



WSCB Communications Strategy – Proactive and Reactive Communication with the Media.

1. Introduction

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) was set up in accordance with the Children Act, 2004 and operates under the statutory guidance of Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015. It is the statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to promote the welfare of children in the local area and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. It co-ordinates local work and promotes the welfare of children by developing policies and procedures in this field, participating in the planning of services for children in the area, communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and having procedures in place to ensure a co-ordinated response to unexpected child deaths. It has to monitor the effectiveness of this local work principally by monitoring the areas outlined above as well as undertaking Serious and Local Case Reviews (SCRs and LCRs) and ensuring that information on child deaths is collected and analysed.

Effective communication is crucial to ensure that the core business of the WSCB outlined above is implemented and that the children and young people in the County are effectively safeguarded.

This document outlines the WSCB's communication strategy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that WSCB fully discharges its statutory responsibility to:

“Communicate to people and bodies in the area the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can be done, and encouraging them to do so” (Working Together 2015 chapter 3).

This strategy covers both 'reactive' (when the WSCB is approached, for example, by the media) and 'proactive' communication.

Its aim is to provide a plan of action for improving and strengthening communication and participation with the following groups of people:

- Children and young people resident in, visiting, or accessing services/ support from WSCB partner agencies.
- Parents and carers resident in, visiting, or accessing services/ support from WSCB partner agencies.
- Professionals and volunteers with the Warwickshire children's workforce.
- The media

3. Principles

- Communication is open and transparent with our partner agencies;
- Communication is a two way process;

- Communication is accessible to all sections of the community, particularly children and young people.

4. Objectives

- Promote awareness in all our communities of how everyone can contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- Give reassurance and confidence regarding safeguarding children and young people in Warwickshire;
- Raise awareness of the work of the WSCB.

5. Key Messages

- Safeguarding children and young people is 'everyone's business';
- WSCB is transparent and open in its activities and will promote the sharing of information in order to safeguard children;
- When information cannot be shared, the WSCB will make the reasons clear;
- WSCB will work in a way that helps people to have confidence that their activities are keeping children and young people safer;
- Communications from the WSCB will have a focus on making information available to all partner agencies and the wider community.

(Also see key messages for different groups in Appendix 3)

6. Proactive Communication

WSCB will use a variety of ways to promote awareness of safeguarding generally and the work of the Board in particular with its various audiences co-ordinated through the WSCB Business team, for example:

- Extensive distribution lists are used to disseminate electronic information to as wide an audience as possible. (These lists are routinely updated);
- Use of the WSCB website as a communication tool. It holds WSCB news, up to date information on interagency safeguarding policies and procedures and local procedures as well as links to useful web sites, training information and training dates and a range of other advice and guidance;
- The WSCB updates training regularly to include ongoing learning, and arranges specific training events in response to the lessons learnt from our Case Reviews in order that the messages reach front line staff.
- The WSCB holds an annual conferences for professionals on relevant themes. Recent conference themes have included Professional Curiosity, Neglect, and Child Sexual Exploitation.
- The Learning and Improvement Officer produces a quarterly newsletter containing learning from reviews and performance monitoring activity.
- The WSCB Board Manager, along with partner agencies, provides briefings and written material for interested parties on relevant subjects and the work of the WSCB.

7. Reactive Communication

WSCB has developed a Case Review media communication strategy (see Appendix 1: Media Strategy - Contact Details) to ensure all partner agencies are well briefed and that there is a coordinated response in the event of media interest.

The Warwickshire County Council communications team will lead for and advise the WSCB on all media issues.

This Communication Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

8. Responsibilities

There is currently no specific post or dedicated capacity within the WSCB responsible for improving communication. Rather the responsibility for this is distributed across all Board and Committee members and shared with the WSCB Independent Chair and Board Manager.

9. WSCB meetings

In their membership agreement WSCB members have a specific responsibility to ensure that information from the WSCB is cascaded to all relevant people within their organisation. They are also responsible for ensuring that any issues raised by members of their organisation are fed through to the SSCB.

Meetings of the WSCB and its subgroups should be seen as a forum for the discussion of concerns about interagency or single agency practice and for highlighting and promoting examples of good practice. Any organisation with an interest in child protection and safeguarding can raise an issue for discussion at any of these meetings.

Anyone wanting to raise an issue for consideration by the WSCB should speak to either the WSCB Chair or the Board Manager. Contact the Board Manager in the first instance on telephone number: 01926 742510 or via e-mail on

wscb@warwickshire.gov.uk.

10. Accessibility

The board will ensure that any leaflets/information are made available in other languages and formats on request.

11. Annual report

The Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) statutory guidance confirms the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) to produce and publish an annual report.

Responsibility for drafting the report rests with the Board Manager working closely with the Chair person, Board and Committee members and partner agencies. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of safeguarding in the local area.

Audiences for this report include the Executive of the County Council, the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Police and Crime Commissioner. It is published on the website so that it is also available to other interested parties.

