



Solihull
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

**Listening, Learning and
Improving Outcomes for
Children and Young People**

RESPECTFUL CHALLENGE • ACCOUNTABILITY • LISTENING • LEARNING • INCLUSION

Communication Strategy 2023-2024

Introduction

Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and its partner agencies play a significant role when it comes to safeguarding children/young people, and their parents and carers. To achieve the best possible outcomes, individuals should receive universal and targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way; the SSCP believe communication and engagement is integral to achieving this.

This strategy ensures that the work of SSCP is effectively communicated to ensure people who live, work, or visit Solihull are aware of what safeguarding is and have access to relevant information. To achieve this SSCP needs to raise awareness about how everybody can contribute to the safeguarding agenda. This should involve listening to and consulting with individuals and carers, and ensuring their views and opinions are taken into account in planning and delivering safeguarding services. This strategy will outline the best methods to communicate messages, as identified through engagement with our respective audiences.

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.

The SSCP 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 Solihull can contribute to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs
- To improve and strengthen how we communicate and engage with individuals, the workforce, stakeholders and the wider public to raise awareness and promote key messages about safeguarding in Solihull
- 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)
- To support the delivery of the business priorities of the partnership by developing targeted campaigns that encompass communications and engagement activities
- To establish links with other strategic partnerships to develop a shared understanding of the needs of the service users
- To define and implement clear lines of communication to ensure consistency and transparency

Roles and Responsibilities

Partner organisations in Solihull 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 and young people, 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 and 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 to ensure consistency and transparency wherever possible
- To ensure that information from the partnership/subgroups is cascaded to all relevant people within their organisation
- To be responsible for ensuring that any issues raised by members of their organisation are raised to the relevant SSCP subgroup
- To ensure that our communications and engagement inform our multi-agency policies and procedure

Principles

The Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) branding should be used in all communications from the Partnership. This can be viewed on the SSCP website.

The following principles will be adopted whilst undertaking communication and engagement activities on behalf of the SSCP:

- Maximise opportunities for shared communication/engagement activities i.e., regional campaigns and joint partner events
- Use and share engagement feedback to inform and drive change
- Communicate messages clearly in a format that is easy to understand
- Communicate messages that are relevant based upon local needs and related research
- Encourage two-way communication and engagement activities
- Maintain up to date and accurate information

This strategy reflects several core communication principles:

- Openness and honesty
- Transparency
- Timeliness
- Accessibility
- Accuracy
- Support of safeguarding agencies' priorities
- Compliance with GDPR

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. In



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In addition to service users and the wider community, the SSCP also has a responsibility to proactively engage with practitioners across a broad spectrum including social care, emergency services, education settings, healthcare settings, the voluntary sector, faith settings, and elected members.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Statutory and Relevant Partners & Professionals
- 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 Solihull

We recognise that people will need information at various stages, in different formats and from different locations depending on their requirements. The SSCP 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.

Methods of Communication

The main electronic communication platform is our SSCP website www.safeguardingsolihull.org.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 SSCP webpages. We will work together with the communication teams from the statutory safeguarding partners in relation to specific messages/communication campaigns.

The SSCP will use the following methods (in either electronic and/or paper form) to communicate to our audiences:

- Annual Report and Strategic Plans
- Board/Sub-Groups/Task and Finish Groups
- Community group events
- Conferences/Media Statements
- Leaflets/Posters/Factsheets
- Newsletters & Bulletins
- Press releases
- Provider forums
- Public events/Roadshows
- Service User and Practitioner Feedback (Surveys /forums)
- Staff Supervision
- Training/Briefing sessions/Workshops
- Visual media sources
- Multi-agency learning events
- Campaigns

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- Practitioner forums
 - Annual conferences
 - Specific promotional material
 - Leaflets, factsheets, and posters
 - Internal communication methods for each partner
 - Advertising
 - Emails and email briefings
 - Meetings, seminars, and workshops (inc. distribution of minutes)
 - Support or special interest groups

Communication Programme

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 national and local events or campaigns. The SSCP Executive Group may also wish to take advantage of opportune 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 abuse, neglect, harm, and exploitation are
- 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 SSCP, their 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 appendices)

