



GATESHEAD  
**safeguarding  
children**  
partnership

# **Gateshead's Safeguarding Plan**

2019-2020



# Gateshead's Safeguarding Plan 2019

## Summary:

Current safeguarding arrangements within Gateshead are robust and well respected. Outline plans for a more streamlined structure and system were agreed in principle by statutory partners during 2018-19, subject to final approval. Since then, real progress has been made in strengthening regional collaboration across Northumbria, with the support of DfE Early Adopter funding. This programme is exploring which key safeguarding functions can be more effectively undertaken across a wider footprint, and which functions need to retain a place-based focus at local authority level.

The proposals for implementation in September 2019 represent a transitional process. Some streamlining is proposed to the current arrangements, with greater integration between the children and adult boards; however, much of the current structure will be retained for at least 12 months.

During the course of 2019-20, further work will be completed on integrating functions across the Northumbria footprint, and a wider structure review will be undertaken in the spring of 2020. It is envisaged that in September 2020 new arrangements will be introduced.

***We are committed to the aspirations and content set out in this plan and will engage widely to ensure its success. We are also committed to the need to respond flexibly and creatively to new challenges as they arise.***

***Our new arrangements are designed to offer us the chance to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children and young people and support those who most need our help into adulthood. We agree and state our intention to ensure these plans help us continue to promote and improve the safety, welfare and health of children and families in Gateshead.***



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## Introduction

The Children and Social Work Act (2017) set out provisions which replaces Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) with new flexible working arrangements led by 3 safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police and clinical commissioning groups), and places a duty on those partners to make arrangements to work together with any relevant agencies for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the area.

Under the new legislation, the responsibility for Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) has also changed. Responsibility for SCRs will move to a National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel).

The Panel will commission and publish reviews of serious child safeguarding cases which it thinks raise issues that are complex or of national importance. Local safeguarding partners will still be required to complete local reviews where the partners believe there are lessons to be learned.

The Government published new guidance in 2018 that set out how local areas should work to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) with new partnership arrangements.

This plan sets out the transitional arrangements for Gateshead from September 2019.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** requires that as local safeguarding partners we set out arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children including identifying and responding to their needs.

A safeguarding partner in relation to our local authority area is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- Gateshead Council
- Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Police

Our Safeguarding Plan sets out our intention to work together and with wider partners to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for children and young people.

Over the last two years safeguarding partners have been strengthening the levels of joint working across the Northumbria region via a Safeguarding Forum supported by Early Adopter Funding from the Department of Education. The region covers the 6 local authority areas of Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland; 5 CCGs of Northumbria, North Tyneside, Newcastle & Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland; and 1 Police region.

In February 2019 members of the Forum agreed on a hybrid model as the preferred option for future safeguarding developments. This reflected a wider framework with a local focus but one that creates the opportunity to adopt a wider regional footprint in partnership with

other safeguarding partnership arrangements. Often described as more of an 'evolutionary' model rather than 'revolutionary'.

The plan is based on a proven track record of working in partnership to improve outcomes.

An Ofsted inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) across children's social care services took place in April/May which looked at early help, social work, commissioning of services and education. The LA was rated **Good**. Ofsted reported that children and families in Gateshead are benefiting from a good-quality service from skilled and passionate staff who care deeply about them, and there are well-established and developed strategic partnerships which are supporting effective multi-agency working.

