

# East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

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## Foreword

We are delighted to present our multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in East Sussex.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 created new duties for police, health and the local authority to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

Following the passage of the Act in April 2017, the Government published the revised statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. Changes included: the replacement of Local Safeguarding Children Boards with local safeguarding partnerships; a number of changes to conducting serious case reviews; and significant changes to the child death review process.

In accordance with the above guidance, this document sets out East Sussex safeguarding partners' local arrangements for safeguarding children. East Sussex has a strong track record for its work with vulnerable children and young people and this document outlines how local agencies will continue to build upon this foundation.

Following publication of this document we will be working to implement these arrangements by 29 September 2019.



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## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in East Sussex

- 1.1 **East Sussex will retain a local safeguarding partnership** that acts as a forum for safeguarding partners to:
  - agree on ways to coordinate safeguarding services in (the geographical local authority borders of) East Sussex;
  - act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging other agencies across East Sussex; and
  - implement local, regional and national learning, including serious child safeguarding incidents.
- 1.2 The arrangement will be called the '**East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership**'.
- 1.3 The three local safeguarding partners are: East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG, Hastings & Rother CCG, and High Weald Lewes Havens CCG) represented by the Sussex and East Surrey (SES) Commissioners.
- 1.4 The Lead representatives for the safeguarding partners are: the Local Authority Chief Executive, the Chief Executive Officer of the CCGs, and the Chief Officer of the Police, with **equal and joint responsibility** for safeguarding arrangements.
- 1.5 Although the lead representatives will delegate their functions, they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken. 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. These representatives are the:
  - Director of Children's Services, East Sussex County Council
  - Head of Safeguarding and Looked After Children, Sussex CCGs
  - Detective Superintendent, Safeguarding Investigations Unit, Sussex Police
- 1.6 The above representatives will: speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent; take decisions on behalf of their organisation and comment on policy, resourcing and practice; and hold their own organisation to account on how effectively they participate and implement arrangements.
- 1.7 Although the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP) will retain a focus on East Sussex, it should be expected that child protection and safeguarding procedures will continue to be developed at a Pan Sussex level, and opportunities for joined up working across Sussex will be promoted where appropriate. This will include:
  - Holding a Pan Sussex Strategic Leadership Group - meeting at least twice a year – with the Directors for Children's Services of the three Sussex local authorities, Head of Safeguarding, CCG, and Sussex Police. The Group will focus on setting the 'road map' for future partnership development and identify shared safeguarding priorities across the three areas.

- The Business Managers for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships across Sussex to meet on a quarterly basis.
- Identifying learning and training opportunities across Sussex – for example learning from safeguarding practice reviews and pan-Sussex training opportunities.

1.8 The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board is well established in East Sussex, it is effective, and it underpins the good multi-agency working that takes place in East Sussex. This is reflected in the Ofsted Inspection of East Sussex Children’s Services, published on 4 September 2018, which highlighted the role of the LSCB, and the Council, in providing oversight and challenge:

*‘Probing oversight and challenge from the corporate parenting board, scrutiny committee and the East Sussex safeguarding children’s board are routine, all closely holding senior managers to account.’*

1.9 In July 2018, a consultation exercise was undertaken with Board members, and discussions have continued during the past 12 months in relation to the future arrangements. Board members were not minded to make substantial changes to the way the safeguarding board is run, the structure of the subgroups, nor to the business unit that supports the work, beyond the statutory requirements to make changes. This is because it works well, and it makes a difference to the children and young people in East Sussex. However, the opportunity to hold discussions, conduct an impact review, and explore further Pan Sussex options has been welcome, and has informed the new arrangements for the ESSCP.

## Arrangements for Safeguarding Partners to work together to identify and respond to needs of children in East Sussex

- 2.1 The purpose of local arrangements will be to support and enable all professionals working with children and families in East Sussex to work together in a system where:
- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
  - Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own a vision for safeguarding children
  - There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues
  - 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 accurate and timely decision making for children and families.
- 2.2 To enable the above, the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP) will retain: a partnership 'Board' made up of statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies (see 6.1), which meets on a quarterly basis, and a 'Steering Group', to support strategic and operational decision making.
- 2.3 This will be supported by a subgroup structure (see Appendix A) which will lead on areas of ESSCP business, including: responding to serious child safeguarding cases; leading on quality assurance, including conducting multi-agency case audits; developing and delivering training for multi-agency partners and strengthening a culture of learning and development across agencies; and multi-agency groups responding to current safeguarding concerns, for example Child Exploitation. The groups will continue to be facilitated by the ESSCP Business Unit, be chaired by key multi-agency partners, and be attended by a range of managers from multi-agency partners.
- 2.4 The Terms of Reference for all subgroups of the ESSCP will be reviewed and published on the ESSCP website by the 29 September 2019. The terms of reference will include:
- How the safeguarding partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help (**Quality Assurance Subgroup**) and how they will undertake any multiagency and interagency audits
  - How inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact (**Learning and Development Subgroup**)
- 2.5 The ESSCP will produce an 'annual report' on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in East Sussex. The report will also provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services.

