



WOLVERHAMPTON  
SAFEGUARDING  
TOGETHER

## **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together (WST) Strategic Plan 2022-2024**

### **Introduction**

The strategic plan for 2022-2024, sets out the Executive Board's strategic vision, ambition, purpose, principles, and safeguarding priorities for the following two years. We have reflected on what was achieved over the last two years, to refocus on streamlining and key partnership action required. We have made the decision to keep the same priority groups, however the priority questions have been refocused.

WST convenes safeguarding partners, the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group 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. The WST supports them as leaders, challenges and hold them to account. WST 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 learning from the best, 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 sub groups and priority work streams which regularly account to the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-ordination Group, who in turn report to the Executive Group.

The WST Strategic Plan sets out the strategic intent of the WST in making this vision a reality. It underlines the statutory objectives of the WST to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

### **Our Principles**

- Committed to effective collaboration partnership working which delivers the best possible protection of children and adults with care and support needs
- Operating a learning culture

The WST 2022-2024 Strategic Plan provides information on how the agreed strategic priorities for 2022-2024 will be driven in line with the revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as set out in Working Together 2018 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 children and adults and promotes their welfare.

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 2018 and the Care Act 2014.

### **Key Priorities for 2022 – 2024**

The Strategic priorities for 2022-2024 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 June 2021 and November 2021 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 Working Group. This plan and the work of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together is further complimented by the Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

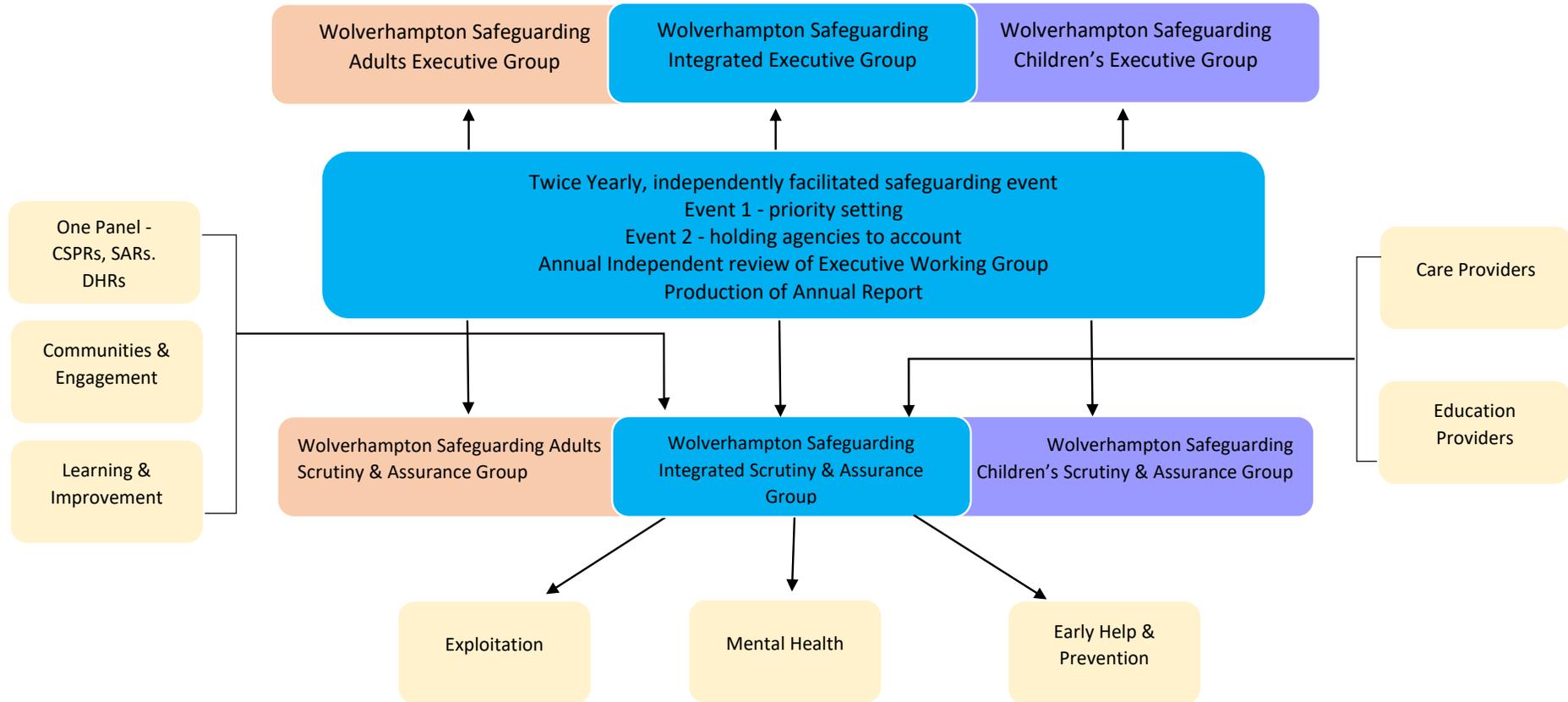
The work of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together (WST), which is to ensure that activity to protect children and adults with care and support needs from harm is fully co-ordinated and effective, fits within the wider context of the work and remits of Health and Wellbeing Together, Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board, and the Children and Families Together Board.

