

Cumbria Safeguarding
Children Partnership



C S C P

Protocol for Improving the Standards of Care and Safeguarding in Private Residential Care Provisions and Supported Accommodation in Cumbria



Introduction

This document is Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership's (CSCP) guidance for addressing and continually improving our approach to safeguarding arrangements for children living in Private Residential Care Provisions and Children's homes within Cumbria.

In 2022, over 80,000 children were in care of English local authorities at any point during the year. The number of children who become cared for is growing every year as is the number of children who go missing from their care home.

Cared for children are some of the most vulnerable in society in comparison to their peers and are more likely to experience homelessness, mental health difficulties and are often overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

The main reasons nationally that children are required to be in the care of the local authority is due to abuse and neglect experienced in their families. However, more and more adolescents are taken into care due to risks outside their families, such as child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and are victims of human trafficking. The **Still in Harm's Way** report (2018) identified that cared for children are significantly more likely to be reported missing than those not in care, with over 1 in 10 going missing compared to 1 in 200 of those not in care. This is often an increased risk for children who due to sufficiency of appropriate homes move to live at a distance from their home community.

The Government's main findings of Children's Social Care in England 2024 states that children's homes are not evenly distributed across the country. They reported that all regions saw an increase in the number of homes and places. However, the North West had the most children's homes (866) and places (2823). This equates to 25% of the residential provision in England. Many of these homes are privately run and difficult to monitor any potential safeguarding concern.

In Cumbria, there are a total of 95 independently run residential provisions. From 28th October 2023, supported accommodation became a regulated sector. The Government's main findings of Children's Social Care in England 2024 reported that, as of 31st March 2024, there were 258 active supported accommodation providers, with approximately 90% of these being privately run. Again, the North West has the largest proportion of providers at 21%. In Cumbria, there are approximately 76 supported accommodation provisions. Alongside regulatory inspection visits, Ofsted receive and investigate potentially unregistered children's homes to determine if they should 'cease and apply' or did not require to register.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group 'No Place Like Home' Report (2019) highlighted significant concerns that 'too many older children were living in poor quality and unsuitable care placements. This was fuelled by a lack of good accommodation resulting in children being placed 'where there was a bed free, not where would be most suitable'. This is something we as a group want to impact upon for children living in Cumbria.

Purpose of this Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to improve information sharing, the care and safeguarding of children placed into private residential care and supported accommodation provisions in Cumbria.

This protocol applies to:

1. Local Authorities Placing Children within Cumbria (Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Council areas)
2. Any private children's home or supported accommodation Provision in Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council areas.

The aim of this document is to:

1. Set out the standards and expectations of Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) has of Local Authorities, residential care provisions and supported accommodation when children in care are living in the geographical footprint of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness
2. Sets out minimum standards that the CSCP has of residential care and supported accommodation providers who deliver care to children.
3. Provide contact information for different partner agencies in Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.
4. Explain the role of the Multi Agency RADAR Group



Cumbria Context

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership consists of statutory partners and agencies from three Local Authorities, Police and Health working together across Cumbria. This to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding children in line with Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023.

Cumbria is England's second largest county in area, with a local population of around 500,000. Cumbria has 22 million visitors every year to the Lake District National Park. There are around 73 Independent Residential homes and 6 Residential Special Schools in Cumbria, which is higher than the national average. Cumbria has two councils, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. Further information on the **Cumbria Context**.

Statutory Duties & Legislation

Please refer to **Statutory Duties and Legislation**.

Radar Meeting

A multi-agency children's RADAR group was established in 2019 to provide oversight of cared for children, living in private residential care in Cumbria. This has now been expanded to include supported accommodation provisions in Cumbria. The group considers concerns raised about quality of provision and therefore impact for children who live in these homes (recognising they may not be children from Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council as many children are some distance from their home authority).

The RADAR group is well represented by relevant multi-agency partners and any practitioner can refer into the group around emerging concerns. For example, placing decisions by local authorities, practice issues around the care provision or breaches of national guidelines and legislation.

Once a referral is received and accepted, it will be discussed at the RADAR meeting, information will be shared and appropriate multi-agency responses will be put in place. The group is able to meet at short notice if there are urgent concerns to address.

