



## **Terms of reference of the Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Determined by the Children and social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018**

### **Introduction:**

Chapter 2, Section 16 of the Children and social Work Act 2017 requires the safeguarding partners for a local authority area in England and Wales to make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### **Safeguarding partners:**

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

- a) The local authority (Central Bedfordshire Council)
- b) A clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)
- c) The chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (Bedfordshire Police)

### **Geographical area:**

The geographical footprint for the arrangements is based on local authority areas, however the safeguarding partners for two or more local authority areas may choose to be treated as a single area in relation to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire cover the local authority area of Central Bedfordshire.

### **Statutory and Legislative Duties:**

The safeguarding partners for a local authority area in England (listed above) must make arrangements for:

- a) The safeguarding partners, and
- b) Any relevant agencies that they consider appropriate

To work together for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and identifying and responding to the needs of children in the area.

The arrangements must also include a process for identifying and conducting Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews:

- a) To identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area, and
- b) For those cases to be reviewed under the supervision of the safeguarding partners, where they consider it appropriate.



The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Reviews should help to understand whether there are systemic issues and whether policy and practice need to change. Reviews should seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar issues.

Local 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. Local arrangements must commission and oversee the review for those cases where they consider it appropriate that a review be undertaken.

**Key functions:**

The purpose of the local arrangements is to enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted
- 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
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- 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 more accurate and timely decision making for children and families

To work together effectively the arrangements should also:

Facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries  
Ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families.

Within the arrangements relevant agencies and safeguarding partners will need to:

- Assure themselves that relevant agencies have appropriate and robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Ensure information is shared amongst relevant agencies and the safeguarding partners
- Communicate on a regular basis about the work that they will do together
- Have in place procedures for escalation and resolving disputes.

**Relevant Partners/Membership of the Central Bedfordshire Arrangements:**

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

Within the Central Bedfordshire the relevant safeguarding partners have been identified as:



- Independent Chair
- CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service)
- Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Local Authority, including Adult Services, Children's Services and Public Health
- Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service
- Bedfordshire Police
- Luton and Dunstable NHS Foundation Hospital
- Bedford Hospital NHS Trust
- BeNCH
- National Probation Service
- 2 lay members
- NHS England
- Education, including schools and the local college
- East London Foundation Trust
- Cambridge Community Services
- Representation from the Voluntary Sector (Voluntary Organisations for Children, young people & families, VOCyph and Central Bedfordshire Home-start)

**Links to other Boards:**

To be effective the Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements for children will need to link into other local partnerships and boards such as:

- The Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Safeguarding Adult Board
- Bedfordshire Channel Panel
- Central Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership
- Bedfordshire Local Family Justice Board
- Bedfordshire MAPPAs Panels
- Bedfordshire Youth Justice Board
- Any local improvement boards

Within Central Bedfordshire there is a joint protocol in place whereby the chairs from Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership, Children's Leadership Board and the Youth Justice Board meet on a regular basis to discuss cross cutting themes/issues and priorities.

**Independent scrutiny:**

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements must have in place arrangements for independent scrutiny which provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area. The scrutiny arrangements will also be involved in identifying and reviewing serious child safeguarding cases.



Safeguarding partners will need to ensure that the independent scrutiny arrangements are objective, acts a critical friend and promotes reflection and drives continuous improvement.

Within Central Bedfordshire it has been agreed that independent scrutiny will be carried out and overseen by an Independent Chair who is responsible for considering how effectively are safeguarding arrangements working for children, families and practitioners and how well are the safeguarding partners providing strong leadership.

It has been agreed by the 3 multi-agency safeguarding partners that it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) of the Local Authority to appoint or remove the LSCB chair with the agreement of the other 2 safeguarding partners. The Chief Executive, drawing on the other multi-agency partners will hold the chair to account for the effective working of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

### **Information sharing:**

Multi-agency systems are strong when information is shared effectively amongst and between multi-agency partners to improve outcomes for children and families. Safeguarding partners (and therefore their multi-agency arrangements) may require any person or organisation/agency to provide them, any relevant agency for the area, a reviewer or another person or organisation/agency with specified information. This must be information which enables and assists the safeguarding partners and their arrangements to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.

