



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 January 2025

REPORT TITLE:	SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) annual report for the year January-December 2023, sets out activity undertaken by the WSCP and relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Wirral.

The report includes what has been done in the previous 12-month period as a result of the local statutory multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including a summary of child safeguarding activity, statutory reviews, and progress against actions from previous reviews, and an assessment of how effective the safeguarding arrangements have been.

The report includes evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training on outcomes for children and families, and an assessment of any areas requiring further improvement. The report also includes case studies highlighting good practice and examples of how children, young people and families have informed the work of the safeguarding partnership and influenced service provision.

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, and previous reports are shared with the WSCP's relevant agencies and are published on the WSCP website (<https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/the-board/annual-reports-business-plans/>) placing them in the public domain.

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 WSCP is required under statute to publish an annual report which provides a transparent assessment of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements. The report must set out what the WSCP have done because of the local arrangements, including in regard to child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective the arrangements have been in practice.
- 3.2 Safeguarding partners are required to ensure the report is widely available, and that the published safeguarding arrangements set out where the report will be published.
- 3.3 The WSCP annual report is presented on behalf of the three statutory safeguarding partners – the Local Authority, Merseyside Police and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, who are jointly responsible for the effectiveness of the safeguarding partnership arrangements.
- 3.4 The full report is published as a series of webpages on the WSCP website and will be available to access in full after publication in mid-February 2024. The full report will be published alongside a summary and narrated presentation and will be available here: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/annual-report-2023/>.
- 3.5 The statutory safeguarding partners urge all those with a responsibility and interest in safeguarding Wirral's children and young people to read the report. 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, as well as detail about how the partnership is organised and resourced
 - a presentation of what the profile of our children and young people would be if we had 100 children
 - a summary of key safeguarding statistics for 2023. These include statistics illustrating the volume and nature of contacts and referrals to the Integrated Front Door, the number of cases opening and closing to Early Help and Children's Social Care (Child in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked

After), and the number of repeat cases, how long children were subject to a plan and what outcomes were achieved

- a number of case studies drawn from agencies across the partnership, including in the voluntary and community sector. The case studies illustrate the impact of effective multi-agency working and show how the voice of children and families is captured, considered, and influences how cases progress
- examples of how the voice of children and young people have influence service development and the direction and content of strategies and plans. Two examples include how Catch22 changed the way they complete return to home interviews with children who have gone missing, following feedback from young people. And how local schools contributed to the development of Violence Against Women and Girls strategy
- the annual report summarises the case review activity undertaken by the WSCP over the previous 12 months. In the period covered by the annual report the WSCP published two statutory child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPR's), Ollie and Noah. The Ollie review was undertaken following the death of a two-month-old baby as a result of unsafe co-sleeping with a parent and had features of neglect and parental substance misuse. The Noah review was about a two-year-old who tragically died at home. This case included features of domestic abuse and alcohol abuse. The review reports and learning for both cases is published on the WSCP website: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews/>
- the WSCP is currently undertaking a CSPR about three adopted siblings who were victims of familial sexual abuse. This review is due for publication in early 2024.
- As well as statutory CSPR's the WSCP also undertakes multi-agency learning reviews for cases likely to elicit learning for the partnership. In 2022 the WSCP published the case of an 18-year-old care leaver who took his own life shortly after his birthday. The WSCP currently has two other learning reviews nearing completion, these will be published in February 2024.
- the report summarises the multi-agency programme of auditing completed by the WSCP. The report details the audits completed in 2022-23 which included: child exploitation, management of serious complaints against foster carers, domestic abuse and operation encompass, children looked after aged 0-5. Reports of the findings and learning from audits are shared with all relevant agencies and published on the WSCP website
- the WSCP has a published [Business Plan](#) for 2022-24 which sets out the four priority areas for the partnership: Strategy for Neglect; Systemic Practice; Breaking the Cycle; Safeguarding and Education. The annual report sets out the progress made against each priority area, as well as the activity to be completed in 2024
- 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

- 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 offer, 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, and a summary of the 'Big Learn' safeguarding event for professionals held in the autumn
- a report of the latest developments in the introduction of systemic practice as the new practice model for working with children, young people, and families
- the WSCP is subject to independent scrutiny and the report sets out the local model and messages from scrutiny
- the report also includes messages and learning for the safeguarding partnership from the JTAI inspection completed in September 2022

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 the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board. The annual budget for the WSCP is approximately £300,000. The statutory partners are currently in discussions to agree the funding arrangements for 2024-25.

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 systemic practice model; engagement with young people through the Contextual Safeguarding, and VAWG agendas.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality implications rising directly from the publication of this report. The Equality Impact Assessment is published here:
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements exist to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Wirral, particularly those who are most vulnerable and are unlikely to achieve positive outcomes without intervention.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: WSCP Annual Report Presentation

Appendix 2 WSCP Annual Report on a page

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Report 2023-24 - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (Full Report):

<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/annual-report-2023/>

Statutory Guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023:

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with its responsibilities for education, children's social care services and health services to children and young people

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years) Council Meeting Date

Council Meeting	Date