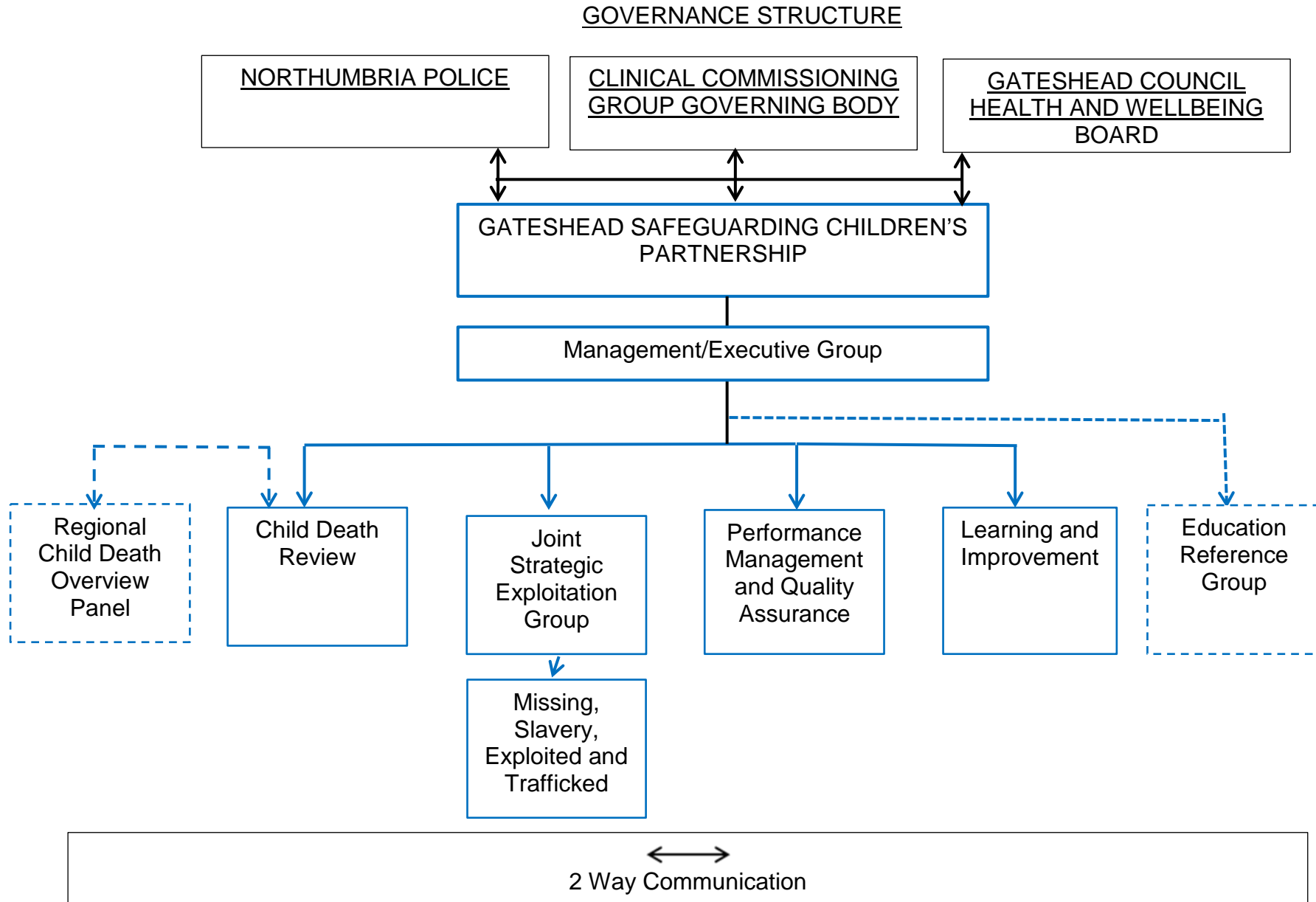
In the revisit to Northumbria Police in January 2019, HMICFRS identified that the Force is making sustainable improvements in child protection and safeguarding outcomes.

In 2018, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted an inspection of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) services and once again rated them as **Outstanding**. NTW are one of only four Mental Health and Disability Trusts in the country to be rated as such, as at 1 April 2019. The CQC reported the leadership, governance structures and culture within the trust were used to effectively drive and improve the delivery of high quality person-centred care and the trust worked collaboratively with other organisations to ensure the highest provision of care for patients.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust) was rated **Good** in 2015; currently awaiting inspection report for 2019.

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (0-19 service) was rated **Good** in 2019.

**Structure:** The diagram below is illustrative of the potential structure going forward.



We are committed to maximising the 'Think Family' approach by progressing and developing our collaborative work with the Safeguarding Adults Board as well as across other key partnerships. These include those relevant Boards within the three of the statutory partners, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Board. We believe this will better reflect the wider safeguarding context. We are committed to the aspirations and content set out in this plan and will engage widely to ensure its success. We are also committed to the need to respond flexibly and creatively to new challenges as they arise. The new arrangements are designed to offer us the opportunity to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children and young people at both a local and regional level.

At the heart of our work is one simple concept: ***that every child should grow up feeling safe and in a loving, secure environment, free from abuse, neglect and crime, enabling them to enjoy a happy and healthy childhood in which they can fulfil their social and economic potential***

## Priorities going forward

The current priorities of the Safeguarding Board were agreed over a one year period 2018-19, having previously been over three years. Due to breadth of these priorities it is suggested to keep them the same for the next 12 months but to include the transitional arrangements with the actions for 2019-2020.

The current priorities that could be adapted are:

- Voice of the child
- Early Help & Early Intervention
- Mental health & Emotional Wellbeing
- Child Exploitation & Missing

## Transitional Arrangements

The Gateshead Safeguarding children Partnership Plan will come into effect for 12 months from September 2019. The document sets out areas that will be a key part of the transitional arrangements and ones that will be subject to review and assessment of impact in Spring 2020.

## Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies

### Leadership, Governance & Accountability

Strong leadership is critical for the Gateshead Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to be effective in bringing together various organisations and agencies.

All three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements underpinned by equitable and proportionate funding.

Locally, the lead representatives have delegated their functions to the:

- Strategic Director (DCS) of Care, Wellbeing and Learning – Gateshead Council
- Director of Nursing and Quality Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group\*



- Designated Chief Superintendent – Northumbria Police

These safeguarding partners have the responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the children and young people's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, though the lead representative remains accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency.