Using the **Escalation Policy** process the Children's Radar group will deal with and respond to concerns that are raised where expectations set out below are not met or they are breached.

Process for Responding to Concerns

If issues or concerns are raised to the Radar group that are deemed to be affecting the standards of care and safeguarding of children in private residential care provisions. The following escalation process will be adopted to resolve the situation:

1) Identification of a concern – Radar Referral Form:

- Concerns regarding a provider should in the first instance be addressed directly with them and the placing local authority.
- Single contact forms must be submitted to the local authority safeguarding hub to refer all children where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Prior to a referral being made to the RADAR group a discussion should take place with the either Cumberland LADO Service or Westmorland and Furness LADO Service to identify any issues that LADO need to be made aware of, and to assess if the concern can be dealt with through the LADO process rather than a referral to RADAR. A referral can be made to LADO using this form **LADO Position of Trust Referral**
- If concerns are not resolved with the provider or placing authority for the child, the concerns must be raised to the Cumbria Children's Radar Group via the referral form.
- If concerns are raised around a local authority placing a child into Cumbria inappropriately or it is felt that placing local authority is not fulfilling its statutory obligations, then a Children's Radar group referral form must be completed.
- The chair of the Radar group will review the referral and make decisions on appropriate next steps. (for example, no further action, further work with LADO, single agency or progression to the RADAR group) These are recorded on the referral form.
- The Radar group will assess all referrals which progress to them and respond appropriately and proportionately.

2) Referral Review:

- When referrals are received the Cumbria Children's Safeguarding Partnership (CSCP) will review the form and will seek views from the chair, deputy chair or other relevant members of the children radar to determine whether the concerns need urgent attention. If it is non-urgent the referral will be added to the agenda of the next Children's Radar meeting.
- If it is urgent then the referrer is advised to submit a Single Contact form to the Safeguarding Hub, without delay, who will then arrange for the relevant District Team to arrange a strategy meeting.

3) Collate Concerns:

- At the relevant Children Radar meeting, all agencies attending will share appropriate information to determine the correct intervention steps with the provider and/or the appropriate response with the placing local authority.
- Any response will be proportionate to the level of risk presented after information has been shared.

Appropriate actions may range from keeping a watching brief on the situation to launching a criminal investigation or requesting OFSTED or other inspections. This will also include taking appropriate actions to gather further information.

4) Taking Action:

- The Children's Radar group will ensure that responses to concerns will be proportionate with the level of risk posed to the children involved.
- Any action taken will be in line with statutory guidelines and legislation.
- The level of risk posed to the children will determine the timescales for the response.
- When there are a series of lower-level concerns, the Children's Radar group will also respond appropriately after assessing the cumulative risk posed.

5) Recording and Updating:

- All decisions and actions taken will be recorded.
- Decisions will be reviewed if further information becomes available.
- The Children Radar group will report concerns and actions taken to Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership board when appropriate.
- The Children's Radar group will also provide an update to the initial referrer and other relevant parties promptly.



Expectations of Local Authorities Placing Children into Cumbria

When local authorities are placing a child into Cumbria, it is expected that statutory guidance will be followed you can access this **here**. This means:

- The placing local authority will place their child in a suitable placement.
- The placing local authority will consider any foreseeable risks that their child poses to other children in any potential residential care or supported accommodation provision and will consider any foreseeable risks that children already placed at a potential provision pose to their child. Matching must be robust and risk assessed.
- If a child is placed into Cumbria who is at risk of, or a victim of child exploitation, then this child must be brought to the attention of the Complex Safeguarding Children Team in the appropriate council. The pathway for children placed in Cumbria is outlined in the Child Exploitation procedure **here**.
- The placing local authority informs Cumberland Council or Westmorland and Furness Council that they intend to place a child in the area and completes the STATUTORY NOTIFICATION OF NEW PLACEMENT or TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH 1989 CHILDREN ACT form (which can be found at the end of this document) and send to: **OLANotifications_Children@cumbria.gov.uk**

Please note that Cumberland Council currently collects this data for both Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils, as part of a hosted arrangement.

