



## **Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB): What the board does and why this is important for you**



***“Every child and young person in Warrington should be able to grow up safe from maltreatment, neglect, bullying, discrimination and crime -receiving help when they need it in a timely and effective manner”***

**Our Vision: “To ensure that every child and young person in Warrington is safe and has the opportunity to reach their potential”.**

## **1. Introduction**

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area. The LSCB in Warrington is called the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

The Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is a statutory Board and a strategic partnership. The Board does not commission or deliver direct front line services, (other than multi-agency safeguarding children training), but scrutinises, challenges and evaluates all local services, making clear where improvements are needed to keep children and young people in Warrington safe. The Board provides strong, forward thinking, outcome focused, visible leadership promoting delivery of continuous improvements in the care and protection of our children and young people.

The purpose of this document is to provide you with clear and coherent information about the WSCB, what it does and why you need to know about it.



## **2. What do we do locally?**

The WSCB conducts its business by placing children, young people and their families at the centre, enabling them to direct and challenge all we do. Families are a fundamental partner in visioning, design and delivery of services and in evaluating all service and partnership activity.

The Board undertakes a wide range of work including significant activity to increase protection for children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation or who are missing from home or care. The Board delivers multi-agency child sexual exploitation (CSE) and missing from home and care training for practitioners and strategic leaders and supported the commissioning of drama workshops in schools to raise awareness. Workshops have been delivered for Elected Members. The Board has ensured effective strategic frameworks and operational supports for staff working with these vulnerable children and has maintained a strong challenge and scrutiny function.

The Board has also been influential in supporting practitioner understanding

of the harm to children from neglectful parenting resulting in earlier identification of risk and greater numbers of children being protected. Currently the Board is supporting the implementation of the graded care profile across the partnership.

The Board has a responsibility to ensure front line practitioners are well supported by their agencies so that they can recognise when children and young people may be at risk of harm. In order to do this we want to meet with practitioners and front line managers so that we can hear from you what it is really like on the ground. We want to ensure that you have the right training and support so that you know what to do if you have concerns, what your responsibilities are and how you can work with other partners to support vulnerable families and to keep children and young people safe.

The report of the Ofsted inspection of Warrington Borough Council services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board was published on 12 May 2015. The inspection dates were 24<sup>th</sup> February until 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Ofsted's overall judgement was that both children's services and the Board "required improvement". However, the report highlighted a number of strengths in the work undertaken by the Local Authority and the Board including judging services for children in care and children achieving permanence and care leavers "good". In addition, Ofsted said "no children or young people were found to be unsafe and not being supported during the course of this inspection." The Board is delivering an improvement plan that addresses actions required in the report.



### **3. Why does this matter to you?**

It is important that you know that there is an independent board in Warrington that is scrutinising the work of your organisation and how we all work together to keep children and young people safe. We are interested in supporting you in your work and hearing from you about the things we are doing well and what we could do better.

We also want to keep you up to date with new research, outcomes from serious case reviews and about what is happening nationally. We want to make this relevant and useful to you directly in the work you are doing. We

have a partnership training programme that you can use and we also hold lunchtime workshops that are easy to fit in in your busy schedules that cover a range of current topics. It is important that you identify who the representative of your agency is on the Board so that you can feed in issues that are important as well as keep yourselves up to date. You can also visit our website (just Google Warrington safeguarding children board) that is full of information for practitioners including some key documents and safeguarding policies that you will need to use in your work.

#### **4. WSCB Objectives**

Section 14 of the Children Act 2014 sets out the objectives of the WSCB which are:

- to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

#### **5. WSCB Core Functions**

Statute is very clear about how the WSCB must undertake its work and what our core functions are. These include:

- having up to date policies and procedures (available on our website) for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of Warrington, including policies and procedures in relation to:
  - (i) the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
  - (ii) training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
  - (iii) recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
  - (iv) investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
  - (v) safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
  - (vi) cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;
- ensuring we communicate to people and agencies in Warrington, the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done in Warrington and our Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- participating in the planning of services for children and
- undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and our Board partners on lessons to be learned.



In order to fulfil our statutory function under Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006, the WSCB uses data in order to:

- assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
- assess whether WSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations
- quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## **6. The WSCB Independent Chair, Accountability and Resourcing**

The WSCB must provide effective scrutiny and therefore must be independent. It is not subordinate or subsumed within other local structures. We have an Independent Chair of the WSCB, Richard Strachan, who can hold all agencies to account.



The Independent Chair works closely with all our WSCB partners and particularly with the Executive Director, Families and Wellbeing as the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

The Executive Director, Families and Wellbeing has the responsibility within the local authority, under section 18 of the Children Act 2004, for improving outcomes for children, local authority children's social care functions and local cooperation arrangements for children's services.

