



Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Future Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
Workshop

January 2019



Contents

Background to Workshop	3
Draft Proposals	3
Overview of Model	4
Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group	4
Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Group	5
Independent Scrutiny	5
Business Intelligence and Quality Assurance.....	5
Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Groups	5
Pan-Merseyside Groups	5
Timeline	7
Officer and Member Discussion	7
Recommendations.....	10
Special Thanks.	10
Attendance	11

Background to Workshop

At the Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 13th November, it was agreed that a workshop session be convened for members to scrutinise the draft safeguarding proposals before approval at Cabinet. This was an outcome from an agenda item on Future Safeguarding Arrangements presented at Committee.

As the Children and Social Work act 2017 will replace the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in approximately September 2019, Members wanted more information regarding the proposed model for Local Safeguarding arrangements.

Draft Proposals

Members received an overview and presentation of the new safeguarding model by the Business Manager of Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

It was explained to Members that the new model will be known as Wirral Safeguarding Partners and will be led by three statutory safeguarding partners:

- Wirral Council
- Merseyside Police
- Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

The new model also places a duty on Child Death Review partners, the Local Authority and CCG to review deaths of children normally resident in the local area.

The Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), provides the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There is a clear framework within this guidance to enable the three safeguarding partners to decide how best to work together and respond to the needs of local children:

- The three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- All schools must be included in the arrangements.
- The partners must also set out how their arrangements will receive independent scrutiny.
- Once agreed, the safeguarding partners must publish the arrangements.

The new local arrangements have been designed to support and enable local agencies to work together. Fundamental to these proposals is that the public feel confident in local safeguarding and that children are protected from harm.

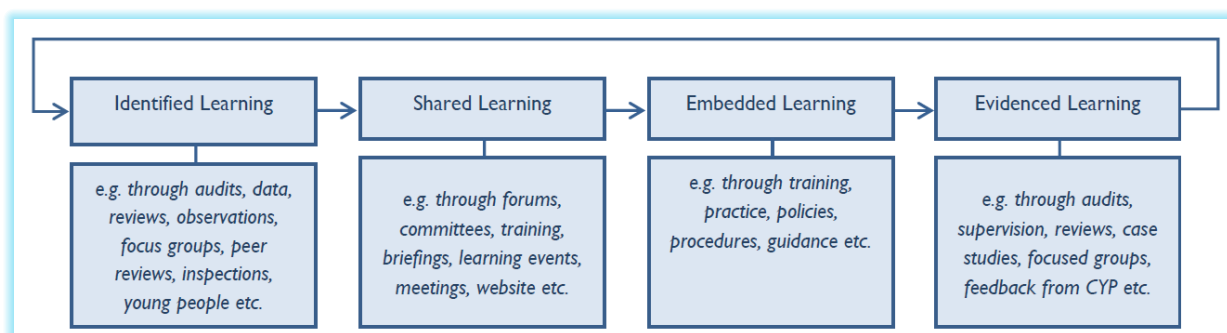
There are three central parts to the proposed model: governance, services and practice. Embedding excellent practice is the foundation of the model, as well as shared partnership arrangements to

ensure positive outcomes for Children. Governance will be developed last to ensure it reflects how the safeguarding partners want the model to work.

The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Excellent practice is the standard.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- 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 local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The draft model also includes an 'intelligence function' to support an evaluation of safeguarding. This will include data analysis, audit, reviews and feedback from families, children and frontline professionals. Also included within this will be feedback from learning events, inspection results and research.



There will be opportunities for local and regional collaboration to be pursued where beneficial. This will include looking at outside organisations approach to policy and strategy, workforce development, communication and child death reviews, section 11/175 Audits (agency and school safeguarding audits), case reviews and peer reviews.

Overview of Model

Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive Group

- Comprises of the 3 statutory Partners and are responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Group

- A stakeholder group drawn from relevant agencies, to include lead and lay members, as well as child and young people representation. This will meet bi-annually.

