



Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

**Multi-Agency
Arrangements for
Safeguarding and
Promoting the Welfare of
Children in Bolton**

‘In Bolton we want to give all our children the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed, be safe and be happy’

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For further information about the arrangements, share your experiences of safeguarding in Bolton or get involved in the work we do, contact:-

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Welcome and Introduction

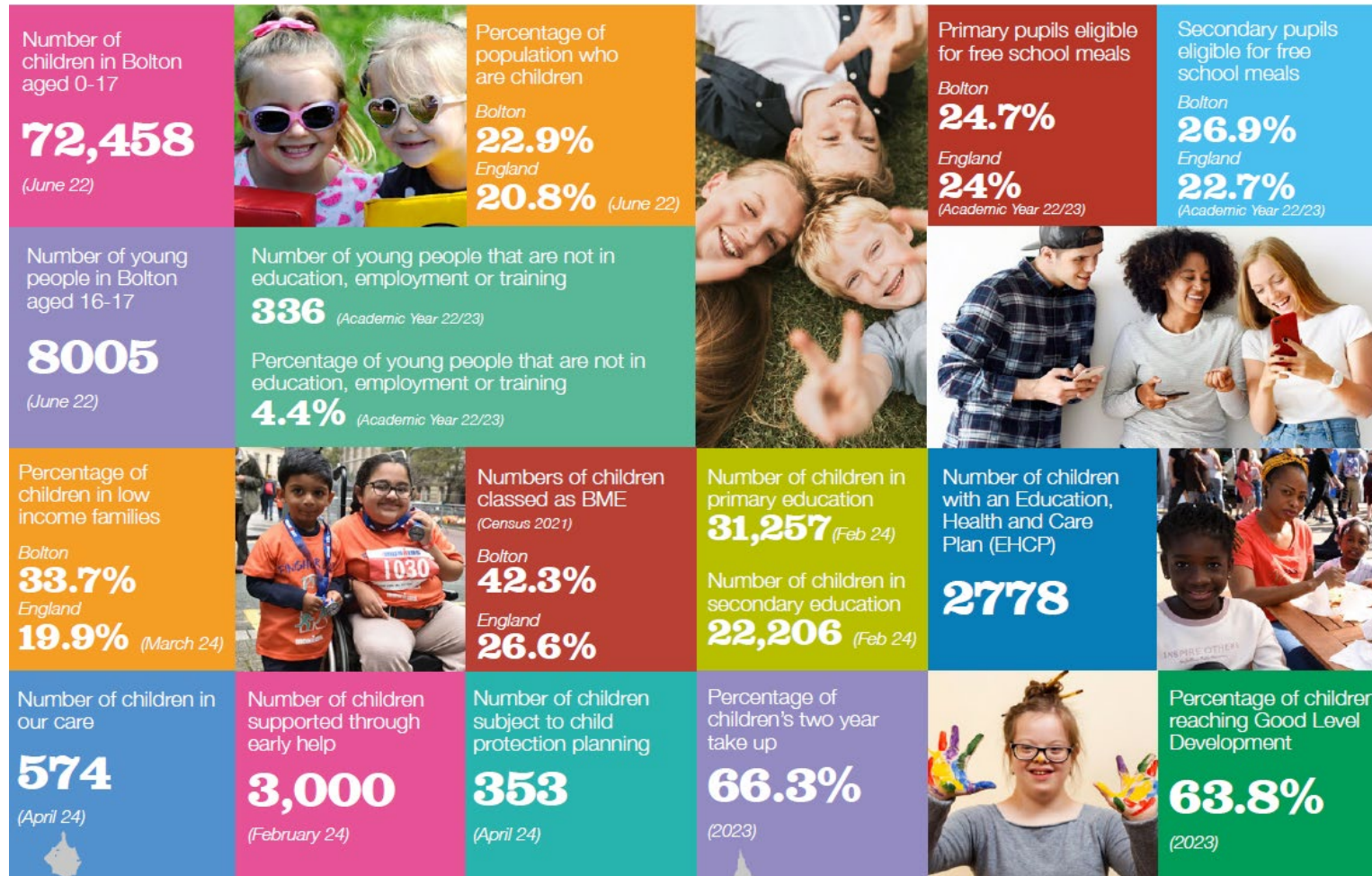
The vision for the future of Bolton is a thriving borough where people want to live, work, study, invest and visit. A key element of that vision is the mission to ensure Bolton is a family friendly place where every child matters. The foundations of this ambition are rooted in the existing strength and continued development of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation requires multi-agency join up and co-operation. Organisations and agencies in Bolton have a duty to ensure their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children. The way in which organisations and agencies work together is known as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs). This document sets out the arrangements in Bolton to ensure that information about a child is shared effectively, children's needs, including the need to be protected from abuse and neglect, are correctly identified and understood, and that children and families receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.