The placing **NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB)** must notify the local provider and local ICB that they have placed in the area via:

West/East Cumbria: **CLAHealth.cumbria@nhs.net**

South Cumbria: **nem-tr.clahealthsouthcumbria@nhs.net**

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB – **lscicb.safeguarding@nhs.net**

North East and North Cumbria ICB – **nencicb-cu.safeguardingteamnorthcumbriaccg@nhs.net**

- Individual healthcare plans including a copy of most recent health assessment are shared with the relevant health provider in Cumbria before the child is placed. If it is an emergency placement, then the care plan must be shared as soon as practicable and within 3 working days.
- This information will be reviewed when it is received and will be shared with other agencies when appropriate and in line with GPDR requirements to support continued delivery of health provision e.g., GP and 0-19 services.
- Health services in Cumbria will review health plans at each health assessment and in between these assessments when necessary.
- The information provided on the Statutory Notification of New Placement or Termination of Placement in accordance with 1989 Children Act form (which can be found at the end of this document), must include the developmental needs of the child and the services required to meet those needs in detail. It must include health and education dimensions in detail.
- This information on the statutory notification form must describe why a particular placement has been chosen and it must include specific, achievable, child focused outcomes intended to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. It must set out the roles and responsibilities of the child's carers and practitioners.

- When a suitable placement has been identified for the child the information within the statutory notification form must set out in detail how the placement is intended to contribute to meeting the child's needs.
- All children placed into Cumbria must have an individual care plan and a placement plan. It is recognised that some children placed into the county may also remain on a child protection plan, where safeguarding issues remain.
- Adherence to contractual obligations of all child placements within Cumbria are the responsibility of the placing local authority.
- When a placing local authority has concerns about a private residential care provision they must inform the external placements Commissioning Team. This should be done by contacting:

external.placements@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

external.placements@cumberland.gov.uk

- The placing local authority and ICB have a statutory duty to share relevant information with either Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB or North East and North Cumbria ICB, in a timely manner, so the welfare and safeguarding of the child can be maximised.
- When concerns are raised about the conduct or behaviour of any adult who works with children and young people, whether they are paid or volunteering their time, they should be shared with the Designated Officer who will provide advice and guidance and be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases.

Further information regarding the procedures in the event of an allegation against staff or volunteers can be found **here**.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is located within Children and Families Services in both Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Local Authorities. Their details are below.

Westmorland & Furness LADO **lado@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**

Tel no **0300 303 3897**

Cumberland LADO **lado@cumberland.gov.uk**

Tel No **0300 303 3892**

Postal address for both council LADO's is:

LADO, Safeguarding Hub, Skirsgill Depot, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 2BQ

Expectations for Private Residential Care Homes and Supported Accommodation

- Accept children whose needs you can meet and who do not pose a risk of harm to children already living in your provision.
- Ensure all staff recruited receive suitable training and are qualified in line with safer recruitment policies and procedures.
- Ensure staff are suitably trained and qualified in line with Ofsted standards. Training and awareness for staff should include Trauma Informed Care.
- Ensure that staffing levels are suitable to provide the required standard of care and these levels are enough to respond effectively to foreseeable events. This should include an endeavour to provide as high a degree of continuity of care staff for individual children and young people as possible.
- There is a requirement that children's home a notify their host authority when a child is placed with them by another authority (in line with Regulation 5 of Childrens home regulations). The Statutory Notification of New Placement or Termination of Placement in accordance with 1989 Children Act form (which can be found at the end of this document) must be completed and emailed to **OLANotifications_Children@cumbria.gov.uk**
- Every private residential care home and supported accommodation provision must sign up to the Philomena Protocol. The **Philomena Protocol** is an information sharing system with the police. Information must be emailed to: **RegisteredProvision&PoliceMOU@cumbria.police.uk**
- All provision commissioned to provide care and support children living in Cumbria will be bound by a set of contractual terms and conditions. It is recognised that providers of residential care and supported accommodation will be registered with Ofsted, the Care Inspectorate or other equivalent regulatory bodies and are therefore expected to conform to regulations and a prescribed set of minimum quality standards.
- Providers are expected to demonstrate they are able to provide a good level of care. Core cost specifications outline the minimum expectations in relation to staffing and support to ensure education, health, cultural, social and independent living needs are met.
- Every provider should have a clear and concise Statement of Purpose that sets out how a home operates. The information set out in the Statement of Purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs.
- Providers are monitored on the adherence to these expectations and the achievement of outcomes as outlined within individual Care Plans.
- Ensure staff respond appropriately and in a timely manner to all health concerns that are raised by the child/young person.
- Ensure that time and privacy are allocated for health assessments that need undertaken.
- Ensure that they if they take a child or young person to a health appointment that they have all the relevant information in respect of consent to treatment, next of kin, who has parental responsibility and any other relevant health information. Care provider needs to be fully aware of the health needs of a Child / Young Person.
- When appropriate, work closely with agencies, LADO and the Children's Radar Group to improve standards of care and safeguarding for children in private residential care provisions.
- Residential care and supported accommodation providers to provide care and levels of support following good parenting principles by acting in the role of a good parent and parenting/supporting in an appropriate way and in line with care and safety plans for children. This includes risk management and supervision of a child or young person as someone in a parenting role would be expected to provide. **The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023**

