

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership

Communication Strategy

2022-2024

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Introduction

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership are committed to the effective safeguarding of adults and children in the local area. We believe all adults and children at risk of abuse and neglect should be able to obtain appropriate interventions which enable them to live a life free from fear, harm or abuse.

Partners are working together to ensure people who live, work, or visit Walsall are aware of what 'safeguarding' means and have access to information that will help them make informed decisions and stay safe. Partners have a responsibility to ensure that messages from Walsall Learning Reviews are shared and making a difference to practice. We want to listen to the views what people have to say to us about safeguarding whether this be feedback or sharing experiences. The whole community needs to understand what abuse, exploitation, harm and neglect looks like as well as the roles they play in keeping people safe and promoting welfare as Safeguarding is everybody's business.

This strategy will outline the best methods to communicate messages that we have identified through engagement with our respective audiences. The strategy should be read in conjunction with the WSP Engagement Strategy where it highlights the importance of listening to Walsall residents and not only engaging to find out what they want to tell us but how they want to tell us and how people want us to show that we have listened.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this Communication Strategy is to provide a plan of action for improving and strengthening communication to and from the partnership, and to ensure that the safeguarding partnership communications are managed effectively and professionally.

Our objectives are:

- To ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and adults is at the heart of what all partner organisations do
- To raise awareness about how everybody in Walsall can contribute to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs
- To drive forward best safeguarding practice by making sure our multi-agency workforce has easy access to evidence based information about what works
- To communicate the key safeguarding lessons learned from national and local case reviews, audits and research
- To raise awareness of the key business priorities of the partnership, using a variety of ways to cascade information to maximise the engagement of a busy workforce (see section 6).
- Support the delivery of the business priorities of the partnership by developing targeted campaigns, encompassing communications and engagement activities
- To inform our multi-agency policy and procedures
- To establish links with other strategic partnerships to develop a shared understanding of the needs of the service users

Roles and Responsibilities

Partner organisations in Walsall which have a role in safeguarding have the following responsibilities:

- To be proactive in raising awareness of their role and work
- To promote the work of the Partnership with children, young people and adults, professionals and the wider community
- To engage with professionals to promote an understanding of the work the Partnership and to inform of changes to policy, procedure, share best practice and communicate the findings of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and all Rapid Reviews with multi-agency learning
- To share good practice, ideas, good news and learning from quality assurance work including multi-agency audits
- To keep partners up to date with developments including single agency changes to policies and procedures which affect partnership working
- To define and implement clear lines of communication and to ensure consistency and transparency wherever possible
- To ensure that information from the partnership / subgroups is cascaded to all relevant people within their organisation.
- Responsible for ensuring that any issues raised by members of their organisation are raised to the relevant WSP subgroup.

Who is our audience?

The Partnership needs to communicate with a diverse community and a range of groups and organisations that care for, educate, provide services for and protect children & young people and adults with care and support needs.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Statutory and Relevant Partners & Professionals
- Adults with care and support needs
- Children & Young people
- Parents & Carers
- Wider community / members of the public
- Healthcare settings
- Educational settings
- Faith settings
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Agencies who work across boundaries of Walsall

We recognise that people will need information at different stages, in different formats and locations depending on their requirements. Walsall Safeguarding Partnership aims to provide information that is accessible, of a high quality and meets the needs of the public, service users, potential service users and staff working across partner agencies.

What we will work on together

Each year Safeguarding Partners will identify and coordinate a programme of publicity and awareness raising campaigns on a routine basis to tie in with the partnership priorities, learning from reviews and with national and local events or campaigns. The Safeguarding Executive Group may also wish to take advantage of opportunistic media stories or issues to highlight the role of the partnership and safeguarding awareness. This may need to be done at short notice with advice from safeguarding partners or partner communications staff.

Messages identified by the partnership include:

- What is abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation?
- Keeping children / adults safe is a responsibility shared across the whole community
- What to do if you are worried about a child and / or adult with care and support needs
- How to spot the signs and vulnerability indicators of the different types of abuse
- What the different responsibilities to safeguard are, and how they should be fulfilled
- A basic understanding of the role of the WSP, the key priorities and how they can be supported
- Key changes in safeguarding nationally and locally and the implications of these
- The learning from all review activity, including key themes and areas for practice improvement (see flowchart at appendix 1).

Ways we will communicate

The main electronic communication platform is our WSP website www.walsallSP.co.uk

This is the main method for accessing information, the website hosts the learning and development training programme, all safeguarding policies and procedures and a range of advice, guidance and resources/ links to other services.

Partner agencies have their own respective websites which provide information about services and link to WSP Webpages.

