

New arrangements for Waltham Forest Local Safeguarding Partners June 2019

This paper describes the decisions made to implement new arrangements in Waltham Forest and are our published arrangements, as required under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 on the 27 June 2019.

Signed by the local safeguarding named partners

Waltham Forest Council

Deputy Chief Executive
Linzi Roberts Egan

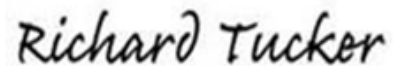
NHS Waltham Forest, Newham and Tower
Hamlets CCGs, on behalf of Waltham Forest

Director of Quality and Safety
Chetan Vyas

Police North East Command Unit
Met Police

Borough Commander
Richard Tucker





1. The Local Safeguarding Partners

The Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) are defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017). Within Waltham Forest the safeguarding partners are:

- (a) Waltham Forest Council
- (b) NHS Waltham Forest, Newham and Tower Hamlets CCGs
- (c) Waltham Forest and Newham Police

2. LSP function in the Strategic Partnership Executive

In Waltham Forest we approach strategic partnerships differently to other boroughs and since March 2016 we have established a Think Family joined up framework which enables our four strategic partnerships (Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Board (WFSCB), Waltham Forest Safeguarding Adults Board, SafetyNet, and Health and Wellbeing Board) to work more effectively and efficiently. This is supported by the Strategic Partnership Unit (SPE).

This framework includes a Strategic Partnership Executive (SPE) that is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive for Families and Homes, LBWF and is attended by the chairs of the four boards, alongside senior leads from the Waltham Forest Council, Police, NELFT, Bart's Heath Trust and Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group. The SPE function is now a mature and well established decision making forum which in effect has already been operating as a local safeguarding partnership for the WFSCB. Therefore the formal LSP function will sit in the SPE, where the three partners have equal and joint responsibility for the oversight and governance of the WFSCB.

3. The name of the partnership

In the new arrangements the LSP have agreed to continue using the same name of Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Board.

4. Business management arrangements for WFSCB

The Strategic Partnership Unit will continue to provide support to the WFSCB alongside the other three boards. This includes support to the independent scrutineer, board members and the subgroup and task and finish group delivering the WFSCB priorities. The head of strategic partnerships who manages the unit is also the advisor to the One Panel.

5. Identifying, responding and monitoring the needs of children in the area

The LSP will complete a needs assessment to identify the priorities required to address the needs of children in Waltham Forest. The priorities will be delivered through task and finish or subgroups as required. Ongoing data regarding how the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families including early help will be monitored via the WFSCB quarterly dashboard and early help multi-agency conversations.

6. Threshold Document

WFSCB published a very comprehensive threshold document which clearly articulates the local understanding of thresholds and assists professionals within Waltham Forest to identify suitable responses to the needs they identify amongst the children, young people and families they are working with. This provides a guide, recognising that each family is unique and their needs should be considered on a case by case basis, using professional judgement supported by the threshold guidance document. This document also sets out the local criteria for action in a way that is transparent, accessible and easily understood. The WFSCB will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this guidance and provide training for the partnership.

7. Independent Scrutineer

WFSCB will continue to commission an independent person to provide independent scrutiny function as set out in statutory guidance (Working Together 2018). While this post will have similar key functions as the role of independent chair there will be a shift in the relationship between the LSP and WFSCB and the independent person. The scrutineer will function not as part of the WFSCB but as a scrutineer viewing and commenting on practice by the WFSCB. The language used will reflect this, moving from the “we” used by the independent chair, to “they” used by the independent scrutineer.

The independent scrutineer will undertake broadly similar functions as the independent chair, agenda planning and chairing the WFSCB board meetings, reviewing decisions regarding child safeguarding practice reviews, and assisting where there is a disagreement between agencies. See appendix one for draft personal specification for the role.

