



Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in Sussex



West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

Updated Partnership arrangements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023,
with effect from 2 September 2024

Contents

Page

Foreword by Lead Safeguarding Partners	4
1. Background and Introduction	5
1.1 Purpose of partnership arrangements	6
2. Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements in Sussex	7
2.1 Accountability for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sussex	7
2.2 Delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sussex	8
2.3 Pan Sussex Structure	12
3. Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships	12
3.1 Partnership Chair	13
3.2 The key functions of the local safeguarding children partnerships	13
3.3. Partnership Planning	13
3.4. Voice Of Children and Families	14
3.5. Dispute Resolution and Whistleblowing	14
3.6. Legal advice	14
3.7. Annual report	14
3.8. Schedule of Meetings	15
4. West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership Updated arrangements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023	15
4.1 Introduction	15
4.2. Our vision and guiding principles	16
5. Developing our arrangements - Partners, Engagement and Consultation	18
6. West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership subgroups	19
6.1 Case Review Group	20
6.2 Quality Assurance Group	20
6.3 Child Safeguarding Liaison Group	20
6.4 Child Exploitation Group	21
7. Independent Scrutiny	21
8. WSSCP - Dispute resolution and whistleblowing	22
9. WSSCP - Legal advice	22
10. Secure Settings	22
11. Annexes	23
Annex A - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: scheme of delegation	23
Annex B - Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures	26

Abstract

Updated Partnership Arrangements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 including Pan Sussex and local arrangements.

Implementation from 2 September 2024.

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Foreword

We are delighted to present our multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children in Sussex.

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

We welcome the changes brought by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (WT23) as an opportunity to strengthen our existing Partnership Arrangements. Since the introduction of Safeguarding Partnerships (following Local Safeguarding Children Boards arrangements) in 2019 a Pan Sussex Strategic Executive Leadership 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 across Sussex will continue to support our innovative work and sharing of best practice across the Sussex 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 on strategy development through to front line service delivery by optimising our respective roles and responsibilities in line with the expectations set out under WT23.

In accordance with the above guidance, this document sets out how across Sussex we will safeguard children. Sussex has a strong track record for its work with vulnerable children and young people and this document outlines how local agencies will continue to build upon this foundation.

Following publication of this document we will work to implement these arrangements on 2 September 2024.



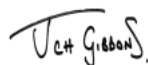
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1. Background and Introduction

Agencies working with children and families across Sussex recognise that by working in partnership we can achieve as a collective more than the sum of our individual parts. Moreover, we can best safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our children¹ by harnessing our wide-ranging expertise and resources. This enables us to provide the best possible solutions, be it via our universal services, targeted early intervention or by multi-agency collaborative support work with children and their families.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 statutory guidance sets out expectations about how we as safeguarding children partnerships provide help, support and protection for children and their families. It applies at every level, from senior leaders to those in direct practice with families, and across all agencies and organisations that come into contact with children. It also gives practitioners clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in partnership with each other to deliver effective services. The Police, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the local authority must agree and lead local arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

Revised multi-agency partnership arrangements in Sussex will come in to force from 2 September 2024, ensuring the requirements set out in WT23 are fully met. These arrangements will be reviewed annually and take into account any future updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined under WT23 as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

¹ Pan Sussex SCP arrangements, definition: a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' means 'children and young people.'

1.1 Purpose of partnership arrangements

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online. Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.



The purpose of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is to ensure that, at a Sussex based and local level, organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare. This means:

- There is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm.
- When a child is identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a prompt, appropriate and effective response to ensure the protection and support of the child.
- Organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account.
- The voice of children and families combined with the knowledge of experienced practitioners and insights from data, provides a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvement within arrangements and practice.
- Information is sought, analysed, shared, and broken down by protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families, and to understand outcomes for different communities of children.
- Effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies.
- Senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture which supports local services to become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of local practice and its impact on children and families.

2. Sussex Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements

The statutory safeguarding partners across Sussex are NHS Sussex ICB, Sussex Police, West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, and East Sussex County Council.

Sussex statutory safeguarding partners have agreed a partnership structure with the following components:

- (i) **A single Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive (SSCE)** responsible for determining multi-agency safeguarding strategy and agreeing models for multi-agency working to safeguard children and young people.
- (ii) **Three Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs)** which each reflect the role of the SSCE while exercising separate responsibility for decision making about individual cases of serious incidents, rapid reviews and local practice reviews, through Case Review Groups and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs). DSPs report annually to the Sussex Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), meeting together as a group to review the effectiveness of arrangements across Sussex. The relevant DSP will be the formal Partnership Chair as detailed in 3.1.
- (iii) **Three local area Partnership Groups (PGs)** which support the work of each LSCP, chaired by the relevant Director of Children's Services, or DSP from NHS Sussex ICB and Sussex Police. These groups will replace the previous Boards and Steering Groups. The broad membership of the PGs will be consistent across Sussex comprising representatives of local statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations. The engagement of education partners in each area will be strengthened building on existing local arrangements.

2.1 Accountability for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sussex

In Sussex, the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) are:

1. The Chief Executives of the West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, and East Sussex County Council
2. The Chief Executive of NHS Sussex
3. The Chief Constable of Sussex Police

The above named LSPs are accountable for the effectiveness and outcomes of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Sussex. They are also jointly responsible to ensuring proper involvement of and oversight of all relevant agencies.

