

HM Assistant Coroner Mr Robert Cohen
HM Coroner's Courts
Allerdale House
Workington
Cumbria
CA14 3JY

Date: 14 September 2026
[REDACTED]

Dear HM Assistant Coroner Cohen,

Inquest concerning the death of Miss Isla McVeigh

Cumberland Council write in response to the Regulation 28 Report issued by HM Assistant Coroner Cohen, dated 23rd July 2026, following the Inquest of Miss Isla McVeigh.

Both Cumberland Council and Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership would like to extend sincere condolences to Miss McVeigh's family.

Acknowledgement of the Concern Raised

Cumberland Council and the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership acknowledge the concern identified at paragraph 10(3) of the Prevention of Future Deaths Report: *"The threshold for involving local authority social care is too high in practice."*

We recognise the evidence heard during the inquest that some safeguarding professionals considered concerns relating to parental opiate dependency may not have met the threshold for referral to Children's Social Care and that, in their experience, referrals in comparable circumstances may not have been accepted.

We share the Coroner's commitment to ensuring that children receive the right help and protection at the earliest opportunity. We recognise the importance of understanding whether any aspect of local safeguarding arrangements could unintentionally discourage or delay referrals where concerns are identified. Practitioner confidence and understanding of safeguarding pathways are essential to effective multi-agency safeguarding practice.

Review of Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance and Associated Arrangements

Through the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership, we will undertake a review of:

- Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance;
- The *Understanding the Level of Need and Practice Response* document;
- The Multi-Agency Pre-Birth Protocol; and
- Associated referral, consultation and escalation arrangements.

The review will consider whether any aspect of current guidance could be interpreted as requiring an unnecessarily high level of risk before referral to Children's Social Care is considered and whether further clarification is required in light of the themes identified during the inquest.

The review will also consider whether existing guidance sufficiently supports practitioners to recognise and respond to cumulative risk, professional uncertainty and circumstances where early referral, consultation or assessment may be appropriate to safeguard children.

Any amendments identified through this review will be progressed through the governance arrangements of the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Timescale: Review to commence in October 2026 and conclude by January 2027.
Any amendments identified will be implemented following partnership approval.

Multi-Agency Learning and Engagement

The Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership will undertake engagement with safeguarding professionals across health, education, police, children's social care and wider partner agencies to better understand the concerns raised during the inquest and to strengthen a shared understanding of referral expectations and safeguarding responsibilities.

This work will reinforce:

- the importance of professional curiosity and professional judgement;
- seeking consultation where there is uncertainty regarding thresholds;
- ensuring referrals are not delayed because of uncertainty regarding statutory thresholds;
- considering concerns cumulatively rather than in isolation; and
- the use of established escalation and professional challenge arrangements where concerns remain.

Learning arising from the inquest will be shared through safeguarding partnership governance structures, multi-agency forums and workforce development arrangements.

Timescale: Multi-agency engagement and dissemination of learning to be completed by January 2027.

Actions to Address the Matter of Concern

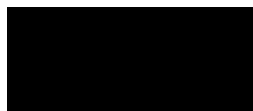
In response to the concern identified by the Coroner, Cumberland Council and the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership will:

- Review threshold guidance and associated safeguarding procedures.
- Review referral, consultation and escalation arrangements.
- Undertake multi-agency engagement to strengthen shared understanding of referral expectations and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Reinforce professional curiosity, professional challenge and escalation processes across the partnership.
- Share learning arising from the inquest through governance, quality assurance and workforce development arrangements

Overall completion date: Initial actions by January 2027, with review activity and implementation completed by March 2027.

We trust that the above will reassure the Coroner, however, if any of the above information needs to be clarified, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,



Director, Children and Family Wellbeing
Cumberland Council