***\*The CCG will continue to represent NEAS/ NHS England / NTW / GHFT and STFT as part of their formal role***

The lead representatives, or those they have delegated their authority to, are able to:

- Speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent
- Take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters
- Hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements

## Membership of the Safeguarding Children Partnership

### **The core membership of the Partnership:**

- Independent Chair (during transitional period)
- Gateshead Council Chief Executive or nominated deputy
- Chief Constable or nominated deputy
- CCG Chief Executive or nominated deputy
- (all deputies will be part of the senior management team in their organisation)
- Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board
- Director of Public Health

## Relevant Agencies

The strength of local partnership working is predicated on the safeguarding partners working collaboratively together with relevant agencies, whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership will engage local organisations and agencies to collaborate and provide targeted support to children and families. The local approach also enables joint identification of, and response to existing and emerging needs, and to agreeing priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 sets out the list of relevant agencies that are required to work under the auspices of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

It is important to note that:

- although safeguarding partner organisations are not referred to in the regulations, their staff are subject to the Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)

- that certain key agencies are not listed in the regulations, as their functions are commissioned or otherwise overseen by one or more of the safeguarding partners – for example, GPs, dentists and mental health service providers are already represented variously through the inclusion of CCG’s NHS England and Foundation Trust.
- the list of relevant agencies is intentionally focussed at a strategic, agency-based level – it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all bodies and individuals which come into contact with children

There are relevant agencies in Gateshead who can actively contribute to helping and protecting children. The list of local agencies (appendix) may change overtime to reflect the journey of travel.

Other organisations and agencies not identified in the relevant agency regulations will be included in the local safeguarding arrangements. Examples of these include the Fire and Rescue Service, Gateshead Housing Company and the voluntary and faith sector.

Where a relevant agency has a national remit such as the British Transport Police and CAFCASS the safeguarding partners will collaborate and take account of that agency’s individual responsibilities and potential contributions towards a number of local safeguarding children arrangements.

It is envisaged that subgroups will include representation from the three statutory partners with the added value of the partners who are currently involved. During the transitional year each agency will have the opportunity to be included on the sub groups.

## **Early year’s settings, schools, colleges and other education providers**

Early years providers play a crucial role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as defined by their duties under Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006. There are robust arrangements in place at a strategic and operational level to engage with early years providers to ensure they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities, for example through section 11 Safeguarding audits and statutory Ofsted Inspection reports.

Safeguarding partners also acknowledge the pivotal role that schools, colleges and other educational providers play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as detailed in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

There are well established, collaborative relationships with schools and colleges, which are built on a variety of open and transparent partnership arrangements across Gateshead. These include the primary and secondary Head Teacher Forums. There is an Education Reference Group which we hope will continue to provide a key safeguarding reference point for the Partnership as well as having a standing agenda item for feeding back any relevant information to and from the Partnership Board.

## Geographical Area

The boundaries for the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership will be those of Gateshead Council. However, work will continue with the regional collaboration via the Business Managers network and the North and South Regional Safeguarding Forum as outlined on pages 14-16.

## Strategic Partnership Arrangements in Gateshead

All three Strategic Partners will sign up to an updated Memorandum of Understanding that will help to clarify key issues and outline the process for escalation of concerns to other key Boards. This clarity and understanding will ensure that the partners are aligning their work and resources and supporting each other by delivering on a 'Think Family' approach to secure better outcomes.

The Partnership will deliver against an agreed work plan related to agreed strategic priorities and will report accordingly to the other aligned partnerships as well as their own, e.g. Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Board, CCG Governing Body, Police and the regional Safeguarding Forum.

The long-term Independent scrutiny of the Gateshead Partnership is yet to be determined. It has been agreed to maintain the role of the Independent Chair for the 12 month transitional period.

### **The Safeguarding Partnership will be made up of:**

**Safeguarding Children Partnership Board** – led by the three safeguarding partners and additional key multi-agency partners.

- Independent Chair
- Director of Children's Service or nominated deputy
- Chief Constable or nominated deputy
- CCG Chief Executive or nominated deputy
- (all deputies will be part of the senior management team in their organisation)
- Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board
- Representation from Community Safety Board
- Director of Public Health
- (Community & Voluntary Sector)
- Education representation Nominated Headteacher / rep from Education Reference Group
- Gateshead Housing Company
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Community
- Youth Justice Service

The purpose of the Board is to be the decision making body to oversee the agreed multi-agency plan to protect children and young people. The Board will review progress and assess strengths and areas for developments. This will include the oversight of the regional performance score card as well as other regional developments.

The Board will have a fixed core membership drawn from organisations across the safeguarding partnership in Gateshead, the list of relevant agencies as set out in Working Together 2018, and with the additional flexibility to co-opt other relevant professionals to discuss certain agenda items as and when appropriate.

**Management / Executive Group** – made up of representation of the three statutory partners and Chairs of the sub groups. The key aim of the group will be to keep the business of the Partnership on track and monitor the progress and impact measures against each priority. They will meet on a quarterly basis.

**Sub Groups will include:**

**Learning and Improvement Group** – focus on co-ordinating the outcome of any scrutiny and assurance activity, oversight and learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Review / Safeguarding Adult Reviews and to potentially contribute to the regional Learning and Improvement Framework

Learning and Improvement Group Cases that require a practice review will be referred on to the Learning and Improvement Group that will have responsibility for commissioning an Independent Reviewer. The Learning and Improvement Group will be responsible for maintaining oversight of the practice review and reporting progress to the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership.

Other cases that are not notifiable incidents but present opportunities for learning will be referred directly to the Learning and Improvement Group for them to consider whether a single agency review or local learning review would be appropriate.

A copy of all published reports will be sent to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care within seven days of being published.