As the three statutory lead safeguarding partners, supported by the nominated delegated safeguarding partners we are committed to delivery of effective and efficient multi agency practices which are child centred. These arrangements extend beyond the statutory partners to involve all those agencies who are engaged with families and well placed to identify needs as well as inform what works. The partnership have effective information sharing arrangement which operate on the need to share rather than consent. Finally, we are committed to work with families involving them in solutions and learning from their experience.

| Health NHS GM Integrated Care Partnership | Local Authority Bolton Council | Police Greater Manchester Police |
|--|---|---|
| Chief Officer Mark Fisher | LA Chief Executive Sue Johnson | Chief Constable Stephen Watson |

Bolton's Children



Data correct as of April 2024. [Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) provides further

Our Ambition for Children

We want children and families in Bolton to stay together, living in safe family networks and communities. We want all children to have a person who is there for them as a trusted adult who cares, nurtures and encourages them. We want children to be safe in and outside of their homes and get the help they need when they need it, at the earliest opportunity. We want children to gain the skills they need at home, in education and in their community so they grow up to be resilient, independent, confident and achieve their full potential. We want children at the forefront engaging in the plans we make and the services we deliver.

We want a workforce that is passionate and understands children, practitioners who can advocate on their behalf. A workforce who build on what works, understands the impact of adversity on children and on the adults who care for them and are responsive to what children have said they need, in particular:¹

- **Vigilance:-** to have adults notice when things are troubling them.
- **Understanding and action:-** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:-** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:-** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:-** to be informed about, and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:-** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response.
- **Support:-** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:-** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
- **Protection:-** to be protected against all forms of abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

'In Bolton we want to give all our children the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed, be safe and be happy'

¹ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 paragraph 13

Principles

Our principles reflect those in the [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#):-

- Children's welfare is paramount.
- Children's wishes and feelings are sought, heard, and responded to.
- Children are raised by their families, with their family networks or in family environments wherever possible.
- Children's social care works in partnership with whole families.
- Local authorities work with other agencies to effectively identify and meet the needs of children and families.
- Local authorities and agencies consider the economic and social circumstances impacting children and families.
- A child-centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child.

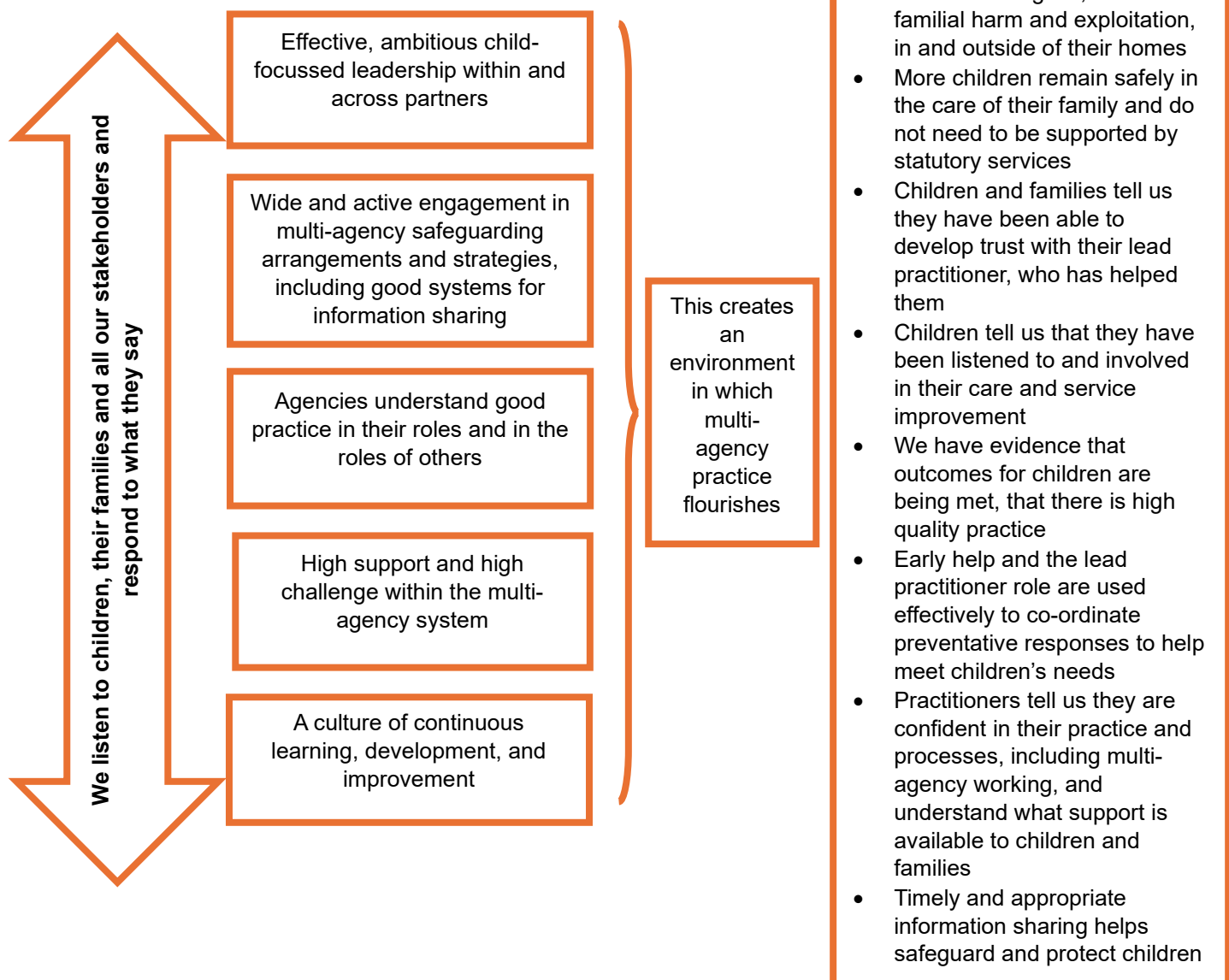


Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

How We Achieve the Right Outcomes for Children

This ambition and principles are part of our governance, communication and workforce development. How well we achieve these and their impact is monitored as part of our scrutiny and assurance work.