They will **meet at least once annually** to review collectively the effectiveness of partnership working to safeguard children in West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and East Sussex (via scrutiny of the three partnerships' annual reports). The annual meeting would also be attended by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (see 2.2 below), the Partnership Business Managers, and Independent Scrutineer/s. Other strategic leaders, such as the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner could be invited to attend this meeting as appropriate.

The LSPs will also receive a 6 monthly briefing, coordinated by the three Partnership Business Managers, with input from Independent Scrutiny.

2.2 Delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Sussex

On a day-to-day basis, Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) will make decisions on behalf of the LSPs and hold their agencies to account for their contribution to safeguarding arrangements. Across Sussex, the DSPs are:

1. The Directors of Children's Services (DCS) West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, and East Sussex County Council.
2. Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, Director of Patient Experience & Involvement, NHS Sussex ICB.
3. Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection, Sussex Police Service.

To facilitate the delivery and monitoring of Sussex wide multi-agency priorities and procedures, the DSPs will establish a **Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive**, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Nursing Officer or Head of Public Protection (this is rotated on a 2 yearly basis). For the period September 2024 – September 2026 this will be Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection, Sussex Police Service.

2.2.1 Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive

The responsibilities of the Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive (SSCE) are:

- (i) Agree consistent procedures and strategies to secure effective multi-agency safeguarding of children across Sussex.
- (ii) Monitor the impact of procedures and strategies on the wellbeing of children in Sussex, drawing on analysis of data, audit of agency actions, and intelligence about the lived experience of children and families.
- (iii) Review the allocation of resources across partner agencies to ensure they fairly meet the different needs of children and secure consistent and effective discharge of statutory duties.
- (iv) Together with local Quality Assurance Subgroups, monitor the effectiveness of joint working at Sussex and local level in meeting the requirement of statutory guidance, and agree actions to address any gaps as identified.
- (v) Together with the Pan Sussex Learning & Development Subgroup monitor the effectiveness of the pan Sussex training offer and the circulation of local, Pan Sussex, and national learning from practice reviews, audits, research, and reports, and agree actions to address any gaps as identified.

The SSCE will determine:

- The strategic approach to all issues requiring multi-agency safeguarding action, including responses to reports published by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- The model of multi-agency working to discharge statutory duties (for example the operation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) in each area or multi-agency child protection teams as proposed in “Stable Homes Built on Love”². Investment decisions by each agency within the partnership will be for the agency in question but constructive challenge and dialogue will be encouraged so that issues can be resolved through consensus wherever possible. Agencies with a Sussex wide remit will base area investment decisions on clear evidence shared with all parties.
- What collective multi-agency actions are needed to address gaps in training and practice identified through quality assurance, training needs analysis and independent scrutiny. Respectful mutual challenge will be encouraged so that individual agencies experience high support and high challenge through participation in the Executive.
- The procedures which all parties will follow across Sussex to protect children.

The SSCE will meet twice a year. The biannual meetings will also be attended by the three local authority Heads of Safeguarding, the Partnership Business Managers, and Independent Scrutineer/s.

The SSCE will be supported by one of the area Partnership Business Managers, on a rotation of a minimum of two years. For the period September 2024 – September 2026 this will be the Brighton & Hove Partnership (BHSCP).

The SSCE will receive exception reports from the three areas of Sussex wide work including learning and development; collation and analysis of multi-agency safeguarding data; and Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.

Each of these three areas will be supported by one of the area Partnership Business Managers, on a rotation of a minimum of two years. For the period September 2024 – September 2026:

- Learning and development, including supporting a Sussex wide Learning and Development Subgroup of the SSCE - **West Sussex SCP**.
- Collation and analysis of data relevant to multi-agency safeguarding responsibilities, and delivery of the Sussex wide Section 11 audit of agencies operating in the Sussex area, and additional Sussex wide audit activity, as directed by the SSCE – **East Sussex SCP**.

² [Stable Homes Built on Love consultation response](#) (DFE – September 2023).

- Administration of the SSCE and LSP meetings and related activities. Support for the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Subgroup of the Sussex Executive – **Brighton & Hove SCP**.

The SSCE may establish subgroups on a standing or task and finish basis as it sees fit, for example in relation to exploitation, neglect or other issues requiring collective strategic development.

2.2.2 Sussex Learning and Development

The strategic oversight and development of the partnership's learning and development programme will be delivered on a Pan Sussex basis. This includes:

- A Sussex Learning and Development Subgroup, of the SSCE which meets on a quarterly basis. The subgroup will be responsible for:
 - Development of a Sussex wide training programme, recognising that some training will still be delivered locally, to ensure that training is responsive to local needs.
 - Development of a consistent charging policy for training across all three partnerships.
 - Responding to Sussex wide learning needs, such as responding to local and national safeguarding practice reviews and reports.
 - Plan for and deliver Pan Sussex Conference, drawing from local and national learning to decide theme and approach.
 - Development of a Sussex Learning and Improvement Strategy/Framework.
 - Coordination of communication on Sussex wide learning themes.
 - Considering the potential of a Sussex wide SCP website.
 - Development of an approach to evidence impact of training on practice.
 - Reporting progress annually via the partnerships' annual report with updates twice per year to the SSCE on emerging risks and issues.

Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRS) can be held as actions from each area, with overall strategic oversight in Learning and Development Plan but should be locally implemented.

2.2.3 Sussex collation and analysis of data

To enable the early identification of new safeguarding risks and issues, and to ensure a joined-up responses across Sussex, where appropriate, a new collation and analysis of data function will be created. This function will include:

- Development of a Sussex wide 'dashboard' of indicators, in response to joint areas of risk and Sussex safeguarding priorities.
- Delivery of a Sussex Information Sharing Agreement.
- Delivery of the Section 11 audit and scrutiny process.
- Supporting the SSCE on discrete pieces of work, such as delivering needs analysis on key areas of need.

- Facilitation of a twice-yearly meeting between key multi-agency colleagues to review the dashboard and escalate indicators, prior to the SSCE meetings.
- Establish and maintain a network of colleagues who have access to relevant data.

Each SCP will continue to deliver a data and audit function locally, via their Quality and Assurance Subgroups.

2.2.4 Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

The Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures are co-ordinated through the Pan Sussex Policies & Procedures Group (PSP&PG). This multi-agency group meets four times a year and is responsible for the development of policies, procedures and guidance for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Sussex. The PSP&PG reports on its progress annually via the annual report with updates twice per year on emerging risks and issues to the SSCE.

2.2.5 Budget setting and financial support and advice

LSPs agree funding arrangements for local and Pan Sussex multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Agencies with a Sussex wide remit will base area investment decisions on clear evidence shared with all parties.

The expenses of each local SCP business support team will be met from their respective SCP budgets or will be provided as an ad hoc contribution from statutory safeguarding partners. The budget must be sufficient to cover statutory responsibilities and core SCP business delivery.

East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex retain SCP business support teams locally. Local decisions on budget expenditure are delegated to the LSCPs. Decisions around Pan Sussex projects and funding e.g. scrutiny, training and conferences will be made at the SSCE meetings.

The local authority hosts the business support team activity and is therefore responsible for ensuring each partnership's fiscal compliance and governance.

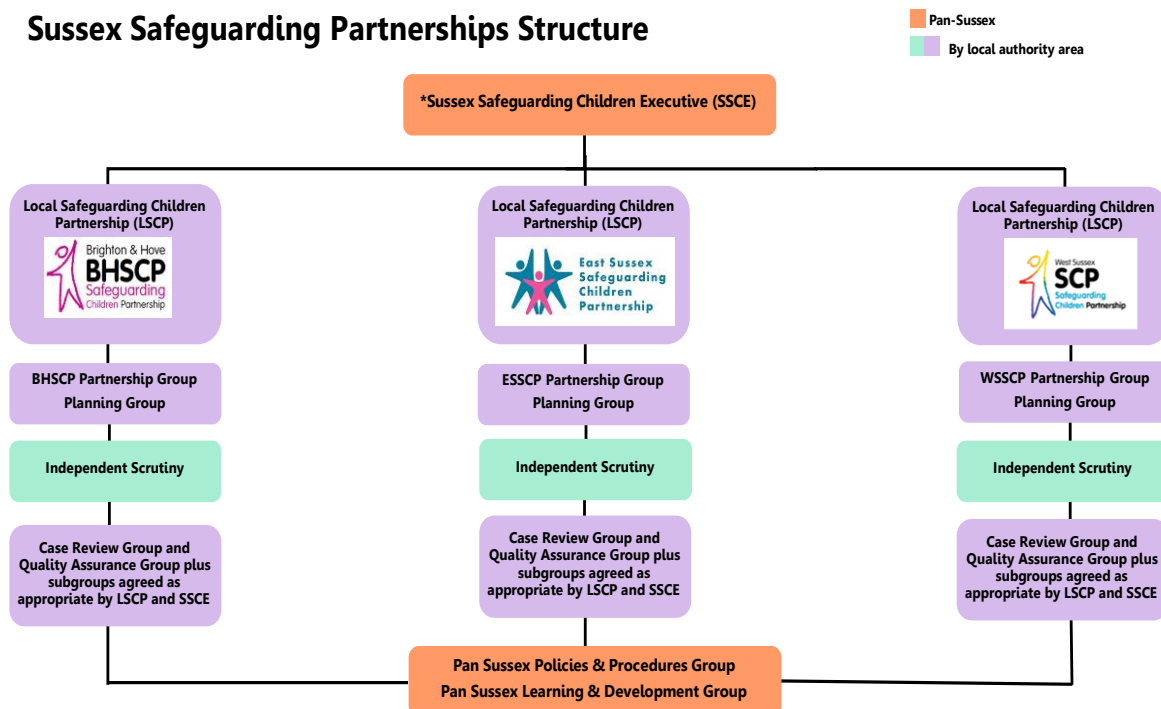
The SCPs' annual report will set out statutory safeguarding partners contributions to the SCPs' budgets and a summary of expenditure. Expenditure decisions will be made in accordance with local agreements and schemes of delegation.

2.2.6 Independent Scrutiny

The DSPs are responsible for making independent scrutiny arrangements on behalf of the LSPs and reviewing those arrangements to ensure safeguarding partners and relevant agencies receive independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.

