

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements



Foreword

The Department for Education commissioned a Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The Wood Report¹, published in 2016 found “the case for fundamental reform is based on a widely held view that LSCBs, for a variety of reasons, are not sufficiently effective.” The Wood Report summarises: “evidence shows bureaucratic processes; too much timid inquiry at practitioner and system level; an unwillingness to challenge partners when they opt out of cooperating; and too much acceptance of less than good performance at both the level of agency performance and individual practice”.

The review findings led to legislative reform, detailed in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. These new statutory requirements require three lead agencies: the health partnership, police and local authorities to work together as joint and equal partners to shape bespoke arrangements which respond to local need. This provides our newly formed partnership with the opportunity to implement the necessary changes identified in Wood’s Report.

In West Sussex we are using the recently revised legislative provisions² as a catalyst to reshape our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We recognise that our West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) needs to continue to improve our services to children, young people and their families. It is clear from recent local developments that a strong and purposeful multi-agency approach to child protection is essential to drive swift and sustainable improvements to practice in key areas of child abuse, such as neglect.

Our vision for the new West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership is to develop “an assured Safeguarding Partnership, which collectively engages with children and their families, enabling them to thrive.”

Listening to feedback from our partners in May 2018 and with further detailed scoping work from October 2018 onwards, the WSSCP business delivery structure has seen a radical overhaul. Our key intention is to establish a streamlined and agile Steering Group. Membership includes the lead safeguarding partners and key representatives including Education and enhances links to our communities via our District and Borough representation. The Steering Group will be the driving force for improvement and will engage the Chairs of our Operational Delivery Groups to ensure delivery of our vision through key pieces of multi-agency work. The new structure also acknowledges the need to optimise resource deployment and brings the added benefit of reducing the duplication of work across the Operational Delivery Groups.

¹ Wood Report published March 2016: Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

² Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Children and Social Work Act 2017

Membership of the Partnership structures will be focussed on who is best able to provide appropriate levels of authority, expertise and value in the WSSCP decision making processes.

As part of our restructure we reflected on what was working well in our existing multi-agency arrangements. On this basis we decided that our recently appointed Independent Chair should continue to provide leadership and facilitate positive partner engagement to drive forward our ambitious improvement plans. This wider partnership engagement, which is so critical to effective safeguarding, will be maintained via the insight provided by our Partnership Board.

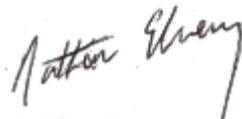
We are also building on our commitment to further integrate our work with our other key partnerships including the Adult Safeguarding Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership, whilst fully engaging with our children and young people and frontline practitioners. In addition we are trialling a Practitioners' Forum (Safeguarding Liaison Group); this network will strengthen the impact of the Partnerships' work on frontline delivery and retain a strong connection to the voice of our practitioners.

We know that we must give of our best as a partnership to make a real impact on promoting and supporting successful outcomes for our children, through continuous improvement in practice and our collective service delivery. We believe that real change will happen through our refocussed collaborative approach to delivering our partnership's vision.



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Our new arrangements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018: published 25th June 2019

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West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements

1. Introduction

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) recognises that by working in partnership we can achieve as a collective more than the sum of our individual parts. Moreover, we can best safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our West Sussex children and young people by harnessing our wide-ranging expertise and resources. This enables us to provide the best possible solutions, be it via our universal services, targeted early intervention or by multi-agency collaborative support work with children and their families.

The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) reframed the approach to local safeguarding by removing the statutory requirement for local authority areas to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board and placing a duty on three lead partners: Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the local authority to agree local arrangements to work together to safeguard children. The changes were introduced to enable local authority areas to work more flexibly and innovatively when developing the delivery of their local safeguarding children partnership work. The WSSCP is required to publish its new safeguarding children partnership arrangements. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also saw the introduction of a national [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#). At a local level, Local Learning Reviews and the introduction of more flexible ways of learning from cases will replace Serious Case Reviews. [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency Regulations 2018](#) outline Local Safeguarding Partners' statutory obligations.