The diagram below and the standards outlined in the following pages establish the five key components that support us to not only achieve our ambition for children but also ensure the principles underpin local practice and align to the requirements of the Children's Social Care National Framework.



Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership ensures effective, ambitious child-focussed leadership within and across partners

In practice this means:-

- We have a shared vision for keeping children safe across Bolton and recognise – safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s business in all communities.
- Our leaders champion safeguarding in their organisations and across wider partnerships in Bolton.
- Our leadership focus on the voice of the child and their lived experience, understanding that children and families are diverse and practitioners should approach cultural difference with openness and respect, and a willingness to learn.
- We challenge ourselves at every meeting across the partnership to identify ‘what difference are we making to their lives?’
- Our leaders have a clear line of sight on both the operational and the strategic response locally including the quality of frontline practice.
- Our commissioning arrangements take account of the diversity, needs and wishes of children in Bolton and ensure local services deliver interventions to children and their families that are equitable, culturally competent and inclusive.

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership enables wide and active engagement in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and strategies, including good systems for information sharing

In practice this means:-

- We ensure that we actively involve children and their families when we develop local safeguarding responses and that these are responsive to our diverse communities.
- We have a shared set of safeguarding outcomes and standards, including for child protection, effective assessments, and best practice in working with families.
- We ensure that a range of agencies including the voluntary and community sector, faith groups, education settings and adult services are involved in developing and implementing multi-agency plans, priorities and processes to safeguard children.
- We ensure good systems for information sharing which practitioners are confident and knowledgeable about; and consent is used appropriately where applicable.
- We work with other strategic partnerships in Bolton and in Greater Manchester on shared priorities to achieve better outcomes for our children.

Agencies understand good practice in their roles and in the roles of others

In practice this means:-

- We ensure a joined-up approach to deliver timely responses to children and families that all stakeholders understand.
- Our threshold document, Framework for Action, sets out our local safeguarding arrangements from early help to protection, with clear guidance about pathways to support. Local partnerships and commissioned services demonstrate how they have integrated and implemented the framework within their safeguarding processes.
- Our practitioners understand local pathways and support children and families to navigate these.
- We support practice that enables good quality relationships with children and their families to develop, takes account of cultural difference and these inform decision-making.
- We accept that it is not possible to eliminate all harm to children despite our best actions and interventions. However, we support front-line practitioners, through our safeguarding systems, policy, training and other relevant resources, to develop the skills and knowledge to create safe environments for children and families.

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership ensures high support and high challenge within the multi-agency system

In practice this means:-

- We embed a culture of relational practice across Bolton focused on individuals' strengths and collaborate with children and families to achieve the best outcomes possible.
- Our leaders have high expectations of their practitioners and services and hold them to account as appropriate.
- We have an effective system for scrutiny and assurance, including independent scrutiny, to understand the effectiveness of safeguarding practice at the front-line and across the partnership.
- We ensure that there are clear processes for challenging decisions or escalating concerns about individual children or about partnership decision making.

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership creates a culture of continuous learning, development, and improvement

In practice this means:-

- We ensure a range of quality assurance methods and partnership intelligence are regularly used to provide insight into the lives of children, the impact of frontline practice and support the identification of new or emerging needs.
- We ensure that 'practice reviews' focus on the lived experiences of children, identifying good practice as well as areas for improvement.
- We promote and model an open, honest culture to enable opportunities to learn and improve.
- We ensure strong collaborative working between the safeguarding partnership and front-line practitioners, enabling alerts and trends to be identified and acted upon quickly to safeguard children.
- We provide multi-agency training and workforce development opportunities which are aligned to the strategic priorities of the partnership and learning from assurance activity, to make a positive difference to practice and outcomes for children and their families.

Focussing on the Right Things

A two-year strategic plan for the partnership setting out priorities relating to outcomes for children is published and reviewed annually. It ensures that we are always focussing efforts on the most important areas for improvement. Actions and outcomes from our priorities are monitored quarterly through the partnership arrangements and other activity outlined in the scrutiny and assurance framework.

The both documents are available at:-

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/homepage/18/keeping-children-safe-in-bolton>

Geographical Area and Working with Other Partnerships

The Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements are applicable to Bolton's resident population and children who are looked after but live outside the Bolton boundary. However, where there are opportunities and benefits to develop responses across a wider geographical footprint we will proactively co-operate with relevant neighbouring or regional partners.



Bolton is one of the ten local areas that make up Greater Manchester, and as such we share statutory partners and some services. To align safeguarding arrangements we contribute to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures Manual, and the strategic Safeguarding Alliance.

We have mechanisms in place, including an 'Alignment Group' which supports us to work closely with other partnerships in Bolton including the Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Adult Board, and Children and Young People's Board.

