



# North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report

April 2023 - March 2024



**Avon and Somerset Police**  
**SERVE. PROTECT. RESPECT.**



**North Somerset Council**



**Healthier Together**  
Improving health and care in Bristol,  
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire



**Bristol, North Somerset  
and South Gloucestershire  
Integrated Care Board**

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# Foreword from independent chair

“As the Interim Independent Chair of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP), I am pleased to present the annual report for the period April 2023 to March 2024. In my role, whilst chairing the Partnership, I have also undertaken several pieces of independent scrutiny. This is the second annual report under the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA).

This report is published in line with the statutory responsibilities under the new requirements in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (WT23). This report provides the opportunity to review progress in delivering on our priorities, assess our training activities and consider how agencies work together across the whole child’s journey.

The NSSCP has a really important role in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each and every person involved in protecting children in North Somerset. The NSSCP monitors how all agencies work together to provide services for children and ensure they are protected. The revised Partnership has now been in place for two years and is between North Somerset Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board.

The Partnership has also responded to the new guidance in WT23, published in December 2023. In delivering independent scrutiny. I have ensured that the Partnership has undertaken the necessary work to develop a delivery plan and framework to implement fully WT23, including the necessary leadership through the identification of lead and designated safeguarding partners and the engagement with and of education representatives.

The Partnership has also developed a framework for the delivery of future independent scrutiny and is actively working on strengthening the multi-agency data sharing and analysis, including multi-agency case file audit framework. I have prepared a current situation report with suggested areas of performance for the Partnership to interrogate further.

I have pressed the Partnership to ensure it is effectively resourced to meet these new requirements; whilst the pressure on all agencies’ budgets is acknowledged I have prepared a formal report for the consideration of the safeguarding partners in this regard.

In acknowledgement of the low number of serious incident notifications and referrals for consideration of local child safeguarding practice reviews during this reporting year, the Partnership undertook a detailed piece of assurance work to ensure no referrals were being missed. This work was led by the case review subgroup who provided the necessary assurance. During the year, this subgroup also revised their guidance on case reviews and developed a self-assessment framework against which to assess the learning from reviews conducted by the national panel to enable relevant local learning to be embedded.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Partnership staff, for their continued support in the smooth functioning and promotion of the NSSCP. I would also like to thank our stakeholders from across the Partnership and all the frontline practitioners and managers for their commitment, hard work, and effort in keeping children and young people safer in North Somerset.”

# Our Children in North Somerset

In North Somerset we have 64 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, 4 special schools and 1 pupil referral unit. Within these settings there are:

- ❖ 95 different languages spoken
- ❖ 16% eligible for free school meals
- ❖ 2266 children have an education, health & care plan
- ❖ 3373 children are receiving SEN support



42,846 children and young people in North Somerset



189 families supported through early help



428 children with an open early help episode



233 children with a child in need plan



2266 children with an EHCP



14 Children's Centers



252 children in care



236 care leavers



133 children with a child protection plan



3373 children with SEN support



64 primary schools  
11 secondary schools  
4 special schools  
1 PRU



88.5% of our schools graded Good or Outstanding



16% of children eligible for free school meals



8% of children with English as an additional language



95 languages spoken

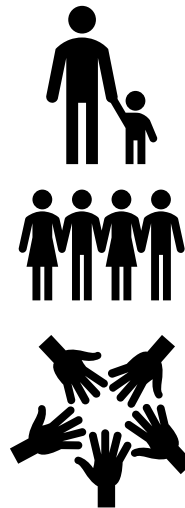
# Governance 2023-2024

Welcome to the 12-monthly report of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP). The report outlines key areas of work undertaken from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, and identifies priorities to further improve the effectiveness of the Partnership.

The CEO of each statutory organisation each delegate a member of their organisation to be part of the NSSCP Executive, with a commitment to shared and equitable leadership of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children as set out in [Working Together 2023](#). The NSSCP has experienced renewed drive and purpose following the permanent appointments of the Director of Children's Services (Claire Shiels) and the Assistant Director (Jane Anstis). This alongside continued invested support from ICB colleagues and strong leadership from the new police representative has given rise to positive results.