2.3 Pan Sussex Structure

Sussex Safeguarding Partnerships Structure



3. Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships

The statutory safeguarding partners across Sussex agreed to retain three Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCP), based on local authority boundaries. This will ensure local level organisations and agencies are clear about how they will work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare, and the partnership is able ‘hold up the mirror’ to front-line safeguarding practice.

The statutory partnership for each local authority area shall comprise the LSPs (and DSPs) for the three statutory partners: Sussex Police, NHS Sussex ICB and the respective local authority.

Each of these three partnerships will discharge the core partnership functions for their area, including:

- (i) Approving rapid reviews on cases notified to the National Panel.
- (ii) Approving the recommendations and publication as appropriate of local safeguarding practice reviews into such cases.
- (iii) Approving proactive and reactive communications in relation to cases subject to review.

They are supported by the respective Partnership Groups, which shall include representatives of education settings.

3.1 Partnership Chair

To support the functions of the LSPs, DSPs and the SCPs across Sussex the LSPs will appoint one of the DSPs to the Partnership Chair role in each local authority area. This role will be reviewed annually. This arrangement replaces the existing independent chair role. The Partnership Chair in each locality will have oversight of their locally based arrangements and act as a conduit to inform and update LSPs. In the first year the Chairs will be appointed as below:

- BHSCP - Corporate Director of Children's Services, BHCC.
- ESSCP - Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection, Sussex Police Service.
- WSSC - Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, Director of Patient Experience & Involvement, NHS Sussex ICB.

3.2 The key functions of the local safeguarding children partnerships (LCSPs)

- Three Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs)** which each reflect the role of the SSCE while exercising separate responsibility for decision making about individual cases of serious incidents, rapid reviews and local practice reviews, through Case Review Groups and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs), reporting annually to the Sussex LSPs meeting together as a group to review the effectiveness of arrangements across Sussex. The relevant DSP will be the formal Partnership Chair as detailed above in 3.1.
- Three local Partnership Groups (PGs)** which support the work of each LSCP, Chaired by the relevant DSP from the Children's Services, NHS Sussex ICB and Sussex Police. These groups will replace the previous Boards and Steering Groups. The broad membership of the PGs will be consistent across Sussex comprising representatives of local statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations. The engagement of education partners in each area will be strengthened building on existing local arrangements. The local PGs will be held twice a year, with additional meetings arranged as necessary, such as for the purpose of signing off rapid reviews/Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews / associated communications. The membership of the PGs will be listed in the Terms of Reference.

3.3. Partnership Planning

The DSPs from Sussex Police and NHS Sussex ICB will meet with each of the local authority DCS at least twice during the business year together with the Partnership Business Manager to plan partnership business at local level.

3.4. Voice Of Children and Families

The voice of children must be reflected in our service delivery as it helps to inform both our future priorities and measurement of service delivery outcomes. We believe that listening to our children and their families about the services they have used or sought to access, and their views about safeguarding priorities in their communities, plays a pivotal part in informing our work priorities. By acting on their feedback and experiences we are better able to understand how to optimise our partnerships' resources and deploy strategies to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our children.

3.5. Dispute Resolution and Whistleblowing

The Pan Sussex procedures has a published escalation procedure, which is promoted to ensure agencies and organisations are aware of how and when to use it.

In the event of a disagreement between the three statutory safeguarding partners the Independent Scrutineer may be asked for advice to help partners swiftly and transparently reach a suitable resolution. The LSPs and/or DSPs may also seek independent advice, for example legal advice when appropriate. Partners will ensure throughout any dispute that their focus remains on safeguarding the child.

3.6. Legal advice

The LSCPs appoint a Legal Adviser to advise and assist them as and when required. Legal Advisor attendance is not required at the Pan Sussex or local partnership groups but may do so if requested by any partner agency. Additional expenses arising from the provision of Legal Advice will be met from the local LSCP budgets or will be provided as a contribution from the three statutory safeguarding partners. The Legal Advisor to the partnership does not provide legal advice to individual Partners.

3.7. Annual report

Each LSCP is required under WT23 to undertake a review of the effectiveness of its arrangements and track its business plan delivery progress. This will inform a retrospective annual report (April to March in line with business year cycle) which will be published on the LSCP's website by the end of September of each year.

3.8. Schedule of Meetings

Meeting	Frequency	When
Meeting of Lead Safeguarding Partners	Once per year	September (sign off - SCP annual report/s)
Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive (SSCE)	Twice per year	January and July
Partnership Planning	Twice per year	April/September (or October) – one meeting date for all 3 areas – so 3 x SCP area meetings x 2 hours each (and maybe a short Pan Sussex mini SSCE if there are decisions to be made?)
Pan-Sussex Policies & Procedures	Quarterly	April/July/October/January
Pan-Sussex Learning & Development	Quarterly? (currently meets twice per year with additional local level meetings)	Suggest: June/September/December/March
WSSCP Partnership Group	Twice per year	June and December
Case Review Group	Monthly	
Quality Assurance Group	Quarterly (may vary locally)	TBC – but to feed into strategic planning
Child Exploitation Subgroup	Varies locally (monthly/quarterly)	
Child Safeguarding Liaison Group	Varies locally (monthly/bi-monthly)	

4. West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership

Updated arrangements under WT 2023

4.1 Introduction



West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) agencies and organisations must work together successfully, thereby ensuring they provide high quality and effective support to children who need help and protection. We view WT23 as an opportunity for us to reflect as a Partnership on how we continue to build on the work we have already done to make a real impact on promoting and supporting successful outcomes for our children, through continuous improvement in practice through our collective service delivery. We believe that since 2019 we have made improvements to how we work together. We will retain our focus on delivering our partnership's ambitious vision.