The purpose of the Learning and Improvement Group is to promote a culture of continuous multi-agency learning and improvement through coordination of the review of serious cases and the development and communication of training, guidance, resources and tools. The group will ensure a process exists for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the findings and recommendations from practice reviews, performance management activity and multi-agency learning, including any areas for development from single and multi-agency inspections by regulatory bodies.

The commissioning and delivery of interagency training and learning events will be overseen by the Learning & Improvement Group and will be informed from a variety of sources. These will include, learning from local and national serious safeguarding practice reviews; other local quality assurance functions such as multi-agency case audits; and changes in national guidance or legislation.

The content of all courses will be evaluated to measure the extent of acquired learning. The Learning and Improvement Group will dip sample and audit single and multi-agency training in order to assure that the content is valid, up to date and delivered by persons with appropriate knowledge and skills – this will be achieved using task & finish group.

**Joint Strategic Exploitation Group (JSEG)** – The Joint Strategic Exploitation Sub Group is a sub group of both the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) and Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The remit of the group is to lead on the development of strategic work in relation to exploitation, including Child Sexual Exploitation and Adult Sexual Exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, and criminal exploitation.

The group will contribute to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults vulnerable to exploitation and improve outcomes by:

- Considering the implications of new policy, legislation, research and guidance.
- Exploring best practice on a regional basis and, where possible, aligning procedures
- Developing practice guidance for responding to incidents
- Developing a preventative approach
- Developing learning and improvement opportunities
- Establishing the current provision of support for victims

The group will have oversight of the Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficked Group (MSET) and the Adult Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Group (AMSET).

The group will develop and maintain links with other relevant partnerships.

**Missing, Slavery, Exploited and Trafficked (MSET)** – the local group will continue but strengthen the link with adults at risk of exploitation in order to give the same level of scrutiny to adult cases. This in turn will help to develop a local exploitation profile that can be fed into the regional work around exploitation.

**Performance Management & Quality Assurance Group** – this sub group is the key to keeping the partnership focused on safeguarding issues of a local, regional and national interest. It will lead on the multi-agency audits, quality assurance of all partners, scrutiny of external inspection reports, and input from children and young people. In addition, it will also assess the effectiveness of the help (including early help) being provided to children and families.

The PMQA will report up to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership on what is working well and what is not so that there is a clear line of sight on the quality and effectiveness of practice.

PMQA is to be attended by Senior Managers (or Assistant Directors) across the statutory safeguarding partners, and relevant agencies and chair/ deputy chair across various partnership forums.

There are two main functions of PMQA;

- 1) to seek assurances from agencies operating in Gateshead that they are safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and
- 2) to act as a critical friend to agencies working with children.

To achieve this the PMQA will oversee a multi-agency key performance indicator set, single & multi-agencies audits and will work with Youth Council, Children in Care Council and other youth groups to ensure children are part of the quality assurance processes.

All groups will meet on a quarterly basis and the current effective arrangements for the distribution of papers etc. remain.

**Rapid Review Group** – A local Rapid Review Group will be established to receive and consider whether notifiable incidents meet the criteria for a local or national child safeguarding practice review. The aim of this rapid review is to enable safeguarding partners to:

- gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time. discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children’s safety and share any learning appropriately
- consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- decide what steps Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership should take next, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review.

The Rapid Review Process (see Appendix x) shows how cases should be referred to the Rapid Review Group and how that group will respond within 15 working days of becoming aware of the incident. All recommendations will be shared with the Panel, Department for Education and OFSTED.

During the transition process, the Independent Chair will be the decision point regarding child safeguarding practice reviews and any recommendations for serious case reviews.

## Plans to Date and Going Forward

**Local** – it is anticipated that the key focus of the revised safeguarding arrangements will be based on a dual ‘Back to Practice’/ ‘Think Family’ basis where there will be a stronger connection between strategic and operational safeguarding functions that better aligns with safeguarding practice within the Partnership, demonstrating compliance, overview and evidencing impact for children and families.

There is the potential to strengthen the current MSET arrangements both at a local and regional level with greater alignment with Operation Sanctuary.

In addition, further collaborative working will be progressed with the Adult Safeguarding Board and the Community Safety Board. The more we progress towards a joint collaborative model the more we can add more substance and evidence to the ‘Think Family’ approach. In addition, we will be evidencing maximising the use of partner’s time, commitment and wider understanding of safeguarding across the life course.

It is important to consider the current and/or future arrangements within the organisations of the three statutory partners which may influence any local plans and /or arrangements.

**Regional** – the Business Managers across the region have made considerable progress on securing robust integrated and collaborative arrangements. These have included:

**Safeguarding Policies and Procedures** – agreed shared regional set of safeguarding policies and procedures. This will ensure greater levels of consistency across the region in terms of practice and provide some level of efficiency in relation to costs, maintenance and review.

**Next Steps:** Following the success of this piece of work the next steps are to explore the development of a regional joint multi-agency threshold / effective help document and referral form.

**Performance dataset and score card** – this has been agreed and will be introduced during 2019. This will provide more substance opportunities for comparative analysis, trends, themes, gaps and strengths in provision from which a regional approach can be taken to address.