Independent Scrutiny

- The WSBC chair, will provide independent scrutiny of the arrangements and provide an annual report for partners. An updated protocol will be formalised with the Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Business Intelligence and Quality Assurance

- This is central for providing and understanding data and information from across different agencies. This could include information from audit, case or peer reviews, or feedback from families, professionals and performance teams.

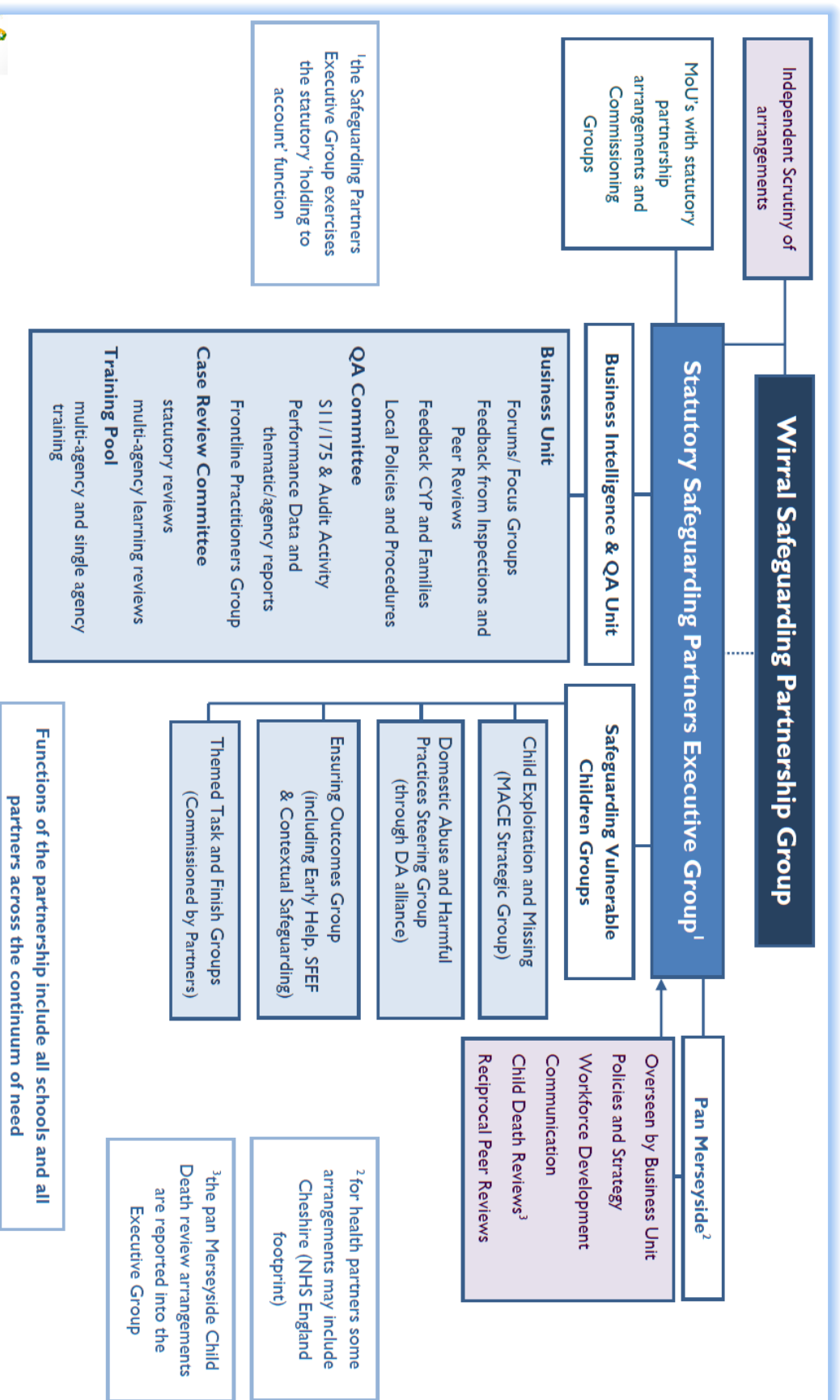
Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Groups

This group will undertake specific multi-agency activity to ensure there are robust and tested safeguarding arrangements around key areas. This may include but is not exclusive to:

- Early help
- Exploitation
- Child and domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SEFE) initiative
- Contextual safeguarding. (Contextual Safeguarding is a national framework to better protect children and young people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability within their schools, environment and wider community.)

