



Cheshire West and Chester
Safeguarding Children
Partnership

Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership

Our new arrangements

June 2019

“We seek to ensure that every child and young person in Cheshire West and Chester grows up in a safe environment that enables them to achieve their full potential”.

NHS
Vale Royal
Clinical Commissioning Group



Cheshire West
and Chester

NHS
West Cheshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

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WELCOME

This document sets out how agencies in Cheshire West and Chester will work together to safeguard children and young people in the Borough. The Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership described here is still relatively new and builds on the work of its predecessor Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Our new framework has been developed mindful of the fact that the LSCB was operating effectively; being judged by Ofsted in February 2016 to be 'Good' and again in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection in November 2017 when the Inspectorates recognised an "effective LSCB" and "strong partnership working". As such, our new arrangements seek to build on this solid foundation and we have not made changes for changes sake, instead only introducing new approaches where it is felt it can enhance safeguarding practices for our children and young people.

Our partnership arrangements include all the agencies that provide support to, work with or commission services for children and young people; and includes all statutory and voluntary agencies and faith groups. We recognise that agencies will have differing levels of engagement within the partnership we want to build on their strengths and support them to effectively promote and safeguard the children of Cheshire West and Chester.

As leaders of the 3 statutory partners responsible for ensuring there are effective multi-agency arrangements in place, we recognise that safeguarding children cannot be achieved in isolation from other partnerships, or our communities. We are committed to provide the leadership and joint accountability for the safeguarding and welfare of our most vulnerable children.

Our new arrangements are designed to offer us the chance to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children and young people and support those who most need our help into adulthood.



Clare Watson
Accountable Officer
NHS Vale Royal & NHS West Cheshire
Clinical Commissioning Groups



Andrew Lewis
Chief Executive
Cheshire West & Chester Council



Darren Martland
Chief Constable
Cheshire Police.

1. National context to our safeguarding arrangements

The Children and Social Work Act (2017) set out the provisions which will replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new flexible working arrangements. The Act places new duties on 'three Safeguarding Partners'¹, namely the Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups to work together, and with other partners locally (known as Relevant Agencies²), to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

The requirements of the new safeguarding arrangements, as set out in Working Together 2018, have underpinned the establishment of our local arrangements in Cheshire West and Chester. The guidance requires areas to publish their new arrangements by 29th June 2019 and provides 3 months for their implementation. In Cheshire West and Chester, we have been piloting the new structure since April 2019. The LSCB will cease to exist now that this framework is published and we will operate as the Safeguarding Children Partnership with immediate effect.

2. The Local Context

2.1 Geographical boundaries covered by these arrangements.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements described throughout this document only cover the Local Authority area of Cheshire West and Chester.

Cheshire West and Chester has a population of 331,000 and covers 350 square miles. The borough is located in the North West of England and includes the historic city of Chester and the industrial and market towns of Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Helsby, Malpas, Neston, Northwich and Winsford. About a third of the population lives in rural areas. **Approximately 70,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years, and 23,700 between the ages of 19-24 live within the authority.**

Figure 1. Cheshire West & Chester Local Authority Boundaries

¹ A *safeguarding partner* in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 as: (a) the local authority, (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area, and (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area. The three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents. To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies as well as arrangements for conducting local reviews.

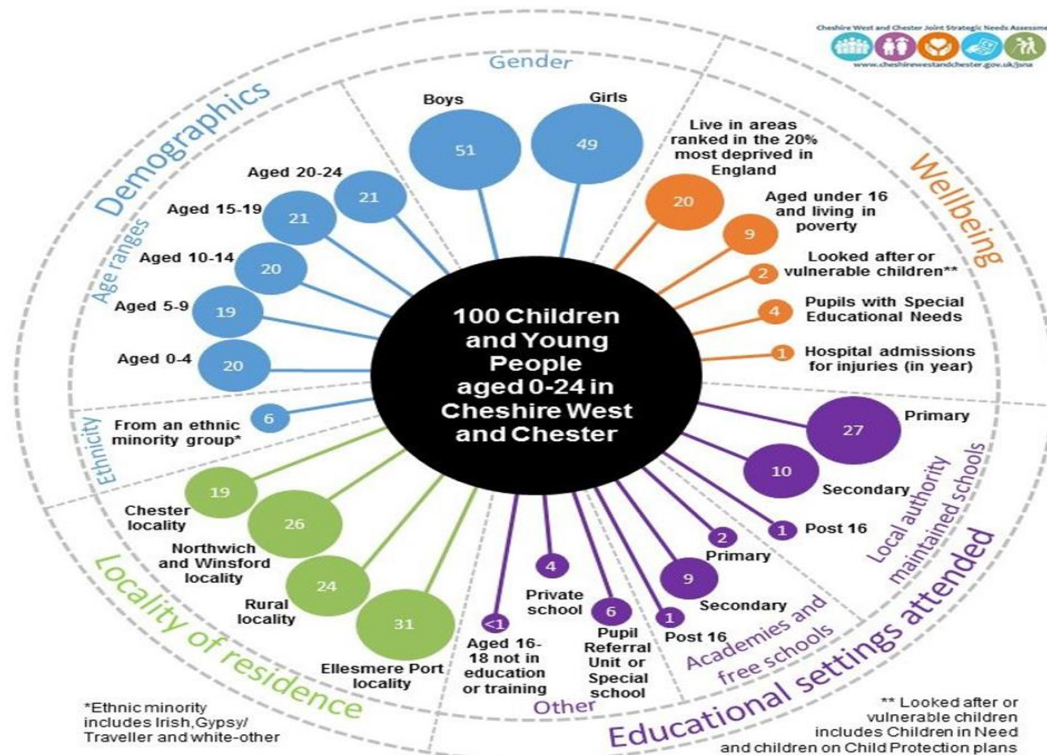
² Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.



If Cheshire West were a village of 100 Young People....

If the population of 0- 25s was reduced to a village of precisely 100 young people, with all existing ratios remaining the same, the demographics would look something like this (JSNA 2016):

Figure 2. Cheshire West demographics based on 100 children



There are 171 Registered Childminders in Cheshire West and 201 settings.