All WST 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.

### **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 Working 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 Working Group immediately. Each of the Priority Groups, Learning and improvement group and the Communities Engagement Groups will have a delivery/work plan which will underpin the delivery of these priorities.

### Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Structure



## WST Strategic Priorities 2022-2024

Priority	Aim	Activity
<b>Priority 1: Exploitation</b>	To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency practice in response to the exploitation of vulnerable people, including: Criminal Exploitation; County lines, Child Sexual Exploitation; children affected by gangs and youth violence; modern slavery and trafficking.	Scrutinise and challenge partner's multi-agency practice.
<b>Priority 2: Early Help and Prevention</b>	To improve the effectiveness of multi-agency Early Help and prevention work for both children and adults whose needs do not warrant a statutory social care intervention.	Evaluate multi-agency practice, and promote best practice.
<b>Priority 3: Mental Health</b>	To explore tier 1 and tier 2 service offer, and improve the safeguarding of children and adults living with poor mental health, or those who live in a family where mental ill health is a feature.	Develop rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the provision and delivery of mental health services and multi-agency practice where poor mental health is a feature. Introduce timely and robust methods to learn from audits and case reviews and disseminate the lessons learned.

Each Priority working group will have a workplan.

Priority	What do we need to do?	How are we going to do it	How will we know we have made a difference?
<p><b>Priority 1: Exploitation</b></p> <p>WST will provide scrutiny and challenge to partners to evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effectiveness of pathways that are in place.</li> <li>• The level of understanding re the impact of childhood trauma on the lives of young people / adult at risk of exploitation.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of transition from exploited child to exploited adult.</li> <li>• The access to support services available.</li> </ul>	<p>Identify whether current pathways are understood and effective.</p> <p>Look at and review current pathways in place to identify whether they are effective.</p> <p>Create a space for children / adult social workers to share information in readiness for transition to adulthood.</p>	<p>Annual Event – Focus on priority questions, pathways / services available etc.</p> <p>Experts by Experience – user feedback to inform continuous improvement and development.</p>	
<p><b>Priority 2: Early Help and Prevention</b></p>	<p>Understand how widely embed the Early help and prevention offer is embed across the workforce</p> <p>Assure WST that the correct threshold is consistently met</p>	<p>Review of the Threshold document (due in the next 6 months) and explore if there is a appetite for a regional threshold document</p>	

<p>WST to provide scrutiny and challenge to partners to evaluate effectiveness of multi-agency practice in response to Early Help and Prevention in both children and adult services, for those whose needs do not warrant a statutory social care intervention</p>	<p>Assure WST of the impact and quality of the work being undertaken to prevent escalating risk to children, young people and adults with care and support needs</p>	<p>Stories of difference.</p> <p>WST Annual Event – Focus on Pathways, Transition and Access to services.</p> <p>Review performance data</p> <p>Launch and embed the neglect strategy and toolkit – analyse data to evaluate its use and dip sample the quality</p>	
<p><b>Priority 3: Mental Health</b></p> <p>How effective and equitable is early access to mental health provision across Wolverhampton? Early access will be in relation to offer of Tier 1 &amp; Tier 2 services</p>	<p>We need to scope the mental health offer in Wolverhampton within a safeguarding and multi-agency context.</p> <p>Establish current services offered around early access to Mental Health Services and identify any gaps.</p> <p>Mapping Report – Identify what is already in place, what the route to support is, how support is accessed and by who. Report should also detail where pathways don't exist within Tier 1 and Tier 2.</p> <p>Service User Engagement</p>	<p>WST Annual Event – Focus on Pathways, Transitions and Access to Services</p> <p>T&amp;F Group to be convened to look at mapping.</p> <p>Use of Experts by Experience.</p>	

## Communication and Learning

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership (WST) is a multiagency partnership committed to the effective safeguarding of Children and Young People, Families and Adults with care and support needs in the local area who are unable to protect themselves.

The aim of this Communication and Learning Strategy is to provide a plan of action for improving and strengthening communication to and from the partnership, and to ensure that WST communications are managed effectively and professionally.

To fulfil its statutory objectives and effectively carry out its functions, the Partnership needs to raise awareness about how everybody can contribute to the safeguarding agenda. This should involve listening to and consulting with service users and carers, and ensuring their views and opinions are considered in planning and delivering safeguarding services.

We recognise that people will need information at different stages, in different formats and locations depending on their requirements. The Partnership aims to provide information that is accessible, of a high quality and meets the needs of the public, service users, potential service users and staff working across partner agencies.