8. Rapid review of a child following a serious incident and undertaking child safeguarding practice reviews

As part of the unique arrangements in Waltham Forest we have a joined up Think Family forum that reviews all referrals for statutory reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews, safeguarding adult reviews and domestic homicide reviews. This forum, the One Panel includes membership from children and adults services from police, health (providers and commissioners), children and adults social care, community safety, disability enablement services and education. The Panel commenced in September 2016 and functions extremely well and is well respected by all partners. The panel meets monthly and has a standing membership with named deputies, substitutes are not allowed. This has enabled the group to develop a consistent approach to decision making. The relevant board chair is invited to observe the panel when it is making a recommendation against the statutory criteria. The chair and the advisor to the One Panel then meet and discuss the decision of the panel with the chair who makes a final decision.

This process enables the panel to embed a Think Family approach from decision making to commissioning to undertaking reviews.

As this panel is functioning at such a high level the LSP have made a decision to include the rapid review function of a child following a serious incident into the panel. On the occasions that the panel meeting is outside of the 15 working days detailed in the guidance the LSP will be advised and where appropriate they will make the recommendation to the relevant board chair/scrutineer.

Following discussion and approval of the final report by the relevant board a board response to the findings identified in the report is developed and an action plan is created to deliver the response. This action plan is monitored regularly by the One Panel. The impact on practice of the work completed because of the review is also collected using practitioners focus groups, re-auditing, and surveys.

Statutory review reports and the relevant board response will be published through the strategic partnerships website.

9. Child Death Review arrangements

WFSCB is exploring arrangements to create a Child Death Review (CDR) function across Waltham Forest, Hackney and City, Tower Hamlets, and Newham to increase the footprint of child deaths to approximately 60 in line with the new guidance, Child Death Review, Statutory and Operational Guidance (England) October 2018. The new guidance will be implemented by September 2019.

10. Funding

WFSCB is financed by contributions from partners, with the Waltham Forest Council making the largest contribution. Partners contribute to the strategic partnerships function as a whole which includes support for the other three boards. Additional funds are requested from partners to finance statutory reviews. The present arrangements will continue.

11. Relevant others, including engaging with schools

The current partnership arrangements in Waltham Forest reflect the commitment and contribution of a wide partnership base and this is reflected in the naming of relevant agencies, who are central to enable safeguarding arrangements to work effectively in the borough. This is done through collaboration and working together within the board and its subgroups and task and finish groups to improve outcomes for children and families.

- North East London Foundation Trust
- Barts Health Trust
- CAFCASS
- National Probation Trust
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- London Fire Brigade
- SCB board lay members
- All Waltham Forest schools and educational establishments, regardless of size or type including primary, secondary, special and maintained, academy, free or independent.
- All Waltham Forest voluntary sector organisations working with children and families, regardless of size or type

Particular targeted work has already been undertaken and will continue to increase the engagement in the work of the WFSCB by schools and education establishments, and early years settings, 16/17 semi-independent providers and residential care homes and all settings that children spend time in, including out of school settings such as activity clubs etc.

This work is in addition to the representation already from schools and early year settings on the WFSCB board and relevant subgroups and task and finish groups.

12. Use of data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of help provided to children and families

WFSCB has developed a comprehensive dashboard which includes performance data from partners that demonstrates the progress against the priorities of WFSCB.

Partners provide data for the dashboard and SPU coordinates this data into the dashboard and disseminates this to WFSCB members. This function will continue.

13. The voice of children and families

The views and opinions of those children, young people, parents and carers who have used services are collected within our annual multi-agency audit process, statutory and local reviews. WFSCB will continue to embed the seeking of views in the action plans that are delivering the priorities of the board and work with groups such as Youth Independent Advisory Group, Young Advisors, Children in Care Council and Voices in Partnership. This will be further enhanced by the development of a new approach to delivering aspects of priority work using a more community involved inquiry approach which will link with Waltham Forest Council's connecting communities programme.

14. Learning and improving practice

Learning and improving practice are at the centre of the work of the WFSCB. Strong arrangements are already in place with a cross cutting group operating across the four boards and oversees the annual multi-agency audit programme of up to four audits a year, development of resources such as bitesize guide videos, practitioner's guidance, multi-agency training and an annual Think family event. Evidence is collated on how practice has improved as a result of all the learning and improving practice through practitioner discussion groups, surveys and audits.

15. Annual Report

An annual report will be completed each year to evidence progress and performance of WFSCB and partners in safeguarding children, young people and families.