Scoping of our new arrangements commenced in May 2018. We used this opportunity to review, examine and reinvigorate our partnership, details of which are described in this document. We believe that by utilising resources across our collective areas of expertise we are better able to provide children and their families with the most effective, consistent and targeted support across our multi-agency service provision.



2. WSSCP vision

An assured Safeguarding Partnership, which collectively engages with children and their families, enabling them to thrive.

Delivering our vision will mean that:

- ❖ Children and young people are safe from harm and able to thrive within their family units.
- ❖ Children and young people enjoy a healthy life, including good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- ❖ Families are resilient and feel supported within their communities, via bespoke community led work to meet their needs.
- ❖ Our wider networks, including schools and colleges, keep our children and young people safe and helping to support and equip them with the skills they will need for their adult life.
- ❖ We will disrupt criminal activity and hold offenders to account, so that children and young people are protected from harm.



How we will deliver our vision

Our Partnership will work together to deliver this vision by:

- ❖ Ensuring children and young people are safeguarded via a strong, co-ordinated multi-agency approach.
- ❖ Working innovatively with our partners, including children, young people and their family networks we will identify what needs to change.
- ❖ Being solution focussed as a partnership; working together to find the best way to drive improvements to practice and service delivery.
- ❖ Evaluating our work to ensure that we are effecting progress and that this is making the difference we expect.

