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**To:** County Council – 17 December 2019

**Subject:** **NEW SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN MULTI-AGENCY  
PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Divisions:** All

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**Summary:** This report provides overview information about the recently established Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) because of changes to the Children Act 2004. This is the new statutory body that has replaced the former local safeguarding children board which has ceased to exist.

**Recommendation:** The County Council is asked to NOTE the establishment of a new safeguarding children multi-agency partnership.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2015, the Government asked Sir Alan Wood to undertake a review into the effectiveness of local safeguarding children's boards (LSCBs). His review, published in May 2016, concluded that LSCBs did not work effectively and should be abolished. The Wood Review proposed a new model of collective working that would ensure better multi-agency collaboration, placing responsibilities on three key agencies to take a strategic lead on safeguarding and the promotion of child welfare in each local authority area. The Wood Review recommendations formed a central part of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.2 Under the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local safeguarding children boards, set up by Local Authorities, had to be replaced. The revised legislation requires the three 'Safeguarding Partners', that is the Local Authority, the Chief Officer of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups to make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies, as they consider appropriate, to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.
- 1.3 The Key Decision (19/00035) to adopt the new partnership was taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education on 15 May 2019. Information about the new arrangements which is contained in the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements document can be found via this link: <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/about-kscb/newarrangements>.

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to inform the County Council about the new children's safeguarding multi-agency partnership arrangements which have replaced the previous local safeguarding children board, better known as Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB).

