

TERMS OF REFERENCE



1 PURPOSE

The Children's MARS Board brings together the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP's), and other key officers from relevant agencies, to oversee, innovate and develop the Children's MARS arrangements and seek assurance regarding the standard of local implementation across the help and safeguarding system and to ensure children, young people and families are resilient and safeguarded.

2 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The key role and functions of the Children's MARS Board is to fulfil the responsibilities as detailed in the Children's MARS Local Arrangements and the underpinning Memorandum of Understanding.

3 CHAIR

The meeting shall be chaired on a rotational basis by one of the named Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the rotational chair responsibilities shall be reviewed and reallocated on an annual basis. Children's MARS Board meetings should be prioritised in diaries, though if the allocated rotational chair is unavailable, they should be represented at the meeting by a senior colleague, though the chairing role will be undertaken by one of the other Delegated Safeguarding Partners.

The rotational chair responsibilities for 2024/25 have been allocated to the named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Director of Children Services, North Lincolnshire Council. In the event that the Director of Children Services is unavailable, then vice chair named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Chief Superintendent, South Bank Divisional Commander, Humberside Police will take on the chairing role.

The subsequent chair/vice chair for 2025/26 will be the named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Director of Nursing - Governance, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board respectively and the named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Chief Superintendent, South Bank Divisional Commander, Humberside Police.

The subsequent chair/vice chair for 2026/27 will be the named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Director of Children Services, North Lincolnshire Council and the named Delegated Safeguarding Partner Director of Nursing - Governance, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board respectively.

Reallocation of chairing responsibilities shall be enacted each April.

The named chair will also play a role in the strategic discussion with Lead Safeguarding Partners in respect to setting the strategic direction of the local safeguarding arrangements.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Core statutory members

The core membership of the Children's MARS Board is the named Delegated Safeguarding Partners who are representative of the three Lead Safeguarding Partners, as follows:

- Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council
- Director of Nursing - Governance, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership
- Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Safeguarding, Humberside Police

Core members will attend the duration of the meeting.

Other members

In addition, schools, colleges and other education settings will be represented by an appropriate senior representative, as follows:

- Assistant Director Education, North Lincolnshire Council

Other members will attend the duration of the meeting.

Other attendees

The core statutory members are also represented by key system leaders in their organisations as follows:

- Assistant Director Help and Protection, North Lincolnshire Council
- Assistant Director Children's Standards and Regulations
- Designated Nurse and Head of Safeguarding, North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership
- Detective Superintendent – Protecting Vulnerable People Unit, Humberside Police

A number of senior representatives from across the partnership have also been invited to attend the duration of the meeting as participatory observers as follows:

- The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Communities, North Lincolnshire Council
- Head of North and North East Lincolnshire, Probation Service
- Associate Nurse Director – Children's Care Group, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
- Head of Safeguarding, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
- Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Should attendees not be able to attend the Board, they are not required to nominate an appropriate delegate to attend on their behalf without prior agreement by the core statutory members.

Lead officers for underpinning partnership groups, areas of focus and workstreams will be invited to attend to present items as appropriate (in specific time slots or to attend for the duration of the meeting).

The Independent Scrutiny Officer(s) may also be invited to attend to present their findings relating to scrutiny and assurance activities as appropriate and/or be invited to attend as participatory observer as part of the annual review process. The Independent Scrutiny Officer(s) will also play a role in the strategic discussion with Lead Safeguarding Partners in respect to setting the strategic direction of the local safeguarding arrangements.

Officers to the Board

Representatives from the Children's MARS team shall attend the duration of the meeting to support as required.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

Children's MARS Board members will:

- Speak with authority for the Lead Safeguarding Partner they represent
- Take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters
- Hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements
- Act as the senior officer group (gold group) for child exploitation

6 QUORUM

All three core members (Delegated Safeguarding Partners) or an appropriate delegated representative should be in attendance at each Children's MARS Board.

Any exceptions to this must be agreed by all three Delegated Safeguarding Partners and any decisions taken at the board must be subsequently endorsed by the Delegated Safeguarding Partner not in attendance before they can be enacted (the Delegated Safeguarding Partner is not able to delegate decision making to their representative).

7 PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Children’s MARS Board partnership structures including accountability arrangements and partnership relationships are outlined in the Local Arrangements and Memorandum of Understanding. The scope of the partnership structure is subject to ongoing review and as such, it is subject to change.

While the Children’s MARS Board is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating what is done by safeguarding partner organisations, selected relevant agencies and other organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and families, it is not responsible for their operational work. Each safeguarding partner and other leads from organisations and agencies retain accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families and for fulfilling other statutory duties as set out in associated legislation and guidance.

8 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Where there is a potential conflict of interest for any individual members, attendees or officers to the board about any specific item under consideration by the Children’s MARS Board, they should be openly and explicitly declared and how best to progress will be at the discretion of the chair.

9 ARRANGEMENTS

The Children’s MARS Board will meet on a quarterly basis. Additional meetings between safeguarding partners can be called between meetings, by mutual consent.

The Children’s MARS team will be responsible for managing the board’s business, co-ordinating papers and arranging meetings. The Children’s MARS team will develop a draft agenda which will incorporate items from all safeguarding partners, though the agenda will be agreed by the chair. Substantive agenda items will be in relation to the delivery plan and portfolio areas, underpinning partnerships and the safeguarding pathway.

10 REVIEW

The Children’s MARS Board Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually or in year as required.

Date of endorsement: November 2025

Date of next review – November 2026

Status	Date	By Whom
Last Updated	November 2025	Gemma Waddingham
Approved	November 2025	Karen Everatt
Review Date	November 2026	