



Scope

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes and clarifies the working relationship between the statutory partners for the Child Death Review (CDR) process namely:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- East Cheshire Borough Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB)

and the Pan-Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel, which has oversight of the Child Death Review Processes across the county.

Background

There is a statutory requirement for the statutory partners to *make arrangements to carry out child death reviews. These arrangements should result in the establishment of a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), or equivalent, to review the deaths of all children normally resident in the relevant local authority area, and if they consider it appropriate the deaths in that area of non-resident children¹.*

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP will, on behalf of the statutory partners, review all infant and child deaths under 18 years of age, with a view to identifying modifiable factors that may reduce future deaths or risk of harm.

Purpose

This MOU reflects a formal agreement between the four local authorities and the ICB to share a single CDOP which will provide oversight and assurance for CDR processes across Cheshire to the statutory partners. This MOU also clarifies the funding agreements for Pan-Cheshire CDOP by the four Local authorities and the management of the Pan-Cheshire CDOP staff.

Agreement

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP will operate under the Terms of Reference listed in Appendix I and Appendix II, and will:

- Provide oversight and assurance of Child Death Review processes and ensure that they meet the required statutory standards;

¹ HM Government (2018) Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance (England) page 34
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1120062/child-death-review-statutory-and-operational-guidance-england.pdf

- Review all infant and child deaths under 18 years of age. This includes neonates where a death certificate has been issued, irrespective of gestational age;
- Identify and highlight any modifiable factors, and bring these to the attention of strategic partners, including Health and Wellbeing Boards, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Community Safety Partnerships;
- Escalate any risks or gaps in service provision or strategies to the statutory partners.
- Hold to account and provide challenge to strategic partners (including Statutory partners) on issues identified by the panel;
- A business administrator(s) will be employed to coordinate and administer the Pan-Cheshire CDOP, and an Independent Chair to ensure oversight of the CDR processes;
- Pan-Cheshire CDOP Business Administrator(s) will be hosted by Mid Cheshire NHS Trust and line managed by Manager, Women & Children directorate MCHT on behalf of the four Local Authorities and ICB. The Business administrator(s) will liaise closely with the Independent Chair on CDOP matters;
- Pan-Cheshire CDOP will produce an annual report to meet the requirements of the statutory guidance.

The four Local authorities and ICB (the statutory partners) will:

- Ensure that there is sufficient resource to discharge their responsibilities in line with Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance 2018¹, including provision for an Independent Chair, Business Administrator(s), eCDOP, Designated Doctor for Child Deaths, Specialist Child Death Review Nurse and the continuing professional development of its members;
- Each nominate professional leads in each area to support the CDOP functions, and ensure actions are progressed;
- Ensure that where there any internal reviews of child deaths, these will satisfy the requirements of the CDR Processes and will make available information to CDOP;
- Ensure that all appropriate policies are kept up to date;
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under the statutory guidance, can respond and, where necessary, have the appropriate training;
- Disseminate and promote any learning from the reviews through local strategic partnerships and networks;
- Support and ensure CDOP recommendations are actioned where applicable, through relevant forums.

Reporting

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP will be accountable to the four Local authorities and the ICB and will report to each annually.

Funding

Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust will administer the Pan-Cheshire CDOP budget, excluding the Independent Chair, receiving annual contributions from the four Local Authorities based on the local authority under

18 population in their area, using the most recent Office of National Statistics (ONS) data on child populations on the first April each year.

The split in financial support will be based upon the percentage child population per local authority area, and each Council will contribute a specified amount of funding per year to contribute to running costs, eCDOP and the training budget.

The Independent Chair will be managed by Cheshire East Council, Cheshire East Council will collect the contribution for the post from the partner LA's and the ICB.

Duration of the MOU

This MOU may be modified by the mutual consent of the statutory partners. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by all statutory partners and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent.




Contact Information

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Signatories

Name: Helen Bromley Position: _____ Date: _____	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Name: Dr Susan Roberts  Position: Consultant in Public Health, Lead for Children and Young People acting on behalf of the Director of Public Health Date 31/03/2025	East Cheshire Borough Council
Name: Julia Rosser  Position: Consultant in Public Health Date: 28 th April 2025	Halton Borough Council
Name: Debbie Watson  Position: Director of Public Health Date: 28/04/2025	Warrington Borough Council
Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____	Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

Appendix I: Terms of Reference for Pan-Cheshire CDOP

Pan-Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel Terms of Reference

Purpose

The over-riding purpose of reviewing all child deaths is to reduce the risk of future deaths or harm to children. The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is the final stage of the Child Death Review (CDR) process. On behalf of the Cheshire statutory partners, Pan-Cheshire CDOP has been established to:

- Provide oversight and assurance of the whole CDR processes in accordance with the National Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance 2018, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and Local Child Death Review policies across Cheshire;
- Undertake reviews of all deaths of children normally resident within any of the local authority areas where a death certificate has been issued;
- Consider what, if any, action should be taken in relation to any modifiable factors identified, and make recommendations to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, Health and Wellbeing Boards and other relevant Strategic Partnerships;
- Hold strategic partners to account in relation to its recommendations and any other identified matters relating to the death, or deaths, that are relevant to the welfare, public health and safety of children across the Pan-Cheshire geography.

