



Strategic Plan

2024 - 2027

WOLVERHAMPTON SAFEGUARDING TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP

Version Control

Author of Document	WST Partnership Manager
Version	Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027
Authorised by	WST Executive Group
Date Authorised	December 2024
Review Date	January 2027

Introduction

The strategic plan for 2024 – 2027, sets out the Executive Board’s strategic vision, ambition, purpose, principles, and safeguarding priorities for the following two years. We have reflected and celebrated what was achieved over the last two years and agreed to refocus our priorities to:

- Transitional Safeguarding
- Cumulative Harm & Trauma
- Neglect / Self-Neglect
- Child Sexual Abuse

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership convenes safeguarding partners, the Police, Integrated Care Board and Local Authority, alongside Education and the Voluntary sector to work in close collaboration to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs in Wolverhampton.

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership creates the conditions to develop a learning culture driving best collaborative practice for good outcomes.

To achieve this, it:

- Sets standards and procedures for multi-agency practice.
- Promotes working together in practice supported by behaviours of respect and trust.
- Assures sound quality practice with a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people, and adults.
- Provides a programme of learning and development which supports leadership and practice, as well as from reviews of serious incidents such as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- Models a culture of evaluation, learning and development.
- Communicates effectively with the wider safeguarding system of organisations and individuals, including voluntary organisations and those who experience services.
- Drives progress through subgroups and priority work streams who are accountable to the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-ordination Group, who in turn report to the Executive Group.
- Sets out the strategic intent of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together in making this vision a reality. It underlines the statutory objectives to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Our Principles

- We are committed to effective collaboration and partnership working which delivers the best possible protection of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs.
- We are committed to operating a learning culture to inform and upskill the children and adult workforce.

This Strategic Plan provides information on how the agreed strategic priorities for 2024 - 2027 will be driven in line with the revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as set out in Working Together 2023 and the responsibilities of Safeguarding Adult Boards set out in the Care Act 2014, in compliance with statutory requirements. The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a co-ordinated and systemic way which safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs.

Our Strategic Plan focuses on the specific role and remit of the safeguarding partnership in gaining assurance that that welfare of children and adults with care and support needs are safeguarded and protected, as set out in Working Together 2023 and the Care Act 2014.

Key Priorities for 2024 - 2027

The strategic priorities for 2024 – 2027 have been agreed in response to national requirements, regional developments, and local need. They have taken account of the outcomes from the annual events in October 2023 and January 2024 as well as learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

This document is an overarching conduit to the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group and priority work-streams. Together these plans will be monitored through scrutiny and challenge of the Executive Group. This plan and the work of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership is further complimented by the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group.

The work of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership, which is to ensure that activity to protect children, young people, and adults with care and support needs from harm is fully co-ordinated and effective and fits within the wider context of the work and remits of the following:

- Health and Well-Being Together
- Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board
- Child Death Overview Panel

- Children and Families Together Board
- One Wolverhampton
- Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) Programme Board

All members, as part of their role and responsibilities, will be a champion in their own agency to support and progress the work of the strategic priorities and ensure staff within their own agencies are actively involved in its successful delivery.

Wolverhampton Reform Strands – Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP)

An exciting opportunity for Wolverhampton to contribute to and shape national reform

Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families

Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system

Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks

Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care

Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one

Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data

DFE Design – Specific Minimum Requirements

Family Help: Locally based multi-disciplinary Family Help teams that work collaboratively with partners to provide intensive, non-stigmatising and effective support tailored to the needs of children and families. Incorporating a ‘front door’ and service that is welcoming. Create a family help assessment that feeds into a family help plan. Agree how teams will case manage, provide oversight and have appropriate supervision.

Child Protection: A child protection response led by Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPP). To work as part of a dedicated and skilled multi-agency child protection team (MACPT) to work alongside Family Help. Improving parents’ experiences and engagement with child protection, including through independent parental representation.

Family networks: Participating local areas to make greater use of family networks, with earlier use of family group decision-making throughout Family Help and child protection systems, facilitated by targeted funding to enable more children to live at home or support a transition into kinship care.

Safeguarding partners: Changes to how safeguarding partners operate with clear roles and responsibilities for statutory safeguarding partners at both a strategic and operational level, including a possible statutory role for education.

What is FFCP aiming to achieve?

- Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need, when they need it, in a coordinated way.
- Improved integration between Family Help, Child Protection and across agencies (police, health and education).
- Children and young people are supported by their family network.
- Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes.
- Children and Families have informed access to a range of services to meet their needs.
- Families experience of services is more positive and there is a reduction in the need for statutory intervention
- The workforce is equipped and effective and supports families in a relationship led approach.
- Leaders successfully drive conditions for effective practice.

