



Kent Safeguarding Children
multi-agency partnership

KSCMP

Scrutiny and Challenge Group

Terms of Reference

November 2019

KSCMP Scrutiny and Challenge Group (SCG)

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose and Objectives

- 1.1 The arrangements in Kent for complying with our multi-agency obligations to safeguard children, as required by Working Together 2018, are laid out in the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership Arrangements. These Terms of Reference should be read in conjunction with that document and the KSCMP Scrutiny and Assurance Framework (SAF).
- 1.2 The primary purpose of the SCG is to assure the safeguarding partners of the efficacy of the safeguarding system and facilitate robust scrutiny and constructive challenge across the partnership.
- 1.3 The objective of the SCG is to ensure that the functions of the partnership are effectively discharged by the Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies as required by Working Together 2018.
- 1.4 SCG will, through the activity of the partnership sub-groups and the Partnership Team:
 - a) assure:
 - agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - the efficacy of the safeguarding system in protecting and promoting the welfare of children; and
 - the effectiveness of frontline practice.
 - b) analyse and respond to:
 - the activity of the whole safeguarding system;
 - the findings of independent scrutiny which helps to determine the effectiveness of our arrangements, (including arrangements to identify and review local child safeguarding practice reviews);
 - the voices of children and families; and
 - the voices of frontline staff.
 - c) have a focus on
 - the interconnectedness between performance, practice and the views of children and their families, including contextual safeguarding; and
 - the development of annual report.
 - d) identify early warnings of weak or declining performance, emerging risks or issues, latent or reoccurring concerns and areas for improvement.
 - e) Learn from good / best / outstanding practice.

1.5 Through the delivery of these objectives the SCG will be able to establish an understanding of how well children's safeguarding, as a whole system, is performing, identify early warning of risk and under performance and make recommendations accordingly.

2. Leadership and Chairing

2.1. The Chair of the SCG will be the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS).

2.2 The deputy Chair will be the Director of KCC Integrated Children's Services (Social Work Lead).

2.3 The responsibilities of the chair are as follows, to:

- Chair the regular meeting of the SCG;
- Agree agendas and approve draft minutes;
- Report to the Partnership Executive Board twice a year and at specific request;
- Liaise with the chairs of other groups within the partnership structure to deliver specific activity, as required; and
- Liaise with the Independent Scrutineer to ensure continuity in planning of the development of the annual report and other materials as required.

3. Working arrangements of the SCG

3.1 The SCG will meet twice in the first six months of the Partnership (November 2019 – April 2020). Thereafter, meetings will take place twice yearly and will proceed meetings of the Partnership Executive Board. Meetings will be arranged in advance on a yearly basis as from September 2019. Should the need arise, the Chair of the Group can convene an extraordinary meeting, either face to face or virtually.

3.2 Minutes will be circulated no more than 10 working days after the meeting.

3.3 Agendas and papers will be circulated not less than 10 working days before the meeting.

3.4 The secretariat and administration for the SCG will be provided by the Partnership Team.

3.5 Meetings will only be quorate if there is representation (excluding the chair) from all three Safeguarding Partner agencies (Police, Health and Local Authority). Where this is not possible the planned meeting will be rearranged at the earliest possible opportunity.

3.6 Substitution for members of the group is only acceptable as an exception. In this exception the officer substituting must be able to contribute meaningfully to the meeting and commission work in their own agency accordingly. Where the substitute cannot provide this level of contribution, the meeting will not be quorate, and the process described in 3.5 above will apply.

3.7 Meetings will provide a regular and formal opportunity for the SCG to develop assurance regarding the effective delivery of the requirements placed on the partnership and relevant agencies as laid out in the SAF. Activity will focus on the scrutiny and analysis of performance across the safeguarding system and will include:

- reporting against the agreed domains, themes, indicators and dashboards in respect of the safeguarding partners stated priorities;
- receiving a variety of detailed analytical reports to understand trends, statistically valid variations and analysis of the performance across the safeguarding system;
- pro-active timely reporting to the safeguarding partners, on the above, including recommendations for action;
- identification of partnership strengths;
- a focus on performance relevant to the preparation for single and joint agency inspection;
- utilisation of feedback from national and local inspection and review of safeguarding partner and relevant agencies;
- receiving and acting on updates on the lessons learned from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews;
- through existing fora, hearing the views of children and their families in regard of the support they receive and in respect of their “lived experience “of the safeguarding system and using this information to inform analysis of performance across the system; and
- support for the work of the Independent Scrutineer in appraising the safeguarding system and formulating the annual report.

3.8 In support of the above, much of the Group’s work will take place between formal meetings, and where required, the Partnership Team will establish relevant task and finish groups to undertake key activity.

4. Membership - Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Membership will include, but not be limited to:

- a representative(s) from each of the safeguarding partner agencies and relevant agencies who can reflect the data collection and analysis processes within their agency and who holds the knowledge and authority to present and commission work accordingly;
- chairs of the other sub-groups and partnership forums; and
- members of the Partnership Team as appropriate.

4.2 Those providing secretarial support from the Partnership Team will attend the meetings to take minutes and assist with broader administration.

4.3 Members of the SCG will be expected to:

- share information regarding:
 - data collection and analysis processes within their agency;
 - the context and interpretation of the information shared;
 - the impact of known risks and emerging issues;
 - feedback from local or national agency inspection and anticipated initiatives or legislative change; and where applicable;
 - provide information from representative fora with regards to concerns or emerging themes or patterns;
- commission further internal agency activity to support the objectives of the group or commit their agency to taking part in further joint activity; and

- scrutinise the information presented at group meetings and foster common understanding by using language which makes sharing effective and provides respectful challenge.

5. Relationship with other groups within KSCMP architecture

- 5.1 The SCG will report to the KSCMP Executive Board.
- 5.2 The SCG will draw information from the other groups within the partnership, analyse the information it receives and report to the Partnership Executive Board.
- 5.3 The SCG, as required, may commission further work from another KSCMP group in order to understand an issue or to gather more information. Where this is the case, the decision to request additional work from another group will always be ratified by the Executive Board.
- 5.4 The Chair of SCG will attend the KSCMP Executive Board, as required, to report progress towards agreed priorities and on key developments. This will be scheduled within the Executive Board agenda planning and that of the SCG.

6. Escalation Processes

- 6.1 Should the minutes of an SCG meeting record a dispute between members the process of escalation as described in Section 12 of the KSCMP Arrangements will be followed.

7. Ratification, Review and Refresh

- 7.1 These terms of reference will be agreed by the members of the Executive Board and reviewed annually or specifically in respect of any relevant legislative change that affects the operation of the KSCMP.
- 7.2 The Safeguarding Partners' Chief Officers shall approve the terms of reference of the SCG.