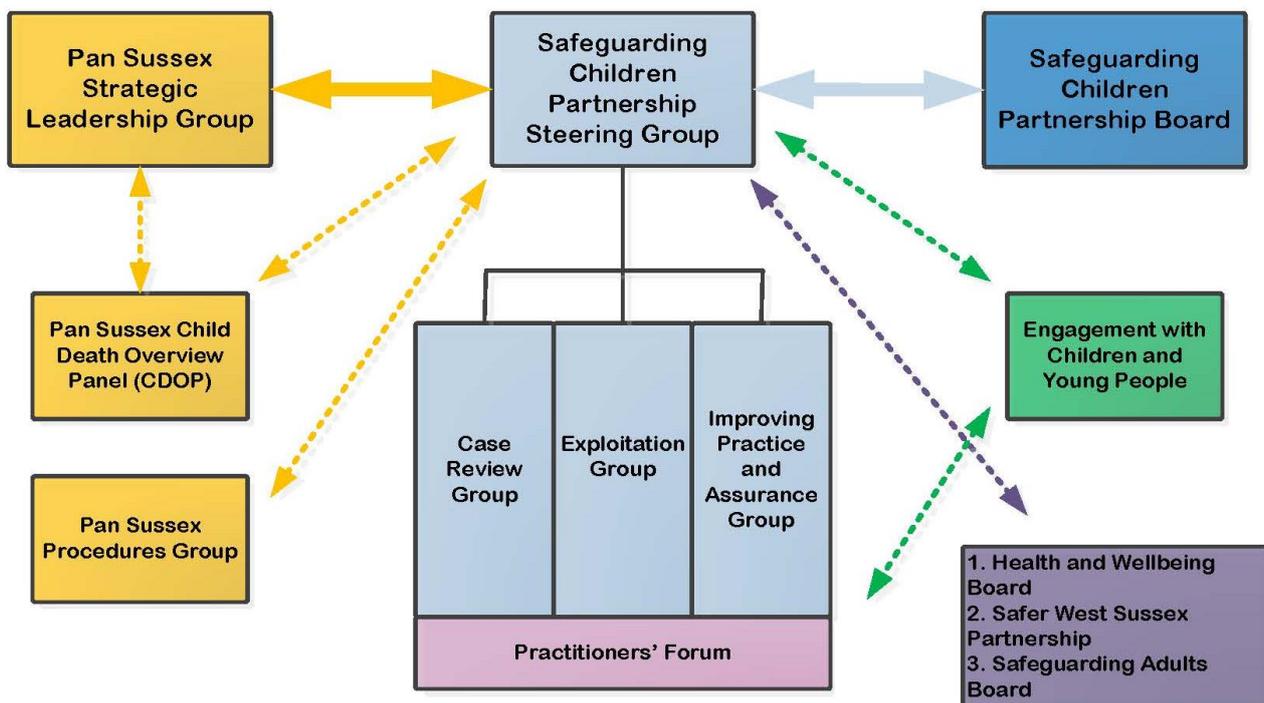


The WSSCP's vision is deliverable through a range of key mechanisms including: capturing and acting upon the **voice of all West Sussex children and young people**. Furthermore, by working with a wide spectrum of partners, including our **local communities**, schools and colleges, we will develop a **strong, integrated and engaged partnership**. The partnership will use research, feedback and data analysis to inform its **clear priorities** and **innovate** by trying new ways of working, such as a practitioner-led group to support delivery of partnership work. Finally, the WSSCP will test the **impact** of its work via robust analysis of available data and research and by using multiple independent scrutiny methods.

3. WSSCP structure: supporting business delivery

The WSSCP structure chart below reflects the complex agency relationships and interdependencies when working with children and their families. The impact of the new structure will be assessed regularly, to ensure that it aligns priorities and maximises the impact of partnership delivery work:

WSSCP core structure and key partner agencies



We will actively listen to everyone across our partnership and regularly review our partnership objectives to make sure that:

- Our plans are working to optimise service delivery and drive improvement to enable us to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Schools and colleges are integral to the partnership arrangements and develop arrangements to fully utilise the range of tailored pastoral and emotional wellbeing support they can offer to both children and families.
- The realignment of the subgroup delivery structure and the addition of the practitioners' group will be reviewed during the first year of the partnership's operation. A brief overview of the aims of the leadership groups and sub-groups is outlined later in this document. Full details of the partnership group and each of its sub-group's functions are described in the WSSCP Constitution at **Appendix B**.

Voice of Children and Young People

The voice of children and young people must be reflected in our service delivery as it helps to inform both our future priorities and measurement of service delivery outcomes. We believe that listening to our children and young people about the services they have used or sought to access, and their views about safeguarding priorities in their communities, plays a pivotal part in informing our work priorities. By using co-production and acting on our children and young people's feedback and experiences we will be better able to understand how to optimise our partnerships' resources and deploy strategies to safeguard and promote their wellbeing. During the first year of the Partnership we will develop creative approaches to our engagement with children and their families.



4. Independent Scrutiny

The value of focussed, impartial and robust independent scrutiny to drive practice improvement and identify areas for development is key to helping inform the WSSCP's improvement journey. The inception of the WSSCP will see it deploy multiple approaches to ensure effective scrutiny of its local arrangements. These include but are not limited to: internal audits, peer reviews, lay membership of the WSSCP Board and its sub-groups, internal and independent child practice reviews. The WSSCP recognises that many of our agencies undergo rigorous audits as part of their organisations' governance. Our focus will therefore be on the outcomes for our children and their families who have received multi-agency safeguarding support and/or interventions.

Independent Chair: An Independent Chair (IC) is employed to support implementation of the new arrangements through impartial challenge and advice. The IC scrutinises local child practice review decisions, monitors and, where appropriate, challenges progress against the delivery of the partnership's business plan. As Chair of the Steering Group and Partnership Board, the IC will drive business delivery, providing leadership for the new partnership as it matures.

5. WSSCP leadership, partners and delivery groups

Background: new legislative requirements and how they have helped to shape our local arrangements

The lead partners are responsible for ensuring that the wider partnership maintains focus on our core responsibilities: safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of our children, particularly the most vulnerable. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WT 2018) states:

“A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- (a) the local authority
- (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area.

Should the lead representatives delegate their functions, they remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency. If delegated, it is the responsibility of the lead representative to identify and nominate a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements.”

Lead Representatives in West Sussex:	Roles are delegated to:
Chief Executive of West Sussex County Council	Director of Children’s Services,
Chief Superintendent, Public Protection, Sussex Police	Detective Superintendent, Safeguarding Investigation Unit
Chief Executive Officer of Sussex CCGs	Head of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

Regulation 18 of the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency Regulations 2018](#) contains a schedule of relevant agencies that are required to comply with the new Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. This includes voluntary and community sector organisations. Membership of the Partnership and subgroups is designed to provide appropriate levels of authority, expertise and value in the WSSCP decision making processes.