## Executive Board

- Jo Walker, CEO North Somerset Council
- Shane Devlin, CEO BNSSG, ICB
- Ivan Powell, Independent Chair
- Claire Shiels, Director of Children's Services, North Somerset Council
- Michael Richardson, Deputy Chief Nurse, BNSSG, ICB
- Lisa Simpson, Superintendent, Avon & Somerset Constabulary



*'Nothing is more important than children's welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other's roles and responsibilities, and how they work together.'*

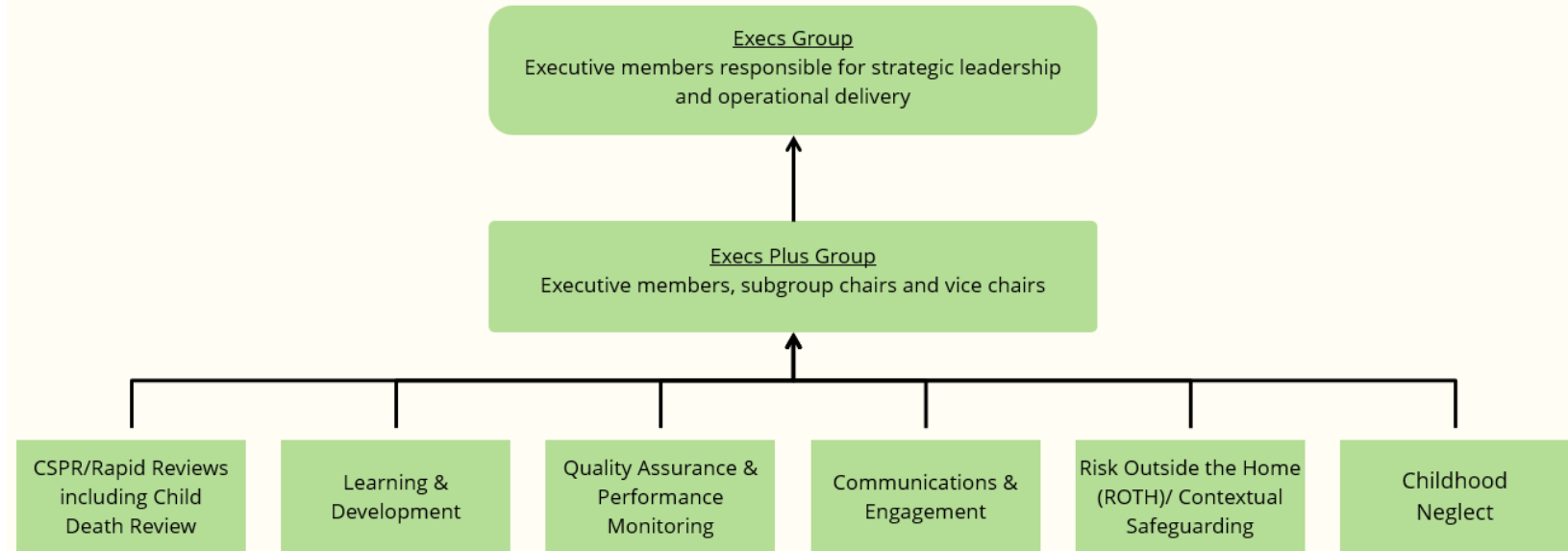
Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023

# About the NSSCP



## Strategic Plan 2023-26 [read here](#)

- Priority one - leadership
- Priority two - learning
- Priority three - contextual child exploitation
- Priority four - childhood neglect



## The expectations for multi-agency working outlined in '*Working Together 2023*' compliment the NSSCP values.

### Learn:

**Transparency & Respect** - we will foster a culture of openness, respect and transparency. NSSCP partners are required to work openly together, to learn from collective and individual experience, and to seek and receive assurance on the overall effectiveness of work to safeguard and protect children in North Somerset.

### Resource:

**Integrity & Honesty** - we will be honest and open with each other on areas of challenge, transformation and system change to inform decisions on future initiatives and collaborative working.

### Mutual challenge:

**Challenge & Innovate** - we will respectfully and constructively challenge each other to drive continuous improvement and deliver the best outcomes for North Somerset's children.

### Collaborate:

**Collaboration & Partnership** - The three Safeguarding Partners and all Relevant Agencies will work proactively, effectively, and collaboratively together. We will value differences to help drive improvements for children and young people.

### Include:

**Care & Listening** to the **voice and lived experience of the child** - Everything we do will benefit children and young people in North Somerset. We will ensure that our work is child-centred, and we continually seek to care and engage, and involve our children and young people and their families.

# What do we know about the quality & impact of our practice?

## Independent Review of the Partnership

In December 2023, a review of the NSSCP was conducted by an LGA Children's Improvement Advisor, which set out the challenges and how we might overcome them.

It found that relationships were good and there was motivation to improve the safeguarding arrangements for children and young people. In line with 'Working Together 2023', the completed governance review told us things that needed to be developed, including: line of sight & effective challenge from statutory partners, wider agencies involved, links with other strategic partnerships joined up, alignment of the subgroups and improved QA processes and information sharing.

These recommendations have driven Partnership activity throughout 2024 with some in-year activity for immediate changes such as appropriate attendance, and future work has been incorporated into the new arrangements.