There are 163 schools in Cheshire West, 130 Primary schools, 22 Secondary schools and 10 special schools. Two of the Secondary Schools are Pupil Referral

Units. 30 of the 163 schools are academies and three are free schools. The Safeguarding Partners consider each and every school to be a relevant agency insofar as the definition provided in Working Together 2018. However, unless there is a specific need to seek representation from an individual school, the Partnership will obtain an education perspective at all its meeting through representative Head Teachers from the Primary, Secondary and Special School Forums, the Local Authority Education Service and the Safeguarding Children in Education Team.

Young People can access further education at 32 sites across the County. There are three college providers; the remainder are Sixth Form provision within schools.

There are two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that commission health care across Cheshire West and Chester – NHS West Cheshire CCG and Vale Royal CCG. There are two hospitals in the area –The Grosvenor Hospital Chester operated by Nuffield Health and the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Residents do also attend Leighton Hospital in the East which is operated by Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and across the border to Arrowe Park Hospital on the Wirral). As such the Safeguarding Children Partnership does receive performance information from the NHS hospitals via our Clinical Commissioning Groups representatives.

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust are commissioned to provide mental health services (including CAMHS), learning disability and community physical health services (health visiting, Family Nurse Partnership and school nursing Services).

Sexual Health Services in Cheshire West and Chester are delivered by Virgin Care Limited

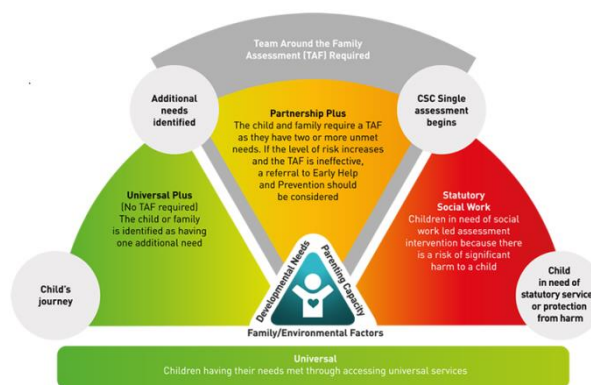
There are 47 GP Practices in our area providing primary care services to our population. NHS England commissions primary and secondary care dental services across Cheshire West and Chester. These services are provided by dental practices across the area.

The area is covered by one police force – Cheshire Police, which also covers Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington.

In addition to Cheshire Police, there are a number of other partners that operate in Cheshire West and across the wider Region. These include NHS England, the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Service, and CAF/CASS. In developing these new arrangements thought has been given as to how best to engage the organisations who may have requirements to contribute to a number of partnership arrangements. Further information in this regard can be found in section 3.4.

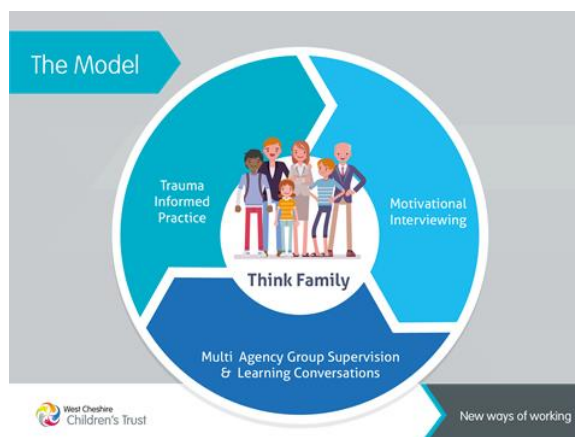
2.2 How the threshold document setting out the local criteria for action aligns with the arrangements

In Cheshire West and Chester all agencies are committed to offering children, young people and their families, help and support at the earliest opportunity. Our Continuum of Need threshold was refreshed by multi-agency partners in 2016 and is well embedded in the area. It demands a whole systems approach to service delivery to ensure families receive early help as soon difficulties start to emerge, but also outlines when action must be taken to protect children from serious harm.



The Continuum of Need is enhanced by a robust [Early Help and Prevention Strategy](#) which supports partners to consider how early help is delivered in partnership with children, young people and families to improve life chances, particularly for families experiencing complex and multiple difficulties.

In 2018 our Local Authority Children’s Services was awarded funding by DfE Partner’s in Practice programme for an initiative based on the development of a trauma informed approach to practice, known as “New Ways of Working”. Overseen by West Cheshire’s Children’s Trust, this is a partnership way of working that has the commitment and support of all partners in the public, voluntary and private sector who work with children and families to develop a model of multi-agency practice that aims to prevent children and young people becoming vulnerable and their needs escalating; and looks to develop sustainable solutions within families which will improve resilience and emotional health and wellbeing.



New Ways of Working is underpinned by our safeguarding partnership’s ‘Think Family’ principles, and both strands of work fit within the Continuum of Need to enhance our response to children and families. Our new safeguarding arrangements do not change the threshold document, and the Partnership will continue to seek assurance that children are receiving the right support at the right time, through its quality assurance mechanisms.

The [Continuum of Need](#) is published on the Partnerships website.

3. HOW THE SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS WILL WORK TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN THE AREA

3.1 The 3 safeguarding partners in Cheshire West and Chester

Working Together 2018 identifies the lead representatives for the new safeguarding arrangements as ‘the Local Authority Chief Executive, the Accountable Officers for Clinical Commissioning Groups, and the Chief Officer of Police’.

For Cheshire West and Chester the lead representatives are:

Table 1: Lead representatives for the Safeguarding Children Partnership

Chief Executive	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Accountable Officer	NHS Vale Royal and West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups
Chief Constable	Cheshire Police

Working Together gives permission for leads to delegate their functions to other Senior Officers, in doing so they nevertheless remain accountable for any actions or decisions taken on behalf of their agency.

Lead Officers have identified the following senior officers to lead the safeguarding arrangements in Cheshire West and Chester.

Table 2: Senior Officers acting on behalf of the Lead Officers

Director of Children’s Services	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Director of Quality and Patient Experience	West Cheshire and Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Groups
Detective Superintendent	Cheshire Police.