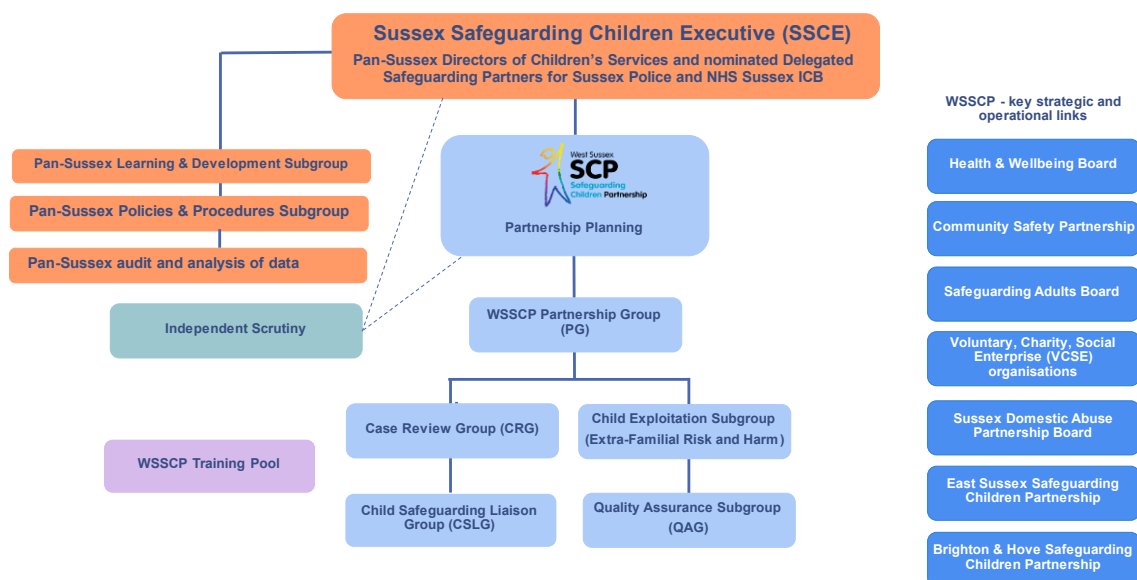
The statutory partnership for each locality is comprised of LSPs and DSPs for the three statutory partners: Sussex Police, NHS Sussex ICB and West Sussex County Council, supported by local subgroups and a WSSCP Partnership Group (PG) including representatives from education settings.

The WSSCP's area based core partnership functions are:

- Development and delivery of local business plan priorities.
- Undertaking and approving rapid reviews when serious incident notifications are made to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- Completing and approving local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs) recommendations and publication strategy as appropriate.
- Developing and approving proactive and reactive communications on behalf of the WSSCP.
- Ensuring that learning is disseminated and embedded into practice locally.
- Determining and delivering local quality assurance activity, including audit and performance monitoring via a local data scorecard.

Additional meetings of the statutory partnerships may be arranged as necessary, for the purpose of signing off e.g. rapid reviews; LCSPRs and associated communications; and task and finish/working groups.

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure



4.2. Our vision and guiding principles

Our shared vision

An assured Safeguarding Partnership, which collectively engages with children and their families, enabling them to thrive.

Delivering our vision - we are focussed on improving outcomes for our children:

- **Always safe at home:** Children are safe from harm and able to thrive within their family units.
- **Be-well:** Children enjoy a healthy life, including good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **Community based support:** Families are resilient and feel supported within their communities, via bespoke community led work to meet their needs.
- **Disrupting criminal activity:** We will disrupt criminal activity and hold offenders to account, so that children are protected from harm.
- **Engaging our partners:** Our networks, including schools, colleges, early years, and other education providers voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and sports clubs who are central to this, keep our children safe, helping to support and equip them with the skills they will need for their adult life. WT 23 notes that they may be the first trusted adult to whom children report safeguarding concerns/abuse.
- **Families at the heart of what we do:** Children and families receive early help when they need it which meets their unique and intersecting needs.

How we will deliver our vision

Our multi-agencies/organisations will work together to deliver this vision by:

- Ensuring children are safeguarded via a strong, co-ordinated multi-agency approach.
- Working innovatively with our partners, including children and their family networks we will identify what needs to change.
- Being solution focussed as a partnership; working together to find the best way to drive improvements to practice and service delivery.
- Evaluating our work to ensure that we are affecting progress and that this is making the difference we expect.



Our Guiding principles

- Honesty and respectful challenge of one another
- Active participation by everyone
- Always asking 'so what' is the impact?
- Being guided by the 'voice of the child' and of our practitioners
- Sharing responsibility and risk
- Holding one another to account for delivery.

5. Developing our arrangements - Partners, Engagement and Consultation

The WSSCP is comprised of three statutory safeguarding partners LSPs (and DSPs), Sussex Police, NHS Sussex (for the Integrated Care Board) and West Sussex County Council. The safeguarding partners lead and co-ordinate how relevant partner agencies/organisations collaborate and work together effectively, striving to improve outcomes for children and families.