# What do we know about the quality & impact of our practice?

## Key Decisions

Date & Event	Impact
June 2023 - Development Day	An opportunity to update partners on the progress of the new arrangements and to network with colleagues. Best practice was recognised and shared and the current priorities were examined. Colleagues considered what we need to keep and what we might do differently.
Summer 2023 - The Local Government Association Review of BNSSG Safeguarding Arrangements	This highlighted areas for improvement and encouraged conversations across the safeguarding system in relation to duplication, shared learning, elements of good practice and different paperwork.
September 2023 - Appointment of Business Manager	The substantive business manager was appointed in September 2023 bringing consistency and stability to the Partnership.
November 2023 - Independent Review of the Partnership	This was presented to the CEX of the local authority & ICB and NSSCP executive members in January 2024. The revised statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' was published in December 2023. The NSSCP developed an action plan taking account of the recommendations from the review and revisions to the statutory guidance.
December 2023 - Global Safeguarding Workforce Development Offer Review <a href="#">Global Safeguarding - International Consulting &amp; Services</a>	Global Safeguarding is a specialist safeguarding agency working with schools, governments, law enforcement, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector in the UK and around the world to eliminate all forms of abuse and exploitation. The recommendations from the review were presented to the NSSCP executive members. The Learning & Development Subgroup proposal to appoint a multi-agency trainer for 3 days per week has been agreed and will ensure that professionals involved in safeguarding are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.
February 2024 - Development Day	An opportunity to share developments and key priorities for 2024/25. It was attended by the CEX of the local authority and ICB along with the Execs Plus Group. It enabled a shared understanding of the direction and objectives for the Partnership, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned.
March 2024 - New Website Launch	A modern, user-friendly website is a vital tool for disseminating information, resources, and updates to partners and the public and ensuring visibility, accessibility and transparency. Working alongside the digital team, we have been able to completely overhaul the look and organisation of the website to ensure clarity for users.



# What do we know about the quality & impact of our practice?

## What was achieved?

- ❖ The NSSCP website has been updated, the reach across partner agencies has been widened, relationships with key stakeholders developed and a quarterly newsletter issued [NSSCP.co.uk](https://nsscp.co.uk). The subgroups meet regularly, are well-attended and mostly quorate. The Terms of Reference for each group were updated in 2023.
- ❖ The multi-agency CSPR guidance documents have been finalised and uploaded to the revitalised website for publication. Subgroup members have disseminated this update throughout the 3 partners agencies and the business manager has shared with key partners.
- ❖ Audits continue to be undertaken 3 times per year to evaluate decision making for children on a child protection plan for neglect. The membership is expanding to provide richer conversations, and the audit tool and standard operating procedures have been updated. Partner agencies alternate writing the summary report and findings are shared via the Execs Plus Group to disseminate within their service. MASH audits are carried out monthly to assess the effectiveness and necessary changes are followed up with individuals or teams. Child protection themes are also audited by the Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Officer (ISRO) team.
- ❖ Neglect workshops are being offered for frontline practitioners to receive support and guidance and the neglect strategy has been drafted.
- ❖ A draft performance model and audit programme has been approved by executive members. The Quality Assurance Subgroup has chosen 10 performance themes. The ambition is a quarterly focus ensuring transitions and cross-age working are included. Each theme has suggested indicators to support discussion. The audits will take a 'think tank' format and a report will be produced and shared with executive members.
- ❖ A child exploitation strategy and screening tool were created and have been distributed and published online.
- ❖ In response to the Child Safeguarding Review Panel's report into the 'Myth of Invisible Men', the NSSCP conducted an initial survey with partners. A report will be written and shared with executive members depicting the findings of the survey and recommendations.
- ❖ NSSCP members attended the CDOP national presentation, and it was shared with partner agencies and uploaded to the website [here](#). Children's Services' Front Door was reviewed, and a strength was improved Partnership presence and strong operational relationships within MASH. There is improved practice and outcomes in terms LADO referrals found here [LADO annual report](#).
- ❖ In February 2023, the ROTH Subgroup led the first multi-agency Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) preparation session. This process has been formalised and there are now regular meetings to ensure the Partnership is responding to themes, and that the required evidence and paper trail are available.

# What do we know about the quality & impact of our practice?

## What was achieved?

A data scorecard produced by local authority analysts depicting key information, from contacts at the Front Door to children in care placements, is reviewed quarterly.

The narrative behind the data is provided by the members of the QA Subgroup and probing questions are asked about themes to watch (amber) and those that are flagged as a risk (red).

Members assure themselves that the necessary action is being taken to address risk and celebrate good practice.

This is a snapshot of a typical scorecard with items 'RAG' rated to aid discussions and scrutiny of the work of the Partnership.

