

**Westmorland and Furness
Safeguarding Children
Partnership**

Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements



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Foreword

We are delighted to present our multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in Westmorland and Furness, known locally as Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Children Partnership (WFSCP). These local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are published in line with the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children.

As Lead Safeguarding Partners in Westmorland and Furness we are committed to enabling our children and families to thrive. To achieve this, we must be assured that our services provide the right help to children at the right time, delivered by the right people.

We welcome the opportunity brought by the development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Westmorland and Furness to further strengthen our previous pan-Cumbria Partnership Arrangements.

Since Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria (1 April 2023) a Pan Cumbria Lead Safeguarding Partner group has been in place, delivering a clear and continuous focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for children. Through effective partnership working we believe that maintaining and further strengthening positive, trusting and co-operative relationships will continue to support our innovative work and sharing of best practice across the Cumbria footprint. To ensure that the partnerships are able to 'hold up the mirror' to front-line safeguarding practice, we have agreed to retain a locality-based approach within key elements of our safeguarding arrangements. We will continue to focus on improving systems and practice by optimising our respective roles and responsibilities in line with the expectations set out under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

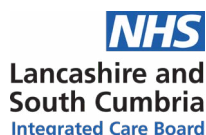
In accordance with Working Together 2023, this document sets out how across Westmorland and Furness we will safeguard children and young people.



Sam Plum
Chief Executive
Westmorland and Furness
Council



Kevin Lavery
Chief Executive
Lancashire and South Cumbria
Integrated Care Board



Rob Carden
Chief Constable
Cumbria Constabulary



Background and Introduction

The Pan-Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) was set up to meet the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. This Pan-Cumbria arrangement has remained in place until April 2025, when there was then a separation and the CSCP was replaced by the Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Children Partnership (WFSCP) and the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership. This document reflects those changes, and the changes and updates following the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The WFSCP recognises that to achieve the best possible outcomes:

- Children and families should receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way. There is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Westmorland and Furness.
- The responsibility to join-up services locally rests with the safeguarding partners (Westmorland and Furness Council, Integrated Care Boards and Police), who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children across the Westmorland and Furness area.

The purpose and importance of multi-agency arrangements are to ensure that organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Early years, schools, colleges, and other educational institutions are recognised as vital partners in the safeguarding of children. They are often the primary point of contact for children and have regular opportunities to identify signs of abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding concerns. In WFSCP education is a key partner

The WFSCP will publish an annual report in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. This report will set out the partnership's priorities for children, young people and their families and outlines progress against them. It outlines the work of the WFSCP in meeting its statutory requirements and ensuring that children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted. This annual report will be published on the partnerships' website.



The Statutory Safeguarding Partners

For each of these partners, Working Together 2023 defines the lead representatives as 'the Local Authority Chief Executive, the Accountable Officer of the Clinical Commissioning Group (now Integrated Care Boards - ICB) and a Chief Officer of Police.

For the Westmorland and Furness area, the lead representatives are:

- Chief Executive Westmorland and Furness Council
- Chief Constable Cumbria Police
- Chief Executive Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Chief Executive North East and North Cumbria ICB

As set out in Working Together 2023, the lead representatives can delegate their functions, although they retain accountability for any actions taken on behalf of their agency. In Westmorland and Furness, the lead representatives have identified the following senior officers in their respective agencies who have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements:

- Director of Children's Services Westmorland and Furness Council
- Assistant Chief Constable Cumbria Police
- Chief Nurse Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Director of Nursing Officer North East and North Cumbria ICB

These representatives and delegates:

- Speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent.
- Take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing, and practice matters.
- Hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements.



Geographical Area

The area covered by the arrangements is defined by Westmorland and Furness Local Authority geographical boundaries.

The WFSCP was set up to enable a single, joined up approach in addressing vulnerability and risk for children and young people. This area covers the one Local Authority, Westmorland and Furness Council a Police Force (Cumbria) and two Integrated Care Boards (Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB and North East and North Cumbria ICB).

Westmorland and Furness is the second largest local authority in England by land area; **3,760 square km**; but fifth least densely populated.

There are **43,300** children young people living in Westmorland and Furness aged between 0 and 19 years.

2,400 children living in most deprived IDACI with a concentration around Barrow in Furness and then rural deprivation impacting others.

There are **148** local authority-maintained schools and academies in Westmorland and Furness, comprising: 2 nursery schools; 122 primary schools, 20 secondary schools, 3 special schools and 1 pupil referral unit.