**Next Steps:** improve the quality of the narrative and analysis and explore what elements of the performance dataset could be undertaken regionally and within what areas. Develop the role and actions of the local quality assurance process to align with the potential of a regional thematic approach to areas of data / performance.

**Learning from Serious Case reviews and learning reviews** – successful regional collaboration has resulted in the production of a regional electronic learning resource based on the theme of vulnerabilities in babies. The resource allows access to all materials produced across the region on this theme. This is both a cost and time effective resource in terms of increasing the level of shared learning across all areas.

**Next steps:** Develop additional regional learning resources across both children and adults.

**Section 11 Safeguarding Audit** – a shared S11 audit tool has been agreed across the region. It is anticipated that this will take place at the same time in each area. This will be a great saving of time for those partners who work across the region. Having one audit tool will allow for both a local and regional comparison and analysis of findings. The regional themes can then support the development of future regional priorities.

**Next steps:** consider building in the S11 audit into wider multi-agency audit process and develop a similar model for a regional Section 175 audit for schools and GPs.

**Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficked** – there has been an agreed regional approach to the running of MSET groups, incorporating adult sexual exploitation. The areas of transitions and involvement of adult cases of concern needs to be strengthened in order to be a robust regional approach.

**Next Steps: explore the possibility of developing one regional strategic MSET group.** This group would have oversight on the trend, hotspots and data analysis across the region from which agreed collaborative actions could be implemented and monitored.

**Local Safeguarding Practice Review Guidance** - work in progress on developing an agreed shared procedure (flow chart at appendix 1 being used to help develop regional framework). There is

already a joint commissioning platform for securing independent chairs and authors where required.

**Next steps:** consideration to be given to a shared regional approach to the approval and learning from reviews. The regional resource is a good starting point that has the potential to be developed.

**Domestic Abuse Prevention** - mapping work has already been completed to explore the potential for a shared prevention regional strategy. Proposals for a joint public awareness campaign expected June 2019.

**Next Steps:** explore the opportunities for the shared commissioning of domestic abuse programmes and sharing of resources.

Domestic Abuse is just one of the issues common across the region. Additional issues that could be tackled include neglect, early help and children in custody.

**Multi-Agency Training** – as safeguarding training is common to all Safeguarding Partnerships there is a real opportunity to take a regional approach. This could be a ‘hub and spoke’ model whereby one area co-ordinates the training offer with the potential for the other local areas, the spokes, delivering bespoke local training dependent upon local needs.

An option paper has gone to the Forum but no discussion / decision has taken place as yet.

**National and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews** - The Learning and Improvement sub group will have responsibility for the local process for identifying and making decisions on whether to undertake reviews, how lessons are learnt and embedded in the online safeguarding policies and procedures. The sub group will manage the arrangements for commissioning and publishing national and local child safeguarding practice reviews. During the transition process, the Independent Chair will be the decision point regarding child safeguarding practice reviews and any recommendations for SCR.

The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance. The Panel will also maintain oversight of the system of national and local reviews and how effectively it is operating.

## Scrutiny and Assurance

The new safeguarding arrangements will continue to reflect the current commitment and healthy culture of challenge and scrutiny already evident within the current local safeguarding arrangements. The current Board has evolved into an environment that is conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge.

Locally, there is a culture of challenge and holding partners to account. There are embedded systems and processes for professional challenge and there is evidence of scrutiny and assurance arrangements in place at all levels across our safeguarding partner organisations.



There is an ongoing drive and commitment to ensure continuous improvement leading to better outcomes and experiences for our children, young people and families. The North East-Northumbria early adopter status has provided opportunities to further test and develop innovative approaches to scrutiny and assurance. These are outlined on pages 5-6.

## Independent Scrutiny

The independent scrutiny function as set out in Working Together 2018, which will provide the critical challenge and appraisal of Gateshead's safeguarding partnership arrangements in relation to children and young people. The three safeguarding partners are responsible for determining local arrangements including involving other agencies. The role of independent scrutiny will form part of these arrangements and do the following:

- Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of services to protect children and young people
- Assist when there is disagreement between the leaders responsible for protecting children in the agencies involved in multi-agency arrangements
- Support a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge

The three key partners will develop a range of key questions in terms of the scrutiny function.

Whilst the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

## Funding Arrangements

Safeguarding partners will be required to provide equitable and proportionate funding to the Gateshead Safeguarding Partnership. The funding needs to be sufficient to cover all elements of the arrangements, including the cost of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

**In order to support the transitional plans the budget for 2019-2020 will remain the same as previous year. Future funding will be reviewed in January 2020.**

**Business Support** – The Safeguarding Partners will provide joint funding for business support to the Partnership to ensure its effective functioning, including training.

The Local Authority will provide legal and communications advice to the Safeguarding Partners and the Partnership, however, individual organisations reserve the right to seek advice provided by their organisation.

## Voice and Engagement

The ambition within the new safeguarding arrangements is to continue to engage with the ‘experts by experience’, all those children and young people who experience services, particularly the harder to engage. This remains one of our priorities.

Partners remain committed to continue and improve engaging with children, young people and families at an individual, service and strategic level. We will make use of the various systems, groups and forums in place to gather the views of children, young people and families.

