

Active Cheshire CONNECTED, our strategic vision to 2040, highlights the significant role we must play as systems leaders in the physical activity system and in safeguarding children and adults at risk. We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously at all levels of our organisation and will use our platform and relationships to create a safer environment as participation in physical activity, movement and sport grows.

Active Cheshire's Safeguarding Policies are annually reviewed by our Board of Trustees, under the guidance and stewardship of our Safeguarding Board Champion. We value our partnership with the NSPCC and Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and welcome the support and knowledge of local partners in further developing our understanding.

CONNECTED states our intention to provide an interconnectivity between community providers, strategic partners (from governing bodies to 'unorganised' providers) and Statutory Safeguarding Organisations. We will:

Know – Grow – Show – Shape – Share

- KNOW – To gain understanding of key safeguarding issues across sport and physical activity in Cheshire & Warrington through effective sharing of safeguarding data and insight between NGB/non-NGB organisations and statutory organisations.
- GROW – To widen the network of people we are talking to about safeguarding issues, backed up by data and insight that is relevant to our local physical activity system.
- SHOW – Demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding as an organisation by what we do internally and how we advocate for safeguarding within the physical activity system.
- SHAPE – Be part of how the system views and responds to safeguarding. Drive a system approach that is proactive rather than reactive. Ensuring that all safeguarding alerts shape how safeguarding in sport and physical activity locally is approached.
- SHARE – Provide platforms and take opportunities to share data and insight relating to local thematic safeguarding themes around sport and physical activity. Ensuring organisations are connected, and good practice is talked about. Creating a safe space for learning to take place.

The key to the success for our strategy is embracing our learning culture, utilising lived experiences, combining best practice with research from partners and articulately detailing the impact our strategy has upon the lives of children and adults at risk in Cheshire and Warrington. The details of this can be found in our Implementation and Action Plan (page 4-7).

For clarity, our role within the Physical Activity is defined as a connector and influencer. We will work with partners to shape their policies and share best practice from across the system. Our role is not to supersede safeguarding policies and procedures already in place within organisations or National

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Governing Bodies. Should we receive any safeguarding concerns directly to Active Cheshire, we will signpost these to the appropriate NGB where possible.

Our journey so far

In our 21-22 annual safeguarding review, we identified that the next year would be focused on understanding our role as a system leader, linked to our Sport England investment, and how this would shape our role within safeguarding. As we repositioned, we knew that we need to approach things differently to maintain impact, with the question of ‘so what?’ guiding our decisions.

After time to reflect and better understand the local picture, our position will be to drive a systematic approach with collective ownership of safeguarding across the local physical activity system. It will be flexible, thematic, proactive, meaningful, and ongoing, with the continued focus of safeguarding becoming the ‘Golden Thread’ not just internally but within the local physical activity system as a whole. Additionally, understanding impact around safeguarding will be embedded to ensure the overarching ‘so what?’ question can be answered.

Why we need to act now

In recent years, high profile reports have been released cataloguing the many and repeated failings of sports governing bodies in safeguarding, The Sheldon Review (2021) into historical child sex abuse in Association Football found that survivors were ‘let down by the game, the authorities and society as a whole, and made 13 recommendations for improvement. The Whyte Review (2022) into mistreatment of gymnasts found a ‘culture of silence’ which prevented athletes from speaking up under their authoritarian regimes.

In 2017, Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson conducted a Duty of Care review which has led to a legislative amendment in September 2022, closing a legal loophole in the law that means some adults who hold a position of power over a young person aged 16 or 17 (including sports coaches) can legally have sex with them.

Engagement with partners identifies key themes linked to safeguarding within physical activity and sport, across Cheshire and Warrington. Whilst some of these are well talked about, some fall under the radar. We want to ensure that nothing goes unknown, enabling both strategic and community organisations to protect the children and young people and adults at risk they work with and prevent abuse and neglect.

National Alignment

Active Cheshire is committed to working in partnership with the NSPCC, CPSU and Ann Craft Trust. We will work systemically to embed safeguarding as the ‘golden thread’ in sport and physical activity across Cheshire and Warrington, ensuring that every child and adult at risk can be active in a safe and supportive environment. In doing so, we will also support our partners to realise their strategic goals. These can be seen in the 2021-31 NSPCC Strategy ‘Preventing Child Abuse Together’ (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/strategy/strategy-2021-31-summary-booklet.pdf>)

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and the Ann Craft Trust Vision Mission Statement (<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ACT-strategy-incl-values.pdf>)

Synergy can be seen between our strategy and 'Preventing Child Abuse Together'. The NSPCC will 'Do', 'Enable' and 'Influence'. Active Cheshire will apply 'Know, Grow, Show, Shape and Share'.