Delivering Effective Arrangements

Lead Safeguarding Partners

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership is led by three statutory partners: Bolton Local Authority, NHS Greater Manchester (the Integrated Care Board) and Greater Manchester Police. The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Bolton.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 states that the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) for each of the Safeguarding Partners are:-

- The Local Authority Chief Executive
- The Chief Executive of the local Integrated Care Board
- Chief Officer of Police

Joint Functions Of Lead Safeguarding Partners

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Review and sign off key partnership documents including published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
4. 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).
5. 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.
6. Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In addition to their core functions, the Lead Safeguarding Partners, together with other local relevant agencies are committed to:-

- Co-ordinating their safeguarding services for maximum impact.
- Acting as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others.
- Implementing local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- Learning from independent scrutiny that judges the effectiveness of multiagency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in x.
- Developing processes that facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries
- Ensuring that relevant agencies have appropriate, robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Publishing a report at least once in every 12-month period, which sets out what they have done as a result of these arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners will meet as a minimum twice a year as the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Alliance. Through this forum, they provide collective leadership and deliver mutual assurance of strategic and operational safeguarding partnership arrangements for children in Greater Manchester.

The Safeguarding Alliance is the dedicated forum where the Lead Safeguarding Partners can: -

- Set direction and model collaborative working.

- Bring, explore and problem solve city-regional strategic and system wide issues.
- Agree the financial resources required including individual agency contributions for safeguarding partnerships.
- Provide mutual challenge and accountability.
- Receive high level performance and quality assurance information and key system learning, including from serious child safeguarding cases.
- Receive updates from the Complex Safeguarding Executive.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners

In addition to the Lead Safeguarding Partners, each LSP appoints a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) who is of sufficient seniority to be able to take decisions on behalf of the LSP and hold their sectors to account. The functions of each role are stated within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 are summarised below.

In Bolton, the DSPs are:-

- Chief Nurse, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, delegated to Associate Director, Bolton
- Chief Superintendent, District Commander Bolton, Greater Manchester Police
- Director of Children’s Service, Bolton Local Authority

| Joint Functions Of Delegated Safeguarding Partners |
|--|
| 1. 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. |
| 2. Close partnership working and engagement with education (at strategic and operational level) and other relevant agencies, allowing better identification of and response to harm. |
| 3. The implementation of effective information sharing arrangements between agencies, including data sharing that facilitates joint analysis between partner agencies. |
| 4. Delivery of high-quality and timely rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews, with the impact of learning from local and national reviews and independent scrutiny clearly evidenced in yearly reports. |
| 5. The provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding practitioner development and training. |
| 6. Seeking of, and responding to, feedback from children and families about their experiences of services and co-designing services to ensure children from different communities and groups can access the help and protection they need. |

The DSP’s meet a minimum of eight times a year to fulfil their functions. In addition each DSP is required to ensure regular communication with their LSP to keep them updated on key decisions.

By ensuring this regular schedule of contact the LSP and DSP can act as a team, providing strong, joined-up leadership with clear lines of accountability to ensure effective multiagency safeguarding arrangements across Bolton.

In Bolton the LSPs and DSP²s are:-

| | Health NHS GM Integrated Care Partnership | Local Authority Bolton Council | Police Greater Manchester Police |
|---|--|--|---|
| Lead safeguarding partner (LSP) | Chief Officer Mark Fisher | LA Chief Executive Sue Johnson | Chief Constable Stephen Watson |
| Delegated safeguarding partner (DSP) | Chief Nursing Officer Mandy Philbin (deputised by the Associate Director of Quality in Locality) | Director of Children's Services Sandra Bruce | Chief Superintendent Helen Critchley |

Partnership Chair

To support delivery of these functions, LSPs appoint one of the DSPs as the partnership chair for the multi-agency arrangements. It is their responsibility to chair meetings of the DSPs and other partnership meetings as agreed. The role of partnership chair is rotated as follows then iteratively:-

- GMP from July 2024 to June 2025
- NHS GM from July 2025 to June 2026
- Bolton Council from July 2026 to June 2027

| Functions of Partnership Chair Role |
|--|
| <p>1. To develop strategic links, support and hold to account all LSPs in fulfilling their safeguarding duties for children.</p> <p>2. Ensure that local arrangements are designed to work collaboratively and effectively by encouraging and supporting the development of partnership working between the LSPs, DSPs, independent scrutiny role and MASA subgroups.</p> <p>3. Chair the meetings of the DSPs, including any additional meetings convened as a response to specific and exceptional circumstances, with the help of the business manager and independent scrutiny role.</p> <p>4. Offer appropriate challenge to ensure that the partners are accountable, and that the local arrangements operate effectively.</p> |

Strategic Alignment Group

Bolton Strategic Partnership Alignment Group brings together strategic leads from Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), Bolton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP), Bolton Place-Based Partnership and Bolton Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Although each partnership functions separately with distinct authority, governance arrangements, accountability and legal framework, there are a number of overlapping and linked priority work streams that require and benefit from effective strategic alignment via this group.

² All details correct at time of publication, December 2024

In particular, the Strategic Alignment Group aims to:-

- Work together effectively to protect children, adults, families and communities who most need our help.
- Improve outcomes for children, adults and communities by having one conversation on areas where there is significant interface.
- Identify collaborative and joint working opportunities to avoid duplication.
- Provide Strategic leadership, guidance and challenge.

Relevant Agencies

Strong, effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should be responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people in a collaborative way. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. This approach requires flexibility from all relevant agencies, to enable joint identification and response to existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.