The WSSCP will cover the West Sussex local authority area under the new arrangements with the exception of the work of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) which will have a Pan Sussex geographical footprint.

WT 2018 states: "To be effective... arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and wellbeing boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and MAPPAs."

The WSSCP recognises that the new arrangements provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships with our existing partners and build upon work already achieved. For example, our current Pan Sussex delivery includes joint safeguarding children procedures, shared audit work as well as shared learning and development offers.

We are exploring further areas for alignment at a Pan Sussex level, such as thematic work, where appropriate, to support a targeted and resource efficient approach to our partnership work across Sussex. Enhancing our joint work across Sussex will support consistent practice and potentially drive up standards. Furthermore, partners who provide services across two or three of the local authority areas will be able to focus their resources equitably and eliminate duplication of, for example, partnership audit work. This approach will be reflected in our business planning and identification of WSSCP priority work where appropriate.

By working closely with all of our WSSCP partners we believe that agencies will be clear about how best to recognise and respond appropriately by using our shared Continuum of Need (Thresholds) guidance with an ambition to work towards greater Pan Sussex consistency.

Secure Settings

Whilst the local authority area does not currently have either secure residential accommodation for children and young people or a Young Offender Institution, should the situation change in future the WSSCP will scrutinise the effectiveness of these or similar settings.

The Home Office has accommodation in West Sussex where children and their families are held for short periods of time; this includes short term holding facilities at Gatwick Airport. Tinsley House is the only national facility which can hold children and families for a maximum of 7 days for Immigration purposes (Ministerial authority is required for periods lasting beyond 72 hours). The partnership will work with Border Force and Immigration Enforcement who work within West Sussex to seek assurance regarding agency's specific responsibilities under [s55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) and [s6 of the Immigration Act 2014](#).

WSSCP a new structure to deliver our objectives

Pan-Sussex Strategic Leadership Group

The Pan Sussex Strategic Leadership group meets twice a year to assess the impact of partnership work across Sussex, identify opportunities for Pan Sussex delivery of initiatives and to drive targeted and resource efficient practice. The group is led by the 3 local authority area Directors of Childrens Services and senior leaders from Sussex Police and CCGs.

Pan Sussex Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Under our new arrangements, the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has moved to cover a Sussex-wide footprint; this supports trend and data analysis based on a larger population cohort. The CDOP undertakes a multi-agency review for every child who dies in Sussex, to better understand their individual circumstances. This information is collated and analysed to identify where action can be taken which may prevent future child deaths and by driving improvements in the way we work together across the partnership to improve children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Safeguarding Children Partnership Steering Group

The Steering Group is the driving force for improved safeguarding practice across West Sussex. It will involve key linkages with other Partnerships and a more joined up agenda and focus on Safeguarding Children through our revised membership. The new structure will ensure the golden thread from our strategies and business plans to delivery is enabled by the chairs of our delivery groups being part of our Steering Group. The group is comprised of the three safeguarding leads, supported by relevant agencies that are best placed to contribute towards shaping the strategic direction of the Partnership. The Independent Chair supports the drive to scope and deliver the group's aims and membership, which may be subject to change as the partnership matures. Membership is comprised of a dynamic core of Partners to drive forward the WSSCP's work. Initially meeting bi-monthly, once the group is established it will meet on a quarterly basis. The Steering Group evaluates progress via quarterly and annual data, audit, monitoring and progress reports and Local Learning Reviews from the Partnership's groups and networks.

Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

Determining the impact and maintaining collaborative partnership working is overseen by the Partnership Board (PB) via quarterly meetings. The PB will present updates to the Steering Group on the impact of Local Learning Reviews and Learning and Development activity on improving: front line practice; multi-agency and single agency annual safeguarding reports; and scrutiny items. The Independent Chair leads the group to ensure sustained impetus, whilst also promoting innovative multi-agency practice.

Case Review Group

Our Case Review Group meets on a monthly basis, overseeing the process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews in accordance with the guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#).