Case Discussion Objectives

- To collect and collate information about each child death, seeking relevant information from professionals and, where appropriate, family members;
- To analyse the information obtained, including the report from the CDR meeting, in order to confirm or clarify the cause of death, to determine any contributory factors, and to identify learning arising from the child death review process that may prevent future child deaths;
- To make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified which may prevent future child deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children;
- To seek assurance as to what actions have been undertaken as a result of Pan-Cheshire CDOP recommendations and the impact of such;
- To notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and local Safeguarding Partners when it suspects **that** a child may have been abused or neglected;
- To notify the Medical Examiner and the doctor who certified the cause of death, if it identifies any errors or deficiencies in an individual child's registered cause of death. Any correction to the child's cause of death would only be made following an application for a formal correction;
- To produce an annual report for CDR partners on local patterns and trends in child deaths, any lessons learnt and actions taken, and the effectiveness of such actions and the effectiveness of the wider child death review process; and

- To contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve learning from child death reviews, including, where appropriate, approved research carried out within the requirements of data protection.

Accountability & Financial Agreement

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP is accountable to the statutory partners and the relationship with these, and other strategic partners is highlighted in the Memorandum of Understanding. The responsibility for budget arrangements will be with the host organisations.

Reporting

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP will be accountable to the following statutory partners and will report to each quarterly and annually :

- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- East Cheshire Borough Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB)

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP database (eCDOP) will be made available to the Public Health intelligence teams to inform local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

Themed Panels

The Pan-Cheshire CDOP will determine and oversee the process for conducting thematic child death reviews, and will collaborate with neighbouring areas where appropriate. Thematic reviews will also include “deep dives” into various themes on an annual basis. These themes will be determined through discussions with strategic partner networks.

Membership and Quoracy

Membership has been determined to ensure geographic (not organisations) and professional representation. The group will be quorate only if *all* geographies and professionals are represented including the following:

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| • Independent CDOP Chair | • Specialist Child Death Review Nurse/Midwife |
| • CDOP Business Administrator(s) | • Children’s Social Care |
| • Local Authority Safeguarding business representative | • Public Health |
| • Designated Doctor for Child Deaths | • Police |
| • Designated Nurse for Children’s Safeguarding | • Coroner’s Office representative |

Other members may be co-opted to attend the CDOP to contribute to the discussion of certain types of death when they occur. Additionally, delegates who are not members of the panel may

request to observe a meeting and this will be at the discretion of the CDOP Chair.

All observers at Panel will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Quoracy: The meeting will be deemed quorate if there are representatives from health, police, social care and public health, alongside Independent Chair and Administrator (s)

It is the duty of all organisations to arrange a representative to attend the Case Review Meeting (Panel) if they are unable to attend the meeting.

Confidentiality

All child deaths will be discussed anonymously, and papers will only be shared with Panel members; it is then the responsibility of the Panel member to ensure confidentiality and security of the papers.

Facetofacemeetings: The sign-in sheet for each panel will include a confidentiality statement, and any declarations of professional interest in any of the cases.

Virtual meetings: A confidentiality statement will be read at the beginning of each meeting and a request made to identify any declarations of professional interest in any cases

Frequency

The Child Death Overview Panel will be held bi-monthly, with additional 'development/business planning' days organized separately.

Destruction and Retention

All records will be kept securely until such a time when formal guidance is obtained in relation to destruction and retention of Pan-Cheshire CDOP records. This will be undertaken by Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of all statutory partners.

Review of Terms of Reference

The terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis, but changes can be made within this period in response to national guidance or recommendations.

Date of Terms of Reference Agreed

Appendix 2: Pan Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel Business Meeting

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Pan Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel business meeting is to provide a forum for discussion of local and national issues that arise from panel discussions. The business meeting will support the setting of priorities to improve the child death review process, prevent future deaths and improve the wellbeing of children across the Pan Cheshire footprint.

The identification of risks to meeting statutory requirements will be highlighted and actions taken to mitigate against these risks. The outputs from this meeting will provide assurance of the child death review process in the Pan Cheshire area.

Business Meeting Objectives

- To identify patterns, trends and recommendations from local data and report these to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, Health and Wellbeing Boards and other relevant Strategic Partnerships / bodies promptly so they can take action to prevent future such deaths where possible;
- To produce a Pan Cheshire CDOP annual report on behalf of the statutory partners detailing lessons learned and any relevant recommendations for actions for relevant agencies and organisations on a pan-Cheshire basis, and the impact of the actions undertaken;
- To develop an annual work plan and report on progress bi-monthly to the strategic and statutory partners, including the reasons for any delay in progressing and what has been undertaken to address blockages;
- To have oversight of the following processes:
 - Child Death Review (CDR)
 - Sudden Unexpected Death In Childhood processes.
 - Acute Life Threatening Events (ALTE)
- To seek assurance from agencies, where appropriate, on behalf of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements, Health and Wellbeing Boards and other relevant Strategic Partnerships and escalate any issues if they arise;
- To develop and review Pan Cheshire policies and procedures in relation to the CDR process.

Accountability

The Pan Cheshire CDOP business meeting will be accountable to the four local authorities and the ICB.

Membership

- Independent Chair of CDOP
- CDOP Business Administrator
- Designated Doctors for Child Death
- Designated Nurse for Children's Safeguarding
- Children's Social Care
- Director of Public Health (or representative)
- Police
- Coroner's Office representative
- Integrated Care Board Associate Director of Quality and Safety Improvement

Quoracy

The meeting will be deemed quorate if there are representatives from health, police, social care and public health, alongside Independent Chair and Administrator (s)

It is the duty of all organisations to arrange a representative to attend the Case Review Meeting (Panel) if they are unable to attend the meeting.

Frequency

The business meetings will be held bi-monthly with additional development/business planning days organised separately.

Review of Terms of Reference

The terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis, but changes can be made within this period in response to national guidance or recommendations.

Date of Terms of Reference Agreed