SSCP Communications Plan 2023 - 2025

Objectives and actions	Key channels	Key audiences	Timescales and lead	What success looks like
<p>To raise awareness among key stakeholders, professionals and the wider community about the importance of safeguarding children, and promoting their welfare and to engage children and young people wherever possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to update website • Continue to produce quarterly SSCP Newsletters and Bulletins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP website • Newsletters & Bulletins • briefings, seminars, workshops and conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners agencies • the local workforce working with children and families and trainers • community leaders • parents and carers • children and young people 	<p>SSCP Business Manager & Project Officer</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increasing numbers of visitors to the SSCP website.</p> <p>Newsletter widely read with good response to articles.</p>
<p>To raise awareness about the key business priorities of the Partnership: neglect, early help and improvement & learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate national research and local policy via website, newsletters & bulletins • Deliver induction session to children’s workforce to raise awareness of priorities • Targeted campaigns to tackle issues related to the key business priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP website • Newsletters & Bulletins • briefings, seminars, workshops and conferences • Posters, leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners agencies • the local workforce working with children and families and trainers • community leaders • children and young people 	<p>SSCP Business Manager & Project Officer</p> <p>All partners</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Case audits and reviews show awareness of the practice issues.</p> <p>Partners feel informed about the local approach to these issues.</p>

<p>To communicate the key safeguarding lessons learned from national and local case reviews, audits and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include relevant lessons and reports in quarterly newsletters and bulletins • Deliver SCR Briefings via the SSCP Learning and Development Program • Ensure learning from audits and case reviews are fed into training courses as necessary. • Manage the publication of information relating to serious case reviews as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCP website • Newsletters • briefings, seminars, workshops and conferences • Media relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partner agencies • the local workforce working with children and families and trainers 	<p>SSCP Business Manager & Project Officer</p> <p>All partners</p> <p>Regular quarterly communications</p>	<p>Practitioners are aware of the latest learning, and this informs their practice.</p>
<p>To ensure that the voices of children and young people inform the learning, service improvement and practice of all members of the SSCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that key themes around the child’s voice are extracted through the work of partners • Engage relevant youth forums including the Children in Care Council to ensure messages to children are appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case audits and reviews • S11 audits • Complaints and compliments • Surveys • Focus groups and workshops • Children in Care Council, youth services, school, and college forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners agencies • the local workforce working with children and families and trainers • community leaders • schools and colleges • children and young people 	<p>Assurance & Review Group</p> <p>All Partners</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ARG highlight reports to the Exec Group, audits & reviews, participation of children and families in formal meetings, and training which reflect the voice of the child</p>

Responding to Media Enquiries

Working with the media in most situations should be planned and statements agreed with the Partnership Business Manager, Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group Chair and Delegated Safeguarding Partners. 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 Solihull Safeguarding Partnership should be undertaken by the Independent Scrutineer or a nominated substitute where appropriate. In the event of a Child Safeguarding Practice review, all communication should be directed to the Partnership Business Manager, sscp@solihull.gov.uk who will coordinate a response in line with the Media and Communications Protocol for CSPR. Agencies should avoid responding independently to enquiries following CSPR publication and all press releases should be agreed by the Independent Chair to ensure a consistent response is delivered, that manages the potential impact of the release on other partner agencies.

Communication 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 are central to the partnership's continuous improvement

Effective communication requires careful planning and SSCP 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

Communicating following a Child Safeguarding Practice Review

When a child dies or suffers serious harm in circumstances where abuse or neglect are known or suspected the Local Safeguarding Partners are required to consider if a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) is appropriate to establish the learning from the case to inform future practice.

Once a review has been conducted and findings established leading to learning outcomes, the Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership has a responsibility to communicate the learning and engage with all stakeholders involved to improve practice.

Publication and media planning will commence once the Safeguarding Partners have formally endorsed the final report (including the agreed recommendations). Publication planning will include strategic leads from the agencies involved in the review and their media/communication leads.

Aim

- To communicate in a timely and systematic way to inform all those involved in the review of the process, outcomes, and actions to be taken forward
- To publish the report in line with statutory guidance ‘Working Together 2018’ and provide associated communications to all stakeholders
- To agree a single point of contact to co-ordinate media enquiries during the publication phase and ensure effective liaison is maintained with each invested organisation’s strategic and press leads

Audiences

- Partners involved with the child(ren) subject to the review
- Frontline staff involved with the child(ren) involved in the review
- Family, extended family and carers, including surviving children and their siblings
- General public
- Media

Publication Plan

Timings	Audience	Channel/Message	Author/Responsibility
Pre-publication	Subject child’s immediate family members, including surviving siblings, and significant members of extended family	Letter to inform family that the report is finalised making them aware of the publication arrangements. Corporate Communications will also be consulted with at this point to seek advice on managing the press, and whether any additional support is required for surviving children.	Independent Reviewer/SSCP Business Team
Pre-publication	Media	Identify single point of contact for media enquiries in SMBC	Single point of contact – media lead – cascade to stat partner media leads