FFCP Strategic Education Lead

This is a fixed term post. The aims of the role include:

- To be the lead representative for Education as the fourth statutory partner ensuring representation of safeguarding across all education settings delivering services to children and young people from Wolverhampton, the Education Excellence Service and Children's Services more widely.
- To have a knowledge of the different education settings across the city and the services they deliver and to act within a supportive and challenging role and as a voice to feedback to highlight good practice, any risk or concerns.
- To provide support and challenge to education settings, ensuring safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements in accordance with the FFCP programme in Wolverhampton.
- To coordinate and lead the voice of education as the fourth partner and liaise with colleagues and other partners in relation to safeguarding.

Joint Functions of Lead Safeguarding Partners

- Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
- Lead their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
- Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
- Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
- Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
- Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Delivering the plan

The Scrutiny and Assurance Co-ordination Group will take responsibility for monitoring delivery of this Strategic Plan and will formally report to the Executive Group quarterly, with the understanding that any issues that could impact on the delivery of the plan will be escalated to the Chair of the Executive Group immediately. Each of the Priority Groups and the Communication and Learning Group will have a work plan which will underpin the delivery of these priorities.

This will also align to the Quality Assurance Framework via the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and multi-agency audits, whilst ensuring that the impact and outcomes of this information can clearly evidence the difference being made.

WST Structure Chart



WST Priorities 2024 – 2027

Priority	Aim	Activity
<p>Transitional Safeguarding Are pathways for Transitional Safeguarding across the city understood and effective in supporting families and individuals at the right level, at the right time?</p>	<p>To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in relation to Transitional Safeguarding. Our aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure that there is a smooth transition pathway in place for all children, young people and adults to ensure ongoing consistent support • Increase the knowledge and awareness of Transitional Safeguarding across the partnership • Provide an understanding of Transitional Safeguarding arrangements across the partnership and how effective they are 	<p>To do this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map current pathways in place and a gap analysis • Develop a Transitional Safeguarding training package – to include learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews • Review available data to identify any gaps
<p>Cumulative Harm & Trauma How effective are we as a partnership at recognising and responding to Cumulative Harm and Trauma?</p>	<p>To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in relation to Cumulative Harm & Trauma. Our aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how partners have embedded Cumulative Harm & Trauma approaches within organisational policies. • Understand how partners have embedded Cumulative Harm & Trauma approaches within organisational assessment and practice delivery 	<p>To do this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request examples of policies from organisations / agencies to identify examples of best practice and any gaps • Review partner position statements to identify assessment frameworks and tools and identify gaps within organisations / partners.

Priority	Aim	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether partnership organisations frontline practitioners have accessed appropriate training to equip them to understand and embed cumulative harm & trauma informed practice. • Understand the level of understanding partner organisations have around 6 principles of Trauma Informed Care in the workplace and how supervision policy and practice support this organisational culture. • Understand what internal quality assurance mechanisms organisations / agencies have in place and how the learning is disseminated. • Utilise learning from statutory reviews in which cumulative harm and trauma have been identified as key factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of partner position statements and develop a glossary of current organisational approaches to assessment and practice development • identify the current training offers in place and the completion rate. Identify specific training packages / opportunities utilised within the partnership. • Request Partner organisations to review and identify areas of practice that match the 6 principles. • Conduct Dip Samples and Audits • Develop 7 Minute Briefings relating to statutory reviews that specifically involve cumulative harm and trauma. • Produce a summary report on key learning and practice guidance from a number of statutory reviews – locally and nationally.
<p>Neglect / Self-Neglect To what extent are agencies and families aware of what neglect / self-neglect looks like and the impact it can have?</p>	<p>To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in relation to Neglect and Self-Neglect for both children and adults. Our aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a user-friendly toolkit and ensure it is embedded in practice 	<p>To do this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the neglect strategy and toolkit • Review the West-Midlands best practice guidance to inform whether