We will work together with the communication teams from the statutory safeguarding partners in relation to particular messages/ communication campaigns

Methods of communication to be used by Walsall Safeguarding Partnership are (could be electronic or paper copies):

- Newsletters and publications/key messages
- 7 minutes briefings
- Social media account
 - Twitter @Safe_Walsall
- Multi-agency learning events
- Campaigns
- Practitioner Forums
- Annual conferences
- Annual reports
- Strategic Plan
- Consultation and engagement events and surveys
- Specific promotional material Leaflets, factsheets and posters
- Webinars, podcasts and videos
- Press Releases
- Internal communication methods for each partner
- Advertising
- Emails and email briefings
- Meetings, seminars and workshops inc. distribution of minutes
- Support or special interest groups (e.g. SEN parent groups. voluntary organisations, DSL Forums, Quality in Care Board)

The most appropriate method of communication will be identified to suit the needs of the message and audience.

Communications Standards

Our approach is based on the following principles:

- Information is a service in its own right
- Information should be accessible to everyone
- Communication should be clear and open using plain English (e.g. avoiding jargon and explaining acronyms) or giving clear explanations where this is not possible
- Promoting equality and valuing diversity is central to the provision of information
- A commitment to keeping information up to date and relevant
- Information may need to be delivered in the spoken word to be effective
- Consultation and engagement is central to the partnership's continuous improvement

Effective communication requires careful planning and WSP encourages the following approach to be considered and confirmed at an early stage:

- Know who your audience is and what they want to see
- Identify the key messages to be shared
- Assess the method of production
- Identify where information is to be distributed or how it will be given direct to people
- Understand how information will be used
- Ensure the outcome will be consistent with the objective of learning and safeguarding
- Assess when information materials will need to be removed or reviewed
- Actively facilitate the possibilities for involving service users and staff in producing information
- Ensure any service you are publicising or signposting to is aware of the publicity so they can prepare to meet any potential increase in demand.

Media Communications

Working with the media in most situations should be planned and statements agreed with the Partnership Business Manager, Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group Chair and senior leaders in agencies where appropriate. This is to provide consistency including ensuring a coordinated multi-agency approach as appropriate.

Responsive media statements may be required when there is a case issue involving a specific person or where there is negative media coverage of key safeguarding matters which needs to be addressed.

Any interviews with the media in the name of Walsall Safeguarding Partnership should be undertaken by the Independent Chair or a nominated substitute where appropriate.

In the event of a Safeguarding Adults Review or Child Safeguarding Practice review, all communication should be directed to the Partnership Business Manager safeguardingbusinessunit@waslall.gov.uk who will coordinate a response in line with the Media and Communications Protocol for CSPR's and SARs.

Agencies should avoid responding independently and all press releases should be agreed by the Independent Chair to ensure a consistent response is delivered.

Partner agencies must ensure that any public communication does not negatively impact on another partner agency.

Measuring Success

The success of this strategy will be monitored via:

- ✓ Analysis of website analytics.
- ✓ Numbers in attendance at public/partner WSP workshops, conferences, and training events.
- ✓ Response to feedback / evaluation requests.
- ✓ Holding focus groups with multi-agency staff and with members of the public
- ✓ Training needs analysis feedback.
- ✓ Feedback from adults, children and families involved in the safeguarding process.
- ✓ Auditing activity, including scrutiny of the impact of our learning from reviews.
- ✓ Inspection feedback from partners.
- ✓ Progress against the Business Plan.
- ✓ Future review activity (ie. have we prevented the same issues being identified again).
- ✓ Evidence/ assurance of how Partners embed learning from reviews and campaigns in their own organisation in line with the Partnership Quality Assurance Framework

Risk Management

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership anticipates the following communication risks:

- Not identifying safeguarding issues before they reach the media
- Inconsistent and unclear messages delivered from partner agencies or across the partnership
- Not sharing information which is needed to change or improve practice
- Communication leaks of confidential information

Risks are mitigated by partner agencies being aware of this strategy and working within the framework set out within it, as well as working within the principals of confidentiality and GDPR and each agency taking accountability for sharing or escalating risks if they are identified.

Governance and Review

This strategy is agreed by the partners of Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and will be overseen by the Operations and Scrutiny Group.

This Communication Strategy will be reviewed every two years, unless there are policy and procedure changes which directly affect the strategy.

Appendix 1 - Learning and Improvement flowchart:

The communication strategy seeks to promote continuous improvement as part of our wider learning and quality assurance framework.



Principles for Learning & Improvement

- There should be a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice
- **Findings** from reviews will be shared in good time to partners through various briefings and published on our website (include links)
- The content of the briefings will be a combination of information and learning from reviews / audits or a reminder of basic information with challenge to think about the application to practice. Their brief duration should also mean that they hold people's attention, as well as giving managers something to share with their staff.
- Each agency is responsible for ensuring this is disseminated throughout their organisation. The expectation is that the information within the briefings are **shared** within team meetings or used as an aide-memoir of key learning.
- * Final reports of review will be **published** (unless there are exceptional circumstances which the Executive Group agree prevents publication) including WSP's response to the review findings, in order to achieve **transparency**. The impact of reviews and audits on improving services to children, adults with care and support needs and their families must also be described in WSP annual reports and will inform inspections
- Improvement must be sustained through regular monitoring and follow up so that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children and adults