Health

When a Cared for Child is being placed out of area, it is the responsible authority, as a corporate parent, who should work with children's home staff and health providers or cared for children services locally to secure the health services that each child needs.

In particular, social workers and other relevant officers in the authority responsible for a cared for child should work with the home and local health teams to:

- Utilise the health care plan to establish what the child's health needs are and what is required to meet these needs.
- Ensure that where a child requires specialist health services, such as CAMHS or other specialist paediatric services, the responsible authority and placing ICB should consult with the ICB that commissions secondary healthcare in the host area to establish whether the placement is appropriate and able to meet the child's needs.
- Be confident that where a child is accommodated in a children's home that offers specialist health care, such as therapeutic care, the professional care provided will meet the assessed health needs of the individual child.
- Be confident that staff in the home have sufficient understanding of relevant local health provision, and can support children to navigate these services, advocating on their behalf where necessary and appropriate.
- Agree the specific responsibilities of the home towards supporting the health needs of every child at the time the placement is made. Ensure that these responsibilities are recorded in the child's placement plan and health care plan.
- Share the plan with the responsible ICB, the host ICB and the local Named Nurse for Cared for Children to clarify that what is proposed can be provided locally.
- The responsible authority and staff in residential and supported accommodation settings should also support the child to register with a GP and dentist locally, and to access statutory health assessments and any medical appointments necessary to meet their identified health needs. Young people should be suitably prepared for health appointments and appointments must be cancelled when they are unable to attend.
- When a child or young person attends an Initial Health Assessment, they must be accompanied by a worker who has all the relevant background information to share with the paediatrician undertaking the health assessment.
- The worker accompanying the young person must be aware of the importance of health assessments and the significance sharing relevant information has in ensuring a meaningful and comprehensive assessment is undertaken.
- Where the child has complex health needs, the responsible authority and placing ICB can have a discussion with the Designated and Named Professionals for Cared for Children in the host area authority, who will be a valuable source of support, advice and information.

Strengthening Families admin secure email:

- West/East Cumbria: **CLAHealth.cumbria@nhs.net**
- South Cumbria: **nem-tr.clahealthsouthcumbria@nhs.net**

Nursing Teams:

- West Cumbria Team (Allerdale/Copeland): **01900-705865**
- East Cumbria Team (Carlisle/Eden): **01228 608114**
- South Cumbria Team (Kendal/Barrow): **01229 484013**

Designated Nurse Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB:

- Tel: **0300 373 3600**
- Email: **lscicb.safeguarding@nhs.net**

Designated Nurse North East and North Cumbria ICB:

- Tel: **01768 639330**
- Email: **nencicb-cu.safeguardingteamnorthcumbriaccg@nhs.net**



Education

Statutory guidance states that:

- Social workers, Virtual School Heads (VSHs), IROs, school admission officers, and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) departments should work together to ensure that, except in an emergency, appropriate education provision for a child is arranged at the same time as a care placement.
- Cared for children, as defined in the School Admission Code, have the highest priority within all mainstream schools' admission arrangements. The admission requirements for care for children are set out in the School Admissions Code. This Code applies to maintained schools and academies, including free schools.
- Fair Access Protocols do not apply to cared for children. In relation to infant class size regulations, they are 'excepted pupils' if they are admitted outside the normal admission round (see 2.15(b) of the School Admissions Code)
- If social workers are unsure of how school admissions work in relation to looked-after children, they should urgently discuss this with their VSH or someone else – e.g. the local authority's school admissions officer, who can provide the correct information. If the appropriate placement is at a mainstream academy or maintained school, the corporate parent must apply through the same process as other parents. Please note that the national closing dates for applications are: 31st October for secondary schools, and 15th January for primary schools.
- The VSH should ensure that there are effective arrangements in place to work with a range of professionals who will play a role in supporting the education of CLA. Care staff should have high expectations in helping CLA to achieve their full potential in education, whether this is in school or post-16 education, employment and training.
- Care staff are expected to attend Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, liaise with school, prepare the cared for child for the school day and ensure they attend.
- Care staff are expected to support cared for child with homework and extra-curricular activities where appropriate.