Priority	Aim	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of what action is being taken to tackle neglect within the city • Reduce the number of inappropriate safeguarding referrals • Provide a better understanding of what constitutes neglect where there are care quality concerns • Provide an understanding of the extent agencies and families are aware of Neglect and Self-Neglect looks like and the impact it can have • Identify any gaps in knowledge and provide appropriate training / resources • Increase practitioner knowledge and understanding of Neglect and Self-Neglect and poverty. 	<p>a local Self-Neglect toolkit is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Quality Assurance Framework to understand the extent agencies and families are aware of what Neglect and Self-Neglect looks like and the impact it can have including the impact of poverty • Develop a training package to raise awareness of Neglect and Self-Neglect and the impact of poverty. • Conduct necessary dip samples and audits and develop action plans as appropriate
<p>Child Sexual Abuse How as agencies do we reduce the impact of all forms of child sexual abuse through improved prevention and better response?</p>	<p>To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in relation to Child Sexual Abuse. Our aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear commitment across the partnership to prevent, identify, and respond to Child Sexual Abuse in all its forms. • Align strategic priorities with national guidance and local / regional needs. 	<p>To do this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a local strategy. • Review available data to understand the scale and nature of CSA within the city. • Conduct necessary dip samples and audits and develop actions plans as appropriate • Provide multi-agency training to upskill the workforce in recognising and responding to Child Sexual Abuse.

Priority	Aim	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what preventative work is already in place to identify and address any gaps. • Use local/regional data to understand the scale, nature, and context of CSA. • Undertake a multi-agency training needs assessment. • Deliver evidence-based training and provide accessible resources to support practice. • Increase public awareness and understanding of an appropriate response to suspected child sexual abuse. • Launch the WM Regional CSA Response Pathway and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and utilise the WM Regional CSA Pathway and resources. • Identify what services are currently available to support those at risk of CSA in all its forms and identify any gaps.

Media Protocol

Communicating with the media

Proactive use of the media to promote good safeguarding messages should be a routine part of any public awareness campaign.

A pre-prepared statement will be written by Wolverhampton City Council's Communication Team in readiness for the publication of any CSPRs and SARs. Any communication with the media in the name of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together should be undertaken by the Chair of the Executive Group or a nominated substitute where appropriate.

Agencies should avoid responding independently and all press releases should be agreed by the Chair of the Executive Group to ensure a consistent response is delivered. Partner agencies must ensure that any public communication does not negatively impact on a partner agency.

Dealing with media enquiries

Much of the work undertaken by partner agencies is confidential and this confidentiality is fundamental. It is the intention of the partnership to be open and transparent about its work, whilst protecting the personal details of clients.

From time-to-time issues may arise that are of interest to the media. These issues may be of a negative nature and may have a damaging impact on the reputation of the partnership and of partner agencies.

If you receive an enquiry relating to Safeguarding, your communications team and the Partnership Business Manager should be notified immediately. If the enquiry relates specifically to the Partnership, the response should come directly from the Chair of the Executive Group. Where possible, responses should be sent to the Executive Group before it is sent to the journalist. However, media deadlines mean it is not always possible to wait for a response from each organisation before the response is submitted, although every effort should be made for this to happen.

Speaking to the Press

When an immediate media response is required, this will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Executive Group or whomever they designate this to. The Chair will have authority to talk to the media on all Partnership matters. In the absence of the Chair, this role will be taken on by other members of the Executive Group.

The Chair will undertake the role of 'talking head' for the Partnership. This will not be undertaken by any other person without prior agreement from the Chair. Information may be shared with the press by the Partnership and after alerting partner agencies of the Chair's wish to do so. Partnership members will not make any 'off the record' comments to the media.

Drafting and Publishing of Press Releases

Any press releases will be drafted by the Wolverhampton City Council Communications Manager in collaboration with the WST Partnership Manager. This will be circulated to the Executive Group for approval before being shared wider.

Communicating following a Child Safeguarding Practice Review / Safeguarding Adults Review

The Chair of the Executive Group should be the key representative to speak to the media about a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) / Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) and any actions following that review on behalf of the partnership.

It is important to note that any press release will only be made once the CSPR / SAR has been completed and published. If a media request for a statement is received prior to completion of a review, the Partnership will provide a holding statement on the case.

It is important that the families of those who have suffered the death of a relative or who's relative has been subject of a CSPR / SAR is kept informed about the process.

Professionals who have been involved with the family before and at the time of the incident/s that resulted in a CSPR / SAR, may be best placed to make informed and professional judgements about the frequency and method of communicating information to the relatives and passing back information to colleagues. Where these staff work for organisations external to Wolverhampton, for example where someone has been placed into a care home in Wolverhampton by another Local Authority or Integrated Care Board, the primary responsibility will remain with them. However, the Partnership will also require that a representative from Wolverhampton makes and, unless declined, maintains contact in addition to this.