Those organisations that meet the criteria to be included as a relevant agency are set out in regulations, and those in Bolton are listed below. However, in line with statutory guidance, the three safeguarding partners retain the right to request representatives from other agencies or organisations as the partnership develops or need arises from areas of partnership work. We maintain a directory of nominated relevant agency contacts and their engagement, including in the work of the partnership.

Relevant agencies are required to:-

- Act in accordance with the local safeguarding arrangements.
- Have appropriate robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Have clear arrangements on how information is shared amongst all relevant agencies and the safeguarding partners.
- Be aware of the expectations placed on them by the new arrangements.

Organisations and agencies not named in the relevant agency regulations, whilst not under a statutory duty, should nevertheless co-operate and collaborate with local safeguarding arrangements, particularly as they may have duties under Section 10 and/or Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

All education settings, including early years, alternative provision, independent, private schools, specialist provision and further education

- All early years and childcare providers, via Early Years Provider Forum *
- All schools and education settings via Bolton Primary Schools Executive
- Bolton Learning Alliance (Secondary School Head Teacher Forum) *
- Bolton Association of Special Schools
- Bolton Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education Establishments
- Virtual School

Voluntary and Community Sector

- Bolton Community and Voluntary Services

- Bolton Together Consortium * – Children’s Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations

Health Services, Including Substance Misuse and Mental Health

- Bolton NHS Foundation Trust *
- Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust *
- Primary Care Services – GPs, Dentists, Pharmacies and Opticians

Criminal Justice

- National Probation Service *
- Cheshire & Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company
- Bolton Youth Offending Team

Housing Sector

- Bolton at Home
- Bolton Community Housing

Other and National organisations

- British Transport Police
- Cafcass
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue - Bolton
- Department for Work and Pensions

() Those relevant agencies who are also members of the Safeguarding Partnership*

An annual list of relevant agencies is published at:-

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/homepage/18/keeping-children-safe-in-bolton>

Working With Schools, Colleges, Early Years, And Other Education Providers

Working Together 2023 pays particular attention to the role of education in the lives of children. Education settings are uniquely placed to identify need and concerns relating to children and, with partners as appropriate, address them early.

Our arrangements recognise this, and education settings are represented in a number of ways across the different layers of the local safeguarding arrangements. This includes the work of our Safeguarding in Education Team and their intrinsic involvement in the partnership as well as Head Teacher representation and Local Authority Education Department representatives at a strategic level.

The education sector are actively involved in the diverse range of safeguarding developments led by the safeguarding partners, and these arrangements are further detailed in the ‘working together’ agreement developed with the education sector. This can be found at:-

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/homepage/18/keeping-children-safe-in-bolton>

Partnership Organisation

Bolton’s Safeguarding Children Partnership structure aims to provide the framework for LSPs and DSPs to undertake their duties in leading safeguarding arrangements across the multi-agency system. The diagram below sets out the current structure and sub-groups enabling the statutory safeguarding partners to:-

- Collaborate with other key agencies and partnerships

- Provide, receive and analyse information related to the safety and welfare of children
- Use intelligence and learning opportunities to reflect, drive improvement and identify emerging needs

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership Organisational Structure

CONNECTED PARTNERSHIP



Policy and Workforce Development Group
Purpose: To commission and deliver safeguarding training and provide policy support for safeguarding children
Meeting Frequency: Bi-Annually
Chair: Partnership Business Manager
Attended by: DSP and Relevant Agency workforce development and policy leads

Safeguarding Effectiveness Group
Purpose: To provide DSPs and leaders from Relevant Agencies with oversight on the impact and effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding system
Meeting Frequency: Quarterly
Chair: CEO Bolton Together
Attended by: DSP and Relevant Agency senior and middle manager representatives

Learning From Practice Group
Purpose: Identify and respond to learning from scrutiny and assurance activity, including learning from serious childcare incidents and lead on implementation of any actions plans
Meeting Frequency: Quarterly
Chair: Designated Nurse
Attended by: DSP and Relevant Agency Middle and Frontline Managers

Greater Manchester Safeguarding Alliance Meeting/LSP
Purpose: To provide collective leadership and deliver mutual assurance of strategic and operational safeguarding partnership arrangements for children and young people in Greater Manchester
Meeting Frequency: Minimum of twice a year
Chair: TBC
Attended by: LSPs, DCS, GMCA representatives