### Referrals

- The rate of new referrals at the end of Q4 was 11.7 per 10,000, this remains significantly lower than that of our stat neighbours (39.73 per 10,000) and the national average (44.81 per 10,000). 204 new CSC referrals were started in Q4 lower than the previous two quarters. 71% of referrals resulted in assessment.
- Over the past 3 months the percentage of re-referrals has been 19.8% this has remained stable over the previous quarters. We are still lower than our statistical neighbours average, 21.3% and England average, 22.4.%

### Assessments and Enquiries

- 457 assessments were carried out during Q4, an increase on the previous 2 quarters and also compared to the same period last year, 402.
- 67% of these were approved within the target of 45 working days compared to 81% at the end of 2023/24. This is below that seen for stat neighbours (83%) and nationally (85%).

### Strategy discussions

- 162 strategy discussions took place in Q4, 147 were initial and 15 were follow up discussions.
- 92% of strategies were held within 1 working day compared to 87% in Q3. 5% of strategies in Q4 had an outcome of police involvement. This has stayed stable across the previous 2 quarters.

The impact of the work of the NSSCP on professionals within North Somerset this year has been a shift in perceptions. Having no permanent business unit for some time has meant that professionals previously lacked confidence in the Partnership to be able to deliver & provide support and resolve issues. The impact of having stability in the business unit but also in key members from all agencies showing a renewed commitment and drive to develop, has directly improved the effectiveness of the Partnership.

# What do we know about the quality & impact of our practice?

## What was achieved?

### North Somerset Council

- ❖ North Somerset Children's Services welcomed Ofsted in March 2023, and the report was published in May 2023. Services for children were judged to be 'requires improvement' overall. The council has as a result been focused on delivering an improvement plan and working in partnership to strengthen our front door arrangements and joint decision making for children at risk of harm.
- ❖ Following a period of instability, there is now a stable and permanent leadership team in place to drive improvement and contribute to the partnership arrangements.
- ❖ A significant amount of engagement and co-production with children and their families has been completed and is being used to shape the future plans of the partnership. Investment in business intelligence and increased auditing is improving management oversight and line of sight to practice.
- ❖ The council has maintained its investment in early help, but challenge remained throughout the year in having sufficient permanent social workers - investment has been made in additional external capacity to support our work and ensure services for children and families are maintained.

### Avon & Somerset Constabulary

- ❖ In October 2023, there was a significant increase in the volume and severity of criminal offences and antisocial behaviour linked to children in Weston-super-Mare town centre and Worle. It resulted in an increased risk and fear in the community, as well as a risk to the children themselves.
- ❖ Operation Avatar, a police response to antisocial behaviour, quickly evolved from a single agency to a highly coordinated multi-agency approach involving police, VRP, Safer Communities Team, Children's Social Care, Youth Justice and Prevention Service, YMCA, and other charity involvement (including street outreach). 13 key children were identified, leading to a piece of joint mapping work across the Partnership which highlighted a wide range of vulnerabilities and safeguarding needs including risk of exploitation.
- ❖ This led to improved contextual safeguarding to consider contexts beyond the children and families, including the nature of the peer group and the locations of their offending. The children benefited from bespoke risk management, support and interventions from across the Partnership. By February 2024, the reduction of criminality and antisocial behaviour associated with the group was significant.
- ❖ Operation Avatar was an incredible example of the Partnership responding to acute and escalating risks to children and the community, and the approach adopted has contributed to the current development of the Adolescent Safety Framework.

### Integrated Care Board

- ❖ Following the ICB financial investment in Sirona Care and Health to recruit MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Specialist Nurses, the ICB Safeguarding Team have supported the development of these arrangements from a strategic position. The purpose of these arrangements are to share relevant and proportionate information with other safeguarding partners in relation to child safeguarding concerns so that decisions can be made at an early stage to prevent escalation in risk and harm. Sirona Care and Health provide the 'health' voice within the MASH, ensuring that as a statutory safeguarding partner we contribute to the information sharing exercise and take away any proactive actions.
- ❖ The ICB Safeguarding Team have invested support, expertise and time in supporting JTAI (Joint Targeted Area Inspection) preparation.
- ❖ The ICB Safeguarding Team have developed a multi-agency training schedule in collaboration with our local authority partners to upskill our workforce on the [ICON](#) public health message.
- ❖ The ICB Safeguarding Team have contributed to the chairing of partnership meetings and quarterly audits across NSSCP arrangements by either providing chairing and/or administrative support during this last financial year. Some of the outcomes from these groups have included producing multi-agency guidance or revised policies and procedures. The team have also then ensured that any changes to safeguarding practice borne out of these audits/learning events have been incorporated into the ICB GP Safeguarding Training Programme for 2024-25, which is a key responsibility of the ICB Safeguarding Team. Team members have also successfully managed to ascertain access to the NHS Spine, in support of our input into audits.

# How do we know it?

## Scrutiny from the Independent Chair

“Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 requires scrutiny to provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.