Safeguarding Partnership Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the WFSCP is to support and enable local organisations and agencies operating across Westmorland and Furness to work together to ensure that:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share, and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

In order to fulfil its statutory duties, the Partnership:

- Develops and implements a strategy that increases the protection from harm of children and young people and strengthens the awareness of and response to potential abuse among partner and other local agencies.
- Ensures that effective local arrangements are in place for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and that learning from these are embedded throughout the Partnership.
- Ensures that information-sharing arrangements are agreed and implemented between partner agencies, and that these protect the data rights of individuals as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Maintains a library of core procedures and standards for children's safeguarding to be used by partners, Relevant Agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Maintains and develops a training offer that will embed in partner agencies, relevant agencies, and voluntary and community sector organisations in the Westmorland and Furness, the skills required to keep children safe from harm and to respond appropriately to suspected abuse.
- Is jointly responsible with Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership for the Child Death Overview Panel and ensure this fulfils its statutory duties.
- Scrutinises the quality and effectiveness of place-based safeguarding children's arrangements, and in particular the commissioning and publication of, and learning from, CSPRs.
- Ensures that arrangements in respect of Relevant Agencies (as defined and set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023) are implemented in full.

The partnership will set out its priorities in its partnership business plan and report on the effectiveness and impact in its annual report.

Legislative Context

The former Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership was established in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance. These arrangements have been developed following Local Government Reform in Cumbria and a review of the pan-Cumbria arrangements following Working Together 2023 to strengthen the delivery and oversight of multi-agency safeguarding practice, aligned to Local Authority footprint. The Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Children Partnership provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify, and respond to the needs of children in Westmorland and Furness, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Working Together 2023 explains that the safeguarding partners in relation to a local authority area are defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) as:

- The Local Authority
- An Integrated Care Board (ICB) for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- The Chief Officer of Police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

Joint Lead Safeguarding Partners Meeting

The two partnerships (WFSCP and Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership) have a joint Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP) meeting which meets four times per year, those attendees being those with lead and delegated child safeguarding responsibilities. This joint meeting is chaired by the Chief Executives for each Local Authority and attended by the Delegated Safeguarding Partner, Independent Scrutineer and the Partnership Managers.

Safeguarding Accountability Meeting

The meeting is chaired by the Director of Children's Services Westmorland and Furness Council, with attendance of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners and representatives at senior/executive level across the non-statutory partners (twice annually) and the Independent Scrutineer. The group meets every 2-months to ensure progress and impact on the actions in the partnership business plan are translating into improved outcomes for children and young people. It oversees multi-agency safeguarding activity and highlights are shared with the Lead Safeguarding Partners at their meetings. In addition, it commissions specific task and finish groups in line with priorities or emerging safeguarding themes.

Relevant Agencies

The strength of local partnership working is predicated on safeguarding partners working together collaboratively with relevant agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The safeguarding partners are obliged to set out within their arrangements, which organisations and agencies are required to work as part of those arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. These organisations and agencies are referred to as relevant agencies and when nominated by the safeguarding partners as relevant agency organisations, should act in accordance with the arrangements.

Acting in accordance with the safeguarding arrangements requires safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to work together and:

- Fully engage with the WFSCP functions as set out within this document.
- Provide information which enables and assists the safeguarding partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including as related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Ensure that their organisation works in accordance with the safeguarding procedures and protocols approved by the partnership.
- Have robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place specifically relevant to their organisation.
- Provide evidence of the above to the Partnership when requested as part of its scrutiny arrangements.
- Participate fully in multi-agency audits and assurance activities when required.

The relevant agencies are:

- All Education Setting (Maintained, Academies, Independent, Further Education and Higher Education)
- All Early Years Settings
- University Hospitals Morecambe Bay
- North Cumbria Integrated Care
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
- Primary Care (GPs)
- North West Ambulance Service
- CAFCASS
- National Probation Service
- Commissioned Services
- Voluntary Sector Reference Group
- Other voluntary sector groups by discussion and representation
- Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service
- Westmorland and Furness Adult Social Care
- Westmorland and Furness Public Health
- Westmorland and Furness Youth Justice Service
- Sporting Organisations – Active Cumbria
- Faith Groups
- British Transport Police

Working with the Wider Safeguarding Partnership

The WFSCP works with the wider safeguarding partnerships such as:

- Safeguarding Adults Board
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Family Justice Board
- Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)
- Health and Wellbeing Boards

Through a shared sense of responsibility and joint and aligned priorities, partners can achieve greater impact in addressing vulnerabilities and risks to children and young people in areas such as sexual abuse, sexual violence, exploitation and domestic abuse. The model also enables efficiencies in use of resource and specialist skills.

