

# Protocol between the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are both involved in scrutinising children's safeguarding in different ways and, therefore, clear working arrangements and expectations are necessary to ensure effectiveness and to avoid duplication of effort between the two bodies.

## Roles

- The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Safeguarding Children Partnership are independent of each other;
- The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for holding the Council's Lead Member for Children's Services and the statutory Corporate Director for Children to account, including via an annual safeguarding assurance report, for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the borough. However, they are not responsible for the scrutiny of individual cases;
- The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership is a statutory body (from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019) with an "independent voice" in local partnership arrangements and is expected to form a view about the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding work in and between statutory and relevant agencies based on scrutiny, audit and evaluation. It has the ability to challenge local organisations and partnerships as necessary; and
- The Safeguarding Children Partnership is able to scrutinise individual cases of safeguarding.
- The Safeguarding Children Partnership will present its Annual Report to the Scrutiny Committee and share findings and learning that most impact on outcomes from its function and activities.

## Working Together

*The Scrutiny Committee will:*

- Inform the Safeguarding Children Partnership of its work programme for each Municipal Year highlighting any topics for review that relate to the safeguarding of children;
- Make available the findings and recommendations of any work relating to the safeguarding of children/ young people and share the findings of relevant task and finish group reports with the Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- Have regard to the Safeguarding Children Partnership's published Audit Framework when setting the Annual Scrutiny Committee work programme to avoid duplication; and
- Through its Chair, Spokespeople and Scrutiny Officer, maintain regular contact with the Safeguarding Children Partnership as appropriate and when required, invite representatives of the Partnership to attend meetings
- Consider and promote the relevance of the Partnership's audit activity and findings to other Scrutiny Committees

*The Safeguarding Children Partnership will:*

- Inform the Scrutiny Committee of any specific areas proposed for audit via attendance at the pre-agenda setting meetings on at least 2 occasions per year;
- Report into the Scrutiny Committee annually on the story identified via its performance management activity and also attend annually to present its Annual Report
- Receive information and have regard to the reviews and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee relating to children's safeguarding;
- Respond to requests for information and attendance at meetings from the Scrutiny Committee.
- Provide opportunities for Scrutiny Committee Members to be participating observers of its work.