Cumbria Virtual School can be contacted here:

- **Virtual School - Contact the Virtual School team | Cumberland Council**
- **Virtual School for children looked after | Westmorland and Furness Council**



Police

- If the child is at risk of CSE or CCE or going missing, Cumbria Constabulary will create the child as a nominal on their intelligence and safeguarding systems.
- The appropriate council may need to arrange for their child to be discussed at CERAR Level 1 or 2 meetings. **The Child Exploitation Procedure, Child Looked After placed into Cumbria by another Local Authority pathway should be followed.**
- If the child fits the criteria for the Philomena Protocol, the care provision or placing local authority will be asked to complete a form to identify contact numbers and addresses of family and friends where the child may head towards, if they go missing and the likely means of travel.
- Staff at the care home will demonstrate awareness of standard procedures in the event of the cared for child going missing or risk escalation.

Statutory Notification of New Placement or Termination of Placement in accordance with 1989 Children Act



Statutory Notification of **New Placement** or **Termination of Placement** in accordance with 1989 Children Act

Originating Authority:		Receiving Authority:	Cumberland Council / Westmorland & Furness Council
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Child's Surname:		Child's Forename(S):	
Aka:			Gender:
DOB:			Cared for Start Date:
Name & Address of those with Parental Responsibility:			NHS No.
Child Protection Plan:	Yes	No	Legal Status:
EHCP: Including Primary Area of Need	Yes	No	EHCP Coordinator:
Social Worker:			
Tel:		Email:	



Westmorland & Furness Council

Working for Cumberland Council and Westmorland & Furness Council

New Placement within your Authority

Date of the Start of this Placement			
Name of Carer & DOB:		Placement Type	
or		e.g. Foster Carer/ Adoptive/Residential or Other	
Service Provider:			
Address:			
Post Code:			
Tel:			
Describe the Service that Care Placement has been Contacted to Deliver: (please specify below)			
Is Education Provided on Site?	Yes		No
Details of education provision:			
To include name of school or alternative provider			
Any Transport Arrangements:	Yes		No
Therapeutic Support:	Yes		No
Health Needs:	Yes		No
Please describe:			

To ensure we can appropriately safeguard this child in our area, please highlight any needs or risks presented to and by the young person and how these are addressed in their Care Plan (*with specific regard to the list below*):

- CSE & CCE Risk (please specify at what level: low/medium/high)
- Missing from care
- Self-harm behaviour and details of any CAMHS involvement
- Drug/Alcohol Misuse
- Gang Association
- Offending Behaviour and details of Youth Justice Supervision requirements which may need to be delivered by Cumbria YOT
- Mental Health Needs

Please attach a copy of the Child's Care Plan

G.P Details (if known)

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode	
Tel:	

Current School/Education Provision (If Known)

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Tel:	

Is this Education Provision to Continue:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	*No	<input type="checkbox"/>
*If no, what arrangements have been made (please specify below with dates)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date School Admissions contacted? • Date SEND department contacted (if EHCP is in place)? • Is alternative provision sought? • Other arrangements (e.g., education on site)? 				
Has the Child/Young Person got a Personal Education Plan?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Termination of Placement

Date of Termination:	<input type="text"/>			
Reason for Termination:	<input type="text"/>			
Destination:	<input type="text"/>			
New Address:	<input type="text"/>			
School Address:	<input type="text"/>			
Is The Above Education Provision To Continue:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Originating Authority Signature:

Destination: OLANotifications_Children@cumberland.gov.uk

Fostering & Adoption Service, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle, CA1 1RD

Tel: 01228 221555