We will work with established groups and forums to encourage children and young people to have their say, share their views and experiences, challenge and support local decision makers and shape and influence strategic planning, commissioning and service provision. Emerging issues, themes, and outcomes of engagement will be shared with the Safeguarding Partnership.

## Multi-Agency Thresholds

The multi-agency threshold guidance outlines Gateshead’s processes involved in decision-making when determining the level of support a child and family may require.

This document has the potential to evolve as part of the transitional arrangements in terms of the way partners work collectively to support families.

## Annual Report and Review

In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the Safeguarding Partnership will publish an annual report. The report will include what the Partnership has done as a result of the new arrangements, including child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. The report will also include:

- Evidence of the impact of the work undertaken by the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, and an analysis of the difference it has made for children and families from early help to looked after children and care leavers
- An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report’s period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

The report will be submitted to the relevant agencies and Boards for additional scrutiny and will be available on the Safeguarding Partnership website

## Dispute Resolution

All agencies working with children and young people in Gateshead remain subject to the pan regional Safeguarding Procedures and its Escalation Policy – *‘Resolution of professional disagreements between workers relating to the safety of children’*.

The Safeguarding Partnership all relevant agencies will be expected to adhere to the policy.

Where necessary, the statutory safeguarding partners may escalate to the Leader of the Council, the Chair of the CCG and the Chief Constable of GM Police. The Independent Chair should escalate to the relevant Secretary of State only as a final resort.

Whistleblowing Procedures provide an additional important route for staff to raise concerns in a safe process that protects their position, if this is a concern. The Children’s Safeguarding Partnership will each adhere to their own whistleblowing procedures.

## Information Sharing

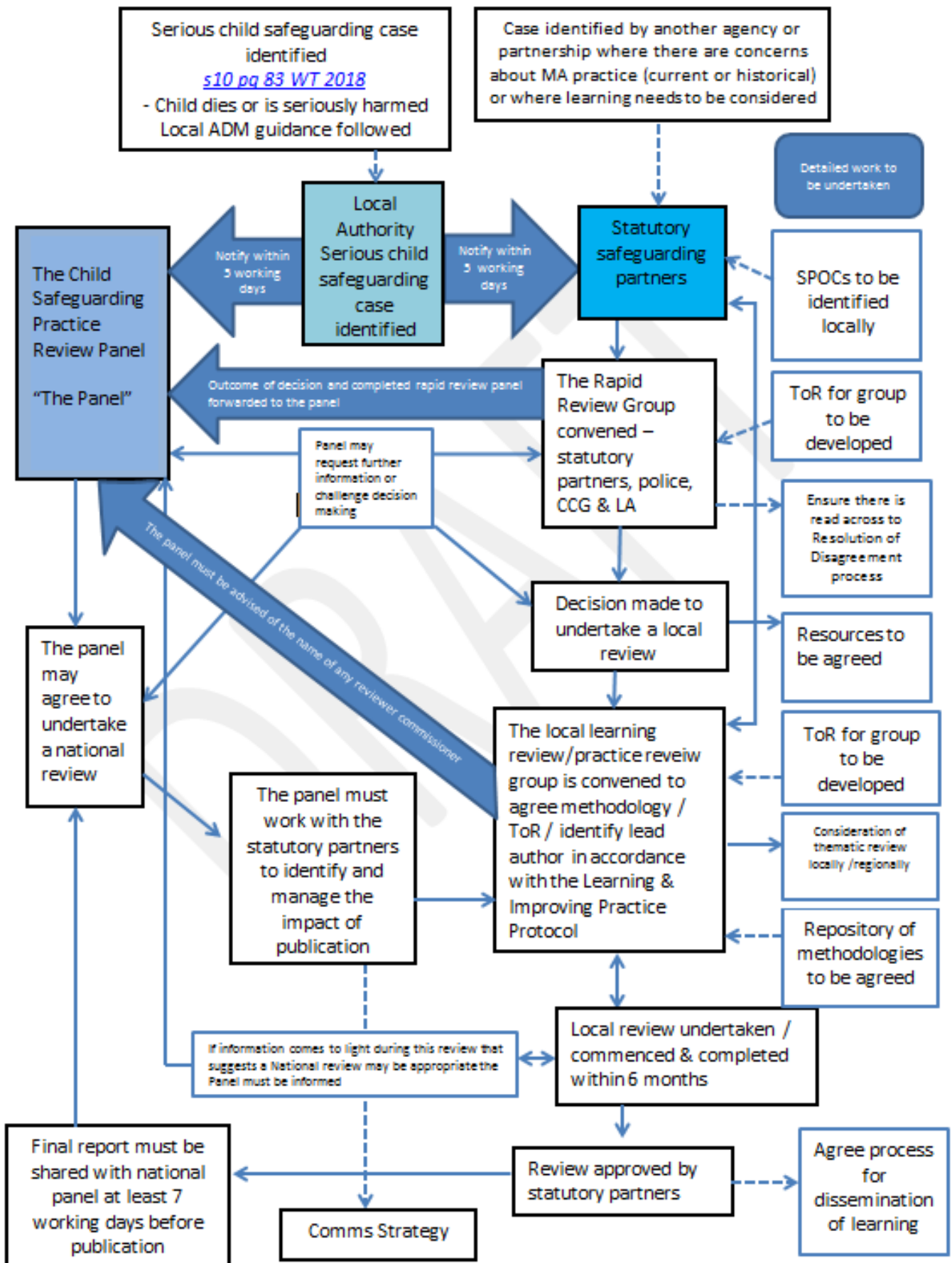
The Partnership members shall keep confidential any information obtained because of inter-agency co-operation unless disclosure of the information is necessary to discharge the functions of the Safeguarding Partners as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the local safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding partners may require any person, organisation or agency to provide them, any relevant agency, reviewer or another person or organisation or agency, with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the Safeguarding Partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Gateshead, including local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.

