



Shropshire Safeguarding
Community Partnership

Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) 2024



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Foreword

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the country's most vulnerable children is at the heart of what our organisations do. These Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) have been produced by the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) as identified within 'Working Together 2023' and clearly set out the arrangements to ensure we work effectively together to do this.

These arrangements will enable us to develop strong and effective partnerships, while also recognising the legislation and requirements for children's safeguarding. We will continue to challenge each other to do better, to learn and to aspire for the best outcomes for children, young people and their families who need our support and protection.

**Executive Director for
People, Shropshire
Council**

**Accountable Officer
NHS Shropshire, Telford
& Wrekin Integrated
Care Systems (ICS)**

**Shropshire
Local Policing Area
Commander
West Mercia Police**

Introduction

Protecting and supporting vulnerable children is a shared, core priority of Shropshire Council, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board (ICB) and West Mercia Police.

This document sets out the working arrangements for the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to discharge the statutory responsibilities of Working Together 2023 and the 2014 Care Act. Its purpose is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- 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
- multi-agency 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.

To be effective, these arrangements should link to other strategic partnership work locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and Wellbeing Boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, MAPPAs and MARACs.

These multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are reviewed periodically in response to changes in legislation and local need.

Vision

The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership is committed to increasing the safety and resilience of people in Shropshire (including children and adults with care and support needs) and their communities; to reduce harm caused by abuse, neglect and other crimes.

Purpose

The purpose of the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together to keep children safe, and ensure that:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted through collaboration between families, community members, volunteers, and professionals at all levels of the workforce from the frontline to senior leaders across all relevant agencies;
- Relevant agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children;
- Local agencies use mutual challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively including through escalation and dispute resolution, audit, performance and data reviews and the Section 11 safeguarding self-evaluation process;
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats;
- Multi-agency working and learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice. Together we will provide effective and evaluated multi-agency training, guidance, learning and development tools, case reviews, eLearning and written briefings;
- Inclusive practice means that families and their voices are at the centre of our work and that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted and expected and discrimination is challenged;
 - Children and families are enabled to input into identifying safeguarding priorities, monitoring outcomes and influencing service development;
 - At every level, Strategic Leaders ensure that resources are shared, prioritised and are more than adequate for the local work; managers ensure children receive holistic support; and practitioners build strong relationships across all agencies and sectors to promote the wellbeing of children.

Staff and volunteers in all agencies across Shropshire will continue to follow the Safeguarding Children Procedures and Multi-agency Threshold Document and Continuum of Help and Support. This guidance will continue to govern the operational delivery of safeguarding services to children and young people.

Geographical area

Shropshire is a large rural county in the centre of the country in the West Midlands, sharing a border with Wales to the west. Shropshire is the second largest inland local authority behind Wiltshire, covering 319,730 hectares.

It has a population of 327,200 (2022 ONS Mid-Year Estimates) and is sparsely populated, with just over one person per hectare (4.3 persons per hectare in England). 97.5% of Shropshire's land mass is rural – the 2.5% of land mass that is classified as urban accommodates approximately 43% of the population.

Shropshire's population is spread across the entire county, with hardly any unpopulated land area. While the county town of Shrewsbury and key market towns are more densely populated, many parts of Shropshire contain less than 0.5 persons per hectare. This means that the provision of services can be more challenging and more expensive than it is in more urban locations and that for much of the population, access to employment and services can be time-consuming and costly.

Governance

Strong, joined-up leadership and clear accountability is critical to effective multi-agency safeguarding. This begins with our Lead Safeguarding Partners from Shropshire Council, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board and West Mercia Police. Our Lead Safeguarding Partners have responsibility for setting the strategic direction, vision and culture for our partnership.

To support them in their functions, the Lead Safeguarding Partners will meet twice yearly as a combined Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin forum in recognition of the shared geographic footprint for both ICB and West Mercia Police. The Delegated Safeguarding Partners and Independent Scrutineers will also attend this meeting to ensure strong links within the leadership structure and as an opportunity to escalate risks and issues as required.

The DSPs are:

- Director of People, Shropshire Council;
- Chief Nursing Officer, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB;
- Local Commander Shropshire, West Mercia Police.

The DSPs will have oversight of quality and delivery against our shared priorities and have processes in place to provide assurance that multi-agency practice is reviewed and operating well and in line with these arrangements. The DSPs will also ensure that there is close partnership working with education and other relevant agencies to allow better identification and response to harm, there are effective information and data sharing arrangements between agencies, that rapid reviews local child safeguarding practice reviews are completed in a timely manner and to a high standard, that appropriate multi-agency safeguarding training is provided and that feedback from children and families is being sought and responded to so children from different communities and groups can access the help and protection they need.

The Board oversees the multi-agency safeguarding of children with a range of levels of need, as shown by our local threshold document. This forms an integral part of Shropshire's approach to supporting children, ensuring the right support is provided by the right agency, based on the child's level of need. The approach also promotes earlier support for families to address issues before they escalate to crisis point and ensure that children are kept safe from harm.

Shropshire will continue to contribute to the development and use the Regional Child Protection Procedures for West Midlands which are regularly updated and widely disseminated to partner agencies and form the basis for our training programme.

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Independent Scrutiny

The role of Independent Scrutineer is to provide assurance around the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

Independent scrutiny is important to ensure there is confidence our practices are as safe and effective as possible. The challenge will be informed, evidence based and support our commitment towards continual improvement. The Independent Scrutineer will act as a critical friend.

An Independent Scrutineer has been commissioned to provide this on-going assurance; the current post-holder is Ivan Powell. Their specific functions will be as set out within a scrutiny framework and work plan with schedule.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership will also receive assurance of the effectiveness of Shropshire's arrangements through:

- section 11 audits (education S175 Audit) in accordance with the West Midlands Regional arrangements;
- Multi agency and single agency audit, review, and inspection outcomes
- case reviews – to drive learning and improvement, then evidence the impact of improvements made following reviews
- Multi Agency Case File Audits – to drive learning and assess the impact of policy and practice development
- performance data
- completed activity from the scrutiny framework, and
- feedback from children, young people and their families will be central to our work and shaping future priorities.

Structure

In August 2024, as a response to Working Together 2023, Shropshire Childrens Safeguarding and Protection Practice Oversight Group would cease and partners agreed to establish a Safeguarding Children Partnership, in its place. This new strategic board was established on 1st October 2024 and currently meets bi-monthly. The meeting will be chaired by a DSP Lead on an 18-month rotational basis; the current chair is Tanya Miles, Executive Director of People, Shropshire Council.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) also meet as an Executive on a quarterly basis with the Independent Scrutineer. The purpose is to update the executive leads of relevant agencies of the work of the Partnership and its effectiveness, as well as to highlight any gaps and where further support and engagement is required.

At all levels, meetings will only be quorate when all the statutory safeguarding partner agencies are represented:

- Shropshire Council
- Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB;
- West Mercia Police.

Relevant agencies must send representation and non-attendees (without valid reason) will be reported to their agency’s line manager. The three Statutory Safeguarding Partner representatives must be part of any key actions and decision-making.

The Education Strategic Partnership and the Early Help Partnership Board report to the Safeguarding Children Partnership. Shropshire also has two standing groups and utilises time limited Task and Finish Groups to progress activity.

- **Childrens Case Review Group** meets monthly to review local learning identified from case reviews and also arranges Rapid Review and Serious Incident Review meetings when required. Chaired by ICB.
- **Tackling Exploitation Group** meets bi-monthly to alleviate and minimise the risks and impact associated with all types of exploitation of children and young people. Chaired by West Mercia Police.

As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, at all levels in the safeguarding system, we are encouraging **Collaboration, Learning, Resourcing, Inclusion and Mutual Challenge**.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership retains a close structural relationship with the Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnership, as illustrated in appendix 1.

Relevant Agencies

The Statutory Partners recognise that they are a part of a much wider system that keeps children and young people safe. Therefore, our arrangements will need to engage all partners who have a contribution to make to safeguarding – statutory agencies, voluntary sector, community and faith groups, families, the public and children themselves.

Relevant Agencies have been set out fully here in regulation:

[The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)

Relevant Agencies pertinent to the local area are listed below but not exhaustively.

