

Protocol Between Wirral Children's Trust and Wirral Local Safeguarding Children Board**1.0 Aim**

- 1.1 The aim of the protocol is to ensure complete clarity about local accountabilities underpinned by effective local challenge.

2.0 Roles

- 2.1 Wirral Children's Trust (WCT) and Wirral Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) have important but distinctive roles in keeping children safe. It is not a hierarchical relationship. WCT is accountable for overseeing the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). In progressing this plan the Trust is accountable for ensuring services deliver improved outcomes for Children and Young People.
- 2.2 LSCB is responsible for challenging each relevant partner of WCT, through the WCT Board, on their success in ensuring that children and young people are kept safe in the Borough.
- 2.3 In order to ensure the complementary roles of the two bodies and the necessary challenge the two bodies are chaired by different people.
- 2.4 The Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member for Children's Services have central roles. The DCS has lead responsibility for improving outcomes for children in the Borough. The Lead Member is politically accountable for ensuring that the Local Authority (LA) fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The Lead Member should provide the political leadership needed for the effective co-ordination of work with other relevant agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. The Lead Member will also take steps to assure themselves that effective quality assurance systems for safeguarding are in place and functioning effectively across services areas and levels of need.
- 2.5 The DCS is a member of both WCT and LSCB. The Lead Member is Chair of WCT and is a 'participant observer' of LSCB as described by statutory guidance Working Together (2010).
- 2.6 The LA Chief Executive and Council Leader also have critical roles to play. The Chief Executive is responsible for satisfying himself that the DCS is fulfilling their managerial responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. In particular by ensuring that the relationship between the CTB and the LSCB is working effectively; that clear responsibility has been assigned within the LA and among WCT partners for improving services and outcomes; and that targets for improving safeguarding and progress against them are reported to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 2.7 The wider public has an important role to play: keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. WCT has actively sought the views of the local community and consulted children young people and their families when drawing up the CYPP.
- 2.8 From April 2010 LSCB arrangements will be opened up to wider public scrutiny through the appointment of two lay members drawn from the local community to the LSCB. This will support stronger public engagement in, and understanding of children's safety issues. The voice and experiences of young people will also affirm the work of LSCB by ensuring that one of the lay persons position is taken up by a member of the Children in Care Council.

3.0 LSCB Responsibilities

- 3.1 The LSCB is the decision making body for multi-agency safeguarding activity within Wirral. It is a statutory partnership and its work is directed by statutory guidance which dictates its functions. The DCS has a statutory responsibility for ensuring that an effective Safeguarding Children Board is in place for the local area.
- 3.2 The work of the LSCB falls into three broad areas, all of which aim to safeguard children and promote their welfare by:
 - Protecting children from maltreatment;
 - Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- 3.3 The LSCB is well positioned through its various quality assurance processes to advise, and where appropriate, challenge WCT arrangements. For example learning from Serious Case Reviews, Child Death Overview Panels, section 11 self assessments and multi-agency critical incident reviews.
- 3.4 From April 2011 the LSCB will publish an Annual report on the effectiveness of arrangements locally, and the contribution and activities of each local partner for keeping children safe as outlined in Working Together Guidance March 2010.
- 3.5 The LSCB will report on its safeguarding performance information on a quarterly basis to the WCT and LSCB. It will make recommendations from the monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding arrangements during the year.

4.0 Children's Trust Responsibilities

- 4.1 WCT is the statutory local partnership brings together organisations responsible for children's services. It is a thematic group of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 4.2 It has responsibility for developing and publishing a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The plan sets out how CT partners co-operate to improve the well-being of children in the local area and will monitor how partners act in accordance with the plan.
- 4.3 WCT must ensure the work of all the strategy groups takes into account the safeguarding needs of children in the development of the CYPP.
- 4.4 WCT as part of its CYPP Annual Review will make an assessment of the effectiveness of partnership arrangements in supporting the best possible standards for safeguarding children And in its response WCT will ensure that any refresh to the plan include priorities identified by the LSCB.
- 4.5 WCT will seek approval from LSCB regarding any proposed commissioning arrangements which are linked to the factors which impact on safeguarding children, including compromised parenting.

5.0 Operational Arrangements

- 5.1 WCT and LSCB will jointly hold an annual event to meet with frontline staff which will explore the effectiveness of safeguarding at all levels of need.

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- 5.2 The LSCB will report to the CT each quarter on the arrangements for local safeguarding by monitoring and scrutinising activity and offer robust challenge to partners and the Trust on its activity. It will provide an annual report setting out the assessment of local safeguarding and its findings and make recommendations for improvement. The LSCB will also reflect within the annual report priorities for commissioning of safeguarding activity
- 5.3 The following people are members of both WCT and LSCB Boards. This will ensure clear lines of communication:
- Lead Member for Children's Services
 - Director of Children's Services
 - Director of Strategic Partnerships, Wirral Primary Care Trust.
- 5.4 Once agreed by WCT Board and the LSCB this protocol will be embedded in Wirral Children's Trust Memorandum of Understanding and will be reviewed annually with the Memorandum.

6.0 Resolution Process

- 6.1 LSCB will request evidence from WCT as to its rigour in commissioning or developing Safeguarding services. LSCB will call member of the Children's Trust to account should it have evidence that children are not being adequately safeguarded by one or more relevant partners. The resolution will require a formal response/ action from WCT within a specific timeframe which will be agreed mutually.