The person or organisation to whom a request is made must comply with such a request and if they do not do so, the Safeguarding Partners may take legal action against them.

As public authorities, Safeguarding Partners must be aware of their own responsibilities under the relevant information law and have regard to guidance provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office when issuing and responding to requests for information.

Appendix 1: Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews



## Appendix 2: Serious Incident Notifications and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Rapid Review Process

### 1. SERIOUS INCIDENT NOTIFICATIONS<sup>1</sup>

Where Gateshead Council knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected they must notify the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) if –

- (a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or
- (b) while normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It also includes impairment of physical health.

Gateshead Council will notify any event that meets the above criteria to the Panel and the Safeguarding Partners **within five working days** of becoming aware that the incident has occurred and will also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether abuse or not neglect is known or suspected.

Others who have functions relating to children should inform the Safeguarding Partners of any incident which they think should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review. Contact details and notification forms to notify incidents to the Panel are available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-child-safeguarding-incident>

### 2. REFERRAL

Agencies should inform the Chairperson of the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership, Learning & Improvement Group, of any serious incident which they think should be considered for either a national or local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, using the *Referral Form*.

### 3. RAPID REVIEW

When notified about an incident the Safeguarding Partners will ensure that a Rapid Review of the case is promptly undertaken.

The Rapid Review will be completed within 15 working days of notification.

### 4. INITIAL SCOPING, INFORMATION SHARING AND THE SECURING OF RECORDS

All relevant agencies who have (or had) involvement with the subject child or family will be required to contribute to a Rapid Review. An initial scoping of agencies' intervention will, therefore, need to be completed and other relevant information rapidly gathered using the *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* form.

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<sup>1</sup> 16C (1) of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017)

The purpose of the initial scoping and information sharing is to gather the basic facts about the case, including determining the extent of agency involvement with the child and family. More detailed information will be sought if the Rapid Review concludes the case has the potential to identify national or local learning and a decision is made to recommend a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review, a local Safeguarding Practice Review or an alternative learning review.

The *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* form will be sent out to all relevant agencies **within 2 working days** of receiving the referral, along with an accompanying letter that briefly outlines the referral and explains the purpose of this initial scoping document.

Agencies should prioritise completion of the form and return it **within 5 working days** of receiving it to the Safeguarding Partners' business support officer.

All agencies must secure all records/files in relation to the case, so they are not accessible to agency personnel other than through a nominated representative. Where access to the records is required for ongoing case work this must be agreed and monitored by a relevant manager.

## 5. SETTING THE DATE OF THE RAPID REVIEW MEETING

The Safeguarding Partners business support officer will convene a Rapid Review Meeting and invite key partners who have operational knowledge to attend.

The date of the Rapid Review Meeting will be set as soon as the *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* form has been sent out. The Rapid Review Meeting will be scheduled **between 7 and 13 working days** of receiving the referral. This will allow for analysis of the initial information to establish the key events in the child's life and inform the Rapid Review Meeting whilst also allowing enough time to prepare the necessary documents for the Panel.

## 6. DOCUMENTATION

The following documents will be shared with all those attending the Rapid Review Meeting:

- Gateshead Council *Serious Incident Notification* form to the Panel
- Completed *Referral Form* that initiated the process;
- Copies of the completed *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* templates from relevant agencies
- Where relevant Child Death Review Rapid Response Meeting minutes

Wherever possible the documentation will be shared with participants in advance of the meeting. However, it is recognised that it may on occasion be necessary to share documentation at the meeting.

## 7. THE RAPID REVIEW MEETING

The Rapid Review Meeting will:

- Review the facts about the case as presented in the documentation;
- Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately;
- Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;

- Decide whether to recommend a National or Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. If the decision is not to proceed with a formal Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the meeting will also consider whether an alternative form of learning review is appropriate. In some cases, the Rapid Review process may identify key local learning that can be quickly acted upon, removing the need for further review

The *Rapid Review Meeting* record will be completed and agreed at this meeting.

## **8. CHAIRING THE RAPID REVIEW MEETING**

The Rapid Review Meeting will be chaired by a member of the Learning & Improvement Group as and when required.

## **9. SHARING THE OUTCOME OF THE RAPID REVIEW**

**Within 2 working days** of the Rapid Review Meeting, the completed *Rapid Review Meeting* record will be sent to the Panel and the attendees, by the business support officer, together with a covering letter to the Panel.