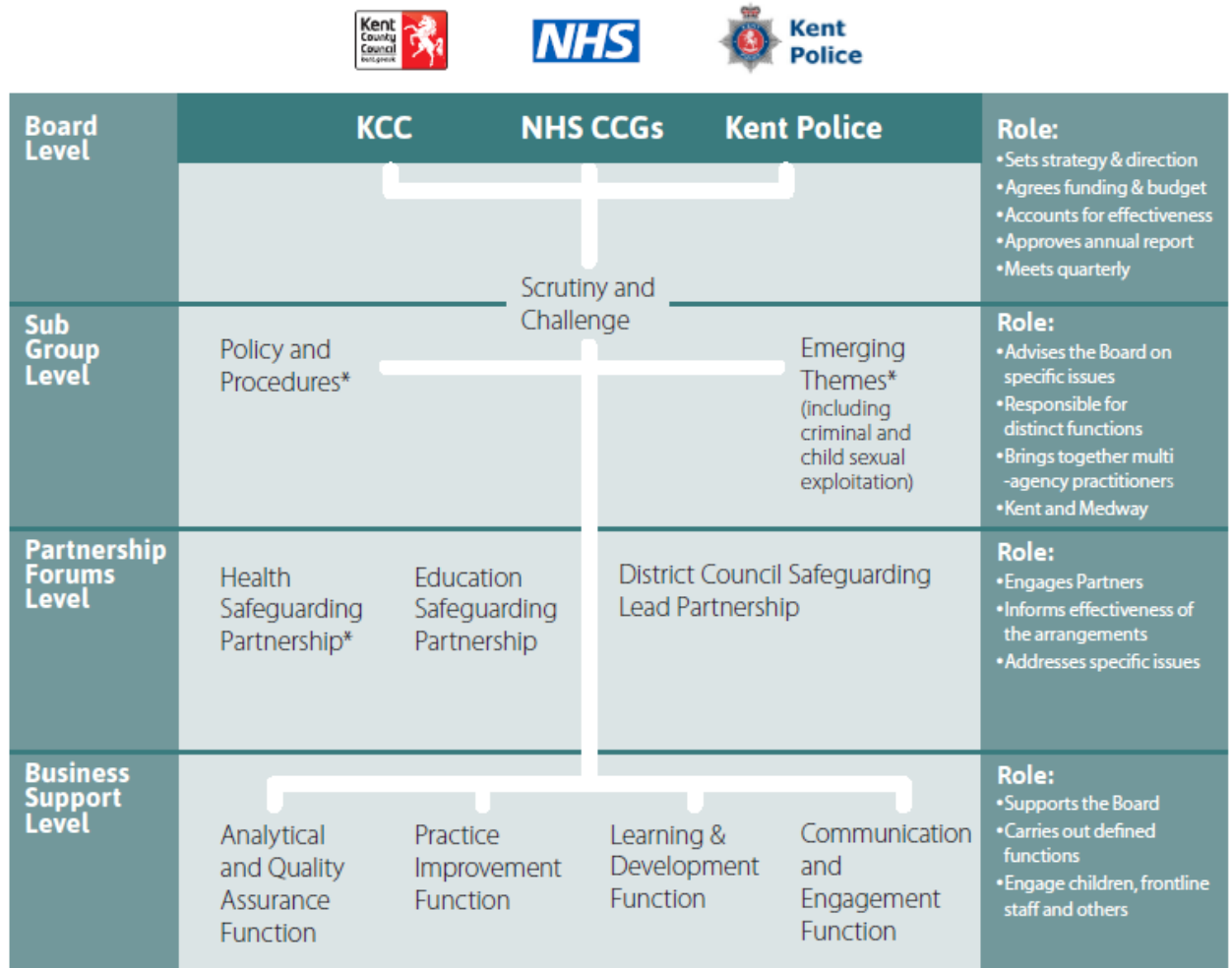
## **2. Policy context**

- 2.1 The statutory duties to establish the new multi-agency local safeguarding arrangements are placed on the statutory officers of the 'Safeguarding Partners'. The Chief Officers, namely, the Head of Paid Service (KCC), the Accountable Officer (CCGs) and the Chief Officer (Kent Police) have a *'shared and equal duty'* for the local safeguarding multi-agency partnership arrangements. The Chief Officers must be assured that the functions of the new arrangements are being delivered effectively. The Chief Officers have delegated their responsibility to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education and the statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS); the Chief Nurse of West Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Groups; and the Chief Superintendent for Protecting Vulnerable People Command Kent Police. The senior officers with delegated responsibilities will play a lead role in ensuring that relevant partners play a full and active role in the new partnership arrangements.
- 2.2 The statutory guidance from 2013 which sets out the roles of statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) remains in place. The statutory guidance requires the LMCS to be *"a 'participating observer' of the LSCB; they may engage in discussions but not be part of the decision-making process in order to provide the LMCS with the independence to challenge the DCS (and others) when necessary"*. So, although local safeguarding children's boards have been abolished, to allow the LMCS to continue to fulfil this statutory function within the new partnership, they will become a member of the Scrutiny and Challenge Group within the new partnership arrangements. All elected Members will have oversight of, and assess the effectiveness of the new partnership arrangements, through existing mechanisms to hold the statutory DCS and LMCS to account, e.g. Cabinet, the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Children's Assurance Board. The County Council itself will continue to receive annual reports on the new partnership activity just as it did under the previous local safeguarding children board.
- 2.3 The purpose of the new partnership arrangements, which is to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people', aligns with the broad thrust of the KCC Strategic Statement outcomes. Specifically, in relation to *'Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life'* outcome. The new arrangements are also in line with the Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy outcome 1 - *'Every child has the best start in life'* by supporting families, communities and universal settings within local districts to support all children and young people to do well and to stay safe.

## **3. New safeguarding partnership arrangements**

- 3.1 As mentioned earlier, the new multi-agency local safeguarding arrangements are known as Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP). A Partnership Executive Board has been established and it is comprised of senior representatives from the three Safeguarding Partner organisations. The Executive

Board held its first meeting on 30 October 2019. The Partnership Executive Board is assisted by the three subgroups - Policy and Procedures, Challenge & Scrutiny and Emerging Themes (including criminal and child sexual exploitation). Subject specific partnership groups covering health, education and district councils have also been established. It should be noted that some of the subgroups\* function across Kent and Medway and not just Kent. The outline of the agreed governance structure is shown in the diagram below.



\* Kent and Medway groups

- 3.2 The Lead Member for Children’s Services will play a key role in the KSCMP Scrutiny and Challenge Group. The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services will act alongside the Independent Scrutineer and the Partnership Executive Board to lead on the system of challenge and holding partners to account, in order to demonstrate evidence of system performance. Consequently, the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services will play a vital role in driving the multi-agency partnership to improve the overall system performance and effectiveness.
- 3.3 The new arrangements further underline the fact that all Members and officers share a joint role and responsibility as corporate parents to safeguard and support the children within their care and, to make sure that Safeguarding Partners have the right systems and structures in place to fulfil the County Council’s corporate parenting duties, in the best and most effective way. In practice, this means that Members should take a strategic overview and set the authority’s direction in relation to

promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and challenging the system whenever there is emerging evidence of deterioration in system performance.

- 3.4 Safeguarding partners are also under an obligation to select Relevant Agencies from a specified list of agencies whose involvement the Safeguarding Partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Kent. Designation as Relevant Agencies carries certain responsibilities which are set out in the statutory guidance. These include acting in accordance with the local arrangements, collaborating and contributing to the funding of the arrangements. Given the size of Kent and the number of organisations in the county, it is not possible to include every organisation. The summary list of the selected Relevant Agencies is shown in the table below.