It is crucial that the Chair of the Executive Group is objective and leads the Partnership in such a way. Whilst the Partnership does not look to apportion blame, there may be times when the finding of a review commissioned by WST highlights unpalatable truths that are nonetheless crucial to future learning and safeguarding. In the spirit of public accountability and transparency, it is the exclusive prerogative of the Executive Group Chair to have the final word on how and when pro-active publicity/news releases will be issued.

All priority and sub groups, scrutiny and assurance and the executive group can refer communication and learning opportunities to WST

### Aims & Objectives:

Our aim is to raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities for organisations and individuals, and to promote good multiagency working

#### Our objectives are:

- To promote the welfare of children and young people, adults, families, and communities in Wolverhampton.
- To prevent abuse, neglect, harm exploitation and make people feel safe.
- To ensure the voice of the child, families and communities are heard and that their views are meaningfully taken into consideration.
- To inform multi-agency policy and practice.
- To establish links with other strategic partnerships to develop a shared understanding of the needs of children, young people and adults and encourage the sharing of good practice.
- To seek opportunities to engage directly with children, young people, adults, and communities using the Experts by Experience approach.

- To ensure partners have an appropriate mechanism to communicate views and comments back to the Scrutiny and Assurance Group, ensuring meaningful participation.
- To communicate in an accurate, timely and appropriate way meeting the needs of the target audiences, and to ensure information is accessible and addresses equality and diversity issues

Where appropriate we will jointly support national campaigns to raise awareness of safeguarding issues. This will help our local communities to understand how to recognise different forms of abuse.

We will also work closely with our partners to co-ordinate our communications and ensure that consistent messaging is used across the city.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility for implementing this strategy sits with the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group.

WST and partner agencies will identify and coordinate a programme of publicity and awareness raising campaigns on a routine basis to tie in with national and local events.

The Chair of the Executive Group may also wish to take advantage of opportunistic media stories or issues to highlight the role of the Partnership and safeguarding awareness.

WST Members have a specific responsibility to:

- Ensure that information is cascaded to all relevant people within their organisation.
- Ensure that any issues raised by members of their organisation are fed up to the Scrutiny and Assurance Co-Ordination Group.
- Promote awareness of safeguarding issues and disseminate accessible information about the work of the partnership via a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at ensuring that abuse is recognised, reported and immediate action taken wherever it arises.
- Promote the work of the partnership with children, young people, adults and families across children, adult and community services and the wider community.
- Engage with children, young people, adults, families, and professionals to inform multi-agency policy and practice and to seek and listen to their feedback, views, and experiences to help review, evaluate and improve policies and practices.
- Communicate the findings of any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).
- Share any good practice or recommendations from any Quality Assurance work, including multi-agency case file audits.

## Target Audience

The Partnership needs to communicate and engage with a diverse community and a range of groups and organisations that care for, educate, provide services for and protect children, young people, adults and families. Examples include, but are not restricted to:

- Partners & Professionals
- Adults with Care and Support Needs
- Children & Young People
- Parents & Carers
- Wider Community
- Healthcare Settings
- Educational Settings
- Faith Settings
- Voluntary Sector

We will seek to raise the visual public profile of the Partnership to improve accessibility to safeguarding services and raise awareness of key issues to promote the safeguarding of children, young people, adults, and families in Wolverhampton.

### What will be communicated?

#### Key Messages:

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility
- A focus on preventing and reducing risk of abuse or neglect and improving outcomes for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults at risk.
- A focus on our key priorities, Exploitation, Early Help & Prevention and Mental Health
- Learning from CSPRs, SARs and DHRs
- Arising themes

### How will we communicate?

- WST & Partner Websites
- Bulletins & Briefing Notes
- Training
- Annual Conferences / Workshops
- Annual Report
- Strategic Plan
- Consultation and engagement events and surveys
- Leaflets, posters, 7-minute briefings
- Email

## 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 whose 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 in to a care home in Wolverhampton by another Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group, 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.

## **Resourcing**

The Partnership is funded through statutory partner agencies and does not have a budget available to produce new marketing material. Therefore, existing, and established communication channels will need to be maximised as much as possible.

Each agency has opportunities to promote safeguarding awareness amongst staff and networks through internal communication channels, including newsletters, intranet, training, and website publishing. Opportunities to launch / support joint campaigns with relevant partnerships (e.g., WST Partnership) are encouraged.

## **Risk Management**

The partnership anticipates the following communication risks:

- Not identifying safeguarding issues before they reach the media
- Inconsistent and unclear messages delivered from partner agencies
- Not sharing information which could result in mixed messages being presented by partners
- Communication leaks of confidential information
- Risks are mitigated by Board members being aware of this strategy and working within the framework set out within it.

The Partnerships Communication & Learning Strategy will be reviewed on a by-annually basis as part of the Strategic Plan

