



Memorandum of Understanding

WOLVERHAMPTON SAFEGUARDING TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP

Version Control

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Introduction and Context

The Children Act 2004 (amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017), along with further guidance provided by Working Together 2023 and the Care Act 2014, places a duty on statutory safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and adults with care and support needs in our local area.

Working Together 2023 states that the four statutory partners (Local Authority, Integrated Care Board, Police and Education) have a joint and equal duty to make arrangements to:

- Work together as a team to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
- Include and develop the role of wider local organisations and agencies in the process.

Effective local safeguarding children arrangements will ensure that:

- Outcomes for children will improve continuously.
- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Relevant partner agencies collaborate, share information and work to the agreed vision and values established for Wolverhampton.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that enables local services for children and families to reflect and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The Care Act 2014 requires that every Local Authority must set up a Safeguarding Adults Board, whose main objective is to assure itself that the local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in its area who meet the criteria for safeguarding.

The Care Act 2014 requires Local authorities to:

- 1) Assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance.
- 2) Assure itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome focused.
- 3) Work collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
- 4) Ensure agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred.

- 5) Assure itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

The arrangements were designed to undertake the three core duties of:

- Developing and publishing a strategic plan setting out how the board will meet its objectives in conjunction with partners.
- Publish an annual report setting out how effective arrangements have been.
- Commissioning Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership (WST) believe that effective safeguarding is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with the children and adults they work with. Practitioners will also look beyond organisational constraints and boundaries to build a culture which improve outcomes for all.

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children and Adults sets out the arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults with care and support needs. It emphasises that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children and adults with care and support needs at the centre of the system and by every individual and agency playing their full part. Organisations, agencies, and practitioners should be aware of, and comply with the arrangements as set out by the Safeguarding Partners.

Partnership working is at the centre of the arrangements and there is a commitment to working together to improve outcomes for children and adults at risk in the area.

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the commitment of local Safeguarding Partners to fulfil their statutory duties to work together to safeguard child and adults with care and support needs in Wolverhampton.

Safeguarding Partners

In Wolverhampton, the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, are:

- The Chief Executive of City of Wolverhampton Council,
- The Chief Executive of the Black Country Integrated Care Board, and
- The Chief Constable of West Midlands Police.

Due to our shared footprint of the West Midlands Police force, the seven West Midlands safeguarding partnerships have agreed that the Lead Safeguarding Partners will come together twice a year to discharge their statutory functions (as described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023) on a regional basis.

Those functions are:

- Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
- Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
- Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
- Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
- Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
- Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The benefits of a regional approach are anticipated to be:

- Agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource to required, to deliver services effectively.
- Achieve greater consistency on the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements at a local level.
- Bring together and analyse learning and intelligence, at a local and national level to enable us to respond proactively to emerging safeguarding themes.

This new arrangement will be kept under review in the first year.

The Lead Safeguarding Partner for each agency has identified and nominated a senior officer to have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements.

In Wolverhampton, the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) are:

- Director of Children's Services, City of Wolverhampton Council .
- Director of Adult Social Care, City of Wolverhampton Council.
- Chief Nursing Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Black Country Integrated Care Board.
- Chief Superintendent, Local Policing Area Commander Wolverhampton, West Midlands Police.
- Strategic Education Lead, City of Wolverhampton Council.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners are empowered 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 local arrangements.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners will meet on a quarterly basis and will agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services, will act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others and will oversee the implementation of local and national learning, including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

In Wolverhampton the above Delegated Safeguarding Partners remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners, working together, assume primary responsibility for implementing the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and providing strong leadership of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure they are effective in bringing together relevant partner agencies.

The Safeguarding Partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements, which is underpinned by equitable and proportionate funding.

Role of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership will fulfil the function of the Safeguarding Adult Board and the Children's Safeguarding Partnership arrangements by:

- Publishing a strategic plan for each financial year stating its main objectives.
- Publishing an annual report with the main objectives and strategy.
- Agreeing a set of priority workstreams across the partnership.
- Conducting Safeguarding Adults Review (Section 44 of the act. 14.139).
- Commissioning and oversee the review of serious child safeguarding cases.
- Agreeing on ways to co-ordinate the safeguarding services in Wolverhampton.
- Acting as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging other partners in Wolverhampton.
- Commissioning and implementing the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Ensuring there is effective challenge, scrutiny and assurance across the partnership.
- Listening and acting upon what children and adults tell us about safeguarding in Wolverhampton.
- Ensuring independent scrutiny of the strategic safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding Partners Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Partners have equal and joint responsibility for the local safeguarding arrangements underpinned by equitable and proportionate funding.

The lead representatives and those they have delegated their authority to, are able to:

- Speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent.
- Make decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency on policy, resourcing, and practice matters and ensure implementation.

Statutory Safeguarding Partners will work together with all relevant agencies within Wolverhampton. We will work together to support and safeguard children and adults with care and support needs within our city.