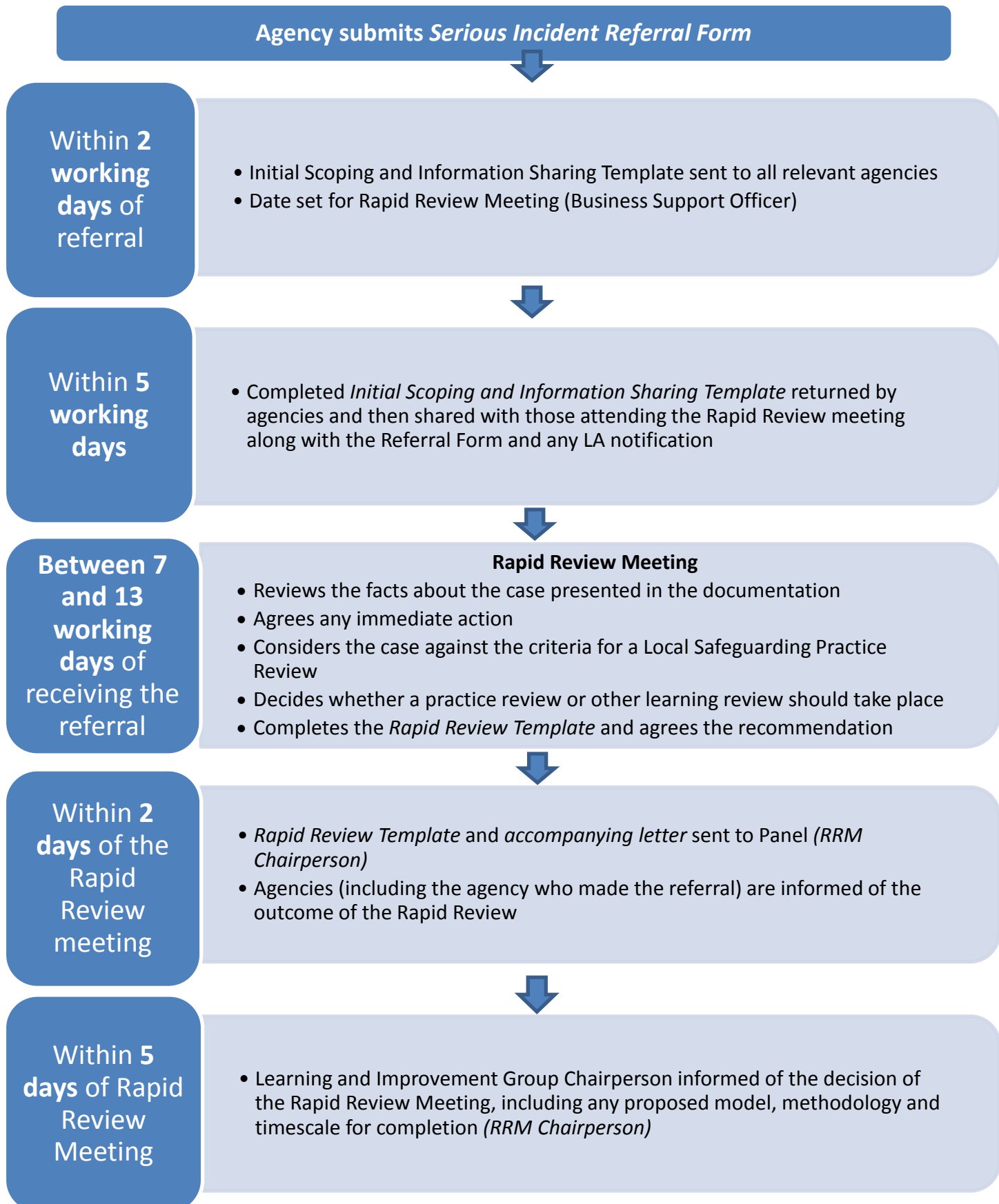
Other agencies (including the agency who made the referral) will be informed of the outcome of the Rapid Review.

The recommendation of the Rapid Review Meeting will be shared with the Case Review Group chairperson, so if required they can oversee the commission and progress of the review.

## **10. KEY CONTACTS**

Saira Park, Business Manager, 0191 433 8010, [sairapark@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:sairapark@gateshead.gov.uk)  
Joe Lowrey, business support officer, 0191 433 [joelowrey@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:joelowrey@gateshead.gov.uk)  
National Panel [Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk](mailto:Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk)

Overview of the process to decide whether to convene a Local Safeguarding Practice Review or alternative learning review and the associated timescales





Appendices – to be added

- Appendix 3 – Safeguarding Children Partnership terms of reference – to follow (draft ready for consideration)
- Appendix 4 – Partners’ Memorandums of Understanding – to follow
- Appendix 5 – Learning & Improvement Group terms of reference – to follow (draft ready for consideration)
- Appendix 6 – Performance Management & Quality Assurance terms of reference – to follow (draft ready for consideration)
- Appendix 7 – implementation plan
- Relevant agencies

Add links to:

- Strategic Priorities 2019-2022 – to follow
- Tyne, Wear & Northumberland Safeguarding Plan – to follow (once agreed)
- Learning and Improvement Framework – to follow (workstream BMs)
- Training Programme – to follow
- Child Death Overview Panel Guidance – to follow (workstream of forum)
- Information Sharing Agreement 2019 – to follow
- Media Protocol 2019 – to follow