As public authorities the safeguarding partners should be aware of their own responsibilities under relevant information law and have regard to guidance provided by the Information commissioner's Office when issuing and responding to requests for information.

### **Accountability:**

The lead representatives for the local safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for putting in place the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, within Central Bedfordshire these are:

- The Chief Executive of Central Bedfordshire Council
- The Accountable Officer of Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Chief Constable for Bedfordshire Police

In situations where a clear and single point of leadership is required the three safeguarding partners will decide who will take the lead.

If the lead representatives chose to delegate their functions they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. 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 in the local arrangements.

The representative or their chosen delegated officer should be 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 arrangements.

### **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Structure and Sub-Groups:**

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in Central Bedfordshire will be known as the 'Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board' and consists of:

- *Safeguarding Children Strategic Board for Central Bedfordshire* – Overseeing, leading and scrutinising the multi-agency safeguarding work for children and young people in Central Bedfordshire.
- *A Central Bedfordshire Case Review Group* – This group is responsible for identifying serious safeguarding cases and taking forward local Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Co-ordinating Group* - Overseeing the work carried out by the sub-groups to implement multi-agency work around the agreed local safeguarding priorities.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Policies and Procedure Group* – overseeing the development and updates of child protection policies, procedures and guidance across Bedfordshire.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Voice of the Child* – A group taking forward consultation with children, young people, families and practitioners to help inform work and service provision.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Performance Group* – This group is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising local Performance information and intelligence around safeguarding children.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Learning and improvement and Training Group* – This group is responsible for taking forward a schedule of local multi-agency audits, implementing actions and embedding the learning and oversees arrangements for local multi-agency safeguarding training.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Neglect Group* – This group is responsible for taking forward multi-agency work to implement the aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Bedfordshire Neglect Strategy



- *A Pan Bedfordshire Technology Group* – This group is responsible for taking forward multi-agency work to implement the aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Bedfordshire Digital Safeguarding Strategy
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Strategic CSE and Missing Group* – This group is responsible for taking forward multi-agency work to implement the aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Bedfordshire *CSE and Missing Strategy*
- *A Pan Bedfordshire CSE and Missing Operational (CSEM)* – This group is a multi-agency group looking to problem solve local issues in relation to CSE and Missing Children.
- *A Pan Bedfordshire Young People's Mental Health Group* – This group takes forward multi-agency work to help promote the mental wellbeing of young people.
- *Harmful Practices Meeting* – This group is responsible for taking forward multi-agency work to implement the aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Bedfordshire FGM, Forced Marriage and honour Based abuse Strategy.
- *Safer Borders Meeting* – This is a meeting held with Border Force Officers from Luton Airport to receive updates and understand any safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable people who may travel through Luton Airport.

### **Reporting:**

In order to bring about transparency the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least every 12 months which sets out what has been done as a result of the arrangements including information on child safeguarding practice reviews and how the arrangements have been in practice.

The report should also include:

- Evidence of the impact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements have had including information about training and the outcomes 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 child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements.
- Ways in which partners have sought and utilised the feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.



The report should be widely available, and a copy of the report should also be sent to the National child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care within 7 working days of being published.

**Publication of arrangements:**

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements will be published in accordance with Working Together 2018 and will include the following information:

- Arrangements for safeguarding partners to work together
- Arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- Arrangements for independent scrutiny
- Who the local safeguarding partners are
- Geographical boundaries
- Relevant agencies
- Information about how early years and education settings will be included in the arrangements
- Information about how youth custody and residential homes will be included in the arrangements
- How the partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of help being provided
- Information about how training will be commissioned, delivered and evaluated
- How the arrangements will be funded
- Process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews and implementing the learning
- How arrangements will include the voice of the children and families
- Links to the local threshold document

**Dispute resolution:**

Safeguarding partners will work together to resolve any disputes locally.

**Funding:**

Funding for the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements including covering the costs of local child safeguarding practice reviews will be agreed by the local safeguarding partners. Funding arrangements should be equitable and proportionate and outline any appropriate funding from relevant agencies.