An MOU is being developed to formalise the sharing of data and information and ensure the mechanisms are in place to hold each other to account on delivery of priorities that impact on the safeguarding of children and their families.



Schools and Other Educational Establishments

Ensuring support is in place to enable early years, schools and other education institutions to continue to fulfil their safeguarding children's responsibilities will remain a key priority for the WFSCP. For this reason, Local Arrangements recognise and join education as a key statutory partner rather than considering them as a relevant partner.

Strong links are maintained through the Westmorland and Furness Learning Alliance who provide a strategic lead across the Education sector and are represented on the Safeguarding Assurance Group. Underpinning this operationally are DSL networks within child minding, pre-school/nursey provision, schools, colleges and other education institutions.

Working through these networks will provide a rich source of intelligence about emerging safeguarding needs and risks so that training, policies/procedures can meet the needs of this diverse group of front-line staff.

The structure supports the wider strategic work of the WFSCP by:

- Providing a framework to enhance communication, support and challenge between all educational establishments, including Early Years providers and Further Education, and the WFSCP
- Supporting the development and co-production of safeguarding assurance, and improvements across educational establishments.
- Working collaboratively with the three statutory safeguarding partners to support and contribute to the delivery of the locally agreed children partnership arrangements.
- Highlighting strengths, challenges, threats and opportunities for educational settings and the partnership.
- Providing a local sector response to relevant national consultations impacting the safeguarding arrangements of children and young people in education settings.

Education partners, including from a range of providers, are members of the appropriate subgroups across the WFSCP structure.

The WFSCP seeks assurance on schools safeguarding practice through feedback on school's 175 audits, multi-agency audits, findings from OFSTED inspections and effective engagement in relevant local practice reviews.

Funding Arrangements

Working together 2023 identifies that 'Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP. Funding for the arrangements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they can meet the financial needs of the arrangements. The funding should be transparent to children and families in the area, and the individual contributions of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies should be clearly set out in reporting'. It also states that 'Safeguarding partners should be transparent in how they co-ordinate, deliver and fund services for children and families locally'. The funding for both WFSCP and Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership have separated from previous arrangements.

The statutory partners will agree contributions from each partner on an annual basis. They are committed to the principles of equitable and proportionate funding. There is a dedicated Business team to support the work of the partnership.

Dispute Resolution

The WFSCP and its relevant agencies must act in accordance with the arrangements for their area and will be expected to work together to resolve any disputes locally. These arrangements are formalised in a dispute resolution policy including appropriate escalation from senior officers to lead representatives of the partnership. Public bodies that fail to comply with their obligations under law are held to account through a variety of regulatory and inspection activity. In extremis, any non-compliance will be referred to the Secretary of State.



Independent Scrutiny

The WFSCP will no longer have an Independent Chair as per the requirements set out in Working Together 2023. The joint functions of the delegated safeguarding partners will now provide this as part of their role.

WFSCP have appointed an Independent Scrutineer to provide support and challenge to the partnership. The scrutineer role will undertake scrutiny activity to review specific areas of practice or multi-agency working.

The former Pan-Cumbria Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework will be redeveloped for Westmorland and Furness, to ensure a fully owned culture and delivery continuous improvement in the quality of services for children and families.

As set out in Working Together 2023, the WFCSP Independent Scrutineer will:

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

Data and Intelligence

Data relating to key safeguarding processes and particularly vulnerable groups of children is provided to each meeting of the safeguarding quality assurance group with an analysis that provides an explanation of any trends and issues for attention of the group. This information is reviewed and analysed to inform reports outlining key trends and themes, recommendations for further scrutiny and identifying areas for potential strategic intervention.

This is supplemented by specific reports on topics that have been identified as requiring assurance monitoring.

This is held to account by the WFSCP multi-agency governance arrangements and reports to the delegated safeguarding partners.

Inter-agency Training and Development

There is place based and Pan-Cumbria Training. The Pan-Cumbria training function offers centralised training for the multi-agency workforce. The inter-agency training and development offer will have a joint core training offer agreed for the year in advance. However, specific partnership training offers will also be available locally informed by partnership priorities, quality assurance information including learning from Rapid Reviews, CSPRs, Audits, inspections and local and national guidance and developments.

Training and learning opportunities are evaluated to ensure that high quality opportunities are available and that they improve practice and outcomes for children and families.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Partnership adheres to the Working Together 2023 guidance in relation to notifying the national panel of serious child safeguarding incidents, conducting rapid reviews and commissioning Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) where this has been agreed by the local panel. The Partnership also follows any other guidance issued by the National Panel in relation to LCSPRs.