Organisation/Sector	Role
Independent Scrutineer	Independent Scrutineer
Shropshire Council	Executive Director of People
	Asst. Director Children Safeguarding
	Asst. Director Education & Achievement

Organisation/Sector	Role
	Head of Safeguarding - Education
	Virtual Head Teacher
	Executive Director of Health, Well-being & Integration
	Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, Young People and Education
	Local Authority Legal Representative
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board	Chief Nursing Officer
West Mercia Police	Local Policing Commander D/Superintendent Vulnerability & Safeguarding
Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust	Head of Childrens Safeguarding
	Operational Lead for Childrens Community Services
Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Hospital Trust	Director of Nursing and Quality
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital	Named Nurse for Safeguarding
Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Head of Strategic Safeguarding
Chair of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, ST&W ICB
GP	GP Safeguarding Lead
Education Partnership Board	Representatives of educational & early years settings/sectors
Shropshire Fire & Rescue	Area Manager
Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP)	SSCP Business Manager
National Probation Service	Head of Local Delivery Unit
West Mercia Youth Justice Service	Head of Service

Other officers from relevant agencies may be invited to the meeting as necessary.

Local safeguarding practice reviews and embedding learning

The responsibility for how the Shropshire system learns lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies with the Childrens Safeguarding Practice Review Group. There is an ongoing commitment to continuous learning and improvement leading to enhanced practice, improved outcomes and experiences. There is regular monitoring to ascertain progress on the implementation of recommended improvements. The group ensures learning on priority local issues is shared and acted on at all levels in a timely way.

Safeguarding partners continue to take account of the findings from all local and national reviews with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally. This includes the way in which organisations and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The learning and development programme is informed by the partnership priorities and takes into account practice issues arising from for example local safeguarding practice reviews, multiagency case audits, inspections, local and national priorities, section 11 audits, feedback from the partnership and emerging issues. The method of delivery of multi-agency training is based on what is most appropriate and effective and includes e-learning, face to face training, virtual training, conferences, case studies and action learning activities. This is evaluated in a variety of ways and includes feedback from practitioners, practice audits, supervision and examples of practice changes as set out in individual action plans. Impact of learning is monitored under the wider performance framework of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the findings reported annually.

Partnership Support and Management

The work of the partnership is supported by the SSCP Business Unit, hosted by Shropshire Council. The team supports a range of statutory boards and partnerships. The team is funded from a multi-agency pooled safeguarding partnership budget, which also funds the cost of practice reviews.

The Business Unit will continue to support with:

- Administration of all partnership and sub structure meetings
- Co-ordinating rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Communication, including website maintenance and supporting any campaigns or awareness raising activity
- Training and workforce development
- Multi-agency policy review and updates
- Multi-agency performance data and quality assurance activity.

Shropshire Council is the Accountable Body to ensure that financial probity is established and maintained and is therefore accountable for all funding received from statutory partners. This includes receipt of the funding, and for setting up and monitoring the financial monitoring systems. The Accountable Body is not by itself responsible for managing the financial operations of the partnership or for taking decisions regarding allocation of funding. This means that if there is concern about whether funding is being used properly and for the purpose for which it was given, the Accountable Body will have the final decision on a course of action. However, questions about value for money and allocation of resources will be made by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners within the Partnership meetings.

Annual report

Each year an annual report will be published to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, in every 12-month period. Final approval of the annual report will be the responsibility of the Lead Safeguarding Partners. Once approved, the report will be made publicly available on the SSCP website.

Dispute resolution process

Safeguarding partners will work proactively to work together to resolve any issues locally through timely dialogue, discussion and and/or meeting. There may however be occasions where one professional disagrees with the actions of another professional. To resolve these situations, the partnership has adopted an Escalation Policy which should be followed. The Policy sets out clear steps to be taken, who should be involved and the timescale for such action. The Escalation Policy can be found on the Partnership website.

Communication

The partnership will use a range of methods to communicate with partners such as the SSCP website resources, Safeguarding Events, summits, an annual safeguarding week, including the use of social media and email communications.

Appendix 1 – SSCP Structure Chart