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. A list of organisations that meet the criteria to be included as a relevant agency is set out in regulations as detailed within [Working Together 2023 \(Chapter 2, Paragraph 65\)](#)

The Safeguarding Partners are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant agencies are aware of the expectations of their role, responsibility and expectations required of them by the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together arrangements. Ensuring that our current information sharing protocols remain relevant and are adhered to.
- Communicating regularly across the workforce via our newsletter and WST website.
- The four Safeguarding Partners will make financial contributions towards the local safeguarding arrangements for the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs, through the executive group.

Information Sharing and Information Governance

- Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership follows the [HM Government Information Sharing Guidance](#) adhering to the data protection and freedom of information legislation in order to protect and safeguard children and adults with care and support needs in Wolverhampton.

We adhere to the 7 Golden Rules of Information Sharing - Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Adequate, Accurate, Timely and Secure and as such believe the following:

1. Be transparent with the individual (and/or their family, where appropriate) from the beginning about why, what, how, and with whom information will or could be shared, and seek their consent unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
2. If unsure about sharing information, seek advice from other practitioners or

information governance lead without revealing the individual's identity if possible.

3. Share information with consent whenever possible and respect the wishes of those who do not consent, unless there is a lawful reason to share without consent, such as safeguarding concerns. Base judgments on the specific facts of the case.
4. When sharing or requesting personal information, be clear about the basis for doing so. Without consent, be mindful that the individual might not expect their information to be shared.
5. Prioritise safety and well-being: Make information sharing decisions based on the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected.
6. Ensure the information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely, and secure. Each agency should follow their organisation's policy on handling personal information securely.
7. A record of the decision and the reasons for it should be documented as to whether the information was shared or not. If it has been shared, record what was shared, with whom, and for what purpose.

Dispute Resolution

Through effective leadership and commitment, we aim to resolve disputes between safeguarding partners informally and using the local escalation policy. Where dispute remains, safeguarding partners will agree the most appropriate partner to act on behalf of the Executive Group. The appropriate partner will escalate concerns to the chair of the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group who will consult and mediate across the four partners.

In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to seek formal independent arbitration to reach a timely and mutually acceptable conclusion.

It should be noted that all Safeguarding Partners are required to comply with their statutory duties and obligations and may be held to account by their regulatory body or inspectorate.

Wider Collaboration Arrangements

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership arrangements have been established in the context of wider partnership arrangements across Wolverhampton. The Safeguarding Partnership will work in collaboration with other strategic partnerships including the following:

- Health and Well-Being Together.
- Safer Wolverhampton Partnership.
- Child Death Overview Panel.
- One Wolverhampton.
- Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) Programme Board.
- Children and Families Together Board.

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership Business Unit

The Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership Business Unit supports the implementation of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The business unit will:

- Facilitate the meetings and support the work of the Executive Group, Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group, priority, and subgroups.
- Work with the chairs of all groups, including 'task and finish' groups to progress areas of focus to help ensure that outputs are delivered in a timely way.
- Bring strategic leads from the relevant safeguarding partners together to drive forward these arrangements.
- Promote best multi-agency practice to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Support partners in the dissemination of local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- Support the work of the independent scrutineer and ensure that findings from scrutiny activity are fed into the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-ordination Group.
- Co-ordinate effective data gathering and accurate analysis, interpretation and reporting of information by harnessing the skills and knowledge of data teams from across the partnership.
- Support the delivery of multi-agency practice audits.
- Lead on the development of multi-agency policies, procedures, and practice guidance.
- Design, deliver or commission and evaluate multi-agency training.
- Facilitate the reporting of performance data and analysis by partner agencies to inform the arrangements and measure impact.
- Co-ordinate communications (including website management) in connection with the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Facilitate meeting and consultation activity to inform the work of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership Business Unit are employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council as the host employer on behalf of the Lead Safeguarding Partners.

Endorsement

We, the undersigned, endorse the content of this Memorandum of Understanding and accept our responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership.

Lead Safeguarding Partners

Tim Johnson
Chief Executive
City of Wolverhampton Council



Craig Guildford
Chief Constable
West Midlands Police



Mark Axcell
Chief executive
Black Country Integrated Care Board



Delegated Safeguarding Partners

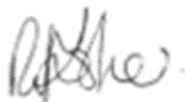
Alison Hinds
Director of Children's Services
City of Wolverhampton Council



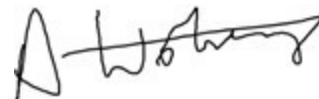
Sally Roberts
Chief Nursing Officer and Deputy Chief
Executive Officer
Black Country Integrated Care Board



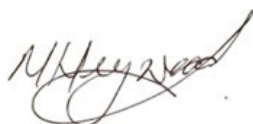
Richard Fisher
Chief Superintendent Local
Policing Area Commander
Wolverhampton
West Midlands Police



Andrew Wolverson
Director of Adult Social Care City
of Wolverhampton Council



Mark Heywood
Strategic Education Lead
City of Wolverhampton Council



Victoria Bowles
Partnership Manager
Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together



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