During the reporting year, whilst being the interim Independent Chair of the Partnership, it has also afforded the opportunity for me to undertake the following scrutiny activity:

- ❖ I have supported the development of the delivery plan to ensure the Partnership is effectively constituted to meet the requirements of Working Together 2023.
- ❖ I supported the Partnership to hold a development event and to agree its strategic priorities based on learning from data and analysis, including varying needs assessments. I have met with the Community Safety Partnership and safeguarding adult leads to identify areas of commonality, thereby providing opportunities for improved efficiency; this work is being continued by the Partnership business manager.
- ❖ I identified the need for the Partnership to revise its guidance for the conduct of rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews which was completed.
- ❖ I challenged the Partnership to revise the content of the multi-agency dataset and introduce a more robust multi-agency case audit framework. The Partnership responded and continues to explore with police and health partners how they can better contribute to data and analysis.
- ❖ I have prepared several reports, including drawing on comparator information, for consideration of the lead and designated safeguarding partners on what level of resourcing is required to ensure the partnership is effective. This remains a live issue.”

# How do we know it?

## Scrutiny

### Global Safeguarding Review

We commissioned a review of the of the NSSCP learning and development offer.

The following key principles were identified to guide the development:

- a) That the offer meets the requirements of national guidance.
- b) That the offer meets the needs of the partnership members and local communities.
- c) That the offer adapts to the changing needs of the partnership members, the changing needs of communities and to newly published learning.
- d) That the delivery of the offer is relevant to the recipients and consistently of a high quality.
- e) That the offer is co-ordinated with other CSPs to increase the overall offer uptake, efficiency and sustainability.

The Learning & Development Subgroup are addressing this through the employment of a training officer to: create course content, act as the advocate for this work and ensure that the core offer from the Partnership can be delivered. The L & D Subgroup are also initiating work with other agencies and across BNSSG utilising their knowledge and subject matter expertise on the development and delivery of additional courses to enrich the NSSCP training offer.

### Section 11

The self-assessment audit tool was circulated to all partners across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset in August 2023 to assess, monitor and evidence progress and achievements in relation to meeting safeguarding requirements. The full report can be found here: [NSSCP Section 11 report 2023 - 2024](#)

The Business Manager has followed up on all recommendations through subgroup activity and direct contact with named partner agencies. This will be monitored by the QA Subgroup.

# How do we know it?

## Learning From Serious Incidents

Historically, the NSSCP has had a low number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and Rapid Reviews (RRs). As a result, the CSPR Subgroup carried out non-statutory learning with a local safeguarding review in July 2023. This provided assurance by identifying learning to create changes across the system in the absence of RRs to conduct. Common themes for this and a previous RR are:

- ❖ Non-accidental injuries to non-mobile babies
- ❖ Professional curiosity and decision making
- ❖ Family history & consent

A learning brief for both reviews was written during 2023 and shared with partner agencies to highlight learning. The action plans for both above cases continued to be monitored by the subgroups and have an expected end date of October 2024. This year we are reviewing the impact of this activity.

The CSPR Subgroup has refreshed the process for serious incidents and appendix documents that can be found [here](#).

A future ambition of the NSSCP is to work with other partnerships in the local area where police and health services are shared. The aim is to streamline processes and recording/reporting systems to ensure that is not a contributing factor in accurate and timely information being shared.

Following the devastating murders of 2 children who lived in Bristol, a joint RR was held with the NSSCP and Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP) as 2 of the perpetrators lived for some time in North Somerset. Subsequently, a knife crime and serious violence themed CSPR is underway in Bristol.

Themes identified:

- ❖ Effectiveness of multi-agency oversight, mapping, support and planning
- ❖ Social work assessments & intervention when children cross borders
- ❖ Effective information sharing
- ❖ Effective early intervention & clear pathway
- ❖ System response to low school attendance & CME
- ❖ Framework to respond to children at risk

The Rapid Review report written by KBSP has been approved by NSSCP executive members and a multi-agency group has co-written an action plan for North Somerset to safeguard children from serious violence. This has been distributed and updated with comments received by the group with oversight from the executive board. The CSPR subgroup will continue to oversee the action plan to ensure relevant learning is disseminated.

Review	Date	Theme
Non-statutory Local Safeguarding Review	July 2023	Non-accidental injury in a non-mobile baby
Joint Rapid Review	February 2024	Serious Youth Violence

# How do we know it?

## Learning & Development

*This course was effective online – the trainer was very knowledgeable.*

*I learned:*  
 1. The processes to follow  
 2. What support is out there  
 3. Signs to look out for

Course	Number of training events	Number of participants
Child Protection Basic Awareness/Refresher	9	150
Introduction to Child Protection	4	54
Advanced Child Protection/Update	22	471
Impact of Neglect	5	106
Domestic Abuse Awareness/Advanced	5	63
Child Exploitation Awareness	1	39

*Thank you - really important subject and the film was very powerful.”  
 “Really valuable session and information, thank you.*



Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Children’s Safeguarding Partnerships are offering multi-agency training around ICON - an evidenced-based programme aimed at preventing abusive head trauma injuries to babies caused by shaking - also referred to as ‘shaken baby syndrome’.

