



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28 January 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT
REPORT OF:	STATUTORY SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

REPORT SUMMARY

The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) annual report sets out activity undertaken by the WSCP and relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Wirral. This includes activity to improve outcomes for children and young people, statutory case review activity, delivery and evaluation of safeguarding training, audit activity, quality assurance and performance, progress against priorities and scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements.

The report is designed to provide a transparent assessment of multi-agency safeguarding activity, and to demonstrate the strength of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that came into force in September 2019, replacing the previous Local Safeguarding Children Board arrangements.

The annual report is presented on behalf of the three statutory safeguarding partners – the Local Authority, Merseyside Police and Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group, who are jointly responsible for the new safeguarding partnership arrangements.

The full report is included as an appendix to this report, and is also published on the WSCP website alongside a summary document and presentation:

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/the-board/annual-reports-business-plans/>

The statutory safeguarding partners urge all those with a responsibility and interest in safeguarding Wirral's children and young people to read the report.

This report does not relate to a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to note the Annual Report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The statutory safeguarding partners must ensure that the annual report is widely available. The report is shared with the WSCP's relevant agencies and is published on the WSCP website (<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/the-board/annual-reports-business-plans/>) placing it in the public domain.
- 1.2 The WSCP and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee had an agreed protocol which included presentation of the WSCP's annual report. As the successor committee the WSCP will continue to bring the annual report for noting to the Children, Young People & Education Committee.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other option was considered as it is a statutory duty for the WSCP to publish an annual report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership became the statutory body for overseeing multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children in September 2019. This is the first annual report published by the partners.
- 3.2 In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done because of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- 3.3 Safeguarding partners should make sure the report is widely available, and the published safeguarding arrangements should set out where the reports will be published.
- 3.4 The report includes:
 - an introduction from the safeguarding partners reaffirming the multi-agency partnerships commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all Wirral's children and young people
 - an assessment of the multi-agency response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the context of safeguarding. The WSCP continues to be very impressed and grateful to all partner agencies for their efforts to ensure vulnerable children and young people continue to be safeguarded in these unprecedented times
 - a presentation of what the profile of our children and young people would be if we had 100 children. The report also includes a deeper look at the disparity that exists in Wirral by contrasting the lives of two children, one of whom lives in an affluent part of West Wirral, and the other lives in one of our most deprived wards in East Wirral.

This highlights the need for agencies to work together to 'reduce the gap' for children across the borough

- a summary of key safeguarding statistics for 2019-20. It is important to note that the statistics do not include the impact of Covid-19, but the safeguarding partners continue to meet very regularly to receive and scrutinise this data. The data in the annual report tells us that Wirral continues to receive a higher number of contacts and referrals than our statistical neighbours, but referrals demonstrate a good understanding and application of thresholds. The report also illustrates that the numbers of children who are looked after in Wirral remain high
- the annual report summarises the case review activity undertaken by the WSCP over the previous 12 months. In this period the WSCP undertook one statutory Serious Case Review related to accidental methadone ingestion by a 20-month year old boy, and three multi-agency learning reviews. The WSCP undertakes learning reviews on cases which do not meet the statutory threshold, but where multi-agency learning is likely. The learning reviews undertaken in 2019-20 related to a child who had suffered a childhood trauma and his carers were struggling to cope, an 18-month-old child who had unexplained bruising and unreported fractures, and a case of the neglect of five young siblings
- as well as case reviews, the WSCP also undertakes a programme of multi-agency auditing throughout the year. The report details the audits completed in 2019-20 which included audits of: the use and quality of case chronologies; the awareness and response to neglect; the quality of child protection plans; the impact of child exploitation; and assessing mental capacity. Reports of the findings and learning from audits are shared with all relevant agencies and published on the WSCP website
- one of the priority areas for the WSCP is the multi-agency understanding and response to contextual safeguarding issues i.e., those risks from outside the family home. The WSCP undertook a large-scale survey of Wirral children and Young people about how safe they felt and the findings from the 2,000 responses are published on the WSCP website
- the WSCP undertakes an annual audit of the strength of partnership safeguarding arrangements (the Section 11 and 175 audits) which include all schools and key relevant agencies. The results of the audits show safeguarding arrangements to be strong, and the key findings are included in the report
- a summary of the pan Merseyside Child Death Overview Panel annual report is also included. The full report is published on the WSCP website
- a summary of activity undertaken by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against professionals
- a summary of the WSCP multi-agency training officer, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of training. The report also includes a summary of the single agency safeguarding training offer made to school and colleges by the WSCP
- a report of the latest developments in the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) model. This is the agreed model for multi-agency working with children and families in Wirral and continues to be developed and enhanced
- a summary of the progress against the current WSCP priorities: Emotional Health and Wellbeing; Contextual Safeguarding; Impact of Intergenerational Abuse and Neglect; Working Together partnership

- a summary of the very successful multi-agency safeguarding learning events organised by the WSCP. Unfortunately, Covid-19 prevented the March and September 2020 events from going ahead but the WSCP has organised a Virtual Event for the 19th January 2021
- the annual report also includes a report provided by Professor Maggie Atkinson who is the WSCP's Independent Scrutineer. All safeguarding partnerships are required to be subject to independent scrutiny and Professor Atkinson's report is based upon her attendance at WSCP Executive and committee meetings, scrutiny of all papers, policies and procedures, and scrutiny of all case review activity. Professor Atkinson comments positively about progress made by the WSCP during its first year

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership is funded from a range of partner agencies. Responsibility for funding the WSCP lies with the three statutory partners, who hold an equal and joint responsibility; the LA, Merseyside Police and Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group. The annual budget for the WSCP is £300,000. The statutory partners are currently in discussions to agree the funding arrangements for 2021-22 and beyond. The financial burden on the LA will not increase next year.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has a statutory duty to publish an annual report under the Children Act (2004) as amended by the Children and Social Work Act (2017). This report demonstrates our compliance with this duty.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resourcing implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership to publish an Annual Report of activity. Failure to do so would constitute a breach of statutory guidance and the requirements of the Children Act (2004).

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A number of key safeguarding activities included consultation and meetings with children, young people and families, as well as professionals across the multi-agency children's workforce. This includes, but is not limited to, WSCP auditing and case review activity; views, wishes and feelings gathered through the Early Help and statutory Child in Need, Child Protection and Looked after Child processes; ongoing work to develop and embed the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures model; engagement with young people through the Contextual Safeguarding agenda.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 There are no equality implications rising directly from the publication of this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental and climate implications arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 WSCP Annual Report (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WSCP-Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>)

Appendix 2 WSCP Annual Report On-A-Page (<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WSCP-Annual-Report-2019-20-on-a-page-1.pdf>)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Section 16 of the Children Act (2004)
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 – Statutory Guidance

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	25 th March 2019