Pan-Merseyside Groups

- These will focus on collaborative approaches to policies and strategy, workforce development, Child Death Overview Panels, case reviews and communications.



Timeline

January 2019

- **28th January** OSC Spotlight Session
- **31st January** Consultation ends

March 2019

- **25th March** Agreement of Model at Cabinet
- **29th March** Publication of Model

April 2019

- **1st April** Introduction of new arrangements in shadow form

August 2019

- **31st August** WSCB stands down at midnight

September 2019

- **1st September** New statutory arrangements in place

Officer and Member Discussion

- Members queried whether the arrangements would be scrutinised by the Department for Education (DfE). Officers advised that the DfE will be contacting every local authority regarding their draft proposals. The DfE cannot reject the arrangements but can give their opinion on how they think it may work.
- Officers informed Members that there will be an independent scrutiny body. It was explained that most local authorities will be retaining their current safeguarding chairs. It was also noted that Ofsted will not check on the framework as models will be completely different across local authorities, however it is anticipated that Ofsted will inspect the practice and outcomes. Therefore, there will be great importance attached to internal and external scrutiny.
- Assurances were made that the new model will be built on excellent practice and the cross fertilisation of ideas. Sharing policies and strategies from across Merseyside will be pivotal to these arrangements and will be a positive move forward. It was noted that there is power in a pan-Merseyside approach.

- Concerns we raised by Members regarding safeguarding around social media use and queried whether there would be anything included in the proposals to cover this. It was noted that children and young people can be more technologically adept than their parents or carers and could easily get around parental controls on devices.
- Officers advised that this guidance sits within business support and the support website is updated weekly. There are also 'school champions' who offer peer-on-peer support. There is training in place for year 12/13 young people to deliver online safety to year 7s. Officers also explained that technology is moving so fast it is hard to keep track of which websites and apps are safe, and which pose risks. The list is updated once a month and informed by all agencies such as the Police and Catch22.
- It was also noted that online safety is a concern for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who may be unable to determine boundaries or voice concerns due to their needs. The vulnerability of this group highlights why it is vital that agencies talk to each other.

It was concluded that the best way to tackle this issue is to ensure that all parties are educated and aware of this issue.

- Members voiced concerns that the new model could be corporate-led and wanted assurances that it would be service based and involve the community where possible.
- Officers confirmed that the partnership group will meet twice a year to find out what children and young people think about the model. It was agreed that thought needs to be given to how children, families, carers and youth groups are involved. A young people's panel had been set up with 15 young people ready to take part. It was agreed that officers would take the model out into the community, but it was understood that there would be some elements that would need to be discussed behind closed doors.
- Officers referred to a contextual safeguarding group, and how Wirral responds to the issues it presents. There are further questions to be asked regarding how 'our' children feel. Do they feel safe?
- It was agreed that there had been issues with stakeholder participation in the past and the current model seemed better structured. It was noted by officers that safeguarding is in a stronger place than at the last Ofsted inspection in 2016, but that Ofsted would not be looking at future arrangements in any detail.
- Members also queried whether there will be more stress placed on Partners to come together ensure better practice. Officers responded by advising that they all have ownership over the framework as they have had equal input. Rather than joining a model that has already been decided; they can see their own ideas coming through. All in attendance agreed that this new model feels like a partnership of

equals. It was agreed by the stakeholders that the importance of safeguarding is recognised more than ever. This new framework is based on learning and collaboration, with emphasis on avoiding any sort of blame culture.