*I am much more confident on safeguarding and child protection.*

The Partnership learning and development offer included face to face and online training. The Learning & Development Subgroup commission and quality assure this offer. [Training events \(nsscp.co.uk\)](https://www.nsscp.co.uk)

Due to the departure of the existing multi-agency trainer to another post within North Somerset Council and the need to continue to deliver core safeguarding training, an external trainer was commissioned to cover the period between October 2023 and March 2024. Our aim was to protect the core offer when we didn’t have the staff to facilitate a full programme. Over the course of the period of this report 46 training events were delivered and 883 participants attended.

Moving forward, a new multi-agency safeguarding training officer is about to come into post, and this will give the opportunity to achieve the recommendations from the independent review by Global Safeguarding.

Alongside our core offer, in 2023-4 we have offered the following courses:

- ❖ Managing Allegations - the role of the LADO
- ❖ Effective Support Document (threshold)
- ❖ Young People and Substance Misuse
- ❖ ICON
- ❖ Family Strengths & Needs Toolkit

We signpost to nationally available government training materials for Prevent.

In terms of reporting, we are in a period of transition and this data reflects our best endeavours being sourced from 2 platforms.

We are exploring blended and face to face models of training moving forward.

# How do we know it?

## Children & Young People's Voices

- ❖ We ensure any child over the age of 8 has access to advocacy for Child Protection Conferences, and that they can attend the reviews.
- ❖ Any child over the age of 4 is seen alone and offered words and pictures to understand their circumstance. Social workers would also ask for feedback from them where appropriate e.g. using smiley rating or traffic lights if the child is younger or has identified learning needs.
- ❖ We have an Elective Home Education (EHE) parent forum three times a year- chaired by the EHE parents and the local authority attends.
- ❖ The Voyage Learning Campus (alternative provision) has a student council - Heads Of Service are planning to visit them to hear the CYP views.
- ❖ We have a local authority SEND parent/carer forum.
- ❖ Health colleagues have had meetings with managers to discuss how we improve the way children's voices are meaningfully included in the work that we do and conversations about the participation groups, feedback forms and reviews.
- ❖ Children in Care Council - directly captures children's voices around several topics, such as: how they would like the council to look, games, location, etc. We link in with parents and carers to feedback on updates and suggestions.
- ❖ Care Leavers Forum - monthly meeting on topics relating to celebration and about our services. The subsequent month we feedback updates.
- ❖ Corporate Parenting Panel - our young people directly shape and influence our policies around topics ranging from housing to council tax and much more. The meetings are captured in minutes and shared appropriately.

These are a range of ways that partner agencies listen to the voice of children and young people and their families.

- ❖ Interview Panels - care experienced young people interview new staff. Our young people have a say in who is employed, directly influencing our service.
- ❖ Bright Spots - for children and young people (an annual survey). We are strengthening how we feedback any changes from the data received.
- ❖ Small Working Groups - working groups for Section 20 accommodation policy, ISRO welcome cards and info, children returning from missing forms and interviews. This allows us to improve our language and learn from their experiences, thereby improving how we communicate and engage CYP.
- ❖ 'You Said We Did' - a document to capture any and all suggestions from children and young people and allow us to record what we did about it.
- ❖ Participation Big Thank You - we invite all the CYP who have helped with interviews, attended forums/councils and any other type of engagement. We spend this time not only thanking them but updating them on topics discussed at each engagement.

### Future plans

- ❖ A communications strategy will depict how Avon & Somerset Constabulary hears the voice of children about matters that are important to them. The Trauma Informed Practice Steering Group has been considering strategically how they will develop work to involve people with lived experience of trauma to support its journey in becoming a trauma informed organisation.
- ❖ A new police Young Persons Independent Advisory Group (ISG) will form to use their voice to help inform and shape service improvements and design to deliver better outcomes for them.
- ❖ We are going to strengthen how we ensure that the output of all this activity is helping to shape the work of the Partnership.



# How do we know it?

## Breakdown of Costs

The NSSCP budget was already set for 2024/25 before the arrival of the permanent business manager or the publication of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*. We are working toward an equitable contribution format that will be detailed in next year's report. The Partnership carried the work regarding resourcing forward into the activity of 2024/25.