Improving Practice and Assurance Group

The consolidated Improving Practice and Assurance Group's (IPAG) functions have a number of priority strands, full details are contained in the WSSCP constitution. Key responsibilities include audit work, analysis of local performance data and ensuring that recommendations and learning from reviews are embedded across organisations and agencies, using the new practitioners' group as champions in their organisation to test this at operational level. The IPAG's bi-monthly meetings assess the impact of specific areas of Child Safeguarding work, as agreed by the Partners. **The WSSCP Quality Assurance Framework can be found at Appendix C**

Exploitation Group

The WSSCP sees the merger of the Exploitation Group and Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) MACE groups. The Exploitation Group, convening bi-monthly, refocuses resources to monitor its approach to a responsive local multi-agency co-operative model which effectively tackles various forms of exploitation and child abuse, including contextual safeguarding and harmful practices. The group is comprised of experts in their field including voluntary and community sector organisations working in partnership across West Sussex to support improvement and support for children who are at risk of, or experiencing exploitation.

Practitioner's forum

The introduction of a practitioner led forum initiative is a further innovation which the partnership will develop and test during its first year of operation. It provides a direct link between WSSCP senior leadership and frontline staff and introduces a clear two-way communication route. This enables discussions about priorities and early identification of practice and operational issues. The forum will initially undertake "task and finish" work and report back to the Partnership Board (PB). Once operational, it will provide feedback to the PB about the impact of WSSCP priority work on frontline practice. It is anticipated that in addition to its core purpose, the forum will provide another link to the views of children, young people and their families, in conjunction with a problem-solving and networking platform.

How we will work with our wide ranging partners

Details of the agencies we will work with are appended; this includes details of the membership of the Strategic Steering Group, Partnership Board and our other partnership delivery groups. (Appendix A). We recognise a number of organisations such as the British Transport Police and Cafcass operate with a national remit. We will agree with them how and when we best operate/engage locally e.g. engaging in audit processes on a Pan Sussex basis. Our ambition is to have a fully co-operative and aligned approach to our collective delivery of services to our children and families with our wider partnerships including the Safeguarding Adults and Health and Wellbeing Boards and West Sussex County Council Community Safety Directorate.



6. Finance

Multi-agency funding to support functions of its business support unit and local practice reviews is expected to remain at current levels for the financial year 2019-20. The lead partners agreed that the local authority will continue to host the WSSCP business support team and is therefore responsible for the WSSCP business support team's budgetary expenditure and financial compliance. Moving forward the Partnership leads will agree funding with partner agencies for local and Pan Sussex multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.



7. Learning and development

The WSSCP uses the multi-agency training needs analysis commissioned by the WSSCB in December 2018 as the basis on which to provide core training over 2 business years: April 2019- March 2021. The WSSCP business support unit's Learning and Development Officer co-ordinates delivery of the multi-agency offer and reports on its impact to the IPAG. The WSSCP will continue to explore opportunities to develop wider Learning and Development partnerships, across Sussex and beyond, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and West Sussex County Council's Community Safety Directorate. The WSSCP Learning and Improvement Framework and outline core training offer **are at Appendices D and E.**

8. Dispute resolution

The WSSCP has a published escalation procedure on its website, which is promoted to ensure agencies are aware of how and when to use it. Use of the escalation procedure will be monitored by the partnership.

In the event of a dispute between the 3 lead partners the Independent Chair will be asked for advice to help partners swiftly and transparently reach a suitable resolution. The 3 lead partners may also seek independent advice, for example legal advice when appropriate. Partners will ensure throughout any dispute that their focus remains on safeguarding the child/children.

9. Annual report

The Independent Chair undertakes a review of the effectiveness of the WSSCP arrangements and tracks its business plan delivery progress. This will inform a retrospective annual report. It will be published on the WSSCP's website.



Appendices:

- A Membership of Groups**
- B Constitution**
- C Quality Assurance Framework**
- D Learning and Improvement Offer**
- E WSSCP core training offer (2019-21).**
- F WSSCP Business Plan and Priorities**