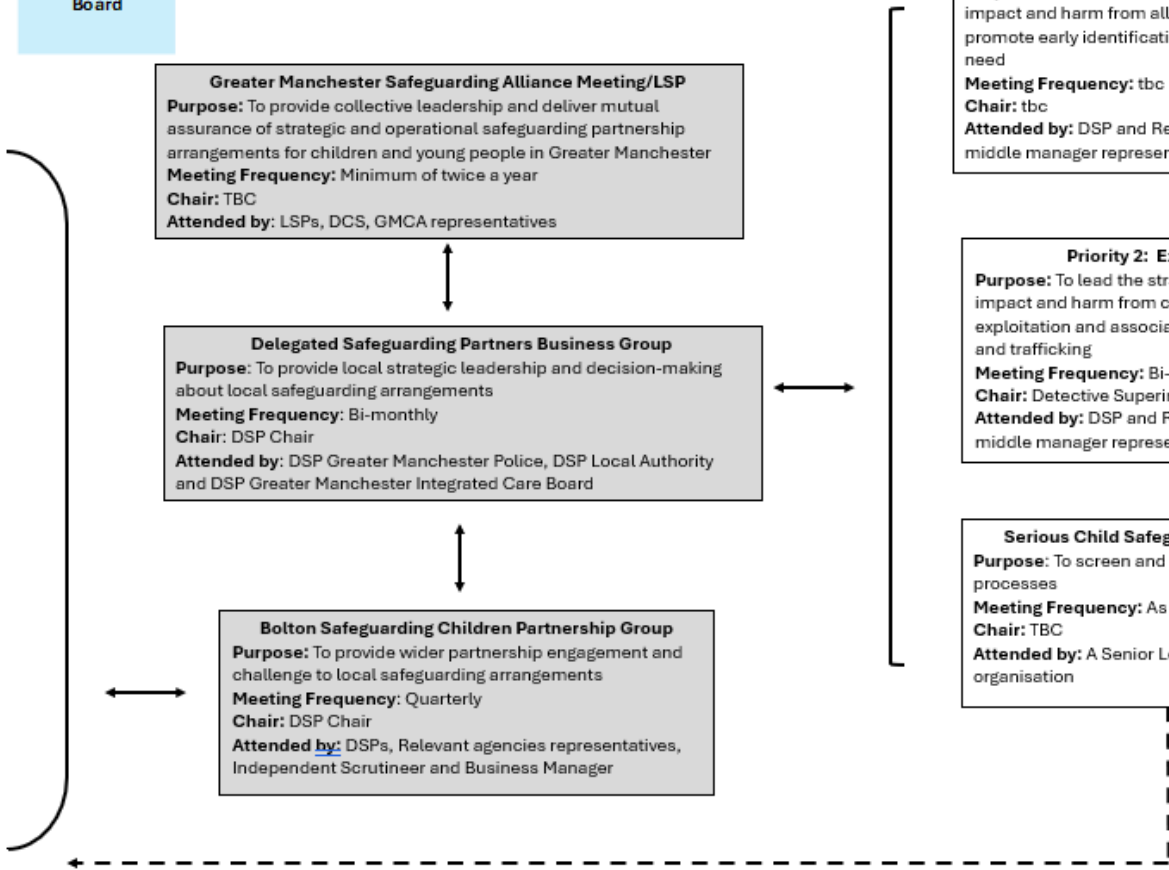
Delegated Safeguarding Partners Business Group
Purpose: To provide local strategic leadership and decision-making about local safeguarding arrangements
Meeting Frequency: Bi-monthly
Chair: DSP Chair
Attended by: DSP Greater Manchester Police, DSP Local Authority and DSP Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership Group
Purpose: To provide wider partnership engagement and challenge to local safeguarding arrangements
Meeting Frequency: Quarterly
Chair: DSP Chair
Attended by: DSPs, Relevant agencies representatives, Independent Scrutineer and Business Manager

Priority 1: Tackling Neglect
Purpose: To lead the strategic response to reduce the impact and harm from all forms of child neglect and to promote early identification and response to emerging need
Meeting Frequency: tbc
Chair: tbc
Attended by: DSP and Relevant Agency senior and middle manager representatives

Priority 2: Extra-Familial Harm
Purpose: To lead the strategic response to reduce the impact and harm from criminal and sexual child exploitation and associated factors such as missing and trafficking
Meeting Frequency: Bi-Monthly
Chair: Detective Superintendent, GMP
Attended by: DSP and Relevant Agency senior and middle manager representatives

Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Group
Purpose: To screen and lead statutory case review processes
Meeting Frequency: As Required
Chair: TBC
Attended by: A Senior Leader from each DSP organisation



Funding and Resources

Financial and in-kind contributions from multi-agency partners support Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership to fulfil its statutory functions. Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 sets an expectation that funding contributions from statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable. The LSPs will agree and review the level of funding needed to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements on an annual basis, commencing with a 'zero based budget' late 2024 in order to set a three-year budget and determine the most effective use of resources and contributions. Any underspends are carried forward to fund expenditure in future years. The agreed partnership budget and funding arrangements are published in each year's annual report.

BSCP Business Unit

BSCP is supported by a dedicated business unit, with staffing agreed by the Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners. The team are hosted by the Local Authority but work across statutory partners and relevant agencies. The responsibilities of the Business Unit include:-

- Facilitate effective Child Safeguarding Practice Review process.
- Dissemination of local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents via appropriate subgroup activity.
- Analysis and reporting of multi-agency key performance indicators including statistics, performance measures and emerging safeguarding trends with the support of data teams from across the partnership.
- Ensure multi-agency safeguarding audits, such as Section 11 thematic practice audits etc. feature as part of partnership activity.
- Design, commission and evaluate multi-agency training.
- Provide support to the Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners to ensure the compilation of the Annual Report.
- Facilitate partnership meetings across the system.
- Provide specialist support and guidance to chairs of subgroups and 'task and finish' groups which enable progress to areas of focus to help ensure that outputs are delivered in a timely way.
- Support the arrangements which bring strategic leads from the relevant safeguarding partners together to drive forward these arrangements.
- Promote best multi-agency practice to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Provide support to the work of the independent scrutineer and ensure that findings from scrutiny activity are fed into the safeguarding effectiveness subgroup.
- Support the Partnership on the development of multi-agency policies, procedures and practice guidance.
- Co-ordinate communications (including website management) in connection with the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Annual Report

Statutory partners will publish an annual report by 30 September of each year. The report sets out how we co-ordinate, deliver and fund services for children and families; our achievements and activities in the past year with an emphasis on impact, ensuring we include all content required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. It will set out our priorities and key activities for the forthcoming year. This will be widely shared and be published on our website.