Pre-publication	Statutory partners	SSCP brief outlining publication date and process for managing media enquiries	Media leads with input from CSPR Panel chair
Pre-publication	Partners and front-line staff involved in the review	Partner brief outlining publication date, support available for staff and process for managing media enquiries	Agreed briefing for all partner agencies designed by media leads with input from Chair of CSPR Panel/SSCP Business Team
Pre-publication	Media	'If asked' SSCP statement prepared and approved by Safeguarding Partners/Independent Scrutineer and shared with comms leads for the three named Safeguarding Partners	Media leads with input from CSPR Panel Chair
Pre-publication	Media	Press Release prepared (if proactive media approach taken) and approved by Safeguarding Partners/Independent Scrutineer and shared with comms leads for the three named Safeguarding Partners	Media leads with input from CSPR Panel Chair
Pre-publication	Media	SSCP spokesperson to be established	Communication Leads & / Delegated Safeguarding Leads
Pre-publication	National Panel	Give formal notice (minimum 7 days) of publication	SSCP Business Team
Publication	All	Report is published on SSCP website	SSCP Business Team
Publication	Media	Press release to media agencies (if proactive media approach taken)	SMBC Comms Team in partnership with Health and Police
Post publication	Wider SSCP partnership (SSCP contacts for communications requesting dissemination to relevant staff)	Learning outcomes brief and publication on SSCP website	Chair of CSPR Panel / Chair of LDG /SSCP Business Team

Post publication	Wider SSCP partnership	Learning event (ensuring links with SSAB and CSP)	Chair of LDG/SSCP Business Team
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Roles and responsibility

Communications roles should provide appropriate information and prevent inaccurate reporting by ensuring:

- The workforce within each agency is fully briefed to reduce the risk of inappropriate, ill-informed misinformation about the case.
- The statutory partners and those relevant senior managers are made aware of the communications plan and sign up to it
- Statements and appropriate guidance are issued from a central point and partner agencies are kept informed of enquiries.
- Key spokespeople are identified within each agency, make themselves available and are prepared for interviews or press briefings.
- Individual agency responses are shared in a timely and coordinated way to ensure consistent messages and a united response to the review.

Stakeholder involvement

The CSPR Panel Chair will assume responsibility for stakeholder involvement from a strategic point of view. Media enquiries will be signposted initially to the single point of contact in the SMBC Communications Team who will respond from an SSCP perspective. The SSCP will not enter into direct communications regarding other agencies' involvement in the review. Media enquiries which relate to the involvement of a specific agency will be sign posted by the SPOC to the comms lead for the relevant agency. Partners are asked to share media responses with the SSCP Business Team who will circulate to all agencies for information.

Statutory Partners

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council - Communications Lead: Deborah Martin-Williams
- West Midlands Police (Solihull) - Communications Lead: Hannah Fitzgerald
- Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board - Communications Lead: Dominic Benson

Measuring Success

This strategy will have influence in the following ways:

- Service users, carers and local residents will know what safeguarding is, how to protect themselves and how to report abuse.
- Our audiences will understand the role, remit, and work of the SSCP and will be able to access information about it.
- People's experiences of safeguarding will inform future communications and improvements to safeguarding practice.
- The workforce will understand their respective roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, leading to improvements in multi-agency working and outcomes for service users.
- Better outcomes for children, young people and adults involved in safeguarding.
- Increase in positive media coverage.

This will be measured by:

- Numbers of visitors to the website and page visits
- Numbers in attendance at public/partner and/or SSCP workshops,
- Attendance and engagement at conferences, briefings, and training
- Response to feedback / evaluation requests.
- Holding focus groups with multi-agency staff and with members of the public
- Completed evaluations/ feedback from practitioners
- Practitioner Surveys
- Feedback from children, adults and their families involved in the safeguarding process
- Inspection feedback from partners
- Progress against the SSPP Improvement Partnership Business Plan
- Coverage in media and partner newsletters/publications
- SSCP Quality Assurance activity including scrutiny of the impact of our learning from reviews.
- Evidence/ assurance of how Partners embed learning from reviews and campaigns in their own organisation
- Future review activity (i.e., have we prevented the same issues being identified again).

Risk Management

Solihull 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 has been agreed by the partners of Solihull Safeguarding Partnership and will be overseen by the Assurance and Review Subgroup.

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

This Communication Strategy should also be considered alongside the following:

- [Framework for Engaging with Children & Families](#)
- [The SSCP Quality Assurance Framework](#)
- [The SSCP Learning and Improvement Framework](#)