guidance is clear that ensuring that work to protect children and young people is properly coordinated and effective remains a key goal of the HSCB

Board Functions

The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives and are as follows:

- developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to: the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
- training persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
- recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
- investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
- safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered; and
- cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners.

Each agency is required to develop their own internal procedures as necessary and will remain responsible for ensuring that their staff are compliant with these. Any procedures developed must be compatible with the LSCB procedures and be endorsed by the governance arrangements for the agency.

Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging all those involved (including the general public) to do so.

In carrying out this function the LSCB will consult with children and young people and take their views into account in the planning and delivery of services and, as part of its work programme, will establish a communications strategy.

The Board also has a responsibility in undertaking its monitoring function to report any identified weaknesses in services. This role will be undertaken by the Chair of the Board, initially through the normal reporting mechanisms of the organisation concerned but, if necessary, to the Director of Children's Services, the relevant inspectorate or government department.

Participating in the planning and commissioning of services for children.

- **undertaking reviews of serious cases** and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned
- **Learning and Improvement Sub-group** will undertake reviews as laid down within the guidance. Within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 the remit of this sub-group has been expanded to include promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the area. The sub-group will also take responsibility for updating, monitoring and reviewing the Learning and Development Framework. The sub-group will report to the Board on an individual and aggregated basis with regard to lessons to be learnt, including any changes required to local policy or practice, and will monitor any action plan in respect of such reviews progress on which will also be reported to the Board on an at least annual basis.
- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)** exercises its responsibility under Regulation 6 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 to collect and analyse information about each child death with a view to:
 - identifying whether there is a need for a Serious Case Review, any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children
 - identifying any wider public health or safety concerns arising from a particular death or from a pattern of deaths
 - putting in place procedures for ensuring that there is a coordinated response by the authority, their Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected death.

In addition the CDOP is charged with ensuring that a rapid response to any unexpected death is undertaken in a co-ordinated manner.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Individual members have a duty to contribute to the effective work of the HSCB. The key roles of a member are to:

- contribute to the effective working of the HSCB in promoting high standards of safeguarding work and fostering a culture of continuous improvement;
- represent their organisation or sector on the HSCB, speaking with authority for that body; committing the organisation or sector on policy and practice matters and holding them to account in respect of its work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within the Borough;
- represent the HSCB within their organisation or sector; ensuring that it is meeting its obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people; and
- be an objective member in undertaking assessments and scrutiny functions of the HSCB. Where necessary this should take precedence over the role as organisational or sector representative.

Members should be people who have a strategic role in their organisation in relation to safeguarding. They should be able to commit their organisation on policy and practice matters and hold their agency to account.

Chairperson

Appointment - The Chairperson will be appointed by the Local Authority, after consultation with Board partners. The HSCB is currently chaired by an independent person as recommended by Working Together, 2010.

Role – The Chair has a central role in ensuring that the Board operates effectively and in ensuring an independent voice for the HSCB. It is crucial that the Chair is of sufficient standing and expertise to command the respect and support of all partners and is able to act objectively, distinguishing clearly their role as HSCB Chair from any day-to-day role.

Accountability - The Chair is accountable to the Local Authority, (via the Director of Children’s Services) for the effectiveness of their work as the HSCB Chair.

Board Meetings

- a) **Meeting frequency** - The HSCB will meet every 6 weeks. The executive group will meet every 6 weeks to drive forward the work of the HSCB.
- b) **Minutes** - Minutes will be taken by the HSCB Administrator or their representative and distributed to members within 3 weeks of the meeting.

Sub groups

Much of the work of the Board will be carried out through its sub groups, each of which will have specific terms of reference.

The Board will agree the Business Plan priorities, most of which will be taken on by one or more sub groups.

SMART actions will be developed by the sub groups and these will form the Board's action plan.

Each sub group may provide specialist advice or information to the Board.

Any other actions identified by the sub groups should fit with the Board's priorities and will be agreed by the Board.

Support to members

New members will be offered an induction meeting with the Chairman and business manager, or lead officer. This will take place as soon as practicable after appointment. Members who resign are expected to give the Chairman due notice of their resignation, and to facilitate new representation. They will be invited to an exit meeting with the Chairman.

Funding

The budget and each agency's contribution to it will be agreed locally. Shared responsibility for the effective discharge of the HSCB's functions includes shared responsibility for determining how the financial and 'in kind' resources are to be provided to support it.

As set out in Section 15 of the Children Act 2004, other statutory partners may:

- Make payments towards expenditure incurred by, or for purposes connected with, the HSCB, either directly, or by contributing to a fund out of which payments are made.
- Provide staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources for purposes connected with the HSCB.