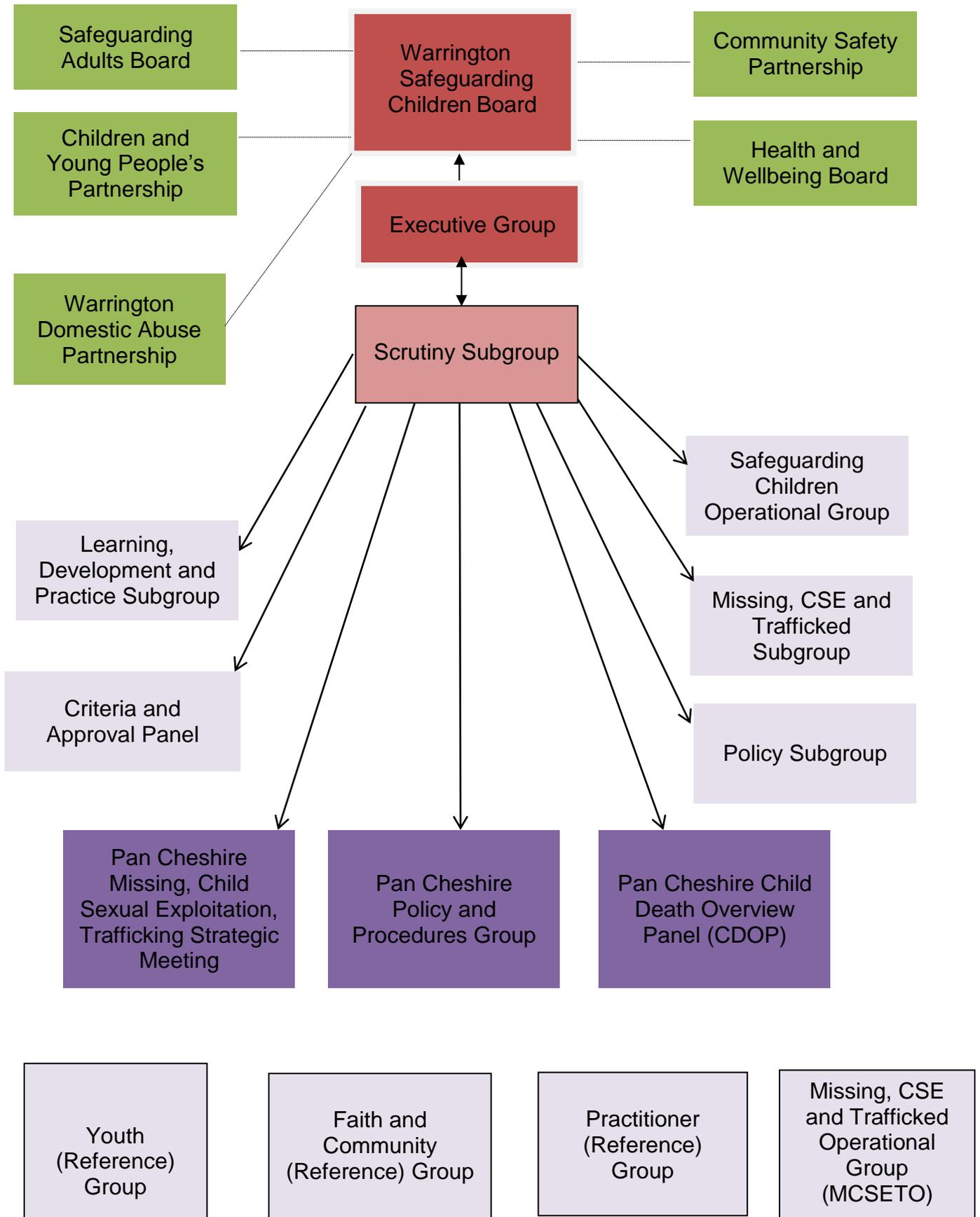
The Independent Chair of the WSCB publishes an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Warrington. The Annual Report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of our local services. It identifies areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report also includes lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period. The report lists the contributions made to the WSCB by partner agencies and details of what the WSCB has spent, including on any Child Death Reviews, Serious Case Reviews that have happened within the reporting period. It also

details other specific expenditure such as learning events or training. All WSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide the WSCB with reliable resources (including finance).

The report is submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. You can see the Annual Report on our website.



## 8. Board Structure



## 9. Membership of the WSCB

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004, as amended, sets out that the WSCB must include at least one representative of the local authority and each of the other Board partners set out below (although two or more Board partners may be represented by the same person). Board partners who sit on the WSCB are:

- Independent Chair
- Representatives of the Warrington Borough Council
- Representatives of Cheshire Police- Divisional Commander
- National Probation Service
- Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company (probation)
- Youth Offending Team
- Director of Public Health
- NHS England
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Bridgewater Community Health Care NHS Trust
- Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Five Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- CAFCASS
- Voluntary sector (NSPCC)

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 amended sections 13 and 14 of the Children Act 2004 and provided that Warrington Borough Council takes reasonable steps to ensure that the WSCB includes two lay members representing the local community.

- Two Lay Members are full members of the Board

Section 13(4) of the Children Act 2004, as amended, provides that Warrington Borough Council takes reasonable steps to ensure the WSCB includes representatives of relevant persons and bodies of such descriptions as may be prescribed. Regulation 3A of the LSCB Regulations prescribes the following persons and bodies.

- Head Teacher Warrington Association of Secondary and College Leaders (WASCL) Representative
- Head Teacher Warrington Association of Primary Head Teachers (WAPH) Representative
- Head Teacher Independent Special School

The WSCB also has specialists sitting as full members of the board that can bring specific advice

- Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children
- Designated Doctor Safeguarding Children
- Director of Public Health.

## 10. Finally

There are many dimensions to safeguarding children and the Board undertakes a wide portfolio of work to ensure local children are provided with effective services that contribute to keeping them safe. The Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 (on the

website) provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services, including identifying areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for further action.

The Board will continue to deliver all its statutory functions and core responsibilities. In addition this analysis has identified a discrete number of defined areas which we have concluded are the most important. The Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Business Plan 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015-31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 sets out our work programme for the next two years to address these defined areas which we have called Business Planning Priorities.

WSCB Business Planning Priorities 2015 – 2017 are:

- Protecting children from neglect
- Protecting children from domestic abuse
- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the most vulnerable including protecting children at risk of sexual exploitation, missing from home, trafficked and at risk from social media
- Improving the quality and consistency of safeguarding practice