Each of the safeguarding partner agencies are represented at an appropriate level across all of the groups that make up the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

3.2 Our shared vision

In Cheshire West and Chester the partnership is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and families. We recognise that to do this we must share a collective vision in respect of what we are seeking to achieve and work together to deliver that vision. Our partnership is agreed that:

“We seek to ensure that every child and young person in Cheshire West and Chester grows up in a safe environment that enables them to achieve their full potential”.

To achieve this vision, the three safeguarding partners will work collaboratively with the relevant agencies to ensure that:

1. The rights and interests of children are at the heart of our arrangements and kept in focus as we go about our work.
2. The Partnership holds each other each other to account for their safeguarding work, which includes their responsibility for effective multi-agency working.
3. Children are safeguarded by having in place policies, procedures, safe working practices and suitable, trained staff and volunteers.

3.3 Our Priorities

We have agreed some shared priorities for the first year of our new partnership arrangements. These include:

- **Priority 1** – A focus on children and young people with complex needs including those who go missing from home or care; missing from education; and those at risk of exploitation – led by the Police.
- **Priority 2** – Ensuring a Think Family response to children and families where substance misuse, domestic abuse, learning disability and mental health problems are a feature of the family environment – led by the Local Authority.
- **Priority 3** – Responding effectively to children and young people who experience poor emotional wellbeing or mental health problems – led by the CCG.

3.4 The Relevant Agencies

Working Together 2018 defines relevant agencies as ‘those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need’.

In this respect it is a challenge to identify any of the partners in the LSCB arrangements that would not be required to contribute to the Safeguarding Children Partnership going forward. As such, the new arrangements have instead sought to provide different routes for agencies to contribute to the work of the partnership so as not to systematically require attendance at every meeting.

The three safeguarding partners consider the following organisations and agencies to be ‘relevant agencies’ for the purpose of the new safeguarding arrangements.

Table 3: Relevant Agencies

Relevant Agency	How they will engage with the partnership
Education Settings	Membership of Executive, Practice Improvement Group, quality assurance activity & wider partnership events
Early Years Settings	Membership of Practice Improvement Group and wider partnership events
Youth Justice Service	Membership of Executive, CE Working Group quality assurance activity & wider partnership events
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Membership of Quality Assurance & Scrutiny Group, Practice Improvement Group, quality assurance activity and wider partnership events

Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Membership of Quality Assurance & Scrutiny Group, quality assurance activity and wider partnership events
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Membership of Quality Assurance & Scrutiny Group, Practice Improvement Group, quality assurance activity and wider partnership events
NHS Independent Contractors (Dentists, Optometrists, Pharmacists)	Wider partnership events
Independent Sector Maternity Providers One to One Midwives	Wider partnership events
General Practitioners	Via the Named Doctors membership of Practice Improvement Group, quality assurance activity and wider partnership events
Housing Providers	Quality assurance activity and wider partnership events
Residential Settings	Wider partnership events
National Probation Service – Cheshire	Membership of Executive, Rapid Review Panel, quality assurance activity & wider partnership events
Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company	Membership of Executive, quality assurance activity & wider partnership events
Cheshire Fire and Rescue	Membership of Training & Development Hub & wider partnership events
Faith organisations	Wider partnership engagement
Sports Providers	Wider partnership engagement
Voluntary, Charity and 3 rd sector services working with children and young people	Via Cheshire West Voluntary Action membership of Training & Development Hub, & wider partnership events
CAFCASS	Wider partnership events
NHS England	Wider partnership events
Army Welfare	Membership of the Practice Improvement Group and wider partnership events
British Transport Police	Wider partnership events
North West Ambulance Service	Wider partnership events
Nuffield Health – The Grosvenor Hospital Chester	Wider partnership Events

These agencies have been identified by the safeguarding partners as organisations with a key contribution to make to ensure that effective safeguards are in place for children and young people. Some services are commissioned to work in Cheshire West and Chester and these will be held to account through the commissioning arrangements and scrutiny from the Safeguarding Partnership. A number, by the very nature of their work, are supporting vulnerable children and families on a daily basis. Others are statutory services that are engaged in Joint Targeted Area Inspections by the multi-agency Inspectorates (HMIC, HMIP, CQC and Ofsted) to test the effectiveness of responses to children and young people experiencing abuse.

The Safeguarding Partners also reserve the right, as outlined in Working Together 2018, to co-opt other agencies/organisations into the partnership as deemed appropriate.

The Safeguarding Partners consider the wider contribution from agencies and organisations operating in Cheshire West and Cheshire to be integral to the

Partnership's effectiveness, and will therefore seek to engage far beyond those agencies listed above.

The Statutory Partners require representation from relevant agency members with sufficient seniority to be able to:

- speak with authority on behalf of their organisation
- take decisions on behalf of their organisation and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters
- hold their own, and other organisations, to account for the effectiveness and contribution to safeguarding children and their participation and implementation of the local arrangements

There is an expectation that any group member unable to attend a meeting will send a representative with the equivalent authority to act.

Collectively all members of the Safeguarding Children Partnership are expected to:

- Be an active and effective partner in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, contributing to the work of the partnership through its groups and wider dissemination of information.
- Contribute resources to the partnership to enable it to fulfil its functions.
- Collate and provide management information as required by the partnership and contribute to quality assurance arrangements.
- Share information to safeguard children in line with Government guidance on information sharing arrangements and the partnerships information sharing protocol locally.
- Identify and support staff to participate in the interagency activities of the partnership such as policy development, scrutiny of practice, training and development, and case reviews.
- Ensure that the work of the Partnership and Pan Cheshire Policies and Procedures are disseminated in an effective way within their own organisations and acted upon.
- Represent the Partnership and its activities within their own organisation.
- Report any difficulties, risks, issues or revisions to structures and resources within their own organisation and between organisations to the Partnership's Executive Group to find effective safeguarding solutions.