- Members questioned how stakeholders will monitor and address the areas of the partnership which are not working well. Will partners be able to challenge each other in a constructive way?
 - Officers noted that a lot has changed since the Ofsted report of 2016, and that the old prescribed model did not work well for Wirral. The new framework offers a totally different approach, and partners are now asked how they want to contribute. It will be possible to refer to the original plans and make sure it is still being followed, however the arrangements will be much stronger in the first instance. Partners commented that a by-product of austerity is that agencies know their business more than ever. They know where the gaps are and what is failing.
- It was agreed by everyone that Children and young people should be central to the new framework. Often Members got the impression from speaking to Children and young people that things are being done *to* them and not *with* them. The draft model gives an exciting opportunity to involve children more, by asking them directly what they want.
 - It was noted that Wirral has been behind other Local Authorities in listening to the voice of the child. Previous arrangements had not sought this out. Merseyside Police advised that they are looking at introducing new I.T so that their frontline practitioners cannot proceed with their online forms until certain questions have been asked. Officers confirmed they wanted to consult with children and involve them in a way that will add value and is not tokenistic.
- Members queried the stability of budget arrangements for the new model and It was noted that they are not obliged to have an independent scrutiny chair.
 - Officers responded to confirm that the budget during year one will be the same as previous years and provided by the same partners. During year one, subsequent funding will be discussed. It was also pointed out that officers have deliberately not discussed money during set-up to ensure the best arrangements are put in place. All recognised how tight spending constraints are, and partners will be honest with each other and make sure it is as economically efficient as possible, whilst still being robust. Partners emphasised that they have looked at what is required in terms of opportunity - not hard cash.
- Further discussions highlighted the value of 'reality check visits' and this was demonstrated in previous visits and it was noted how useful they were to both members and officers. It was agreed that these should continue under the new arrangements, to speak to front-line staff and to hold departments to account. Members also appreciated the attendance and input at the workshop from 3 main stakeholders.

Recommendations

- A draft protocol to be produced between the Scrutiny Committee and Wirral Partnership Group and shared with attendees of the workshop for further suggestions and comments. This will be put in place once both bodies are satisfied with it and prior to Wirral Partnership Group going live and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board standing down.
- Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee should receive bi-annual updates from the Wirral Partnership Group, one of which is to be an annual report.
- Consideration should be given to formalising arrangements whereby Scrutiny could become involved in the Wirral partnership group and informed of its activities. Thought should also be given to whether the Chair of the Committee should be included in the partnership group, or formalised scrutiny visits to the Executive or Partnership groups.

Special Thanks. The Corporate Director of Children's Services Paul Boyce expressed his thanks to David Robbins (Business Manager, WCSB) for his hard work in formulating the draft model. Members agreed that this should be recorded and expressed their appreciation regarding the content of the proposals and the presentation received.

Attendance

Councillors:

Cllr Tom Usher (Chair)

Cllr Chris Carubia (Party Spokesperson)

Cllr Chris Meaden

Cllr Kate Cannon

Cllr Jean Robinson

Cllr Liz Grey

Officers:

Dr Maggie Atkinson (Independent Chair, WCSB)

Paul Boyce (Corporate Director for Children's services)

David Robbins (Business Manages WCSB)

Simone White (Deputy Director – Children's services)

Elizabeth Hartley (Assistant Director: Early Help & Prevention)

Ian Hassell (Superintendent – Local Policing Commander, Merseyside Police)

Nicholas Guntilleke (Merseyside Police)

Rachel Wilson (Merseyside Police)

Lorna Quigley (Wirral CCG)

Sue Fogarty (Wirral CCG)

Joanne Chwalko (Wirral Community NHS Trust)

Anna Perrett (Scrutiny Officer – Children and Families)

Alexandra Davidson (Scrutiny Officer – Adult Care & Health)