WT23 defines 'relevant agencies' as those agencies and organisations whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. Relevant agencies are required to act in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements, have a clear understanding of its' responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children locally, implement and monitor the effectiveness of local arrangements, and share information appropriately regarding safeguarding issues or concerns.

The WSSCP consulted through Quarter (Q) 4 of 2023-24 and Qs 1 and 2 of 2024-25 with partnership agencies and organisations to develop these safeguarding arrangements, through discussion and activities with the former Partnership Engagement Group; Sub-

Groups and Steering Group. Communications to all partner agencies and organisations, including e.g. education and voluntary, charity and social enterprise (VCSE) partners, invited them to collaborate with safeguarding leads to explore how best they can work together to improve outcomes for children and families.

Full details of current partner agencies and how they collaborate to safeguard local children can be found in WSSCP Annual Reports³ including a very active VCSE, providing a range of support services to children and young people and their families. The WSSCP's three statutory safeguarding partners committed funds from DfE multi-agency development grant funding⁴ to strengthen engagement with VCSE partners.

WT23 highlights that education providers should engage and be consulted at both operational and strategic levels, as their insight and co-operation are vital to the successful delivery of the WSSCP's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The WSSCP is undertaking further development activity to ensure it enables local education providers to be fully engaged, involved and participative in local safeguarding arrangements. Given its large geographical footprint, with hundreds of providers from early years through to 6th form colleges, WSSCP partners intend to link with the DfE National Safeguarding Education Facilitator to optimise our local approach to achieve effective engagement and input from education providers, thereby ensuring representation of 'education' at an operational and strategic level.

6. WSSCP subgroups

LSPs agreed that in order to discharge statutory functions under WT 2023 each of the three local authority areas must have Case Review and Quality Assurance Groups. Additional subgroups, task and finish and focus groups and networks may be formed at locality level to meet the specific needs of an individual local authority area footprint.

The representatives from 'relevant agencies' as identified by WT23 are included to ensure representation on the subgroups from wider partners.

The overall purpose of the WSSCP's subgroups is to:

- Instigate and deliver Partnership work, including fulfilling statutory functions.
- Provide reports and information that will inform the WSSCP's strategic direction.
- Provide reports to DSPs, SSCE and PG, ensuring they are sighted on emerging and ongoing risks and issues.
- Ensure implementation of recommendations arising from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Effect strong leadership by requiring sub-group attendance from individuals with decision-making status who can contribute towards service delivery systems and

³ westsussexscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/WSSCP-FINALreport.pptx-January-2024.pdf

⁴ [Strengthening Multi-Agency Leadership for reform: Supporting the Implementation of Working Together and the Children's Social Care National Framework grant funding.](#)

practice improvements which result in improved outcomes for West Sussex Children and their families.

- Support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together productively in a system where agencies and organisations 'are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account'⁵.

6.1 Case Review Group

Case reviews are conducted when a West Sussex child dies, or is seriously harmed, as a result of abuse or neglect. Reviews aim to identify how local professionals and agencies/organisations can seek to improve the way they work together to safeguard children. The WSSCP's Case Review Group meets on a monthly basis, overseeing the process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews in accordance with guidance set out in WT23 and [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#).

6.2 Quality Assurance Group

The Quality Assurance Group's (QAG) key function is to support continuous improvement of services and interventions provided to West Sussex children. It achieves this by undertaking sharing and analysing data resulting in a joined-up approach to identifying emerging risks and issues as well as best practice. Responsibilities include audit activity, analysis of local performance data and ensuring that recommendations and learning are embedded across organisations and agencies utilising the WSSCP's [learning and improvement framework](#). Bi-monthly Quality Assurance meetings assess the impact of specific areas of child safeguarding priorities activity, as agreed by the LSPs. The QAG is also responsible for the overseeing the reviewing local threshold resources at least every two years.

The effective and timely sharing of information between agencies and organisations is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work for safeguarding and promoting welfare of those experiencing and at risk of abuse and harm and for wider public protection. The QAG oversees local information sharing protocols, including an Overarching Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) for Sussex SCPs. The DSA is a strategic agreement between Safeguarding partners defining appropriate arrangements to support multi-organisational information sharing which meets the needs of the Pan Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

6.3 Child Safeguarding Liaison Group

The WSSCP's Child Safeguarding Liaison Subgroup (CSLG) is a multi-agency forum that meets at least 6 times per annum to consider joint working practice in respect of child safeguarding arrangements. The role of the group is to discuss ways to achieve effective

⁵ From statutory guidance: [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

multi-agency work to support children and their families by collectively identifying and sharing learning and improving systems and frontline practice and communication.

The group identifies and shares learning from discussions where concerns about systems and practice are observed, as well as learning from exemplars of good practice. This enables partner agencies and organisations to learn from good practice and support positive working relationships, whilst maintaining effective high-quality communication between all agencies about areas of systems and practice requiring improvement and/or development. It has an additional value in promoting closer front line multi-agency working relationships.

6.4 Child Exploitation Subgroup

The WSSCP Exploitation Group (formerly known as the Extra-Familial Risk and Harm Group) develops strategy, tools, training, and supports escalation processes for professionals working with children to safeguard them from contextual risk that occurs outside the home; including but not limited to criminal and sexual exploitation. The Subgroup ensures contextual safeguarding responses and procedures are in place to safeguard and protect young people from extra familial risk and harm. These procedures include responses to all types of child exploitation including sexual and criminal abuse and violence. The response follows a Public Health approach, in collaboration with the West Sussex Community Safety Partnership and Adults Safeguarding Board.

The Exploitation Group works in partnership with a range of agencies and organisations to prevent children and young people from being exploited. A key function is fostering effective/current practice principles⁶ in West Sussex and beyond that enable practitioners to work collaboratively to encourage and support children, to disclose their lived experience, so perpetrators are held accountable and brought to justice and provide appropriate and timely support to children who experience exploitation to help them recover.

7. Independent Scrutiny

The DSPs are responsible for making independent scrutiny arrangements for the WSSCP on behalf of the LSPs. The DSPs keep scrutiny arrangements under annual review to consider the effectiveness of current arrangements and whether the objectives of the WSSCP are being met via its independent scrutiny model. When appointing to an independent scrutiny role/s the three DSPs ensure the appointee/s is/are of sufficient standing and expertise to command the respect and support of all partners and will be independent of the local agencies and organisations so that the WSSCP can exercise its local challenge function effectively.

The expenses of an independent appointment (s) are met from the WSSCP Budget. The WSSCP's [learning and improvement framework](#) describes how we deliver a range of scrutiny approaches including lay members to represent our community voice; peer

⁶ [Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm](#)

challenge; children and their families views; and practitioners' voice, to inform improvements to multi-agency ways of working.

Confirmation of plans for independent scrutiny locally and Pan Sussex from September 2024 will remain a focus area for the LSPs, DSPs and partners. Published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be updated throughout this process.

8. WSSCP - Dispute resolution and whistleblowing

The WSSCP has a resolution of professional differences/escalation procedure on its website as described at section 3.5 above. It is promoted to ensure agencies and organisations are aware of how and when to use it. Use of the escalation procedure is monitored by the Partnership's QAG to ensure it is effective.

If there is a formal dispute between WSSCP Partners and/or the WSSCP Partnership Chair, dispute resolution procedures will be followed. Within 28 days of the WSSCP determining that a dispute exists, the WSSCP's independent scrutineer, in consultation with the DSPs, will convene a joint meeting of the parties in dispute. This should take place as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 3 months of the original dispute coming to attention.

Agencies and organisations have their own whistleblowing procedures and individuals should follow their own agency/organisations whistleblowing process. In addition the WSSCP website provides a link to the NSPCC's [Whistleblowing Advice Line](#).

9. WSSCP - Legal advice

The LSPs appointed a WSSCP Legal Adviser to the to advise and assist them as and when required. Legal Advisor attendance is not required at the WSSCP PG or any of the WSSCP subgroups but may do so if requested by any partner agency. Any legal advisor attending the SCP Partnership Group or a sub-group is not a member of any WSSCP sub-group.

Additional expenses arising from the provision of Legal Advice to the WSSCP will be met from the budget or will be provided as a contribution from the three statutory safeguarding partners. The Legal Advisor to the WSSCP does not provide legal advice to individual partners.

10. Secure Settings

Whilst the local authority area does not currently have either secure residential accommodation for children, or a Young Offender Institution, should the situation change in future the WSSCP will scrutinise the effectiveness of these or similar settings. The Home Office has short term holding facilities at Gatwick Airport in West Sussex where children and their families are held for short periods of time. The Partnership works with Border Force, to seek assurance regarding Border Force South's safeguarding responsibilities under [s55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#).

11. Annexes

Annex A

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: scheme of delegation

(i) Scope

This Scheme of Delegation sets out respective responsibilities to ensure decision making is aligned to the governance and accountability arrangements made under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (WT23). It forms part of the revised local and Pan Sussex Partnership arrangements. The Scheme of Delegation is to be read alongside the Pan Sussex and local arrangements to provide additional clarity about the functions and decision-making responsibilities of the statutory safeguarding partners.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) are responsible for the overall strategic direction of the SCPs:

- Strategic decisions may be delegated to the Sussex Safeguarding Children Executive (SSCE) with decisions made by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs)
- Locality based decisions may also be delegated where appropriate via a scheme of delegation.

(ii) Governance and Management

For clarity key differences between governance and management are set out below:

Governance

- Overview of the organisation as a whole.
- Long-term strategy and policy.
- Systems, processes, and frameworks for effective working.
- Accountable for actions and decisions made by the organisation.
- Compliance with current legislation.

Management

- Day-to-day operation of subgroup chairs' meetings.
- Short to medium-term implementation of plans.
- Detailed planning.
- Responsible for delivery of actions and decisions.

(iii) Scheme of Delegation: Responsibilities

This Scheme of Delegation table (below) sets out the respective responsibilities of LSPs and DSPs for key SCP areas of responsibility:

- Strategic planning.
- Financial management.
- Risk management.

(iv) Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Group, Subgroups and Forums

LSPs and DSPs may delegate any of their decision-making powers to SCP Subgroups.

The remit of any subgroups will be set out in their terms of reference, which will detail the respective responsibilities and specify the areas of delegated authority.

The terms of reference will form part of the Scheme of Delegation.

Strategic planning		
LSP functions – WT23	DSP functions – WT23	Procedure
<p>- Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.</p> <p>- Lead their organisation’s individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.</p> <p>- Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.</p>	<p>- Delivery and monitoring of multi-agency priorities and procedures to protect and safeguard children in the local area, in compliance with published arrangements and thresholds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Business Plan priorities agreed, and progress monitored annually by LSPs and DSPs via SSCE and annual reporting mechanisms.</i> ▪ <i>Business plan delivery updates to be presented twice per annum at SSCE.</i> ▪ <i>Annual review of performance and achievements provided by the independent Scrutineer to LSPs/DSPs.</i> ▪ <i>SSCE/planning meeting to approve undertaking work in new areas not included in the strategic plan, where this is in line with the SCP’s overall objectives.</i> ▪ <i>DSP representatives to be decided by DSPs as applicable.</i>
<p>- Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).</p>	<p>- Delivery of high-quality and timely rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs), with the impact of learning from local and national reviews and independent scrutiny clearly evidenced in yearly reports.</p> <p>- Seeking of, and responding to, feedback from children and families about their experiences of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs signed off by DSPs as per current process.</i> ▪ <i>Annual report sign off by DSPs and LSPs.</i> ▪ <i>Independent scrutiny commissioned by DSPs.</i>

	services and co-designing services to ensure children from different communities and groups can access the help and protection they need.	
- Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.	- The implementation of effective information sharing arrangements between agencies, including data sharing that facilitates joint analysis between partner agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>SSCE oversight of data and audit.</i> ▪ <i>QAG locality-based data and audit.</i>
- Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.	- Close partnership working and engagement with education (at strategic and operational level) and other relevant agencies, allowing better identification of and response to harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>DSPs to agree Education representation at SSCE.</i> ▪ <i>SCP Partnership Business Managers to discuss education reps for PG and locality-based subgroups.</i> ▪ <i>Development of Pan Sussex L&D subgroup and training programme.</i>

Financial management

LSP functions	DSP functions	Procedure
- Custodians of SCP's assets, ensuring they are used only in accordance with the SCP's objectives, and to ensure financial sustainability.	- Delegated responsibility for the day-to-day running of the SCP, ensuring financial stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>SCP Business support team ensure SCP's funds are used appropriately; to report on solvency and ongoing concerns.</i>
- Approve SCP's financial strategy - business plan and annual budget.	- Oversee development and viability of financial strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Annual report and SSCE approvals.</i>
- Approve expenditure authorisation limits.	- Oversee governance of expenditure authorisation limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Under £1,000 – in principle decision to be taken by LSCP Business Manager and Head of Safeguarding.</i> ▪ <i>Between £1,000 and £10,000 – decisions to be discussed with Subgroup</i>

		<p><i>Chairs. DSPs must be advised of decision with escalation to LSPs only if required.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over £10,000 – decision to be taken by the three DSP – with escalation to LSPs if required.
- In the event of redundancies, to approve the budget for redundancy payments and any redundancy payment packages for members of the SCP team.	- In the event of redundancies, to recommend a budget payment package to LSPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision via SSCE or SCP planning meeting / extraordinary DSP meeting.
Risk Management		
LSP functions	DSP functions	Procedure
- Oversight of risk management order to identify and control risks and to ensure it is appropriate and effective.	Maintain a risk management system that identifies and reviews key risks that the SCP faces and to implement controls to mitigate these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report annually to LSPs recommending any changes needed to risk management system when appropriate. Risks and issues register – Local SCPs to report twice per year to the SSCE as part of the LSPs Briefing developed by the Pan Sussex SCPs Business Managers. LSCPs to maintain Risk Register locally.
- Review identified risks and DSP's judgements on them; ensure Annual Report comments on the key risks faced by the SCP and the effectiveness of the controls in place.	- To interrogate identified risks and the effectiveness of the controls put in place to mitigate risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report annually to the LSPs details of identified risks and the controls in place to manage risks.

Annex B

Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

Procedures referred to throughout the document:

- [Arrangements for commissioning, undertaking, publishing and embedding learning for local child safeguarding practice reviews](#)
- [Information Sharing](#)
- [Resolving Professional Differences](#) and [Professional Difference Statement](#)
- [Agency Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Pan Sussex Threshold documents](#)
- [Safeguarding Children Partnerships](#)

The full [Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) are sub divided into the following parts, each part contains relevant Chapters/Procedures:

1. [Working with Children and Families](#)
2. [The Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
3. [Information Sharing and Confidentiality](#)
4. [Early Help](#)
5. [Recognition and Referral of Abuse and Neglect](#)
6. [Response to Child Protection Referrals](#)
7. [Child Protection Conferences](#)
8. [The Child Protection Plan](#)
9. [Organisational Guidance](#)
10. [Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews](#)
11. [Child Death](#)
12. [Risk Management of Known Offenders and Those who Pose a Risk](#)
13. [Parents with additional needs](#)
14. [Self-harm and suicide](#)
15. [Safeguarding Children Practice Guidance \(Children In Specific Circumstances\)](#)
16. [Safeguarding children living away from home](#)
17. [Harmful practices linked to faith or culture](#)
18. [Allegations against people who work with, care for or volunteer with Children](#)
19. [Miscellaneous Safeguarding Information](#)
20. [Appendices](#)

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