We will connect (**Grow**) leaders within our local sport and physical activity system (**Shape**) to enable sharing (**Share**) of data and insight (**Know**), which will influence (**Show**) how we protect children and young people collectively within our communities. With this data and insight comes the empowerment of organisations to take informed, preventative measures.

Understanding Our Impact

We know that systemic change takes time. Therefore, we will need to measure our impact against short- and long-term impact points.

In the short term, we will drive and begin to shape a system approach to safeguarding for sport and physical activity across Cheshire and Warrington. Safeguarding will sit at the forefront of agendas at the Cheshire and Warrington Physical Activity Leaders Forum and together, through sharing of data and insight, better understanding of safeguarding issues across sport and physical activity settings will be developed. This understanding will be fed into community activities, keeping children, young people and adults at risk safer.

Over time, through the connected nature of our approach, we will see the bigger picture. This will enable us not only to educate at a community level, but to inform statutory bodies of key themes, ensuring that no common occurrences of safeguarding issues go unshared to the wider network.

In the long-term, impact will come in the sport and physical activity system being able to collectively capture and feed into the bigger picture. This will allow for increased awareness of safeguarding risks, as well as the ability to influence training and approaches to safeguarding in sport and physical activity, specific to our local area. We will see safeguarding embedded as the 'golden thread' not just internally to Active Cheshire but across the sport and physical activity system.

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Vision: For safeguarding to be collectively owned and viewed as the ‘Golden Thread’ by the local physical activity system, with a proactive approach to prevention of safeguarding issues using shared data and insight to educate and drive solutions.

Know	Desired Impact	Action 1	Action 2	Action 3	Action 4
	<p>To gain understanding of key safeguarding issues across sport and physical activity in Cheshire & Warrington through effective sharing of safeguarding data and insight between NGB/non-NGB organisations and statutory organisations.</p> <p>Creating a wider picture of safeguarding alert factors such as locations, audiences at greater risk, activity specific factors and key themes. To feed into wider initiatives, training and approaches and allow opportunity to educate the physical activity system on how to reduce risk.</p>	<p>Creation of the Cheshire & Warrington PA Leaders Forum and ensure safeguarding is on the agenda.</p>	<p>Build an understanding of different approaches used by NGBs and non NGB organisations to capture and utilise safeguarding data and insight. Building towards capturing this systematically.</p>	<p>Create trusted relationships with statutory organisations who can utilise the collective data to tackle known /developing themes.</p>	<p>Create pathways for smaller groups and organisations to feed safeguarding alerts into systematic collection of safeguarding pictures locally. As part of this, embed Voice of the Child into all our work, both through our approaches and through influencing partner approaches. This will ensure young people’s voices are reflected and that it feeds into the data and insight picture that drives investment.</p>

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	Implementation Plan	End of December 2022 (MW)	End of September 2023 (MW)	End of September 2023 (MW)	End of December 2023 (JS/MW)
Grow	To widen the network of people we are talking to about safeguarding issues, backed up by data and insight that is relevant to our local physical activity system.	Ensure that all AC staff are comfortable to start conversations around safeguarding, signpost to relevant resources and discuss safeguarding key themes driven by data and insight. As part of this, continue to drive CPD opportunities.	Ensure we are viewed as having an ‘open door’ approach so that local partners feel they can approach us for discussions around safeguarding and alerts.	Share the insight we are continually developing around key safeguarding themes across sport and physical activity locally. Place ourselves in a position of ‘understanding and knowledge’ informed by data and insight.	To ensure the system is a whole system and includes organisations that we ‘don’t know.’
	Implementation Plan	Quarterly since March 2022 (JS)	Ongoing (MW/JS)	Ongoing (HP/JS)	Ongoing (JS/MW).
Show	Demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding as an organisation by what we do internally and how we advocate for safeguarding within the physical activity system.	Continue to embed safeguarding into AC processes (including biannual training), policy, agendas, and culture – practice what we preach and ensure safeguarding	Ensure our approach to safeguarding is reflected in our ‘people’ facing platforms e.g., website and social media. Embed	Monitor and evaluate the impact we are having within our local system in relation to safeguarding. Captured through project	Provide opportunities for local system partners to further develop safeguarding knowledge and understanding in relation to local

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		remains the 'Golden Thread'. As well as create opportunities for regular discussions around safeguarding to ensure sharing and learning takes place. Also, ensuring safeguarding concerns are directed into the correct pathways. As part of this, we commit to embedding the Safeguarding Adults Framework into the organisation within the next two years.	safeguarding into our marketing and comms strategy.	MEL, partner survey and safeguarding issues reported linked to the sharing system created.	thematic safeguarding issues. For examples, Cheshire Police providing Prevent training with local examples.
	Implementation Plan	Ongoing – MW and JS Safeguarding Adults Framework – by March 2024 – MW and JS	End of September 2023 onwards – JS and MW.	Short term – End of March 2023. Long-term March 2024 – JS/MW	Ongoing – JS. Fully in place by September 2023 – utilising collective sharing and impact reporting to drive what is needed.
Shape	Be part of how the system views and responds to safeguarding. Drive a system approach that	Facilitate 'buy-in' from sport and	Ensure that safeguarding is	Based on learning from	Have influence locally around