Each Local Authority is responsible under the Children Act 2004, to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if they know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected and (a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or (b) while normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England. All statutory partners or relevant agencies contact the Local Authority if they become aware of a child that may meet the criteria for notification.

In addition, the Local Authority will also submit serious incident notifications following the death of a care leaver up to the age of 24, as set out in Working Together 2023.

The partners within WFSCP will undertake Rapid Reviews and make recommendations to the WFSCP delegated safeguarding partners about whether a Local (or National) Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is required.

The LCSPR will then take place and the report with the findings will be reported to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners to allow themes to be reviewed across the partnership. The implementation of the learning and the assessment of impact is undertaken through WFSCP Board with overall responsibility for ensuring the recommendations and learning has been embedded sitting with the Lead Safeguarding Partners.

Multi-Agency Audit

The quality assurance group leads on multi-agency audits and learning events. The programme is informed by the priorities of the WFSCP, emerging issues identified through quality assurance information or concerns identified through individual cases. The implementation of the learning and the assessment of impact is undertaken by the group and reported to the WFSCP Safeguarding Assurance Group and overseen by the LSPs.

Themed Task and Finish Groups

The WFSCP uses a problem-solving approach to address safeguarding children's priorities and improve outcomes for the safety and welfare of children and young people. This is progressed through a small number of task and finish groups and where possible co-ordinated with the work of other relevant strategic partnerships which have a role in safeguarding.

The Voice of Children and Families

Capturing the voice of children, young people and their families will enable the WFSCP to hear about the experience and impact of multi-agency support, improve understanding about the safeguarding context in the local area and shape priorities to help keep children and young people safe.

The WFSCP seeks assurance on how individual agencies regularly seek and act upon feedback from children and young people.

Whenever a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review is undertaken, consideration is given to how best to engage with children, parents and carers and support them to effectively contribute to the review. The findings from any reviews will be explained to those involved on completion of the review and prior to any publication.

We also seek the voices of children and families as part of any partnership scrutiny. Our young scrutineers, who are experts by experience, are a key component of our approach working alongside the partnership scrutineer.

Multi-agency audits include views and opinions from children (where appropriate) and / or their families and will be used to inform recommendations for practice improvement.

Multi-agency learning programmes will include collation of the views and experience of children and families in receiving the support and help they need to safeguard children.

Westmorland and Furness will also be developing and establishing a Family Advisory Board to support with coproduction and design of policies and procedures and to learn from the experiences of families to improve practice.

Multi-Agency Procedures and Guidance

The WFSCP procedures provide a clear framework under which organisations will work together to safeguard children. The procedures are updated regularly to take account of local and national learning and any changes in legislation or statutory guidance. Additional guidance and procedures that cover a range of specific circumstances are included.

The Threshold of Need

This document is for use by all practitioners working with children and their families across Westmorland and Furness. It fulfils the role of the 'threshold document' required by Working Together 2023. The purpose of the document is to help identify a child's degree of need, ensure support is offered by the right agencies, at the right time and prevent their needs escalating to a higher level. It will help identify when referrals to specialist Children's Social Care services are required. The document should be used alongside the multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures. At no time must disagreement about levels of need prevent a child being safeguarded. The Escalation Policy provides guidance for those concerned that a child's needs are not recognised.

Youth Custody and Residential Homes

There are no Youth Custody homes within Westmorland and Furness area.

Local Authority children's homes within Westmorland and Furness are hosted by Cumberland Council. There are four homes within Westmorland and Furness and two short breaks homes.

The partnership has procedures for notification of transfer of cared for children and safeguarding incidents regarding cared for children placed out of area and placed in area by other local authorities. As and when necessary, assurance will be sought from providers about the safe and effective running of all independent residential homes and foster care agencies who have responsibility to notify the local authority of safeguarding issues.



Child Death Review Partners

The responsibility for ensuring child death reviews are carried out is held by “child death review partners” who are defined as the local authority for the area and any Integrated Care Boards operating in the local authority area. Child death review partners for 2 or more local authorities may combine and agree to treat their areas as a single area for the purpose of undertaking child death reviews. Due to the relatively low number of child deaths the arrangements for child death reviews cover the whole of Cumbria. Administration of Cumbria Child Death Overview Panel is undertaken by Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Review of the Safeguarding Arrangements

These arrangements were reviewed by the safeguarding partners in March 2025 with the next review being scheduled for December 2025 and every two years thereafter. Additional or amended statutory guidance will be responded to at the time of publication.



Appendix 1 – Structure