3.5 How all early years settings, schools and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements

Schools

Schools will be represented at the Practice Improvement Group and Executive of the SCP via Head Teacher representatives from:

- Cheshire West and Chester Primary Heads Association,

- Cheshire West and Chester Secondary Heads Association
- Cheshire West and Chester Special Schools Association.
- Education Improvement Board

Individual schools can engage in wider partnership events and there is an expectation on schools to engage in quality assurance activity conducted by the Safeguarding Partnership e.g. termly multi-agency audits and annual Section 157/175 audits.

Safeguarding Children in Education Service (SCiE)

SCiE provide all schools in Cheshire West and Chester with support and advice and hold them to account in respect of safeguarding practices within their settings. SCiE are represented at the Practice Improvement Group, Quality Assurance & Scrutiny Group and actively contribute to the quality assurance activity of the partnership.

The training offer provided by the Safeguarding Children Partnership continues to see the greatest percentage of places on events being taken up by schools.

Colleges

Colleges are represented at the partnership via the Director of Learning from Cheshire College who attends the Executive. Further Education providers will be routinely invited to wider partnership events.

Early Years Settings

Early years settings receive support and advice from the Early Years and Childcare Team within the Local Authority. They also arrange a number of briefing events through which the partnership can disseminate information and seek feedback. A representative from the Early Years Team is a member of the Practice Improvement Group and early years settings will be routinely invited to wider partnership events.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership Training & Development Hub also offers Basic Safeguarding Awareness Training which a large number of early years settings take-up.

3.6 How youth custody and residential homes for children will be included in the safeguarding arrangements

Youth Custody

There are no youth custody facilities within Cheshire West and Chester. However, the Youth Justice Service makes a key contribution to a number of the partnership's meetings, including:

- The Executive Group
- Practice Improvement Group
- Child Exploitation Working Group

This relationship enables the partnership to benefit from the YJS expertise of working with teenagers and gain an understanding of any pertinent issues relating to youth custody/justice at a local or national level. The Youth Justice Service can facilitate discussions between the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Youth Justice Board if required.

There are also quarterly Pan Cheshire Youth Detention Meetings that provide scrutiny of all overnight detentions of children in police custody. Reports from this meeting are shared with the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group on a quarterly basis.

Residential Homes

There are 10 Children's Homes and One Short-Break Unit in the area providing 40 beds in total. Cheshire West and Cheshire Council operate one residential setting and the short-break unit, the remainder are private provision.

The Access to Resources Team Manager represents the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit at the Practice Improvement Group, and can also facilitate conversations between the partnership and Provider Group in the event that this was needed.

The Children in Care Sub-Group of the Children's Trust also reports to the Safeguarding Children Partnership on an annual basis, in which any issues pertaining to children's homes can be escalated.

3.7 Engaging children, young people, families and communities

The Safeguarding Children Partnership recognise the need to engage the wider partnership and communities in Cheshire West and Chester not only in the work of the partnership but also so that they know what to do should they become concerned about the safety and welfare of a child/children.

This will be conducted through a partnership communication strategy which will outline the way in which the partnership will communicate information to children and young people, families, partner agencies, the media and the wider public to ensure clear information is available about its work along with national and local safeguarding aims.

The voice of children and young people also influences the work of the Partnership through the relationships we have with a range of groups. These include:

- Children in Care Council
- Cheshire Youth Commission
- CAMHs Participation Group
- SCiEs schools network & their Young People's Annual Conference

This year the priorities of the partnership have been influenced by the some of the issues that the Youth Commission raised following their conversations with 2,000 children and young people across Cheshire. They shared concerns about emotional wellbeing and mental health, and the risks associated with exploitation including County Lines and knife crime.

3.8 The offer the Safeguarding Children Partnership make to wider partnership

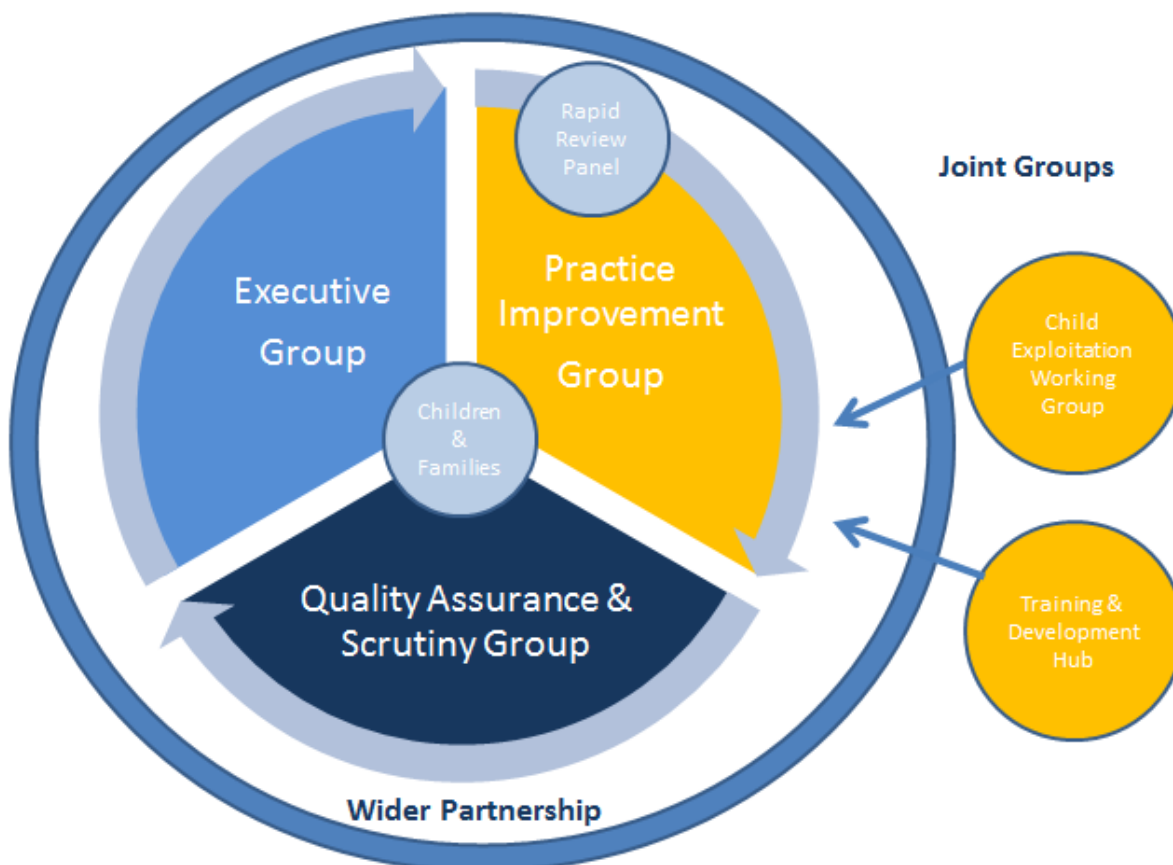
The groups making up the SCP will work together to provide a range of resources and engagement events across Cheshire West to ensure that all organisations and agencies working with children and young people can benefit from the expertise within the partnership. This includes:

- Provision of [Multi-agency policies](#) that set out the expectations for practice.
- Access to a range of [multi-agency assessment tools](#) that support decision making.
- A range of [multi-agency training](#) events.
- Bi-Monthly update with key messages from the partnership.
- A series of FREE Lunch & Learn sessions that cover learning from audits, case reviews, and ‘what’s new’ locally and nationally. These can be found on the training page via the link above.

4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 The Structure of the Safeguarding Children Partnership

Figure 3. Structure of the Safeguarding Children Partnership



The new structure of the partnership was developed following a series of practitioner engagement events and LSCB Sub-Group/Board development sessions. The framework was ratified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board at its meeting in February 2019 and endorsed by Chief Officers of the Safeguarding Partners in May 2019.

Reference to the Safeguarding Children Partnership throughout this document is not a meeting in itself but the entity which encompasses our partnership activity including meetings of its groups, as outlined above. Central to our new arrangements are our Children and Families. Each group making up the Safeguarding Children Partnership has its own Terms of Reference which outline the purpose, functions, membership and frequency of the meetings. Each group is expected to ensure that the voice of the child, family and the professionals with whom they work influence their work and they will fulfil this in a variety of ways. For more information on the groups terms of reference please visit [About Us](#) on our website

The structure of the LSCB changed on 1st April 2019 to reflect the new arrangements. This provided the safeguarding partners with an opportunity to test the new framework and make any final amendments prior to the publication of this document. The Executive, The Quality Assurance & Scrutiny and the Practice Improvement Groups all met on one occasion during the testing period.

Whilst the Executive Group will be the key driver for the partnership, each group will operate with delegated authority on behalf of the Executive to ensure there is no unnecessary delay in decision-making or dissemination of learning. Each Group has its own work plan based on the strategic priorities of the Partnership and will provide regular updates to the Executive in respect of progress. This builds on and enhances previous LSCB arrangements.

4.2 The SCP Executive

The SCPs Executive Group has agreed to meet on a bi-monthly basis in the first year to ensure that the transition arrangements go smoothly. It will be chaired, in the first year, by the Independent Chair, Gill Frame.

The purpose of the Executive Group is to be the decision making body; owning and driving the strategic plan and with a primary function of holding each other and all relevant agencies to account. The Executive will receive information, assurance and learning from other groups and officers of the SCP Business Unit in order to:

- Measure progress against strategic priorities with demonstrable evidence of impact for children and young people.
- Mitigate risks identified within the risk register, including any disputes/escalations.
- Sign off any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Oversee learning from quality assurance activity e.g. Summary Reports from other groups.
- Manage the finance of the partnership.

- Link to Pan Cheshire work streams/ learning.
- Prepare an Annual Report for publication outlining the work of the Partnership.

The Executive has a fixed membership of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, but can co-opt other organisational representatives should the need arise. The Partnership recognises the value of the Lead Member for Children and Families within the Local Authority and the role of lay members of the CCG Governing Body. The Executive will continue to utilise them and invite them to attend meetings and gain their views where necessary to ensure an additional level of scrutiny.

Membership of the Executive Group

Statutory Members
Director of Children’s Services, Cheshire West & Chester Council
Detective Superintendent Public Protection Department, Cheshire Police
Director of Quality and Patient Experience, West Cheshire & Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group
Core Members
Director of Early Help and Prevention, Cheshire West & Chester Council
Director of Education, Cheshire West & Chester Council
Director of Public Health, Cheshire West & Chester Council
Senior Operational Support Manager, National Probation Service – Cheshire Area
Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company
Schools Representatives (3) – Primary, Secondary and Special Schools Heads
Director of Learning, Cheshire College
Head of Service, Youth Justice Service
Directors of Nursing NHS providers
Advisors to the SCP Executive
Senior Manager, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Unit, Cheshire West & Chester Council
Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children, NHS West Cheshire & Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Groups

Designated Doctor Safeguarding Children, NHS West Cheshire & Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Groups
Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager
Chairs to the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny and Practice Improvement Groups

4.3 The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group

The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group will meet bi-monthly in the first year of the transition arrangements. The purpose of the QA&S Group is to develop and embed an effective performance framework and use this to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in respect of agencies contribution to safeguarding practice; and to test for evidence of the impact the partnership is having on improved outcomes for children. The QA&S will achieve this by:

- Developing a Quality Assurance Framework for the Partnership.
- Scrutinising quarterly data submissions by agencies and using this to inform auditing and case review activity with the Practice Improvement Group.
- Receiving assurance reports or additional information to support reviews of areas of practice as requested.
- Overseeing action plans arising from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and testing the impact of this work.
- Overseeing the Section 11/157 and 157 audits.
- Working in collaboration with the Practice Improvement Group, Training and Development Hub and Child Exploitation Working Group as required.
- Directing work to Task and finish groups as required
- Providing regular updates to the Executive and highlighting any exceptions

The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group have a fixed membership of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. They will invite individual agency representatives to present information to their meeting as required.