Agency	Percentage		Value
Local Authority	Forecast in budget	52%	£50,981
ICB	No uplift agreed	20%	£19,050
AWP	No uplift agreed	8%	£7666
UHB	No uplift agreed	4%	£3842
Police	Confirmed in letter from VC	16%	£15,696.20
<b>Total</b>			<b>£97,235.20</b>

### Forecast of spending & contributions in full financial year 2024- 25

- Forecast expenditure ~ £142,768
- Funding contributions from all partners 2024 - 25 = £97,235.20

The executive members as part of the new arrangements are currently agreeing alternative funding arrangements for 2025-2026 to reflect more equitable contributions across partner agencies.

In 2023/24, the Partnership also received a grant of £47,300 from the Department for Education to implement the changes from *Working Together 2023* and strengthen multi-agency working. This grant has been invested as follows:

- ❖ Substantive business manager appointed
- ❖ Independent review of current arrangements/scrutiny model
- ❖ Website rework and updated procedure manual
- ❖ Partnership event to align priorities
- ❖ Independent review of multi-agency safeguarding training offer

# What plans are in place to maintain or improve practice?

## Areas for Development

### Agreed priorities

- ❖ Strategic shared overview of the participation of children and young people in the partnership - the head of service for youth justice service will be leading this work.
- ❖ Effective pathways to prepare, prevent, protect, and pursue, to reduce the risk of child exploitation - the newly reformed ROTH Subgroup will oversee this.

### Holistic data set

- ❖ Health and police metrics - what and how partners contribute data to the partnership arrangements to support strategic planning and monitoring - the Partnership recognises that data sets need to be further developed with police and health colleagues to assure ourselves of potential risks and methods of mitigation, and this work is underway.
- ❖ Evaluation of the take up and impact of training - the new multi-agency trainer will continue to progress this.

### Dissemination of learning

- ❖ Learning from local and national reviews fully embedded in all agencies - this will be a future focus for the Partnership.

# What plans are in place to maintain or improve practice?

## Priorities for 2024/2025

Working together across strategic partnerships, we will address potential duplication by mapping what is already happening and identifying both gaps and where strengthening arrangements is a possibility.

- ❖ **Exploitation** and risk outside the home (ROTH) - mapping, information sharing TOR and launching an operational MACE, alignment to the strategic MACE and the development of the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF).
- ❖ **Transitional Safeguarding** from child to adulthood & contextual safeguarding
- ❖ **Domestic Abuse** and how it can either be 'eclipsed' by neglect or vice versa
- ❖ **Systemwide Safeguarding Transformation Programme** where there is a vision to design a Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Safeguarding System that creates a safeguarding system with a scheme of delegation which has a focus on prevention, de-escalation, protection of the whole family and is assured that organisations are safe.

The NSSCP Partnership event in the spring also highlighted a need to consider:

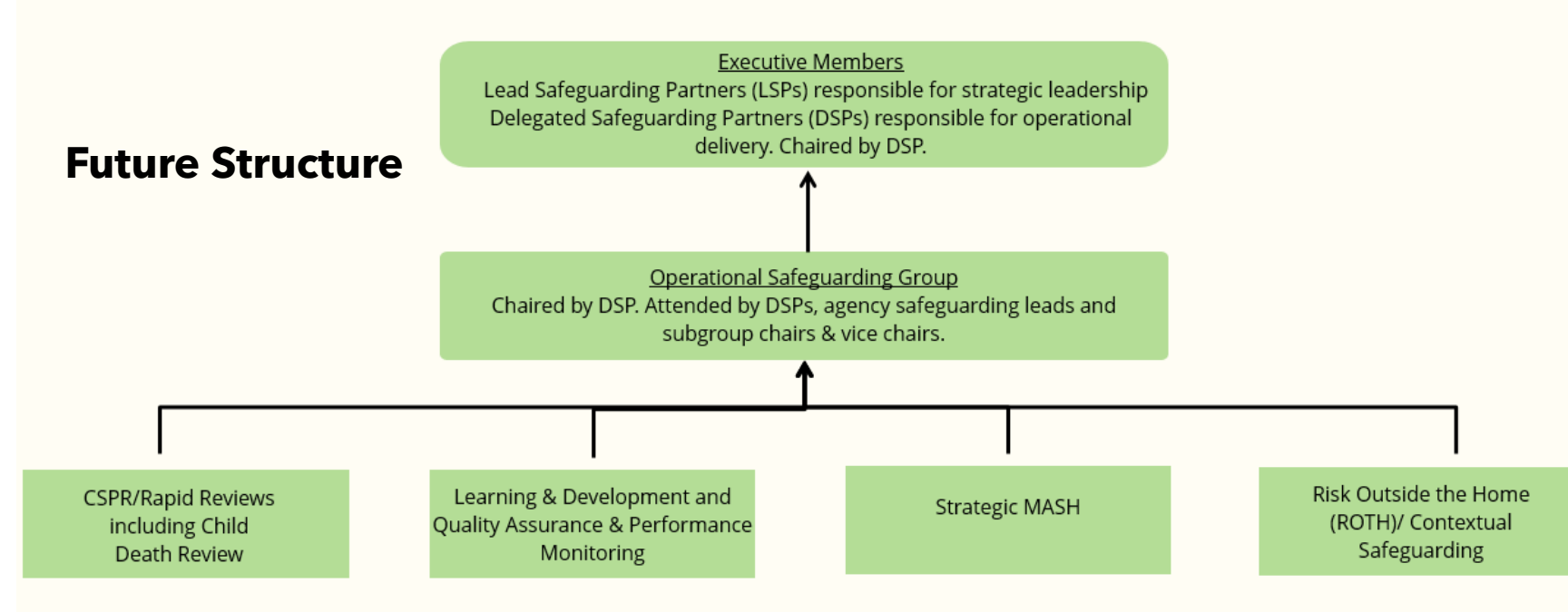
- ❖ the impact of **poverty**
- ❖ a focus on the **voice of children**, young people and their families. - how do we listen and how do we act on the information shared?  
Feedback from the Partnership event suggested:

Gaining the voice through existing SEND groups, schools councils and other forums, capturing the voices of children and families through use of the website where children and families can share their views or experiences of services and setting up a parent/carer reference group.

The annual event for the NSSCP should include a space for children and young people and their families to share and contribute. The Partnership aims to utilise the youth voice team within North Somerset and other youth voice/engagement activity as appropriate. Further work will be required to strengthen parent/carer voice.

# What plans are in place to maintain or improve practice?

## New Arrangements



The proposal for new arrangements has been agreed by LSPs and DSPs. The NSSCP has an action plan with timescales to implement the new safeguarding arrangements by September 2024. This action plan takes account of the recommendations from the Independent Review and WT 2023. Notable highlights are:

*Working Together To Safeguard Children 23* states, 'Strong leadership and clear accountability are crucial for effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. To strengthen accountability, local safeguarding arrangements should separate the roles of partnership chair and independent scrutiny and be clear about the three distinct functions within effective local safeguarding arrangements:

- the partnership chair has authority, is decisive and enables resource allocation, with risk escalation to lead safeguarding partners at the executive
- a business management function with adequate resources and capacity to support the partnership chair
- a rigorous and effective independent scrutiny function providing challenge to the safeguarding partners'

In February 2024, the LSP's (LA and ICB CEX) agreed the action plan and identified the need for the DSPs to agree the partnership chairing responsibilities. Detail such as meeting frequency for LSPs/DSPs/NSSCP, and terms of reference all included in the action plan.

The proposal is for Michael Richardson (Deputy Chief Nurse) to chair the Delegated Safeguarding Partners meetings and Claire Shiels (DCS) to chair the Operational Group for an initial 12-month period.

# What plans are in place to maintain or improve practice?

## New Arrangements

### **Safeguarding Leads**

Specific health partner agencies will be invited onto the Operational Group along with the voluntary and community sector and probation. Contact has been made with these agencies with an agreement to begin in November 2024 under the new Partnership arrangements. They have been included in all communications recently.

### **Education**

Having considered the options mooted at the Partnership event, it has been agreed that education will be represented throughout the NSSCP structure. The recommendation is to invite education representatives into the subgroups to strengthen and engage practice as required. In addition, chairs of existing education groups would be invited to the Operational Group encouraging 2-way communication.

The assistant director for Education Services will join the NSSCP and attend DSP meetings. Jon Le Fevre (National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator for Education) supported the NSSCP with its event in the spring and has agreed to review our new arrangements.

### **Strategic MASH**

The MASH Steering Group has been approved by the executive members to begin in May 2024. It is dedicated to ensuring the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), including the Adolescent Safety Hub, which play a pivotal role in safeguarding children. The group is committed to upholding quality and timeliness standards as outlined in Working Together 2023 and facilitating shared learning among overarching boards. Additionally, the steering group aims to:

- ❖ Facilitate the seamless operation of the MASH
- ❖ Identify challenges and proactively seek solutions
- ❖ Maintain a focus on quality assurance, providing oversight of performance and quality data
- ❖ Drive the implementation of the Front Door delivery plan

# What plans are in place to maintain or improve practice?

## What next?

In line with statutory requirements and best practice this annual report and will be shared with:

Chief Executive, North Somerset Council

Chief Executive of BNSSG Integrated Care Board

Chief Constable for Avon & Somerset Constabulary

Community Safety Partnership & Health and Wellbeing Board

Children and Young People's Partnership Board

North Somerset Safeguarding Adults' Board

The National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Foundations - What Works Centre for Children and Families

This report has been authored by Zoe Gartland, Safeguarding Partnership Business Manager. The report was approved by the Children's Partnership Executive on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and published on the Partnership website on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Should you require the report in any other format to support accessibility please contact [zoe.gartland@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.gartland@n-somerset.gov.uk)