APPENDIX 11 MEDIA PROTOCOL JUNE 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Newcastle Safeguarding Partners have a responsibility to establish clear and coherent lines of communication between partners to handle media relations and proactive media release.
- 1.2 It is important that the Safeguarding Partners establish a multi-agency protocol to ensure effective interaction with the media to promote better understanding of its work, respond to media enquiries and protect the reputation of the partnership and organisations involved.
- 1.3 Historically Newcastle City Council's Press Office have been the first point of contact for all Safeguarding Partnership enquiries and has functioned as a broker for all the partners, drafting responses and passing requests to the responsible agencies for approval.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 As a multi-agency partnership, the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) represents a challenge in terms of media relations.
- 2.2 Traditionally the media like to be able to access a single point of contact for dealing with reactive enquiries. However, because of the distinct nature of the separate partner work areas and associated expertise, no one individual or spokesperson can speak for all the partners across the partnership. On that basis the joint protocol sets out how to deal with day-to-day enquiries about the NSCP, its work and practices and to respond to individual cases that attract media attention.
- 2.3 It is proposed that overarching work that covers the work of the whole
 partnership such as the findings within a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
 the Chair of the Partnership will act as the nominated spokesperson.

3. PURPOSE

- 3.1 The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that all media relations are handled professionally and effectively, aiming to ensure that a fair, co-ordinated and positive coverage of the work of NSCP is maintained. It will ensure that the correct agencies are involved in relevant enquiries, and that individual agencies deal with any service specific enquiries.
- 3.2 It is not Newcastle City Council's Press Office's role to represent all the partners in NSCP, but to ensure that enquiries are directed to the most appropriate agency.

The protocol requires all media contact and responses to be shared with relevant partners.

3.3 This protocol will ensure effective responses to media enquiries and the generation of proactive media that maintains and protects the reputation of the Safeguarding Partners, Partnership and agencies involved.

4. KEY INDIVIDUALS

- 4.1 It is vital to this process that key contacts are established within all relevant agencies, who will act as the point of contact for Newcastle City Council's Press Office. This should be a named officer, with the relevant knowledge of safeguarding, with centralised emails and phone numbers only used as a secondary option.
- 4.2 This is necessary to obtain rapid clearance for any proposed response in matters which jointly involve NSCP and a partner agency or agencies.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the individual agencies to establish their own internal structures, and to ensure cover in this position always.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMIT

- 5.1 Newcastle City Council's Press Officer will act as the main point of contact for all general matters relating to the NSCP business. If the main named contact is not available, another Press Officer from the City Council will always be available.
- 5.2 They will manage all media enquiries about the NSCP business. Copies of the media enquiries will be forwarded to all partner key contacts.
- 5.3 All reactive media responses and any proactive press releases will be reported to NSCB.
- 5.4 Any NSCP media enquiry sent to a partner agency should be forwarded to Newcastle City Council's Press Officer who will manage the enquiry, within the guidelines set out in this protocol

6. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. Newcastle City Council Press Office has overall responsibility for ensuring that media protocol:
 - Operates in an efficient and responsive manner and;
 - In conjunction with the NSCP, carry out a review of the implementation of the media protocol and develop as necessary

7. PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES

7.1. Newcastle City Council's Press Office

- Main initial point of contact for all general media enquiries about NSCP
- Deals with all enquiries about NSCP in liaison with relevant agencies
- Refers to the relevant agency any service specific enquiries and informs media enquirers of actions, ensuring that the right partner organisation responds or inputs information from their area of expertise
- Logs all media enquiries and records actions and responses
- Where there is to be a joint response, it will be signed off by relevant partners
 co-ordinated by the communications leads
- Reports all media enquiries about specific cases to the Safeguarding Partners and relevant key contacts
- Works with partners to develop positive media information and to steer the media process in individual cases

8. PARTNER AGENCY PRESS OFFICE

- Must nominate a key contact for dealing with media enquiries and provide an internal system of cover for this position
- Respond in liaison with Newcastle City Council's Press Office to all relevant media enquiries
- Accept referred media enquiries and deal with in normal manner
- Copy all media responses to Newcastle City Council's Press Office and relevant partner agencies
- Log all media contact and responses

LEAD CONTACTS

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