4.4 The Practice Improvement Group

The Practice Improvement Group will meet bi-monthly in the first year of the transition arrangements. The Group will consist of a core membership of senior officer representatives and a wider membership of Designated Safeguarding Leads from Relevant Agencies. The Group will also co-opt individuals as required based on the theme for discussion and the focus of its work. There is a strong element of engagement built into the Practice Improvement Group work plan. Designated Safeguarding Leads will contribute their own and agencies perspectives to topics in focus and will support the analyses of information and learning in order that the core membership can make strategic recommendations and develop associated action plans.

Key tasks for the Practice Improvement Group include:

- Contributing the Quality Assurance Framework by capturing learning from case review, audit and multi-agency conversations

- Testing awareness of multi-agency policy and procedures and how well embedded these are in practice
- Ensuring learning is disseminated to the workforce.
- Engaging with frontline staff, children and families to test the impact of multi-agency work and use this to support learning.
- Working in collaboration with the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group, Training and Development Hub and Child Exploitation Working Group as required.
- Directing work to Task and Finish groups as required
- Providing regular updates to the Executive

4.5 The Rapid Review Panel

A rapid review panel will be convened as the need arises in order to consider whether a serious incident notification meets the criteria for a Local or National Child Safeguarding Practice Review. The role of the Rapid Review Panel is to:

- Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time.
- Determine whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately.
- Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Determine the steps the Safeguarding Children Partnership should take next, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review.

The Rapid Review Panel membership is made up of senior officers from Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Organisations. The Panel will be chaired in the first year by the Independent Chair of the SCP in order to provide a level of impartiality and independence to the process. In circumstances where a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review is conducted, the Rapid Review Panel members will provide oversight to the process whilst the review is underway. The final report will be presented and endorsed at the SCP Executive.

4.6 CWAC Joint Partnership Safeguarding Training and Development Hub

The Training and Development Hub is a new initiative developed as part of our new arrangements. It builds on the structure that was previously in place with the Joint Learning and Development Meeting of the LSCB and LSAB, by incorporating representatives from a range of other partnerships in Cheshire West including the Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Abuse Partnership, and Early Help & Prevention Service. In addition, representatives from the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with a lead for training and development activity will attend meetings of the hub.

The key functions of the Training and Development Hub include:

- Co-ordinating the training calendars across all Cheshire West Partnerships.
- Conduct and analyse the training needs analysis.

- Develop and quality assure training packages.
- Hold agencies to account for attendance at training sessions.
- Support the multi-agency training pool of facilitators.
- Conduct and evaluate training and its impact on frontline practice.
- Report to the Cheshire West partnerships that contribute to the Hub.

4.7 Child Exploitation Working Group

The Child Exploitation Working Group operates on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Cheshire West and Chester Community Safety Partnership. It will meet on a quarterly basis and its main aim is to ensure that single and multi-agency safeguarding practice within the area enables the swift identification, assessment and protection of children at risk of exploitation. To achieve this, the key functions of the group will include:

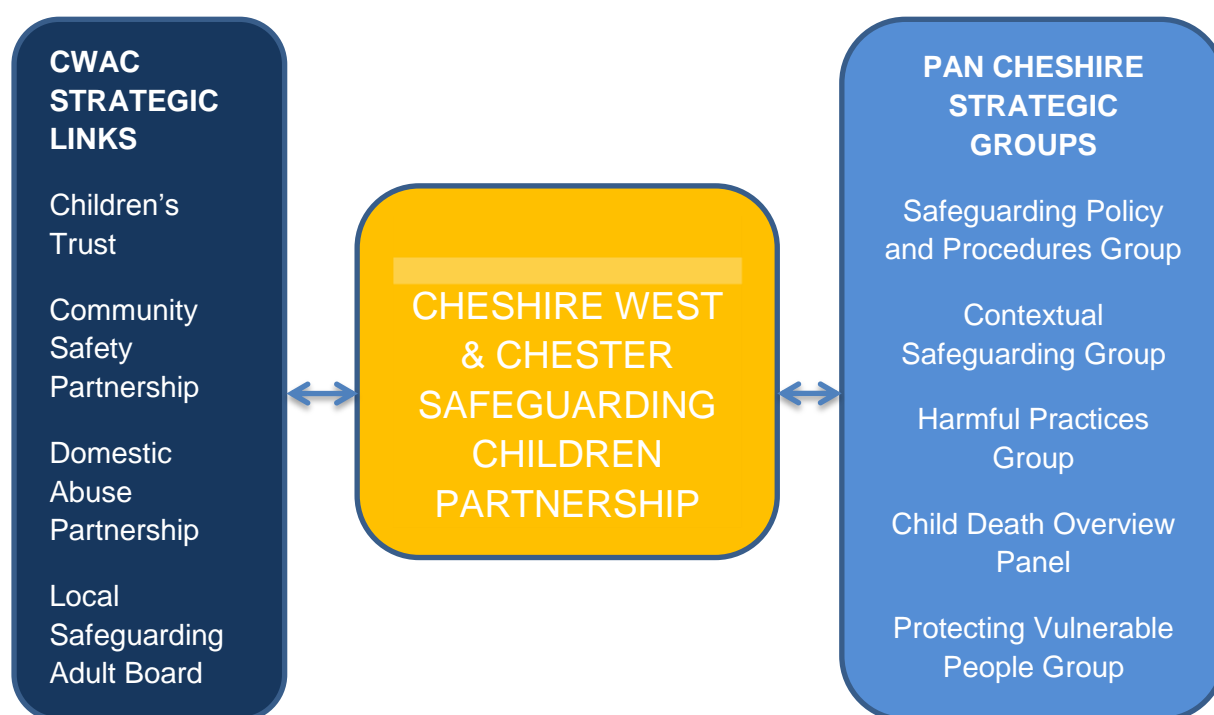
- Testing compliance with local protocols and strategies at a single and multi-agency level through audit or the commissioning of single agency calls for evidence.
- Collating and analysing data in relation to factors linked to Child Exploitation on behalf of the partnerships.
- Developing a profile of child exploitation within Cheshire West and Chester to enable the partnerships to progress their strategic response.
- Overseeing the work of the Child Exploitation Operational Group; providing challenge and where necessary escalating issues on behalf of the Operational Group.
- Seeking assurance on behalf of the partnerships that there is effective support for victims of exploitation and robust approaches to disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.
- Considering information from the Pan Cheshire Strategic Contextual Safeguarding Meeting and the Cheshire West & Chester Serious Organised Crime Group and feed information to those meetings as appropriate.