- 2.6 The ESSCP will work closely with the East Sussex Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) – for example in sharing members and coordinating training - and will present its annual report to the East Sussex SAB, East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, and East Sussex County Council People Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.
- 2.7 From September 2019, the existing Joint Protocol for Strategic Engagement across East Sussex will be revised to incorporate the new ESSCP, and be developed further with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Safeguarding Board, Channel Panel, Community Safety Partnerships, MAPPAs, and local Head teacher forums.
- 2.8 The ESSCP Learning and Development Framework sets out how safeguarding partners will encourage a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice. This includes child safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency audits, section 11 audits, and other reviews.
- 2.9 Safeguarding Partners are currently in the process of developing a ‘safeguarding pledge’ to children and young people in East Sussex, which is being led by the ESSC Children’s Participation Team. This pledge will be published by the end of 2019/20.
- 2.10 Further details on how the ESSCP arrangements will include the voice of children and young people is outlined in the ESSCP Partnership Board Terms of Reference, with activity overseen and reviewed by the Learning and Development Subgroup.
- 2.11 In relation to youth custody, there are no local settings that take children remanded by courts for criminal behaviour. East Sussex has one secure setting for children who require secure care on welfare grounds. The ESSCP will receive an annual report at Board which will facilitate discussion and scrutiny of the effectiveness of the secure setting; this is already established within the current arrangements.

## Funding contributions

- 3.1 Working Together 2018 states that agencies should collaborate on how they will fund their arrangements. The safeguarding partners have agreed the level of funding secured by each partner, which **is equitable and proportionate**, and any contributions from each relevant agency should be transparent to children and families, and sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews, training, staffing and associated costs, and project resources.
- 3.2 The safeguarding partners have agreed to be the sole source of funding and to agree an equitable contribution that in total matches the current LSCB annual budget.
- 3.3 Currently (pre September 2019) 'relevant agencies' contribute £5,234 to safeguarding children arrangements. This contribution is linked to free access to multi-agency training and will need to be reviewed under the new partnership.
- 3.4 Partners have agreed that future ESSCP budget will make an allowance for conducting approximately one serious child safeguarding review per year. Funding for additional reviews, where the ESSCP determines them necessary, and the budget is exceeded, will be considered by partners on an ad-hoc basis. Equally, where there is underspend on the annual budget, the amount will be carried forward to offset child safeguarding review costs the following year.
- 3.5 Safeguarding partners are sighted on the projected expenditure for 2019/20 as presented at the Board on 25 April 2019, and also as detailed in the LSCB Annual Report 2018/19.

## Independent Scrutiny of the effectiveness of arrangements

- 4.1 The ESSCP will retain an independent chair.
- 4.2 The Independent Chair will act as a constructive critical friend and promote reflection to drive continuous improvement. The Independent Chair will fulfil the role of the Independent Scrutineer.
- 4.3 The Independent Chair will also 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 will agree with safeguarding partners how this will be reported.
- 4.4 The Independent Chair will be held to account through an annual meeting with the Local Authority Chief Executive, the Chief Executive Officer of the CCGs, and the Chief Officer of the Police.
- 4.5 The job description will be reviewed, and the post will be advertised with a view to recruitment being confirmed by 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It is proposed the contract for the Independent Chair is similar to current LSCB Chair contractual arrangements.

## Relevant agencies and schools

- 5.1 The ESSCP will include those organisations and agencies whose involvement is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Relevant agencies, who will attend the ESSCP Partnership Board meetings, and other meetings as necessary, will include:
- CAFCASS
  - Eastbourne Borough Council
  - East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
  - East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT)
  - Hastings Borough Council
  - Lewes District Council
  - National Probation Service
  - NHS England
  - Rother District Council
  - South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
  - Kent Sussex & Surrey Community Rehabilitation Trust
  - Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
  - Wealden District Council
  - Voluntary sector representatives
- 5.2 The list of relevant agencies will be reviewed by the ESSCP on an annual basis.
- 5.3 The ESSCP Lay Members will also attend partnership meetings. Lay Members are independent of agencies and act as a critical friend and voice of children and young people at Board meetings.
- 5.4 Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure local schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers in East Sussex are fully engaged, involved and included in the ESSCP. Attendance at ESSCP Partnership Board meetings will need to include appropriate representatives from secondary and primary schools, and that the current developments and improvements in school engagement continue to be driven by the local authority Standards, Learning and Effectiveness Service (SLES).

## Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- 6.1 From 29 June 2018 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has notified the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (“the Panel”) of incidents where they know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected and the child has died or been seriously harmed. In accordance with the Working Together 2018 regulations, ESCC has notified the Panel of any serious incidents within **five working days** of the incident and **safeguarding partners have undertaken a rapid review of the case within fifteen working days**. Since June 2018 the LSCB has undertaken 5 rapid reviews.
- 6.2 The LSCB is currently undertaking three serious case reviews. One of the three reviews will be published before the new partnership begins; if the remaining two reviews are not completed or published by 29 September 2019, all information relating to the review will be passed to lead safeguarding partners.
- 6.3 Details of how the ESSCP will conduct local child safeguarding practice reviews are outlined in the ESSCP Learning and Development Framework, with further detail in the Serious Child Safeguarding Practice Review Protocol Guidance.

## Child Deaths

- 7.1 Child death review partners (Sussex CCGs, East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and West Sussex County Council) will publish their arrangements for the review of child deaths by the 29 June 2019 and will notify NHS England when they have done so.
- 7.2 A Pan Sussex Steering Group has been working to identify arrangements for reviewing child deaths in Sussex.

## Appendix A - East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership structure