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	is proactive rather than reactive. Ensuring that all safeguarding alerts shape how safeguarding in sport and physical activity locally is approached.	physical activity partners to system approach. Driven through the Cheshire & Warrington PA Leaders Forum and safeguarding working group, utilise collective data and insight to deploy resource according and influence best working within the system.	regularly reviewed, discussed, and appropriately funded for all systemic partners.	data and insight, provide clear guidelines for all commissioners as to the minimum safeguarding criteria expected within partner organisations.	awareness, training, and approaches to safeguarding. All informed by collective data and insight and subsequent key themes. Looking to work with partners who have widest system outreach e.g., UK Coaching in safeguarding training delivery.
	Implementation Plan	End of March 2023 onwards (MW)	From October 2022 – JS/AL/MW	From April 2022 onwards – JS supported by team.	From March 2024 - JS
Share	Provide platforms and take opportunities to share data and insight relating to local thematic safeguarding themes around sport and physical activity. Ensuring organisations are connected, and good practice is talked about. Creating a safe space for learning to take place.	Utilise the data and insight to raise thematic safeguarding issues with effected user groups and their support networks.	Share learning and examples of good practice across the physical activity system. In	Ensure that the Cheshire & Warrington PA Leaders Forum and working group have regular meetings	Empower organisations who are best placed to hold community led discussions linked to target groups around

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		Through system partners, projects, forums etc.	relation to local key themes.	where themes, learning and good practice are shared.	questions to ask, things to look for, how to share good practice and how to report concerns. In relation to sport and physical activity settings and activities. All linked to key themes identified.
	Annual Implementation Plan phase	Ongoing – MW/HP/JS	Ongoing – JS and wider team.	End of March 2023 onwards – MW	End of September 2023 onwards- JS

Active Cheshire’s action plan is underpinned by the Active Partnerships framework set out by Sport England and the CPSU, which sits within the ‘safeguarding hub’ on Smartsheet.

Narrative

In the 21-22 annual safeguarding review, Active Cheshire explained that the next year would be focused on understanding its role as a system leader and how this this would shape its role within safeguarding. On the back of this, the above action plan has been developed, focusing on how Active Cheshire will play a strategic role in shaping a systematic approach, with collective ownership of safeguarding across the local physical activity system. It will be flexible, thematic, proactive, meaningful, and ongoing, with the continued focus of safeguarding becoming the ‘Golden Thread’ not just internally but within the local physical activity system as a whole. Additionally, understanding impact around safeguarding will be embedded to ensure the question ‘So What’ can be answered.

The commitment to this approach is linked to Active Cheshire’s System Partner Investment in line with below medium-term goals identified:

- To embed the safeguarding of Young People and Adults at Risk across the physical activity system.
- Accurate, relevant, and reliable cross-sector data will sit at the heart of our decision-making.

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- Becoming a trusted partner to our stakeholders to achieve common goals, taking a systematic approach to solve place-based problems and understand inward investment.
- Being a trusted, valued leader of the physical activity system, influencing innovative change and championing the role of Sport, Physical Activity and Movement when key local policies are developing.
- Continuously improve our ability to demonstrate and showcase the Impact of the Physical Activity System.
- Creation of a learning culture where the 'Listen, Learn, Innovate, Create, Validate, Share, Reflect' process becomes embedded across the Physical Activity system both internally, locally, and nationally.

Naturally, the above is aligned with Active Cheshire's Strategy 'Active Cheshire: CONNECTED'. With the below objectives:

- Lead the physical activity system across Cheshire & Warrington, removing barriers to participation and widening equitable Sport, Physical Activity & Movement access.
- Providing Sport, Physical Activity & Movement data and insight, which is relevant, cross-sector and accessible, to stakeholders, partners and community organisations.
- Focus resources where they are needed the most, to deliver the biggest possible impact to our communities.
- Safeguard children and adults at risk through partnership working with community organisations.
- Listen. Learn. Innovate. Create. Validate. Share. Reflect.

Driving our mission: **Connect sport, physical activity and movement opportunities to communities across Cheshire & Warrington to provide fairer and greater active accessibility for all whilst tackling health inequalities.**

And our Vision: **More People, More Active, More of the Time living longer, happier and healthier lives.**

All of which, is underpinned by our values: **Collaboration, Integrity, Inclusivity, Innovation and Passion.**