4.8 Task and Finish Groups

In the event that a specific piece of development work or such like is required that cannot be routinely accommodated within the existing group structure then **Task and Finish** (T&F) groups will be initiated using the following process

- Starting Up - The T&F team is appointed including the lead and a brief is produced including the objective and timescale for completion
- Oversight – The process for the T&F is agreed
- Closing – The work is signed off, disseminated and embedded in practice. Actions via an action plan that is overseen by the Practice Improvement and Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Groups.

4.9 Working with other strategic groups in Cheshire West and Chester and the wider Cheshire Footprint



In Cheshire there are a number of partnership working groups that undertake work on behalf of the 4 local areas. These areas of work include Harmful Practice (Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage, and Modern Day Slavery); and a group looking at Child Exploitation. Work is being undertaken to identify how these work programmes are to be aligned to Contextualised Safeguarding approaches and where feasible to take an 'all age' approach to practice.

The agreed work undertaken by the Pan-Cheshire collaborative will be reported to the SCP Executive. The Executive will then determine how the work should be progressed within the local arrangements.

At a local level, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) sets out the expectations of the relationship and collaborative working arrangements between the Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Local Safeguarding Adult Board, the Community Safety Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Cheshire West Children's Trust. The MOU covers the respective roles and functions, accountability and governance arrangements, lead Partnership responsibilities, membership of the Boards / Partnerships, arrangements for challenge, oversight and scrutiny, performance management and reporting.

A core principle underlying this memorandum is that safeguarding is everybody's business.

The **Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB)** and **Safeguarding Children's Partnership** have responsibility to scrutinise and challenge each other and the wider partnerships on their safeguarding arrangements. This year the LSAB and SCP will be working closely to further embed our approach to Think Family.

The **Community Safety Partnership (CSP)** has responsibility to understand the nature and extent of crime and disorder issues including offending and substance misuse issues and to set out a plan to address them. This year the SCP and CSP will be working very closely on the issue of Child Exploitation.

The **Children's Trust** has responsibility to ensure there are early intervention and prevention services available for the children and young people and that services are commissioned in the area to meet the needs of children and young people. Their strategic priorities are set out in the Children's and Young People's Plan. The SCP links with the Children's Trust via attendance of the Independent Chair at their meetings and numerous members of the Children's Trust being part of the SCP.

It is proposed that there is a meeting between the chairs of the Partnerships / Boards above. This will provide greater opportunity for effective communication and engagement and ensures that there is a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to safeguarding children and young people that effectively targets expertise and limits the risk of duplication.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership will also continue to actively contribute to development work and joint priority areas at a Pan Cheshire as illustrated above.

5. THE CHILD DEATH OVERVIEW PANEL (CDOP)

Cheshire West and Chester is part of the established Pan Cheshire Arrangements for CDOP. There has been agreement that this arrangement will continue and will be reviewed in January 2020. CDOP will report into the Health and Wellbeing Board in Cheshire West and Chester. CW&CSCP will receive the CDOP annual report and will expect the panel to escalate any areas of concern relating to safeguarding children.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND OUR LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

6.1 How we will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help.

The SCP operates in accordance with our Quality Assurance and Learning and Improvement Frameworks. We use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to help us understand what is working well and what can be improved in respect of frontline practice and improved outcomes for children and young people.

Sources of data and intelligence
Multi-Agency Datasets (incl. full dataset, key indicators, child exploitation)
Inspection Reports – national and local
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SCRs) local and National
Research
Multi-agency termly focus group audits
Deep Dive audits
Single agency audits
Section 11 & Sec 157/175 Audits
Peer reviews
Case Reviews
Frontline Visits

The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group oversee the multi-agency dataset, from which members can use single agency information to form a view about the child journey through the continuum of need and how agencies singularly and collectively support their needs. The data is collated by the Quality Assurance Officer and reported to the QA&S Group on a quarterly basis. The group can make a call for evidence based on trends they identify within the data to help them develop a greater understanding if needed. They will also report by exception any apparent risks that are identified from the data.

Data also supports us to identify areas of practice that may require audit or further interrogation at a multi-agency level. The Practice Improvement Group oversees the auditing activity conducted by the SCP. An annual programme of audits is agreed in advance and additional themes are audited in-year where emerging trends require further analysis. The multi-agency audit topics for this year include:

- Child Exploitation
- Children in Care placed out of area
- Bruising in non-mobile babies
- Sexual Abuse
- Random 20 (random selection of cases)

Following audit the learning from individual cases is disseminated to the agencies involved with the child so that case specific actions can be addressed. Learning from the audits is also collated in order to identify if there are actions required at a single agency



or partnership level. The actions are identified by the Practice Improvement Group and shared alongside the overarching audit report with all agencies involved in the audit, and the wider partnership via the Lunch & Learn Briefings. The action log is overseen by the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group.

6.2 How inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership training plan for the period 2019-2020 was passed to the Partnership from the LSCB and it was agreed that the programme would be delivered, as it was previously, via the multi-agency training pool of frontline staff and the SCP Training and Development Officer. All training provided by the SCP is offered on a multi-agency basis unless bespoke single agency training is commissioned from the SCP Training and Development Officer. National e-learning packages are also promoted on our training page.

The training programme offered by the SCP is derived from analysis of the training needs analysis conducted by the SCP and any priorities of the partnership. Emerging key learning that takes place during the year will be shared with staff via Lunch and Learn Briefing Sessions.

This year our training will continue to focus on:

- Core sessions of Working Together training and child protection planning
- Child Exploitation
- Childhood Neglect
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Domestic Abuse

The responsibility for single agency training rests with individual organisations, although the partnership will seek assurance that all key elements are included when conducting the Section 11/157/175 audits.