Appendix 1: Media contacts/alerts in relation to Serious and Local Case Reviews

- All alerts to Warwickshire County Council Communications Team in first instance as lead for WSCB communications.
- All reactive statements in response to enquiries about Serious and Local Case Review's (SCR and LCR) must be shared with WSCB Chair / Board Manager beforehand (if possible).
- All initial responses to media requests should be from WSCB, not individual agency.
- WSCB Board Manager to notify operational leads as well as communications leads in involved agencies to ensure two-pronged approach.
- All communications leads to inform operation lead in own agency
- When SCR/LCR and WSCB response are completed aim to have SCR published on website within a month unless there are legal processes for surviving children in the family that preclude publication before they are completed.
- Family members to be offered a briefing meeting prior to publication.
- A press statement from WSCB Chair to be prepared prior to publication
- DfE to be informed minimum of a week prior to publication
- On the day of publication the WSCB Chair to be available for media contact
- On the day of publication a WCC senior officer (DCS, Chief executive) and lead member for children and families should be available for media contact.
- SCR reports to remain on the WSCB website for 12 months in line with statutory guidance (Working Together 2015)

Appendix 2: Communications Contacts

Name of Agency	Lead	Job title	Tel No.	Email
WSCB	Jayne Surman	Marketing and Communications Manager	Tel: 01926 412757	jaynesurman@warwickshire.gov.uk
Warwickshire County Council	Helen List	Senior Account Manager Resources Group Warwickshire County Council	01926 413729	helenlist@warwickshire.gov.uk
Warwickshire and West Mercia Police				
South Warwickshire CCG				
Coventry and Rugby CCG	Nigel Hart	Nigel Hart Communication Lead NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Parkside House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2NJ	Tel: 024 7624 6128 Mob: 07917 067034	Nigel.Hart@coventryrugbyccg.nhs.uk
Warwickshire North CCG				

SWFT	Dan Ibeziako	Engagement and Communications marketing lead	01926 353810	Dan.ibeziako@arden
CWPT	Nigel Hart Parkside House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2NJ	Communication Lead NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)	Tel: 024 7624 6128 Mob: 07917 067034	
GEH	James Turner	Communications and Engagement Service Partner Communications and Engagement	Tel: 0121 612 3525 Mobile 07740 454990	James.Turner@geh.nhs.uk
National Probation Service				
Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company	Jane Kerr.	External Communications Manager, People Plus.	Tel:07843036990	e-mail: Jane.Kerr@peopleplus.co.uk

Appendix 3: Communication key messages for different groups

Target group – Everyone

- What safeguarding is
- That safeguarding is a responsibility shared across the whole community
- What the different responsibilities to safeguard are and how they should be fulfilled
- A basic understanding of the role of the WSCB and how it can be accessed
- Key changes in safeguarding nationally and locally and the implications of these

Target group – Children and Young People

- How to keep safe
- What to do if you / someone you know is being harmed / harming themselves
- For those involved in it – a basic understanding of the child protection system and what it means to them
- For those involved – the process of a child protection investigation

Target group – Voluntary and Community Organisations

- What support / help the board can provide: in particular, help with developing training programmes, accessing multi-agency training programmes and with developing child protection policies and procedures
- How to access advice and help
- What good safeguarding practice is and how this can be improved
- How to access board events
- How to access the multi-agency shared child protection procedures
- How to recruit staff and volunteers safely and deal with an allegation made against them

Target group – Parents and Carers

- How to provide safe parenting
- Sources of parenting advice
- How to protect your children and others you are responsible for
- For those involved – the process of a child protection investigation
- For those involved in it – a basic understanding of the child protection system and what it means to them
- How to access child protection procedures

Target group – Board Partners and Statutory Agencies including Schools, Settings and GP Surgeries

Target group – Other Partnerships

The WSCB Board Manager will update key forums about the WSCB's work; this will include the Violence Against Women and Girls Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer Warwickshire, and other forums as appropriate.

Appendix 4: Communication - Important points to remember

1. Dealing with media enquiries

- a. Much of the work undertaken by the WSCB partner agencies is confidential, and this confidentiality is fundamental. It is the intention of the WSCB to be open and honest about its work, while protecting the personal details of clients.
- b. From time to time issues may arise that are of interest to the media. These issues may be of a negative nature, and may have a damaging impact on the reputation of the WSCB and of partner agencies; they may also damage staff morale.
- c. If you receive an enquiry relating to Safeguarding, your Press Office and the WSCB Board Manager should be notified immediately.
- d. If the enquiry relates specifically to WSCB, then the response should come directly from the WSCB Chair.
- e. However, media deadlines mean that it is not always possible to wait for a response from each organisation before the response is sent – but every effort should be made for this to happen. If deadlines are extremely tight, it is up to the WSSB Chair to agree an appropriate response.
- f. The WSCB commits to ensuring joint responses to media enquiries, wherever possible. This should be established at the initial contact stage.
- g. All relevant staff in both organisations must be alerted to the above protocol.

2. Proactive media / communications activity

- a. The media often presents a negative image of Safeguarding children issues.
Therefore, it is vital that we raise awareness of the excellent and innovative activities which are driven forward everyday by the WSCB and our partners, and which local practitioners and the general public rarely hear about.
- b. WSCB will issue proactive information to the media, as well as to staff, the public and other stakeholders.
- c. This could include face-to-face briefings, press conferences, and news releases.
- d. All proactive activity will be planned jointly and in advance by the WSCB in an agreed action plan.