

TERMS OF REFERENCE



1 PURPOSE

The Children's MARS Board brings together the safeguarding partners, 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 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 safeguarding partners.

The rotational chair responsibilities for 2023/24 have been allocated to the Place Nurse Director, North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership. In the event that the Place Nurse Director is unavailable, the Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council will take on the chairing role.

The subsequent chair/vice chair for 2024/25 will be the Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council and the Chief Superintendent, South Bank Divisional Commander, Humberside Police respectively.

The subsequent chair/vice chair for 2025/26 will be the Chief Superintendent, South Bank Divisional Commander, Humberside Police and the Place Nurse Director, North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership respectively.

Reallocation of chairing responsibilities shall be enacted each April.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Core statutory members

The core membership of the Children's MARS Board is representative of the three safeguarding partners, as follows:

- Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council
- Place Nurse Director, North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership
- Chief Superintendent and South Bank Divisional Commander, 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
- 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.

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 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 (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 safeguarding partners and any decisions taken at the board must be subsequently endorsed by the safeguarding partner not in attendance before they can be enacted.

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: Children’s MARS Board – July 2023

Date of next review – July 2024