All training provided by the SCP is evaluation using a two-tier evaluation system. The first captures immediate learning and how that learning will be put into practice. The second is a three month follow-up by Hub members to obtain evidence of how the learning has been used in practice and what impact it has made. The Training & Development Officer prepares a quarterly report outlining the findings and shares this with Hub members at each of its meetings. The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Group will receive a bi-annual update on key themes and the same information is contained within the Annual Report.

7. INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS

The key role of members of the partnership is to provide scrutiny and, where appropriate, challenge in respect of the safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Cheshire West and Chester. All members, whilst representing their own organisations, are expected to contribute with openness and transparency in this regard.

The Safeguarding Partners have asked the Independent Chair to continue in post for the 12 months post transition. The Independent Chair will chair the Executive Group and any Rapid Review Meetings that may be convened, in addition to overseeing completion of the Annual Report. This will ensure that there is ongoing external and autonomous scrutiny of the arrangements and transparency in respect of child safeguarding practice reviews. This arrangement will be reviewed in 12 months.

The partnership has, and continues to enjoy, the support of a Lay Member who has links to local communities and voluntary organisations. This enables the Partnership to gain another independent perspective.

The internal governance arrangements of the safeguarding partner's also provide an opportunity for independent scrutiny. The Lead Member for Children and Young People in the Local Authority, lay representatives on the CCG governing body and the public engagement activity conducted by the Police all afford opportunities for members of our local communities to offer examination and challenge to the work of the partnership.

In addition the partnership will continue to act on the

- Learning and recommendations that is afforded via independent agencies own Inspection processes;
- Peer Review framework that Cheshire West is signed up to at a Pan Cheshire level;
- Opportunities for Peer Review through the North West Sector Led Improvement Programme;
- Multi-agency audit, and Section 11 led by the independent business unit that supports the partnership.

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMISSIONING AND PUBLISHING OF LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS

The form or functions of the Rapid Review Panel is outlined in section 4.5 above. The notification process has been revised to ensure we are compliant with Working Together 2018. We continue to use the Case Review Notification form so that all partners have the opportunity to identify cases that may meet the Child Safeguarding

Practice Review criteria. These forms are submitted to the SCP Business Manager who will trigger the following process:

- Co-ordination of a teleconference between the safeguarding partners.
- Where it is agreed that the incident meets the criteria a Serious Incident Notification will be completed by the Local Authority. In the event that the DCS wishes to submit a Serious Incident Notification but the CCG and Police do not, the prerogative is that the DCS will proceed; If there is a majority view to proceed but the DCS doesn't share the view the DCS will nevertheless submit the Serious Incident Notification.
- Following notification to Ofsted the SCP Business manager will co-ordinate a Rapid Review Panel in accordance with the statutory timescales.

As is currently the case, reviews that are conducted locally will be approached with a view to publishing the report and learning on our website and via the NSPCC. We will also continue to actively engage families in this process to seek their views in respect of areas for improvement.

The final report following a review will be endorsed at the SCP Executive and all learning arising will be shared with the Practice Improvement Group for wider dissemination.

9. FUNDING

The LSCB activity and staffing costs were funded through a pooled budget contributed to by all statutory partners that attended the Board. This approach allowed all partners to access training and to benefit from the scrutiny, challenge and learning disseminated by the LSCB. The LSCB had a reserve made up from income generation activity, and this reserve has been passed to the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The members of the LSCB committed to maintain their existing contribution to the partnership arrangement for a two year period post transition in order to provide stability. The contributions for 2019-2020 amount to £218,866.

Beyond 2021, the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies of the Partnership will be required to discuss future contributions, this will be an agenda item for the Partnerships Executive Group during 2019.

10. RESOLVING PROFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES - ESCALATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

All agencies within Cheshire West and Chester remain subject to the Pan Cheshire Escalation Policy. This policy sets out the general principles of resolution as well as specific procedures to be followed. There will be no substantive differences to this policy and the role of the LSCB detailed in the policy will be taken up by the partnership.

When a disagreement arises between any members of the partnership, then the general principles of resolution will still apply:

- Where the disagreement is between 2 agencies they should seek to meet and find a satisfactory solution.
- Where disagreement cannot be resolved, or involves a more complex set of partner agencies it will be for the full membership of the Executive Group to seek a resolution.
- Where necessary, the three safeguarding partners have primacy in determining the resolution to a disagreement.
- Where there is disagreement between the three safeguarding partners this may need to be escalated to the Chief Executive and Accountable Officers of the safeguarding partner's organisations.
- Whistleblowing policies provide an additional important route for staff to raise concerns. The partnership will promote effective whistleblowing policies within each agency across the local area.

11. DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING AGREEMENT

The Safeguarding Children Partnership will adhere to relevant legislation in using data and intelligence. As the partnership business unit is hosted within the local authority, they will remain the designated data controllers now acting on behalf of the partnership. All necessary information has been passed to the Safeguarding Children Partnership, with an audit trail, to enable the SCP to complete any unfinished business; this includes information in respect of one serious case review, and open actions from the LSCB work plans. All other information has been secured in accordance with the Councils data retention policy.

A data sharing agreement which specifies how we will deal with Freedom of Information requests will be in place and existing documents such as the information sharing agreement will be updated. Each statutory partner will need to respond individually to any information requests and consider exemption under current legislation.

12. ANNUAL REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

In order to bring transparency the safeguarding partners will continue to publish an annual report. The report will provide analysis on the effectiveness of our local arrangements, progress against key priorities, linkages across other key strategic partnerships in Cheshire West and Chester and evidence as to the difference that we as a partnership are making to the lives and experiences of our most vulnerable children.

We will provide details on any safeguarding practice reviews; multi-agency audits and any thematic reviews that we have undertaken, including the learning that was identified and what we have done to embed that learning into frontline practice.

The report will capture the ways in which partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

We will continue to make our report widely available and will publish it on the Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership website along with being formally received through statutory partners' governance processes and across the wider partnership.

For more information you can contact:

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