<b>Relevant Partner</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
Education	Educates children in schools, colleges, and early years setting	Education Safeguarding Group
Health Provider Trusts	Provides primary, community and secondary health care provision	Health Safeguarding Group
Additional Social Care	Provides fostering, adoption, children's home, residential family centres and holiday schemes	Sector Forum
District Councils	Provides housing, waste collection and local planning	Council Partnership Group
National Probation Service	Supervises offenders and released prisoners in the community	Scrutiny and Challenge Group
Community Rehabilitation Companies	Provides probation and prison-based rehabilitation service for offenders	Scrutiny and Challenge Group
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	Looks after the interests of the children involved in family proceedings	Scrutiny and Challenge Group
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	Provides statutory fire and rescue service	Scrutiny and Challenge Group

- 3.5 The changes introduced by the Children Act 2004, as amended, are significant for several reasons. Unlike the previous arrangement which was the sole responsibility of the local authority to establish, the new partnership falls equally to the local authority, CCGs and police to establish and, for all three safeguarding partners to be held to account. The changes also include two types of safeguarding reviews. There is now a child safeguarding practice review (which operates across England as the National Panel) and a local child safeguarding practice review (rapid review for looking into serious cases). It is worth noting that local partners must now decide within 15 days as to whether to hold a local review or if the case is serious enough to refer it to the National Panel. Another significant change brought about by the changes is the role of the independent person (scrutineer) whose remit is to provide assurance on the effectiveness of the arrangements to protect children and to provide a robust scrutiny and constructive challenge.

#### **4. The outgoing KSCB**

- 4.1 The Kent Safeguarding Children Board published its final Annual Report in October 2019. The report includes a Foreword by Gill Rigg, the outgoing Independent Chair, which outlines the significant work of the Board and its Sub-Groups and its key multi-agency achievements. Full details of the year's activities and developments can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Board's Programme Development Officer developed and implemented the electronic Child Death Overview Panel (eCDOP) system, which has now been adopted as the national Child Death management process.
- 4.3 The Board have also driven the County's activity around better insight and management of episodes of missing children where significant work has been undertaken to join Police and Social Care data around children who go missing. This had led to a greater understanding of the incidents, reasons why children go missing and the use of information that has been obtained from Return Home Interviews conducted with young people. This has resulted in a marked reduction in the number of missing episodes reported to services.
- 4.4 The Board's determined drive around the understanding and identification of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) led to early recognition of the issue and the establishment of a dedicated Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation sub-group. This showed proactive thinking and assisted in the development of a County multi-agency sexual exploitation team. The associated county-wide training programme and establishment of multi-agency CSE Champions has ensured that the key work around preventing young people becoming victims of CSE has remained a core focus for the Board. Building on the eCDOP initiative, a multi-agency Intelligence system (eINTEL) has also been developed, where partner agency staff can submit CSE intelligence reports to the Police to assist in the development of the wider understanding of the CSE picture in Kent.
- 4.5 The Board's multi-agency training programme has continued to develop, with increasing numbers of staff receiving either face to face or e-learning as a result of the Board's offer. The training continues to be offered free of charge (with the occasional exception due to the cost of specialist trainers) and is seen as one of the Board's flagship activities. It must also be noted that the Board's Programme Development Officer received the national accolade of being the winner of the NSPCC Trainer of the Year 2018-19.
- 4.6 The Board has been required to undertake a significant number of Serious Case Reviews (SCR) over the past year, some of which are ongoing, and this has created an increase in demand of the key safeguarding leads and frontline staff in all partner agencies. The support offered by partners in the undertaking of these reviews is recognised and the resulting learning from those reviews undertaken is going a long way to assist in the provision of improved services to young people and children of Kent, and their families. The Board also developed an electronic SCR case management system (eCR) that has supported those engaged in the actual production and management of reports required by the Reviews.

- 4.7 The Kent Safeguarding Children Board was required to continue to carry out all its statutory functions, including commissioning Serious Case Reviews where the criteria are met until 17 September 2019, which was the date on which the new multi-agency partnership arrangements became operational.
- 4.8 During the past 12 months, the Board has been working towards the transition to the new Safeguarding Children Partnership. A programme of work has been undertaken to ensure that the Board has continued to undertake its statutory role whilst supporting development of the new Safeguarding Arrangements. The Board has provided assurance to the new Partnership that a seamless transfer of responsibilities would take place, with specific reference to SCRs and multi-agency learning in line with the requirements set out in the Working Together Transition guidance, 2018.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Amendments to the Children Act 2004 have placed a 'shared and equal duty' on the Safeguarding Partners (the local authority, clinical commissioning groups and police). The three safeguarding partners were required to publish a partnership document which explains their new arrangements by 29 June 2019. Following the publication, they had until 29 September 2019 to implement the new arrangements. Information about the new arrangements in Kent was published on 17 June 2019 and the partnership was put into effect on 17 September 2019. KSCB formally ceased to exist (except for relevant residual functions) at the point of the implementation of the new multi-agency local safeguarding arrangements.

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**Recommendation:** The County Council is asked to NOTE the establishment of a new safeguarding children multi-agency partnership.

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## 6. Appendix

Appendix 1: Kent Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2018/19  
<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/about-kscb/kscb/kscb-annual-report-2018-2019>

## 7. Background Documents

Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership Arrangements  
<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/about-kscb/newarrangements>.

Scrutiny and Assurance Framework  
<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/about-kscb/newarrangements>.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

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