Promoting effective multi-agency practice

We develop and maintain a range of strategies, guidance and workforce development activities to promote clear expectations for practice. These also support practitioners to develop their knowledge and skills to become confident practitioners. The full range are maintained for easy access on our website, <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/homepage/18/keeping-children-safe-in-bolton>

Whilst some are permanent, we also develop and deliver other supporting resources, with assistance from children, families and subject matter experts. The additional resources are continually evolving and are a response not only to practice learning but also improvement areas identified from national and independent scrutiny. These include:-

- **Framework for Action** - Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership publishes a threshold document on our website to ensure that everyone understands and is able to act appropriately where there are safeguarding concerns.
- **Information sharing** - [The Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) outlines general principles regarding data protection and information-sharing is supported by a range of Greater Manchester and Bolton specific guidance and training materials.
- **Assessment tools and protocols** - We support organisations and practitioners in their assessment practice. This includes standards of good practice and provision of a range of assessments, [assessment tools](#) and guidance, including a [Neglect Practice Guide](#).
- **Child protection standards** - A summative guide for practitioners which embody the expectations within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework. This guidance puts in place an agreed set of expectations for our work with children and families who are subject to Child Protection Conference processes.
- **Dispute resolution and escalation** - When working with issues relating to safeguarding children, it is likely that disagreement and dispute will arise at some point but that does not mean it cannot be diffused when it occurs. Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership seeks to resolve differences at the earliest opportunities and maintain and monitor use of our [dispute resolution policy](#). If further escalation is required and any issue remains unresolved between the three safeguarding partners and our local networks, we will comply with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 requirement to escalate to the Secretary of State.

Independent and partnership scrutiny and assurance

Partnership scrutiny and assurance

Bolton's Scrutiny and Assurance Framework sets out how we undertake scrutiny and use a range of partnership data and other evidence to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of safeguarding practice. This includes a partnership scorecard, audits, independent scrutiny and the voice of children, families and practitioners. This tells us how well our multi-agency system is working and informs areas for further activity.

Our strategy is centred on being evidence based, supporting a learning culture and promoting strong partnership working in undertaking a 'plan-do-review' cycle. An annual Scrutiny and Assurance Plan, led by the multi-agency Safeguarding Effectiveness Group, ensures this activity is not only delivered, but asks 'so what'. A highlight report, and any areas for escalation or decision, are provided to the statutory partners and other partnership stakeholders on a quarterly basis. Any urgent matters are escalated in the interim.

While each individual agency has its own responsibilities to monitor and manage its own performance in respect of safeguarding children, it is important that this learning is shared and any risks or areas of concern are escalated to the partnership. This not only enables the statutory partners to be assured that individual organisations are discharging their duties effectively but also enables the early identification of cross-cutting themes or emerging needs for children that requires a partnership approach.

It is within this context that all services and organisations working directly or indirectly with children are expected to contribute to partnership scrutiny and assurance activity.

The partnership's Scrutiny and Assurance Framework can be accessed via <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/homepage/18/keeping-children-safe-in-bolton>

Independent Scrutiny

BSCP has robust arrangement for independent scrutiny, to provide an impartial assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our local area. This is led by a named Independent Scrutineer and their activity is embedded within the scrutiny and assurance plan. Areas of focus for the Independent Scrutineer are determined from the findings of local assurance activity, themes and learning from serious childcare incidents and relevant national safeguarding reports or legislative changes. This supports the statutory partners to drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners.

This approach complements external scrutiny carried out by independent inspectorates such as Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Voice of children, families and practitioners

Our aim is that the voice of children, families and practitioners is embedded throughout our work. The statutory safeguarding partners actively identify opportunities to engage directly with each group to gather views, understand their lived experience and their views about the impact of local arrangements to promote children's safety and welfare. In particular:-

- Children and their families - The Safeguarding Effectiveness Group collect and draw learning from the voice and lived experiences of children and their families from across the multi-agency system at each of their quarterly meetings.
- Practitioners - We engage with practitioners in a number of ways when developing guidance and tools, through a practitioner survey linked to our Section 11 audit, multi-agency reflective supervision sessions and a range of events.

We continue to develop our approaches to widen and embed the way we currently engage routinely with children and their families, and this is a priority for us.

Arrangements for commissioning and publishing child safeguarding practice reviews

We maintain a Practice Review Guidance that complies with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel:-
<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/case-reviews> .

