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Do not print this manual or parts thereof as these are likely to become out of date. It will be updated regularly and the amendments will be available from the Safeguarding Children Board website.

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Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board

PROTOCOLS MEDIA PROTOCOL

Section J 05

Version 2

Date 29/05/15

J 05 Media Protocol



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01 Background

Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) brings together representatives from various agencies and organisations in Stoke-on-Trent to work in partnership to protect children and young people in our City.

Agencies represented on the Board are:

- Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Children and Young People's Services
- Staffordshire Police
- University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- NHS Stoke-on-Trent
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Staffordshire Probation Service
- NSPCC
- Youth Offending Services
- CAF/CASS

The Safeguarding Children Board is the decision making body for multi-agency safeguarding issues in Stoke-on-Trent. The work of the Board aims to improve the well-being of children and young people in our city with respect to the five priority outcomes highlighted in Working Together to Safeguard Children and defined in the government document, Every Child Matters:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being.

Each of the agencies represented on the Safeguarding Children Board will have their own media protocols relating to their direct area of work. This protocol outlines how the Safeguarding Children Board will monitor and react to media articles and enquiries within the context outlined above.

02 Media Monitoring

- The City Council already monitors its media coverage in relation to the work of its Directorates.
- In addition, the City Council will monitor the local media for specific articles which would reflect on the work of the Safeguarding Children Board.
- The City Council will not monitor local media for safeguarding issues specific to an individual partner agency.

03 Responding to negative articles

- Queries pertaining to safeguarding issues in relation to a specific partner of the Board will not be responded to by the Board. It will be the responsibility of each individual agency to respond using their own media protocols. However, a generic statement (Appendix A) about that agency's role on the Safeguarding Children Board and the work of the Board should accompany any response on safeguarding issues.
- It is the responsibility of the individual agency to bring any negative press coverage relating to safeguarding, to the attention of the Board at their earliest convenience. (This may be at the next scheduled Board Meeting.)
- No individual officer of the Safeguarding Children Board should respond to media enquiries relating to multi-agency safeguarding issues.
- Media enquiries should be forwarded to the City Council Press Office.
- A number of members of the Board, who are media trained, should be identified as Safeguarding Children Board representatives with the media.
- Should a written response be necessary, the City Council Press Office will draft the response which will be approved by at least one of the Board's nominated representatives prior to release.
- Should a verbal response be required, the City Council Press Office will co-ordinate interviews with one of the nominated Board representatives.

04 When the Safeguarding Children Board will respond

- The City Council Press Office is generally offered the right to reply before a negative media article is published. If it is deemed necessary, the press office will draft a response for approval by a member of the Board. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the Press Office to facilitate a conversation with a representative from the Board.
- If a negative article is published with no prior consultation, the Safeguarding Children Board will only respond if they have been unfairly represented. This will avoid exacerbating any negative coverage.
- Occasionally, it may be necessary for the Safeguarding Children Board to release statements in response to negative media coverage. In this instance statements will be drafted by the City Council Press Office and approved by the Board prior to being posted in the news section of the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children website.

05 Proactive press releases

As part of its duty to communicate with a range of audiences, the Safeguarding Children Board may wish to develop press releases to distribute to local media, or individual agencies may distribute press releases around safeguarding issues:

- Where individual agencies are distributing press releases, these should be accompanied by generic text about the work of the Board (Appendix A) in their notes to editors.
- Where the Board has a positive proactive press release to distribute, this will be developed by the Communication and Publicity Sub Committee as part of their business plan and distributed through the City Council Press Office.
- All press releases distributed by the Safeguarding Children Board will carry consistent notes to editors (Appendix B).

Appendix A

Generic notes to editors to accompany individual agencies' press releases:

(Agency Name)..... is a member of the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board. The Board brings together representatives from various agencies and organisations in Stoke-on-Trent to work in partnership to protect children and young people. By sharing our expertise and best practice we can make sure that children, young people and their families have access to the correct support and services they need.

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Where agencies are represented on more than one Safeguarding Children Board then this text will be modified to:

(Agency Name) is a member of the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board, **and (Any other)** Safeguarding Children Board. The Boards bring together representatives from various local agencies and organisations to work in partnership to protect children. By sharing our expertise and best practice we can make sure that children, young people and their families have access to the correct support and services they need.

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Plus website addresses for other Safeguarding Children Boards on which the agency is represented.

Appendix B

Generic notes to editors to accompany Safeguarding Children Board press releases:

The Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board brings together representatives from various agencies and organisations in Stoke-on-Trent to work in partnership to protect children. By sharing our expertise and best practice we can make sure that children, young people and their families have access to the correct support and services they need.

Agencies represented on the Board are:

- Stoke-on-Trent City Council – Children and Young People’s Services
- Staffordshire Police
- University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- NHS Stoke-on-Trent
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Staffordshire Probation Service
- NSPCC
- Youth Offending Services
- Connexions Staffordshire
- CAFCASS

The Board was established by Stoke-on-Trent City Council under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 in its capacity as the Children’s Services Authority for this area. New legislation directed that all local authorities must have a Safeguarding Children Board in place, with key partner agencies actively involved in taking responsibility for the protection and safeguarding of children and young people. The Board became operative on 1 April 2006 and replaced the Area Child Protection Committee on this date.

The Safeguarding Children Board is the decision making body for multi-agency safeguarding issues in Stoke-on-Trent. The work of the board aims to improve the well being of children and young people in our city in respect of the five priority outcomes highlighted in Working Together to Safeguard Children and defined in the government document, Every Child Matters:

- Being healthy
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Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board recognises its responsibilities to safeguard and protect its children and young people and endeavours to facilitate positive partnership working throughout the community.