It sets out how we ensure that there are robust and transparent arrangements in place to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which are likely to raise issues of importance for multi-agency practice to safeguard children. We also review instances where there has been exceptional practice, to identify learning for the system and achieve consistently good practice. A table of the types of review we undertake is provided below:-

| Review | Definition | Threshold |
|---|--|--|
| Rapid Review | A statutory review completed within 15 working days to establish the relevant facts, identify any immediate action needed to safeguard children, consider potential improvement to local arrangements and decide whether a local CSPR is required. | This is a serious child safeguarding case. A child has suffered a serious injury or death as a result of child abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect. |
| Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) | A statutory review completed within six months. The review works with practitioners, leaders and families to analyse in more depth the key factors relating to the serious injury or death. The review should produce learning that supports local safeguarding arrangements to be strengthened. | This is a serious child safeguarding case. A child has suffered a serious injury or death as a result of child abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect and it is an agreed outcome from the Rapid Review |
| Learn from Success Review | A non-statutory review that is completed within three months. It works with practitioners and families to identify what worked well and the factors that contributed to better outcomes. | Consistently and exceptional multi-agency practice that has led to improved outcomes for a child or children. |
| Local Learning Review | A non-statutory review completed within three months. It works with practitioners and leaders to better understand the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. | A child has suffered injury or death and there are factors in local safeguarding practice that could be strengthened. |
| Local Thematic Review | A series of child injuries or deaths that highlight a commonly recurring issue for safeguarding children practice. | Three or more child injuries or deaths and would benefit from local learning by further investigation and analysis of safeguarding practice. |

A Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Group makes decisions about the type of review, including where the threshold is met for a serious childcare incident. They are also responsible for leading statutory review processes, i.e. Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and proposing responses to the recommendations. The responsibility for tracking the implementation of multi and single agency actions plans, as well as disseminating learning is led by the Learning from Practice Group.

The DSPs maintain direct oversight of all statutory reviews, to ensure they are of good quality, completed in a timely manner, have retained the lived experience of the child/family at the heart of it, and there are SMART recommendations and resulting actions.

We liaise with the National Child Safeguarding Panel and conduct 'true to us' exercises, where beneficial, to ensure we learn from national and other area case reviews. This is included in the Scrutiny and Assurance Plan, led by the Learning from Practice Group and provides additional insight into our practice in Bolton.

Learning and development

There are a number of ways in which we create a culture of continuous development, improvement and learning and provide opportunities for all practitioners across the local area to be knowledgeable, skilled and confident. Understanding training need locally, as well as monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of training are intrinsic to achieving this.

Commissioning and delivering an effective [multi-agency safeguarding training programme](#) and maintaining a local training pool is a key focus for Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership. Decisions about the content and commissioning of the multi-agency safeguarding children training offer is led by the Policy and Workforce Development Group with a quarterly report, detailing training activity and impact, provided to the partnership via the Safeguarding Effectiveness Group.

Bolton is proud of its multi-agency training pool consists of over forty practitioners from a range of organisations in Bolton. Between them, they deliver approximately seventy training courses from early help to child protection, domestic abuse and child exploitation. The training offer is open to anyone who works or volunteers with children and their families in Bolton and courses are free to attend. There is a blended approach to training delivery, with a mix of face-to-face, online trainer led, webinars and e-learning, with courses pitched at different levels.

Our training programme is complemented by:-

- **Knowledge Nuggets** – these are short video-based awareness training activities suitable for basic level training. Practitioners watch a video and complete several related questions based on what they have watched.
- **Network Bites** – these are bi-monthly webinars that showcase local services for children and their families in Bolton and pathways to access help. This supports the multi-agency system to keep in touch with local services and understand how and when to access them.
- **Bi-monthly newsletter** – this is a mix of 'news items' related to learning from reviews, seasonal safeguarding issues, policy highlights, practitioner spotlights etc. and is distributed across the partnership.

- **Multi-agency Themed Events** – themed conferences or summits that bring front-line practitioners, senior leaders and those with lived experience to focus on a safeguarding theme to increase knowledge and engage in developing practice.
- **Learning Briefs** – there are short documents focusing on learning from case reviews, multi-agency audits, practice pointers etc.

Dispute Resolution and Escalation

When working with issues relating to safeguarding children, it is likely that disagreement and dispute will arise at some point but that does not mean it cannot be diffused. Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership will seek to resolve differences at the earliest opportunities. Moreover, in responding to disputes, the partnership encourages all those involved to remember: -

- Good relationships are the priority
- Keep the person and the problem separate
- Pay attention to the issues being presented and be open to changing your position in response to facts
- Reflect and learn from disagreement to strengthen practice

The three Delegated Safeguarding Partners will work together to resolve any professional challenges or disputes between them by discussion, negotiation and consensus. For example this could include issues related to allocation and prioritisation of funding/ resources, strategic priorities, thresholds, failing to comply with agreed safeguarding systems/processes, not fulfilling roles and responsibilities etc.

Should an issue remain unresolved and in dispute, a meeting of the Lead Safeguarding Partners will be convened to hear and adjudicate on the matter; their decision making will be based on the respective Delegated Safeguarding Partner providing a report setting their particular position. In very rare occasions where resolution cannot be reached, despite escalation to the Lead Safeguarding Partner, the partnership may need to seek the involvement of the Independent Scrutineer to review all available information and reach a definitive conclusion

Remember in Bolton Safeguarding Children is Everyone's Responsibility



Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

If you are worried that a child may be being abused or neglected, then please act. In an emergency call 999 or you can contact Bolton's Integrated Front Door on 01204 331500 during office hours.

If you have a concern outside office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01204 337777

Or alternatively discuss your concerns with the NSPCC:-

- Telephone – Freephone 0808 800 5000
- Email – help@nspcc.org.uk
- Text – 88858

If you are a child or young person and need to talk to someone you can contact Childline on Freephone 08001111 or visit Childline <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

Your call could save a child's life.

For further information about the arrangements, share your experiences of safeguarding in Bolton or get involved in the work we do, contact:-

Phone 01204 337479

Email boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk