



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

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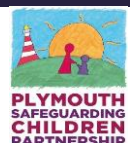


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Our Mission Statement: Working together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families within Plymouth

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INTRODUCTION FROM OUR LEAD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Welcome to our Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report 2024-2025.

It is wonderful to be able to reflect on the safeguarding activity which has taken place over the last year. We would like to start by taking the opportunity to thank all our frontline practitioners, whose dedication to their roles and partnership working keeps children and young people safe and protected in Plymouth.

This year has seen significant strengthening and growth of the Partnership, building on our strong foundations created following the implementation of Working Together 2023 detailed in our last annual report. Through the publication of our Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in December 2024 we have detailed our shared ownership, governance and accountability to ensure that we collectively focus on keeping the children and young people of Plymouth safe. We have also set out how we will utilise scrutineers in specialist areas to ensure we create a constant environment of learning, improvement and holding ourselves to account.

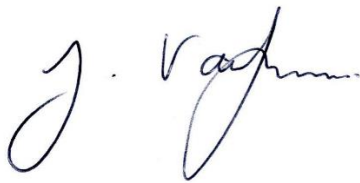
As detailed within this report the partnership undertook a follow up self-evaluation this year. We are particularly proud of how we demonstrated so many areas of achievement, including a strong learning culture, effective communication and partnership working, strong multi-agency safeguarding arrangements with a child centred approach, and effective feedback and challenge from the Young Safeguarders. We acknowledge that there are always areas where improvements can be made, and we will continue to work on these in the coming year.

Work has continued in relation to the priorities for the partnership and wider learning. This annual report demonstrates the progress that has taken place across the city. We are proud of all that has been achieved and the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

Looking ahead to 2025/2026 the Lead Safeguarding Partners will oversee the implementation of the national social care reforms to ensure the successful embedding of these across the

partnership. There will be a significant focus on data. We will ensure the valuable data held in each organisation is used to inform and guide our safeguarding priorities, so that we can provide help at the earliest opportunity to keep the children and young people of Plymouth safe. We are excited to embrace the Young Scrutineer work our Young Safeguarders will be completing to examine how our practice is influenced by the voice of children and young people.

Finally, the work of the partnership would not be possible without the continued support of partners, chairs and members of the sub-groups, our independent scrutineers and the business unit that supports all our work. We would like to take the opportunity to offer our thanks for their ongoing support, hard work and dedication to our children, young people and families in Plymouth.



James Vaughan
Chief Constable
Devon and Cornwall Police



Tracey Lee
Chief Executive
Plymouth City Council



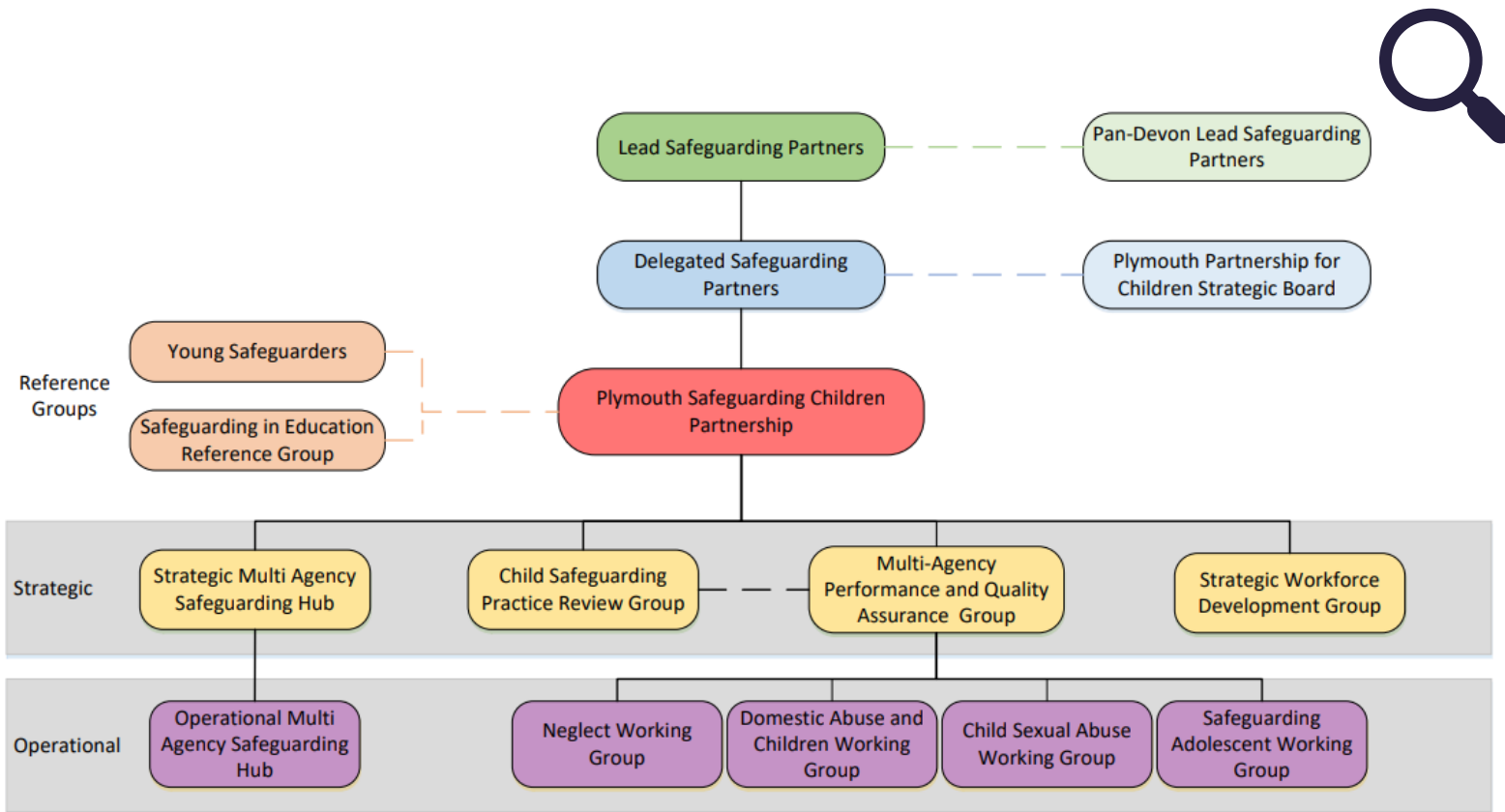
Steve Moore
Chief Executive
NHS Devon Integrated Care Board



Moira Marder
Chief Executive
Ted Wragg Trust

WHAT IS THE PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP?

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership is also known as the PSCP. We are a partnership of agencies who are responsible and accountable for leading safeguarding services across the city. We support each other to learn from local and national reviews identifying what works well and what could be improved within children's safeguarding. We scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and hold each other to account to ensure everyone plays their part in keeping children and young people safe, in Plymouth.



Find out more:

Find out more about the Partnership by visiting our website: <https://plymouthscb.co.uk>



RELEVANT AGENCIES

There are three statutory safeguarding partners: Police, Health and the Local Authority, however there are several relevant agencies who make up our partnership. Although ultimate accountability rests with the three Statutory Partners, the legislation is clear that all agencies share a responsibility for safeguarding children and for working together to achieve that.

The relevant agencies in Plymouth include, but are not limited to:

- All early year's settings
- All Family Hubs and Children's Centres
- All primary, secondary, special, further and independent education settings
- Private training providers
- Language schools
- Faith Groups
- NHS England
- University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
- Livewell Southwest
- Southwest Ambulance NHS Trust
- Adopt Southwest
- Registered fostering agencies
- CAFCASS
- The Probation Service
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
- British Transport Police
- Port and local border police force
- Action for Children
- LARK Children's centre
- NSPCC

- Barnardo's
- The Children's Society
- Young Devon
- First Light
- Community and social housing providers
- Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- Ministry of Defence
- Plymouth Argyle Football Club
- Plymouth Albion Rugby Club
- Plymouth Octopus Project

SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION

In Plymouth, we recognise the valuable strengths of our education partners who spend a huge amount of time with our children and young people.

Under Working Together 2023, we have raised the profile of Education within our partnership and have an education representative at Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) level and Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) level. We also ensure all our partnership subgroups have education representation.

We have a Safeguarding in Education Reference Group (SERG) where representatives from the education sector come together to discuss current practice in relation to safeguarding and share information from the other partnership groups, information on new training offers through the PSCP and current themes and trends.

The partnership manager and other partner agency representatives also regularly attend the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) meetings to ensure education partners are appraised of current partnership work and emerging themes in safeguarding.



Each year all relevant education provisions complete an audit called a S175/157. This process is part of the partnership Quality Assurance work and helps to gather an annual snapshot of safeguarding and safeguarding practice in all educational settings across the city.

An Example of comparative findings 22/23 and 23/24 Improvements

Three audit statements appeared in the 2022/23 audit with 10% or more of data submitting schools indicating a 'No' response, potentially indicating that development was needed. Whilst the questions were re-worded for the 23/24 cycle, the overall indication is that improvements have been made.

Audit question/statement	Audit Year 22/23 % of Y responses	Audit Year 23/24 % of action required responses
2022/2023 wording: The setting completes a PSCP Child Exploitation Screening Tool, where appropriate to assess whether a child or young person may be at risk of child (criminal/sexual) exploitation 2023/2024 wording: Have all relevant staff in the setting accessed training/briefings in Child Exploitation?	85.15%	98.04%
2022/23 wording: There is a named governor for looked after and previously looked after children. 2023/34 wording: Please provide the name of the governor for looked after and previously looked after children.	87.13%	100%
2022/23 wording: STORM training (or equivalent) has been undertaken by relevant members of staff to support students expressing suicidal intent. 2023/24 wording: Are there systems in place to identify and support students who may be expressing suicidal intent?	73.27%	93.14%

There are two statements in which 10% or more of data submitting schools have indicated a 'No' or 'action required' response in both the 2022/23 and the 2023/24 audits.

Audit question/statement	Audit Year 22/23 % of Y responses	Audit Year 23/24 % of action required responses
2022/2023 wording: The setting is aware of the Neglect Graded Care Profile and the requirement to engage in its implementation. 2023/2024 wording: The setting is aware of, and a relevant member of staff has completed the training to undertake a Graded Care Profile (Neglect) assessment with a family. Please indicate in the comments section the number of GCP2 assessments completed.	83.17%	66.67%
2022/23 wording: Relevant staff have booked or have attended training on the use of the Neglect Graded Care Profile. 2023/34 wording: The setting is aware of, and a relevant member of staff has completed the training to undertake a Graded Care Profile (Neglect) assessment with a family. Please indicate in the comments section the number of GCP2 assessments completed.	57.43%	66.67%

YOUNG SAFEGUARDERS

In our City we are very fortunate to have a group called Young Safeguarders. This is a group of young people from across Plymouth who work to make sure that the lived experience and voices of children and young people are heard and that information that is produced, such as the policies and procedures that affect their lives, are fair and understandable. They meet fortnightly and are supported by the Plymouth City Council Participation Team, with costs part-funded by the PSCP. They provide regular scrutiny of the PSCP, including a quarterly review of our data scorecard. Within our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements you will also find the 10 wishes charter created by our Young Safeguarders.

The Young Safeguarders are proud to go on learning walks where they experience different aspects of the partnership and the impact these areas have on young people. This year they have attended learning walks at the Probation Service and Health Based Place of Safety situated at Plym Bridge House for a young person undergoing a Mental Health Act Assessment, following a detention under the section 136/5 of the Mental Health Act. The Young Safeguarders evaluated their view of the suitability of the environment and how well the needs of young people were reflected.

The Young Safeguarders met with representatives from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) youth panel to take part in a workshop gathering young people's views of policing, trust and confidence, and police complaints; and receiving accessible information about young people's rights when interacting with the police and what to do in case of misconduct. They also supported Trading Standards and the Child Centred Policing Team with a Vape test purchase operation leading to two shops requiring possible enforcement.

The Young Safeguarders reviewed the multi-agency audit into substance misuse and early help and shared their views on the suggested recommendations. The Young Safeguarders fed into the Local Authority critical review on SEND services, sharing their experiences of services and the impact it has had on them.

The Young Safeguarders developed questions and interviewed candidates for the role of the

Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) who manage allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children.

Following the recommendations of the Violence Against Women and Girls Commission, partners across Plymouth came together to build a campaign aimed at kick starting conversations between professionals, parents/carers and young people about online harms, and more specifically, online pornography.

Making a Difference

The Young Safeguarders led on the most recent phase of the campaign, developing resources to support peer-to-peer conversations and critical awareness of the influence of pornography and its contribution to harmful behaviours.

'Tricky Topics' is a resource to support 11 to 13 year olds with trusted advice and information on all those awkward, tricky things to talk about. Key topics include consent, healthy relationships and online pornography.

The Young Safeguarders also created a script and recorded audios for a 'Tricky Topics' film which is an introduction to the resource and will be sent to schools alongside the printed booklets

<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/tricky-topics/>

Making a Difference

During the development of Tricky Topics, it was highlighted again and again that the jump from primary school to secondary school can be a daunting one and the Young Safeguarders wanted to also create some information for young people going through that transition. The outcome was a leaflet containing information that the group wished that they had known when they started secondary school including messages such as 'it's ok not to know everything' and 'it's ok to be curious'.

<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/moving-schools-leaflet-starting-secondary-school/>

Finally, the young people made Christmas decorations to sell to raise money to buy gifts for young people who access services that are part of the PSCP. They donated £80 to the Edge of Care Team to buy gifts for several young people who were spending their first Christmas alone in independent living arrangements and have no contact with their families. They also

donated £50 to the Christmas for Care Leavers Giving Tree appeal which aims to ensure that all care experienced young people receive a Christmas gift.

Find out more:

<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/young-safeguards-2/>

TRAUMA-INFORMED PLYMOUTH



The PSCP ensures that trauma informed practice is maintained and will apply the trauma-informed lens in its work by using the Trauma Informed Plymouth Network principles. This means that throughout its arrangements the PSCP shall ensure that it supports the 5 core values for a trauma-informed Plymouth:

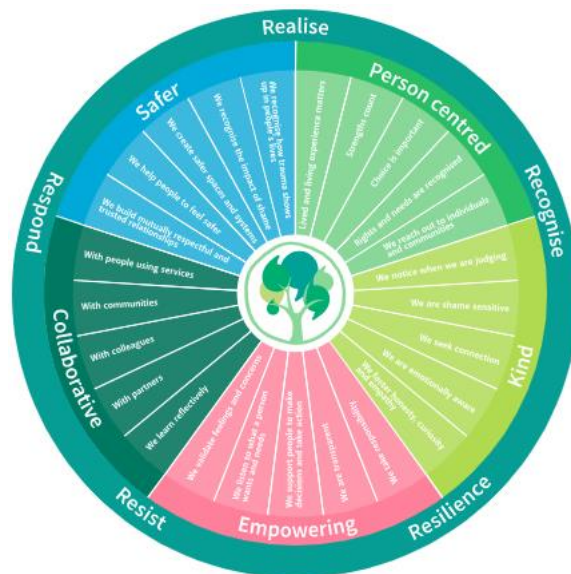
Safer: there is consideration of the psychological safety of those involved in and impacted by its safeguarding arrangements. When meeting, engaging and working with children, young people, families, communities and professionals all efforts shall be made to establish trusting relationships.

Person centred: understanding the lived experience of children, young people, families and communities and the circumstances which led to their involvement within services. Voices of the child, young person, families and communities shall be listened to and heard with respect.

Collaborative: children, young people, families, communities and professionals are treated as equal partners in the PSCP safeguarding arrangements. Learning shall be reflective with openness and emotional awareness.

Empowering: there is an overriding expectation that the PSCP safeguarding arrangements shall make a genuine difference. All involved, engaged or working within safeguarding services deserve to know that their contributions have influenced real change and that the PSCP is going to ensure that learning from their involvement, engagement or work is meaningful and widely disseminated.

Kind: ensure that language is appropriate and mindful of victim blaming or falling into judgement. There shall be understanding that traumatic circumstances may evidence behaviour that is considered challenging, and the trauma lens shall be applied to try to understand the underlying cause of this. There shall be kindness, clear transparent and compassionate communication and engagement.



PARTNERSHIP HEALTH CHECK 2024

In 2023 Plymouth took part in a partnership Health Check facilitated by the Local Authority Department for Education lead Deborah Macmillan to ensure we were embracing the Working Together guidance. As a partnership we chose to take the opportunity to complete the health check to encourage growth through a strong self-evaluation which helped us identify our strengths and areas we need to continue to improve on. In 2024 we have completed a follow up health check to help us identify any further improvements required and to help reflect on our growth in the last year, this also guides us with adequate next steps (See Appendix A).

Some Highlights of improvement from the report include:

- There is a proactive approach to problem-solving, with a focus on resolving issues collaboratively rather than attributing blame.
- Senior leaders have continued to strengthen, improve and innovate services to benefit children and their families, and they have been influential in bringing partners together, including more recently education colleagues.
- Strong partnership engagement, together with easily accessible family hubs, is enabling families to access timely, well-targeted help when their needs are first identified.
- Partnership arrangements are stronger. Children are protected by partnership arrangements that have strengthened since the last health check. The safeguarding partnership arrangements, forward plan, and the proposed scrutiny plan will provide assurance with an ambitious, child centred approach to improving practice for children.
- Strong political and partnership support has enabled the senior leadership team to be an effective champion for children, young people and their families.
- Quality assurance processes are improving, with multi-agency and single-agency audits identifying outstanding practices and focusing on learning.
- A new scrutiny strategy includes independent scrutineers conducting deep dives into key areas.
- The Young Safeguarders group provides effective challenge and has directly influenced practice with an excellent example shared of seeking feedback and acting on that feedback.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED

The PSCP provides a large amount of multi-agency training to professionals across the city. Below is a snapshot of what we've done in the past twelve months.

Courses for 2024-2025



Headline Numbers



What Participants have Valued

We seek feedback during and after all our training courses. Over the past twelve months, participants have valued:

Multi-agency working, and meeting other colleagues who work within different sectors

New webinars following feedback and training needs assessments via the partnership

Practical activities during sessions within groups to enable discussion.

Use of real world learning such as case studies, learning on a page, child safeguarding practice reviews.

Find out more:

Our full training offer and more information about how to book on can be found on our website: <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/training-development/course-information-and-bookings/>

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING INTO PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK

Below are sections of feedback provided by attendees at some of the training sessions provided by the partnership.

Making a Difference

Since the meeting, I have attended a CIN meeting for child neglect. Parents openly admit they are struggling to parent their 4 children. At the meeting parents talked about their struggles with bedtime and teachers had raised concerns about the children being given devices to use at bedtime and the 5 year old sometimes using it until midnight. I understood that these parents needed little steps given them to help them achieve and clear and simple explanations of why bedtime routine and sleep was so important to the child, along with the long term benefits for themselves as parents. I explained all of these and helped them see how small steps in the right direction would be in the best interests of their child and would also benefit themselves as parents. The parents were receptive and appeared to take on board what I said. - *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

Making a Difference

We recently have had a new child to the class, who struggled to talk/open up to the adults within the class. He had trust issues with adults at the previous school he attended. There was clearly something bothering him but felt like he couldn't talk about. After using the DO'S and DON'Ts of what I asked and the language I used the child now feels comfortable to talk to me. - *Understanding Child Protection*

Making a Difference

Navigating a challenging conversation with a parent to gain consent for a social care referral. the training and examples given on the course helped me to frame things well and eventually gain positive engagement from parents which resulted in long term engagement with relevant support and progress for the family and young person –*Child Protection Refresher*

Making a Difference

My situation is that we have a young man with us for almost 8 years, we are PCC foster carers. My example is more of a reflection around the use of the word choices. I understand the reasoning behind people being told they are making a choice that may have negative consequences but I think children and adults are often not capable of making those choices due to past trauma, neglect and abuse so I now think very carefully about how I use that word. –*Understanding Child Protection*

Making a Difference

As a new DSL, it gave me a lot of confidence about what to do in various situations I've not faced before. I would now feel more able to pick up the phone and ask for advice. – *Understanding the Role of the LADO*

Making a Difference

I was really pleased with the training, felt the trainers provided a really good course. I will be taking away from the training a different way to view the support given and needed to support children with disabilities. How many people are involved in one child life when having disabilities. The vulnerabilities children with disabilities have and what to look out for and when to challenge. - *Safeguarding Children With Disabilities*

Making a Difference

I really enjoyed the 10 wishes. I will keep that at my forefront going forward and encourage others to look them up. – *Having Curious and Courageous Conversations*

The training provides consistency of practice across the Partnership, and it enables relationships to be built for better working together arrangements.
The training gives all practitioners a base line of understanding which causes confidence in the practitioner.



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED

The Partnership agreed 4 priority areas of Neglect; Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Abuse & Children, and Safeguarding Adolescents for 2023-2024 and this has been taken forward into 2024-2025.

In 2023 the partnership embarked on a large piece of work to create a strategy, practice guidance and toolkit in each priority area using multi-agency task and finish groups. The creation of this ensured we were being ambitious about making a difference with our priorities to keep children and young people safe in Plymouth.

These strategies, practice guidance and toolkits were launched at the Summer 2024 conference and on the PSCP website. The task and finish groups working on the priorities in 2023-2024 became working groups to deliver on the strategies and to implement learning from audits, local and national learning reviews and emerging themes and trends in these areas.

The working groups have become an intrinsic part of The Partnership delivering on the priorities to make improvements for children and young people in a prevention space and as evidenced in the report the work of these groups is already making a difference.

Looking forward to 2025-2026 as per our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements we will be completing specialist independent scrutiny in each of our priority areas to identify further growth areas.

Find out more:

PSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements can be found here - <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/annual-report/>

OUR PRIORITIES - NEGLECT

In Plymouth we recognise that neglect is challenging for practitioners as it is frequently passive and not always intentional. Neglect is more likely to be a chronic condition rather than crisis-led and this impacts on how agencies respond. It is often combined with other forms of abuse.

Plymouth is committed to prevention, early identification, and intervention in respect of neglect and its negative impact on children and young people, because of the serious impact it has on the long-term chances for children.

The Partnership made the decision to carry forward the priority of Neglect into 2024/2025 as Children on Child protection plans continue to be highest in the category of neglect with figures indicating 52.4% in March 2025, compared to 49.5% in March 2024 and 35.5% in 2023, demonstrating an ongoing yearly increasing trend, however this year it is felt that this is likely due to earlier recognition. The use of the Graded Care Profile (GCP) 2 tool might have helped with this, however this is difficult to evidence this as we are unable to electronically report on its usage.

In the summer of 2024, The Partnership launched an ambitious neglect strategy, practice guidance and toolkit at the annual conference and on the Partnership website, not only to assist practitioners but also to highlight what we plan to do as a partnership to prevent neglect and provide better outcomes for children.

Alongside the strategy, guidance and toolkit an Operational Neglect working group which started as a task and finish group in 2023/2024, was created. This partnership group has completed valuable multi-agency work to address neglect and to assist with and action learning from quality assurance multi-agency audits to ensure constant learning and growth.

In this last year the group has focused on:

- Oral Health Neglect
- Educational Neglect
- Continued Embedding of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) tool.

Police are ensuring body worn video is used at the initial attendance of all neglect incidents, which is crucial in achieving better outcomes at court.

- Starting to focus on poverty alongside other partnership groups and how this can impact on families.
- Audit activity and learning

Oral Health Neglect: A Specialist in Paediatric Dentistry attended the meeting to share information about the processes relating to their area of work – including MASH referrals in the instance that children were not brought to appointments. This highlighted an area for further discussion and exploration to see whether there is any further support that could be offered to children/young people who were not attending dental appointments, where threshold was not met for an initial assessment by social care. It is hoped that progression of these discussions will help to provide a greater understanding about reasons why children/young people may not be brought to appointments and any support needs.

During meetings, the Specialist in Paediatric Dentistry shared information relating to early help messaging relating to oral health hygiene. Family Hubs progressed these discussions and have requested additional information relating to areas of the city where the need for extractions in children may be more prevalent. This would enable us to target information sharing and support. In addition, a Padlet has been created promoting good oral health hygiene. This is available for access by parents/carers and families.

Educational Neglect: there have been numerous discussions around non-attendance at school and educational neglect. It has been recognised that this is a broad term that required further exploration. Discussion in a Neglect Learning Review identified that educational neglect may not be viewed the same as other areas of neglect.

It provided an opportunity to consider the curious conversations that are held when concerns about attendance arise, as well as the various ways schools offer support to children, young people and families. There was recognition that schools are proactive in trying to build relationships with families.

In considering the area of neglect and how outcomes for children can be further improved, we reflected upon information sharing and the importance of gathering information from not just a

current school but previous schools, particularly if the child has recently joined a new school. We also discussed how support such as home visits are vital in understanding what life is like for agencies and how information held by schools could be joined with information held by other agencies, to increase understanding about circumstances and experience.

Making a Difference

Case Study:

We have a strong evidence based case study which demonstrates how Multi agency working and the recognition of agency voice and concern in relation to our student is going to provide our student with the best outcomes into adulthood.

Our case study was initially a Child Protection which stepped down to a Child In Need on recommendation of CSC. However, it was agreed we would monitor a Child In Need Plan initially to monitor the progress. Unfortunately concerns continued to be shared during constant CIN review meetings. The social worker listened to all agency concerns and evidence and in between reviews called professional meetings so we could share openly and transparently our worries without adding further impact to the parent's already failing mental health.

The child's voice was considered at all times and their aspirations for success. During legal planning meetings the child shared his thoughts and feelings and the parent was able to have an understanding of the non-judgemental requirement for the child to enter care.

Impact:

The outcome of the case is that our student is predicted, based on his mocks, our highest achieving grades in August. He has support and stability and his basic needs being met whilst still maintaining a relationship with his parent whilst their health improves. Our student's attendance was previously low and it is now 100% with all barriers removed including the FSW allocated helping him to obtain and ride a bike to give him freedom.

The multi agency context of Housing, adult social care, adult mental health, therapeutic agencies, schools and CSC demonstrated a thorough robust group who all felt equally listened to and heard by the social worker.

GCP2: In 2023 the PS CP embedded the use of the NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) and work has continued into 2024/2025 to strengthen the embedding of this and provide continued training. The GCP2 can help families understand their child's needs and create conversations that lead to positive change and progress. It creates a consistent approach and shared language for us in Plymouth when responding to neglect and helps families get the right support at the right time.

In the S175/157 schools audit, 67% of schools reported they had a trained member of staff able to undertake GCP2 assessment. DO WE HAVE DATA?

Making a Difference

Feedback from families about GCP2:

Family 1 - Mum had a mild learning need and she said that she found the traffic light scoring easy to understand.

Family 2 - "it was less having it done about me and more I was doing it with you", "i felt like I had a voice". She also said that she liked that it showed her what she was already doing well and that she could clearly see what she needed to do to be in the next box.

Impact:

For the 2 children and families where the GCP2 was undertaken, 1 child no longer required to be placed under a CP/CIN,

This allowed professionals to feel reassured that the family no longer required support.

The second GCP2 undertaken, identified that the mother continued to struggle despite the support and the child was placed with a family member.

Poverty: Schools are in the front line of dealing with issues around poverty which are having an impact on family's capacity to meet children's basic needs. They have been setting up food banks and sharing of other resources in their local communities and lots of work to signpost families to support. Staff are bringing in food and clothing, schools are doing washing and providing hampers. Period products are available. Food vouchers. Family support workers

helping parents to provide safe and nurturing home environments and understand how to respond to conflict and set and hold boundaries.

Action for children have identified a number of families who are experiencing challenges around finances. As part of this, some families are struggling to purchase food and/or essential items for their children. During the identified time period, we provided 17 foodbank vouchers and supported 34 families with grant applications.

The provision of foodbank vouchers and promotion of foodbanks has helped to ensure that children and families have access to food / nutrients, to support health and growth. It has helped to minimise the possibility that children could be going hungry through lack of available food.

Making a Difference

The Public Protection Unit (PPU) in the Police had a recent investigation of serious neglect and child sexual abuse. The abuse covered a wide timespan and resulted in physical and psychological harm including an unplanned pregnancy. The police worked collaboratively with partner agencies to safeguard both the victim and her sibling, gathered evidential material to prove the offences whilst highlighting aggravating factors and secured a lengthy custodial sentence for the two perpetrators of abuse. The officers committed to this case from the very beginning and despite the harrowing circumstances, maintained agility and dedication to seeking justice. The officers protected the victim who was unable to protect herself. They operated with compassion, respect and commitment to safeguarding her and the wider community. As a result, the offenders were sentenced, and the victim and her sibling were safeguarded from further harm.

Audit activity and Learning: In the Police, Detective Inspectors complete audit reviews which include reviewing offences of neglect. It is evident that the victims voice is being recorded and consideration to the children and family's welfare, safeguarding and interests are being afforded throughout the investigation and when deciding on appropriate outcomes.

The PPU DI and a Children's Social Care Team Manager have monthly meetings to discuss good work, potential barriers and service failures to ensure we improve our service delivery to children and families these meetings have been vital in providing swift interventions and addressing areas of concern.

In CYPFS partnership and inhouse quality assurance activity evidence that our practice with children experiencing neglect is a strong area of practice.

Children Services quality assurance activity evidence that we are improving outcomes for children living with neglect by connecting them with other services for longer term support and intervention. Family hubs have played a key role in their support of families with younger children, parenting programmes are building parenting skills and connecting families to local community networks.

The Probation service supervises perpetrators of neglect and manage the risk of harm they pose, through working with child safeguarding colleagues and robustly managing their order or licence accordingly. Probation officers look for evidence of neglect completing home visits and during supervision sessions by their account of their day-to-day life.

Safeguarding checks are also completed at court to inform professional pre-sentence reports so that children can be safeguarded effectively.

Multi-agency neglect quality assurance activity evidences the following neglect practice strengths:

- Practitioners have a good understanding of neglect and families are experiencing high support and high challenge particularly from school and Family Hubs
- Family Hubs are seeing an increase in fathers engaging with the service, supporting a 'think family' approach
- Practitioners have a greater understanding of the importance of being aware of the child/family in their wider context
- There are pockets of good practice within the city, demonstrated through use of genograms and writing to the child

- Schools are recognised as being good at collecting and recording the child's voice and experience in their own words
- We now have 460 Graded Care Profile 2(GCP2) licensed practitioners within the city
- There is evidence that the GCP2 tool is supporting reflection and decision making with families which improves outcomes for children

Making a Difference

In the most recent Neglect Learning Review, it was applauded that there has been an increase in both confidence in recognising and having supportive and challenging conversations around neglect. This has a positive impact for children, young people and families as it should mean increased awareness around neglect and the importance of acknowledging this and exploring circumstances relating to this. The GCP2 was recognised as a tool that can help to provide a common language and understanding.

Find out more:

Our Neglect Strategy, Practice Guidance and Toolkit can be found on our website:
<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/neglect/>

OUR PRIORITIES - SAFEGUARDING

ADOLESCENTS

In 2023 a task and finish group for Safeguarding Adolescents was created to work together on the creation of a strategy, practice guidance and toolkit around safeguarding our adolescents in Plymouth. In 2024 this group developed into the Safeguarding Adolescents Working Group (SAWG) and now incorporates all the work of the Strategic Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) group with a wider remit.

The Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) model which replaced the operational MACE in 2023 is now firmly embedded in the city and has been highlighted as good practice by partners.

The Child Centred Policing Team plays an integral role within the DIB. A selected officer attends every day and provides updates on all missing children in the previous 24hrs. The DIB allows all attending agencies a way of providing immediate operational support to that child and family whilst ensuring strategy meetings are fast tracked through the system.

This has proven invaluable and with immediate real time information sharing has led to quicker response times for support or action.

The Child Centred Policing Team is a conduit between partner agencies and the police when actively looking for a child or dealing with the child as a victim or offender.

The Probation Service works with partners to help the transition for young people between children and adult services. They have a young persons officer who has transfer meetings and works with 18-24 year olds in a trauma informed way.

The information from the DIB is then fed into the SAWG which takes a more strategic view of longer-term issues such as problem locations, alongside identified themes and trends.

Making a Difference

Police have shared that During the past 12 months there have been three male juveniles within Plymouth who have been very active in drug misuse, drug supply, assaults against the person, anti-social behaviour, theft of motor vehicles and themselves been victims of crime due to associations with high-risk offenders.

Due to the DIB process and the participation of partner agencies, information has flowed seamlessly throughout The Partnership resulting in all three being swiftly and robustly dealt with through both the criminal justice system and child safeguarding structures of the PSCP. Their offending has been curtailed significantly to the point they are no longer a substantial threat to the public and all are now working with support agencies with an aim of further reducing the likelihood of them offending in future, whilst they and their families receive the support they require.

The speed at which this happened has been down to the existence of the DIB and the close partnership working it has created.

Prior to the DIB this would have taken far longer due to agencies not being aligned. This increases the threat, risk and harm to them and the wider public.

A representative from the DIB attends the education reference group and DSL briefings to provide updates from the DIB.

The updates provide assurance to schools that other agencies are aware of emerging issues around safeguarding adolescents and information about what action is being taken to address them.

A member of the education reference group also attends the DIB each day and links in with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) from other schools.

DSL's sharing intelligence so that other schools can review contextual risks for their pupils including places and persons of concern. Peer group mapping meetings.

All leading to individual and groups being safeguarded from immediate risk and supported in the longer term.

Making a Difference

Last summer agencies made a commitment to work with an identified group of adolescents at higher risk who attend ACE schools MAT Bretonside school. They joined staff on Friday mornings taking the group out on activities to build positive relationships and work with them to improve their understanding of risk and give them strategies to keep themselves safe. The S175/157 education audit showed a year-on-year increase from 73% to 93% of schools reporting they had trained staff available to support pupils expressing suicidal intent

The focus for the Safeguarding Adolescent group this year has been

- Child Hunger
- Exploitation
- Launching a new streamlined Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF)
- Finalising the strategy practice guidance and toolkit on the PSCP website
- Audit activity and learning

The percentage of schools reporting that they complete the Child Exploitation screening tool rose from 85% to 98% year on year.

Child hunger- The group are working with the neglect group and wider partners looking at child poverty as already detailed within this report and will be exploring how to break the stigma for young people living in poverty. The group are currently also working with Plymouth Against

Retail Crime (PARC) to ensure that more shops sign up to a scheme to safeguard children and ensure this is seen as a priority and not just as a crime reporting tool. The group will also highlight the issue to shops in the city that decide not become part of PARC.

All children reported missing are reported to UHP on a daily basis. The administrative team add an alert onto the child's record so that if a child presents to UHP and they are missing it alerts the clinician to call 999 to contact the police and also to make contact with the local authority.

Exploitation: The Safeguarding Adolescents Working Group (SAWG) has the aim of understanding and reducing contextual harm within the city. The group have identified child exploitation as one of their priorities.

Our aim is to identify the prevalence of this issue in Plymouth to enable learning around key themes and trends and for support to be put in place in those areas where it is needed the most. We would also like to understand the challenges that schools face in supporting those most affected and to try and find solutions to support the great work our education colleagues already do in this space.

Making a Difference

Strategic Cooperative Commissioning and SAWG representatives from ACE schools are jointly leading on exploitation and have sent a survey on reduced timetables to DSLs in schools to understand how the school community supports pupils, and their families, if the pupils are on reduced timetable/suspended/persistently or severely absent, which can be a risk factor for exploitation.

A link has been made with a researcher at Plymouth Marjon University who will contact school survey respondents who volunteer to participate in follow up interviews to gain more in-depth understanding of the impact of reduced timetable/suspended/persistently or severely absent on pupils and their families.

The Plymouth Marjon University research project above is also working in partnership with Plymouth City Council to seek the views on school attendance from parents, carers and children to better understand the reasons why children and young people with SEND (school years 6-11) may struggle to attend school. These research findings will then be shared with schools and education partners in the city to help develop and strengthen attendance strategies and identify what can be done differently to support families. These surveys will close on 1st May 2025 and parents and carers have also been invited to participate in follow up interviews. We hope to jointly present these findings with Plymouth Marjon University researcher to SAWG in the autumn of 2025.

The intention is that the SAWG school survey will have questions that can be incorporated into the annual statutory S175/157 Audit from next year as the survey will be live from June to September.

Launching a New Streamlined Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF): a more streamlined version of the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) (Safer me assessment), a tool used to identify children at risk of or experiencing exploitation was created and launched in 2024-2025 with training inputs. Partners have been supporting the co-delivery of the multi-agency Safer Me training.

Audit Activity and Learning: Quality assurance activity has evidenced that the sharing of risk information at the daily DIB meetings so quickly after the risks have been identified has enabled Children Service and the Partnership to respond to the risks and reduce them in a timelier way for the child.

The delay with the simplified adolescent framework and toolkit caused confusion to continue for practitioners and, outside of the bespoke edge of care team, quality assurance activity evidenced this confusion. The edge of care team quality assurance activity found strong practice with timely responses for families, good wrap around support packages and creative bespoke plans that reduce risks for adolescents and build sustained improved outcomes for them.

Data of Return home interviews for children going missing shows that we are in line and better than statistical neighbours.

It is difficult to evidence the number of safer me assessments completed as we have no reporting for this currently.

Making a Difference

Action for Children have been involved in supporting adolescents. They worked with a parent who was under 16 years of age. As a young person, the parent had lived experiences of domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, financial, emotional and physical abuse. This resulted in the parent being homeless and staying in various properties.

The parent and their child had no access to their own money due to the parent's age. We supported the parent to apply for benefits when they turned 16 years old. We then supported the parent and child to find supported accommodation. We worked with the family to complete an EHAT and also made a MASH referral and continued to support the family as part of the multi-agency CIN plan. The EHAT was reconvened as concerns decreased and the family are now living independently within the community

Impact

We supported the young parent in her own right, as a parent as well as offer of support for the child.

Making a Difference

Together for Childhood - NSPCC has contributed to the development of the strategy, toolkit and resources by participating in the working group.

Following the recommendations of the Violence Against Women and Girls Commission, partners across Plymouth came together to build a campaign aimed at kick starting conversations between professionals, parents/carers and young people about online harms-and more specifically online pornography and it's growing influence on harmful behaviour. This was named **Project Porn** by the group of young people supported by NSPCC and PCC Participation teams: The 12-month campaign on tackling the harm caused by violence against women and girls in pornography took a huge leap forward with young people from the Local Authority youth services and NSPCC campaigns and TFC young person ambassadors completing their development work. They worked hard to develop what they thought was needed to raise awareness and support critical conversations amongst peers on Porn influence. They developed 2 key resources, one that supports Year 7 children transitioning into secondary school and an activity pack named 'Tricky Topics' which provides age-appropriate information on Porn and online harms and signposts to NSPCC help and support. This followed the development and delivery of a youth led theatrical performance developed for schools to engage pupils in the topic and provide the opportunity for a supportive and informed conversation with professional youth workers.

Please download the book by and share far and wide with young people so we can make sure they can benefit from the amazing information it contains. <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/tricky-topics/>



Impact

This resource has been made available to all young people in years 7 & 8 across Plymouth as a hard copy as part of transition work and is published on the PSCP website. Demand for the information and how the project developed has been coming in from other local authorities including Somerset after the BBC picked it up and covered the story.

Find out more:

Our SAWG Strategy, Practice Guidance and Toolkit can be found on our website:
<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/adolescents/>

OUR PRIORITIES - DOMESTIC ABUSE AND CHILDREN

The PSCP recognises that Domestic Abuse continues to be a significant concern with regards to safeguarding children and therefore has chosen for it to remain as a priority area in the Partnership.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 formally classified children as victims when they experience the effects of abuse between adults in their household. This legislative change acknowledges the profound emotional and psychological harm children endure in abusive environments and ensures they are provided support services in line with them too being a victim of this abuse in their own right.

The Objectives for 2024-2025 of the Domestic Abuse and Children Working Group have been:

- The toolkit and guidance
- JTAI self-assessment audit
- Training offer
- Audit activity and learning
- DA Practice Week

The toolkit and guidance: The PSCP, in partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence partnership board, created a strategy, practice guidance and toolkit to address Domestic Abuse and Children in 2024-2025. This toolkit brings together guidance, tools and information for practitioners and has been compiled by the Community Connections team in Plymouth City Council with the support of a wide range of organisations to ensure that it meets the needs of a broad range of practitioners. The task and finish group formed to create the practice guidance and toolkit has developed into a multi-agency working group linked to the PSCP and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence board within the Plymouth Community Safety Partnership.

This has taken a considerable amount of time, attention and research to develop and to translate into something well laid out and usable online. The content included has been through a process of quality assurance, formatting, organisation and where applicable

instructions for use are included and will be formally launched with an online workshop later in 2025.

The children and domestic abuse day training course has been aligned with the guidance, toolkit and most up to date practice. Through the process of leading the development of the toolkit, Verity Meeson, technical lead for domestic abuse, has been able to uplift content across training courses. The toolkit has been made more practice focussed now that foundational knowledge is covered within the e-learning package available which has an improved take up rate.

JTAI Self-assessment audit: As well as completion of the practice guidance and toolkit the group have been focusing on results from a JTAI Domestic Abuse themed self-assessment audit based on questions within the national JTAI audit.

The audit identified areas to be strengthened and existing good practice. It was presented to the PSCP Board in December 2024. In March 2025, the DA and children's group translated the areas to be strengthened into action points and within meetings are actively monitoring progress as well as discussing, problem solving and collaborating on the 54 system wide action points.

Some of the identified areas for improvement are complex issues, requiring resource, capacity or culture change in order to be achieved. The DA and Children's subgroup have shown tenacity and creativity in tackling these 'difficult issues'. For example, one of the identified issues is lack of temporary accommodation places for domestic abuse survivors. Creating new housing is beyond the scope of the subgroup, but to mitigate this issue, PCC Housing have commissioned floating support to families living in temporary accommodation affected by domestic abuse. Training courses developed will upskill delegates on post separation abuse risk and options for supporting people to remain safe in their own homes, including working with perpetrators to hold them to account. DASV partnership work is also ongoing in respect of implementation of the whole housing approach. This work with providers seeks to increase safe accommodation bed spaces. Longer term housing work to increase housing stock in the city is also ongoing.

The impact of this work will be improvements across our services that will benefit children and young people affected by domestic abuse, aligned to the gaps in our existing response that we've identified.

Training: The VAWG team with their knowledge of Domestic Homicide Reviews both within Plymouth, but more broadly across Devon and Cornwall and their experience of developing the practice guidance and electronic toolkit can bring this knowledge into the development and refresh of training courses for the city. This ensures practitioners are accessing training that reflects the real learning emerging from case reviews.

The impact of this work is a more confident and competent workforce, who are able to integrate learning into practice and who are aware of the specific issues for Plymouth families.

Plymouth's first free, city-wide workforce development programme is now up and running. This includes the following training courses:

Level 1:

- e-learning VAWG DASV – developed by the VAWG Team
- VAWG Bystander training and community of practice
- Coordinated Community Response (CCR) workshops – led by the VAWG Team

Level 2:

- Coercive Control Homicide and Suicide Timeline
- Risk Assessment and Safety Planning – co-delivered between VAWG Team and PDAS
- Engaging with people causing harm
- DA and Children/Safeguarding Training - delivered by the VAWG Team
- Taking an intersectional approach to VAWG/DASV/VAWG Anti-racism champion training

Level 3:

- Adult child to parent abuse
- Non-Fatal Strangulation
- DA and Suicide

The Probation service has a new Accredited Programme; Building Choices works with DA perpetrators to encourage alternative behaviours.

Training Statistics

- As of Dec 2024 203 External people and 123 Internal staff had completed the e-learning package.
- VAWG bystander training has been delivered to (adult course) 20 people and (children) 6 people with an online children's course planned for 2025.
- The DA/safeguarding training was attended by 66 people and an evaluation provided.
- Homicide timeline training e-learning has been completed by 450 Plymouth professionals identified as being priority for accessing this learning. These licenses were funded by OPCC and whilst we reached a cap on numbers for licences, we have been able to commission three homicide timeline webinars being held in autumn 2025 which will significantly increase the numbers accessing this information. This training will equip practitioners to understand risk escalation in domestic abuse and risk mitigation which are crucial for preventing risk to children.



Partners adopt a think family approach, In UHP when working with an adult experiencing domestic abuse, that staff member is trained to think about the children at home, and to safeguard them. In Probation the risk assessment has been amended to think more widely about the risk of DA harm to children

Audit Activity and Learning: The DA and Children's working group have examined the findings from audit learning. These were presented at the meeting in March 2025. The areas of strong practice identified were:

- Early Help from Family Hubs is providing longer term support with a consistent 'open door' approach.

- Safeguarding training in schools has enabled primary schools to be more professionally curious regarding both parents and children's behaviours and conversations, and it is enabling them to be attentive to behaviour changes displayed by children and families.
- Family Support Workers in the Emergency Department are signposting families to community support.
- Children's lived experience is brought into unborn baby panel, safeguarding midwives monthly panel, and MARAC.
- There are more opportunities for males to share concerns and seek support.
- The opportunities to attend domestic abuse recovery programmes has improved.
- Public Health Nursing offer routine enquiries and completion of the DASH assessment as required.
- There are additional Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) across the Partnership.
- CPOMS is being used by many schools to log safeguarding issues. Themed reports can be downloaded, and the transfer of safeguarding files between schools is efficient.
- There is a shared system between Family Hubs (ESTART) that ensures that children's risk information remains available even when families move.
- Family hubs have no time limits with their work with families.

It was identified that we need to strengthen practice in the following areas:

- We need to consistently identify children and families experiencing domestic abuse earlier and increase our direct work with them.
- Police Protection Notices are not being received by Early Years providers and Family Hubs.
- There is some confusion about what support is available for families.
- Housing is no longer consistently part of the team around the family.
- Police officers are often not given any historical information when sent to a domestic abuse incident.
- Children Service do not always inform referring agencies of referral and assessment outcomes.
- We need to consider the impact of a parent's lived experience on their capacity to parent children.

- Some families do not have the opportunity of specific recovery programmes because of where they live.

The next steps that were all confirmed to be underway were:

- Children service to consider parents lived experience in assessments and share referral and assessment outcomes with partner agencies.
- Early years and Family Hubs to receive domestic abuse Public Protection Notices so they can provide support to children and families.
- Housing teams to be re-engaged with the team around the family to support domestic abuse risks to reduce.
- Domestic abuse guidance and toolkits to be available on the Partnership website for practitioners.
- Police to consider how safeguarding information could be shared with front line officers to make them aware of previous history before arriving at a job.
- Family hubs to develop a framework that enables recovery programmes to be available across the city and not dependant on a family's post code.
- A review of the training that police, fire and ambulance services receive regarding domestic abuse and children to ensure that it is robust.
- Police to develop their recording of a child's lived experience within Public Protection Notices.
- Increase the availability of information about domestic abuse services via the Partnership website.

Making a Difference

Children's Services have stated writing reports direct to children has supported us to see their world through their eyes and this has caused greater empathy and an increased desire to effect change for children.

Children's Disability Team's use of creative communication has enabled us to capture children's wishes and feelings, so their plans are more child led.

An increased recognition of children's risks has enabled the right support to be put in place sooner.

As found in the audit activity, Family Hubs are providing a consistent “open door” approach providing longer term support through various programmes including the freedom programme, Monkey Bob – Do you feel what I feel, DART – Domestic Abuse Recovery Together, RTK – Recovery Toolkit for Young People and Barnardos Domestic Abuse pathway. Case studies from family hubs show us how partnership working enables a better service and support to families experiencing Domestic Abuse (see Appendices B, C and D)

DA Practice Week: The PSCP held a Multi-Agency Practice week on the theme of Domestic Abuse in November 2024 where various partners delivered informative webinars for anyone to attend, further information and feedback received can be found on the PSCP website here- <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/domestic-abuse-practice-week-november-2024/>

Making a Difference

Family Hubs Programme feedback

- ‘I left my ex so my whole life has changed for the better’
- ‘It’s given my confidence and power in myself. It helped me to respond less to abusive behaviours and see the bigger picture and lessen the impact of my ex’s behaviours on my mental health’
- ‘it has helped me see abuse from other people in my life’
- ‘my whole life has changed for the better’
- ‘I’m glad I chose to do this course, it opened my eyes’
- ‘Excellent programme, can’t praise it enough. Makes the behaviours and tactics very clear which means I can use my voice and instincts much more. Thank you’
- Parents are more confident in parenting
- Parents are more confident in understanding their children’s behaviour and the trauma they have experienced due to the domestic abuse
- Young people feel more confident
- Young people report a better relationship with their mum
- Young people have a better understanding of a healthy relationship
- Young people have better attendance at school

Partnership Progress throughout this last year:

Children in a domestic abuse incident who sadly are injured have a Child Protection medical examination on the same day. UHP will see them in CP safeguarding clinic in hours, or on the Children's Assessment out of hours by a Consultant Paediatrician.

From Q1 (2024/25) up to the end of Q4 (2024/25) the Livewell Health Team: MASH have received and inputted Police incident reports (PPN's) for **11904** children compared with **10366** the previous year indicating a **12.9% increase** in notifications over the last year.

In the Education S175/157 audit 98% of settings reported that they access and respond to Operation Encompass information daily as it comes in. However only 84% of settings felt that the information received was sufficient for them to follow up with a pupil successfully. DSL's have found sending PPN's and Operation Encompass via email creates a chance for them to be lost and stated a phone call and discussion would be of more benefit.

Multiple partner agencies attend MARAC meetings supporting the identification of Domestic Abuse risk to children.

A healthy relationships alliance has been developed. This alliance focuses on the implementation and embedding of a healthy relationships approach across local schools.

The main reason that young people access counselling in The Zone is due to domestic Abuse. We see the effect it has on their mental health and day to day functionality and are constantly looking for additional services to signpost them to for additional support.

Making a Difference

Police processes are in place for Officers who attend a domestic incident should submit a PPN for children, even if they are not present at the time of Police attendance. The PPN will be reviewed by the Central Safeguarding Team researchers. They will then send the PPN to the relevant local authority children's services, education and health. MASH staff record this and are co-located with Police; any further information or clarity can therefore be obtained quickly. When the PPN is regarding a child who has a social worker, it is forwarded to them directly. If the child is not open to children's services, the PPN will be reviewed by MASH social care and a contact record created.

Police also use Op Encompass to alert a school that a child has been exposed to domestic abuse.

These multiple layers of review by Police, social services, health and education intends to ensure that the multi-agency support can be given to the child to meet their needs and make a difference to their lived experience.

Impact

Police Niche template records and Children's Social Care score card and data currently does not specifically reflect the category of domestic abuse.

Information from police data does show the numbers of PPNs sent by police to CYPS that have a domestic abuse risk. With these processes police are confident that they recognise and deal with domestic abuse well but obtaining the data is a challenge.

Examples would be a strategy meeting held 22/04/25, this was honour based abuse and domestic abuse, two children involved as victims and with an outcome of S47 joint visit with police and social worker. This contact and strategy meeting was generated by a Police PPN.

Another strategy meeting on 22/04/25, domestic abuse was the reason for the meeting, two children and an outcome of S47 joint visit with police and social worker.

Domestic abuse is a common theme. Some of the initial reasons for the contact may be another type of harm but when the whole lived experience of the children is understood with the wealth

Find out more:

Our Domestic Abuse and Children, Practice Guidance and Toolkit can be found on our website:
<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/domestic-abuse-and-children/>

OUR PRIORITIES - CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Following the launch of the Strategy Practice Guidance and toolkit at the Partnership Conference in the summer of 2024, the task and finish group focusing on Child Sexual Abuse has now become an established working group for Child Sexual Abuse within the PSCP and Community Safety Partnership focusing on early intervention, prevention, managing harmful sexual behaviour, training and learning.

The focus for 2024-2025 has been:

- Embedding the signs and indicators tool across the safeguarding system utilising a task & finish group to maintain focus.
- Creating a train the trainer Level 3 CSA training input and subsequent partnership training
- Membership of the group
- Audit Activity and Learning

Embedding the signs and indicators tool: developed by the centre for expertise in CSA, has been delayed and this has slowed the improvements that we hoped to see through 24/25. However, since January 2025 there has been a renewed focus.

Training: working in partnership the PSCP, NSPCC and the Social Work Academy have increased trainer capacity and the local child sexual abuse training now covers the following areas:

- Child sexual abuse prevention workshop
- Introduction to harmful sexual behaviour
- Level 3 Child Sexual Abuse knowledge and response

The offer on training is always evolving with new half and whole day training being developed this year.

In addition to this a number of partner webinars and sessions have been delivered on a range of topics to support knowledge on child sexual abuse.

Together for Childhood has also been able to facilitate the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse working in the partnership to support the ambition to embed the routine use of the Signs and indicators of child sexual abuse.

The train the trainer CSA level 3 training has enabled the Children's services Advanced Practitioner's (AP's) to deliver this to the partnership which has had a twofold impact:

1. We can now offer monthly training when previously it was 3 times per year
2. This has kick started the APs to becoming champions of CSA in their teams which will assist to embed the signs and indicators tool within children's services.

Better informed partnership practitioners will be able to identify signs of abuse at an earlier stage to intervene and prevent harm.

Training has been rolled out to social work staff in November 2024, December 2024 and April 2025 to raise awareness and use of the signs and indicators tool and to assist social workers to improve their confidence and skill in assessing perpetrators and non-abusing adults.

11% of schools reported in the s175/157 audit that they had a gap in training around child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour however 100% of schools confirmed that all staff had received training in the identification of child sexual abuse and how to respond to concerns of a child being a victim of or at risk of sexual abuse.

More professionals are feeling confident to identify child sexual abuse and see behaviours that may be children telling us they are at risk rather than relying on verbal disclosures.

Making a Difference

Schools have seen a shift in response from professionals to more open curiosity about what may be happening for a child based on signs and indicators rather than relying on disclosures.

NSPCC has welcomed the opportunity to further contribute to the partnership training and workforce development offer this year in relation to child sexual abuse. Each year we are able to deliver more awareness raising on the issue and stop the silence that surrounds child sexual abuse we work together on prevention.

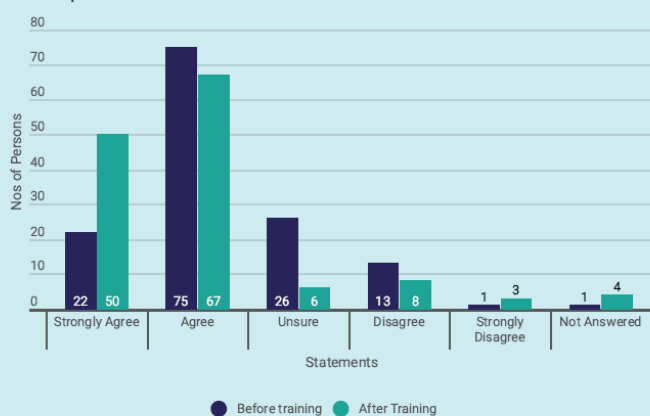
During the past year Together for Childhood have delivered the child sexual abuse workshop to over 250 professionals, below is a snapshot of Q4 feedback on the session in relation to knowledge gained.



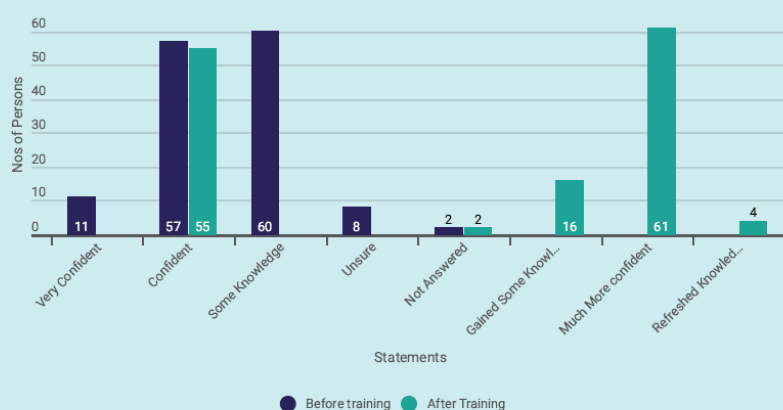
Plymouth Together for Childhood Quarterly Review - Q4 - 24-25

CSA Workshops YTD

To what extent do you agree with the statement "Child sexual abuse can be prevented"?



How confident did you feel about identifying the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse?



Total attendees: **138**

Was the training suitable for your learning needs/learning style? - **99.2%**

Overall, do you think the workshop has supported improvements in your:

Knowledge - **99.2%**

Practice Skills - **93%**

Confident - **94%**

Would you recommend this course to colleagues - **100%**

Building Choices is the probation service's new accredited programmes working with perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

The Zone receive a large number of disclosures around sexual assaults and child sexual abuse. They make the young person aware of procedure and reporting and ensure to support them through the disclosure, or by offering counselling sessions and any support sessions they may require.

Making a Difference

NSPCC – Together for Childhood (TfC) - Guiding CSA Partnership working

In Plymouth we are incredibly privileged to have the NSPCC Together For Childhood team as a partner, keeping us focused on the prevention of child sexual abuse, working closely with The Partnership and the Community.



EMPOWER – first developed as a partnership in 2018 between NSPCC and Barnardo's. This innovative young people led initiative supported young people to develop their own student led quality assurance framework for improving sex and relationships education way ahead of the current focus on the issue in schools. We are pleased to say that in 2024 this initiative developed in Plymouth by young people will be incorporated into the national NSPCC Talk Relationships programme and will eventually reach hundreds of schools and thousands of pupils across the country, placing young people's views and influence at the centre of school's approach to RSE!

Early June we had a great time at Brook Green Learning Academy who have embraced EMPOWER, showing the group all of the previous Young Voices Campaigns that had been created. The group loved looking at these and getting inspiration for starting their own Young Voices Campaign in school. The whole school approach project in Brook Green Centre for Learning concluded with the production of a campaign film which is being shown in school and to parents and carers, giving their voice to what they think is needed to promote healthy relationships. We have loved being back in Brook Green Centre for Learning to work on their Young Voices campaign! There were some really interesting discussions about the key messages they want to include and we can't wait to see how the campaign develops and influences practice.

Schools tell us that Several schools participated in the EMPOWER pilot as part of Talk Relationships project run by NSPCC to support secondary school teachers to confidently deliver sex and relationships education.

City College – Young people lead delivery of CSA Prevention workshop

This year we responded to research recommendations but more importantly young people directly when we were asked to work in partnership with pupils from City College. This has been an incredible development involving training and supporting young people 16+ to deliver a version of the Together for Childhood preventing sexual abuse workshop. Initial feedback has been very positive and we will be fully evaluating the approach for efficacy before looking at extending the approach for other post 16 education settings.

Healthy Body Behaviours: The Plymouth team along with key partners in Family Hubs and Early Years launched the new resource after months of collaborative development. The ambition of this project is part of a wider approach to normalise and create the conditions for families to discuss and understand healthy sexual development in their child from birth, creating healthy relationships whilst also helping parents be alert to signs and indicators that a child may need support.

Throughout September and October 2024 TfC Plymouth promoted healthy body behaviours as part of their work to keep children safe. The promotion included a workforce webinar, leaflet and social media messages.

Building Blocks:

- **Consistency**
- **Confidence**
- **Curiosity**
- **Name body parts**
- **Encourage safe touch**
- **Promote online safety**

Our aim was to use the 6 key building blocks to support early conversations that become part of everyday family talk. This work is with other professionals to increase their knowledge and confidence to have conversations with parents and represents a collaborative approach in the partnership.

Breaking the taboo on child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse prevention starts in the Community and this year Ernesettle achieved another milestone with the installation of 4 prominent signs in the community. The signs project is part of a wider campaign funded as part of the national lottery community potential programme (which ended in 2024). The signs are up to show everyone that there is a place to go and someone to talk to, ensuring child sexual abuse doesn't hide in silence. Since the signs were installed by Plymouth City Council the team have had feedback from survivors thanking TfC for its role in breaking the silence. A call to the base from a member of public commented: As an adult survivor of child sexual abuse, he said it was "so powerful" to see the signs and how he feels it will spark conversations about child sexual abuse.

He shared how seeing the signs made it feel like the community has his back, and helped him feel acknowledged, recognised and like he belongs. He also commented on how well placed the signs were, as these are significant places to him in relation to his abuse. He has taken our signs to be a sign to him to keep pushing and have his voice heard.

As part of the work, 3 videos have been produced and a safeguarding first aid session developed to help community volunteers be clear about their roles and responsibilities in helping to prevent child sexual abuse.

Early intervention in the community

Healthy Relationships badges awarded to children from the Squirrels group (31st Plymouth Ernesettle Scouts). The children (age 4-6) earn their TfC Healthy Relationship Badges by showing how they would be kind to others, the superpower of friendship and they even took "homework" back to their parents/carers so they could be involved too. All parents came to the badge presentation evening and joined in one of the activities the children had done as part of earning their badges. The scout District Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner along with leaders from other sections of the scouting movement attended as did our Service manager, Oliver Mackie. Each child received a Build-a-Bear alongside their badges and the parents took some PANTS resources to support them to talk to their children.



Stop it now

LUCY FAITHFULL FOUNDATION

Stop It Now Plymouth

Safer Plymouth funded a paid for marketing campaign promoting the anonymous Stop It Now helpline and website. The 2024/25 campaign in Plymouth gained 1.5 million impressions, with people in Plymouth clicking the link to get support from the anonymous Stop It Now helpline and self-help modules 10,576 times.

In addition, workforce development sessions were hosted by Together for Childhood and this facilitated national experts sharing their knowledge on subjects such as women as offenders and supporting a trauma informed workforce.

NSPCC Together for Childhood has contributed to the collective knowledge on what works to prevent abuse by delivering numerous learning events, facilitating agency audits and importantly publishing evidence on what works on NSPCC Learning. It is now incumbent on the partnership to embed this learning into the local system.

Key publications this past year include:



Learning and celebration event: In February 2025 we delivered a learning event to over 60 professionals.

Following the event, Professor Kieran McCartan and Shelley Shaw had a blog published on the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse website <https://blog.atsa.com/2025/02/were-in-this-together-now-how-together.html?m=1> which showcases the innovative work of Together for Childhood Plymouth



Audit Activity and Learning: Partnership QA activity has evidenced the following:

Strengths identified:

- Good use of the MASH Consultation line.
- Evidence that in-person meetings are leading to better outcomes for children because practitioner information sharing is better.
- where there is a consistent lead professional for the child their outcomes are more positive

Practice identified that needs to be strengthened:

- There remains an over reliance on verbal disclosure of CSA.
- Lack of consistency with regards to information sharing which leads to a lack of understanding of the child's lived experience.
- Children lose trust in professionals due to multiple changes and this impacts on a relational approach being offered.
- CYPFS not making full use of a child's full history to inform decision making.
- Not enough curiosity of the child with the sexually harmful behaviour to understand the reasons for it.
- The long length of police investigations is impacting on permanency planning for children
- A lack of robust support for practitioners who are dealing with CSA/HSB

QA activity within Children's Services has evidenced that when CSA evidence is clear, they respond quickly and confidently to reduce risks for children and that practice enables these low risks to be sustained.

More triangulation and conversations with partner agencies would support MASH with making decisions collaboratively, and we need to make better use of children's and parent's histories to inform analysis and decision making across the Initial Response and Children's Social Work teams.

The tools on the website have been welcomed.

Children's services has also improved working together with the Partnership, the Partnership team and learning academy to roll out the CSA training.

The Probation service regularly make disclosures to partner agencies about those they are working with to protect the public and refer into children's services if they feel a child may be at

Impact

Children with child protection plans are experiencing good levels of protection and plans are keeping risks low for them; when plans end the successful planning continues for the child.

Having a consistent lead practitioner prevents children and families from having to repeat their stories and the relationship that can develop facilitates disclosures are enables the familiar practitioner to quickly observe increased risks if this prevails.

22 children have child protection plans in Children's Services because of CSA. This is 6% of the total group subject to CP plans.

In November 2024, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published the National review into child sexual abuse within the family environment – "I wanted them all to notice." One of the main findings from the report was that there is often a silence around child sexual abuse and recommended all areas ensure they provide a comprehensive and effective training offer. This has been a priority for Plymouth and will continue to develop in 2025-26.

Making a Difference

Police Public Protection investigations are often lengthy and take some time for a court disposal. As such, providing specific detail for the last year could potentially frustrate a trial.

All officers have now completed extended specialist training around rape, sexual offences and child protection and are accredited through national Police learning programmes. This provides officers with sound knowledge to respond to child sexual abuse and support the children and families in an empathetic manner, whilst also considering the wider safeguarding implications. We now investigate sexual offences in line with the Soteria National Operating Model which provides children and families with a consistent police response.

The signs and indicators of child sexual abuse are widely known within the crime and vulnerability commands of policing, and we continue to share learning with our front-line response colleagues and call handling/dispatch teams to highlight the importance of recognising these.

The PPU also works collaboratively with Children's Social Care to highlight issues and discuss complex cases.

Find out more:

Our Child Sexual Abuse, Practice Guidance and Toolkit can be found on our website:
<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/child-sexual-abuse/>

CONFERENCE

In June 2024 we hosted our Partnership Annual Conference, this time with a focus on Working Together. The Conference was open and closed with a video by our Young Safeguarders and featured an opportunity to attend workshops in our priority areas, launching the practice guidance and toolkits. The Conference was a fantastic opportunity for people from all areas of the safeguarding system in Plymouth to come together and was attended by over 140 practitioners.



Working Together – It's all about relationships Conference Agenda

0845 Arrival and Networking

0915 Welcome

Karen Mitchell – Named Nurse for Child Protection, Livewell Southwest

0920 Young Safeguarders Introduction

0930 Partnership Working in Practice

David Haley – Director of Childrens Services, Plymouth City Council; Scott Bradley – Plymouth BCU Commander, Devon and Cornwall Police; Michele Thornberry – Head of Safeguarding, NHS Devon ICB; Rob Diment – Director of Education, The Ted Wragg Trust

1030 Plymouth Early Help “Supporting Families Early” Strategy

Sally Kendrick – Programme Manager, Family Hubs Plymouth City Council

1100 Break

1120 Workshop Session 1

Child Sexual Abuse – Oliver Mackie – Strategic Service Manager, Together for Childhood, NSPCC; Claire White – Senior research and evaluation officer, NSPCC; Louise Fathers – Team Manager, NSPCC; Ana Broad – Social Worker, NSPCC; Lyndsay Howell – SARC General Manager, Royal Devon University Healthcare

Domestic Abuse and Children – Meghan Field – VAWG strategic lead, Plymouth City Council; Karlina Hall – Senior Commissioning Officer, Plymouth City Council

Neglect – Claire Wasey – Locality Service Manager, Action for Children; Kirsty Thistlethwaite – Emerging Family Hub Lead, Sarah Parsons – Early Years Lead

Safeguarding Adolescents – Naomi Sutton – Practice Manager, Youth Offending Team, Plymouth City Council, Ian Taylor – Service Manager, Youth Offending Team, Plymouth City Council

1215 Workshop Session 2

1305 Lunch

1405 Narrative Alchemy – Invictus Play and Debrief

Sean McGrath FRSA, WGGB – Co-artistic director, Narrative Alchemy

1505 Break

1520 Workshop Session 3

1610 Closing Speeches

Phil Williams – Superintendent for Local Policing and Partnerships, Devon and Cornwall Police; Tracy Clasby – Assistant Director and Strategic Lead, Children Young People and Family's Services, Livewell Southwest; Fran Giblin – Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Plymouth City Council; Rob Diment – Director of Education, The Ted Wragg Trust

1625 Young Safeguarders Close

NATIONAL LEARNING

National Panel Report – December 2024

The national panel published their annual report detailing themes from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) alongside Rapid Review examples, which were shared with the CSPR Subgroup and the full Partnership. The themes outlined in the report were considered by all to ensure the partnership is focusing appropriately on nationally important themes alongside local priorities.

“I wanted them all to notice” Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment – November 2024

The Child Sexual Abuse working group has been considering the findings within this national review and how this can be implemented in their work and the work of the partnership.

What professionals know, think, and do to prevent child abuse – and how we can support them A report from Together for Childhood – December 2024

Published by the NSPCC Together for Childhood programme, these research findings about the Together for Childhood programme and how it has impacted in Glasgow, Grimsby, Stoke On Trent and Plymouth explain how this work has been so paramount to Plymouth and in shaping the work of all members of the Partnership in relation to Child Sexual Abuse.

Families First Partnership Programme – March 2025

Plymouth immediately started to work together as a partnership to identify how they will implement national reforms, this will be ongoing into 2025-2026

LOCAL LEARNING

A learning culture is paramount to enable a constant cycle of positive change for safeguarding children, young people and families in Plymouth, and it is our responsibility as a Partnership to examine safeguarding practices across our partner agencies so that we can develop and continuously improve to provide the best outcomes for all.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

We have a multi-agency Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) group in Plymouth who decide the process for a Rapid Review or full CSPR and ensure internal guidance is created for us to implement learning quickly after a child has suffered significant harm. When a referral for a Rapid Review is received, the Partnership Manager arranges a meeting with the three statutory partners so this discussion can take place.

When we complete a full CSPR the learning from this is published on our PSCP website.

Learning from Experience Reviews

We have decided as a Partnership that if the criteria is not met for a CSPR, but there is still learning to be gained to enable system change and better outcomes for children in the future, a Partnership Learning from Experience review will be convened. This enables all organisations involved in a child's life to come together to discuss their agency and joint agency involvement so that practice areas that need to be strengthened are identified and a practice improvement plan is agreed which are overseen by the CSPR group. This provides a robust level of scrutiny to enable better learning.

Quality Assurance Audits

Four to six times a year our Multi Agency Performance and Quality Assurance Group (MAPQA) arranges multi-agency audits of our practice with children based on topics agreed within the yearly workplan which are identified using referral data, emerging themes and national learning. The PSCP audit tool is used to capture the child's experiences with each service and how the agencies are working in partnership, the audits are a helping tool to support the identification of what is working well and what practice needs to be strengthened. A Practice Learning Review meeting is then arranged so that the practice patterns and themes identified

within the audits can be discussed and actions can be identified for practice improvements. All agencies are involved in leading the Practice Learning Reviews; and a one-page learning briefing is produced which is circulated across the Partnership with the action plan. The relevant Partnership Working group takes responsibility for progressing the actions. This quality assurance arrangement provides a reliable evidence base to enable actions to be identified for practice improvements to be achieved. To close the loop and evidence difference made, the MAPQA work plan sets out a repeat of the same quality assurance activity so that progress with practice improvement actions can be evidenced.

S.175/157 Schools Safeguarding Audits

Education providers are required to ensure their safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and in line with legal requirements. The S.175/157 audit process uses questions to education providers to identify gaps in their safeguarding and can also highlight safeguarding emerging themes. The audit questions are created in conjunction with the education participation and skills team in Children's Services and the Quality Assurance Delivery Group. A sample of the last audit can be seen in the education section of this report.

S.11 Audits

The PSCP undertakes Section 11 audits, in line with The Children Act (2004) to ensure the PSCP partners are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare. These are carried out individually with each agency as a reflective audit process.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

The PSCP has close links with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Plymouth where Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's) are completed as multi-agency learning reviews following the murder or suicide of a victim of domestic abuse. Multiple partners from our safeguarding children system take part in these reviews and any learning is disseminated amongst partners and actions monitored by the DASV board.

Making a difference: Learning from Rapid Reviews/LCSPR's 2024/2025

In Plymouth we have had two rapid reviews in 2024/2025 with one being agreed by the national panel to remain at rapid review and one agreed to have a local CSPR jointly with Devon.

Themes from the rapid review:

1. Understanding the historical context
2. High risk moments
3. Working with those that cause harm
4. Professional curiosity & the power of language
5. Information sharing
6. Impact of managers

Full detailed learning from this review can be found on the PSCP website here:

<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/rapid-review-domestic-abuse-learning/>

The joint local CSPR has now been completed and awaits a joint publication decision. There was rich learning for all agencies which can be shared in next year's report following a publication decision.

Making a difference: Learning From Experience Review 2024/2025

In Plymouth we have had one learning from experience review in 2024/2025

Some of the themes from this review and learning implemented:

- **A partnership information sharing agreement to be devised and written to remove confusion. Safeguarding to come away from “consent” and lean more toward the public task of keeping children safe.**

Tier 1 information sharing agreement has been implemented in February 2025.

Tier 2 information sharing agreement is in progress.

The Building Support document is in the process of being reviewed and will continue to move away from 'consent' when sharing information for safeguarding purposes.

A conversational model will be implemented in the Integrated Front Door in 2025.

Families First reforms will be monitored by the PSCP Board where assurance will be given that these actions are being addressed.

- **Establish a more conducive and productive way of recording reports into the MASH – this would reduce missed opportunities and a way of collaborating professionals concerns.**

The move to an Integrated Front Door model will address this.

EPS colleagues now work within the MASH and this will also be expanded within the Front Door so that Education are better represented in the MASH/Integrated Front Door.

Families First reforms will be monitored by the PSCP Board where assurance will be given that these actions are being addressed.

- **A consistent approach from all professionals involved in the initial stages of child protection investigations to work together more efficiently and more effectively.**

Ongoing work towards the use of Multi Agency Child Protection teams following the Families First reforms will address this.

Families First reforms will be monitored by the PSCP Board where assurance will be given that these actions are being addressed.

- **Police to ensure that PPNs and relevant safeguarding referrals are completed for ALL children of the family present during a particular event.**

Updated guidance and policies have been produced and shared nationally. Internal messaging within Police has occurred to share this across the force, including with front line staff.

- **A clear need for mapping and explaining the different agency roles and responsibilities and development of quality standards.**

MAPQA subgroup and Partnership team have created a roles and responsibilities page on the PSCP website. <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/agency-roles-and-responsibilities/>

- **Partnership to utilise the key relationships that a child has, to help engage with specialist services.**

The Families First reforms will support a shift in culture so that the professional with the best relationship with a child or family are the lead practitioner for the family.

Families First reforms will be monitored by the PSCP Board where assurance will be given that these actions are being addressed.

- **If parents decline support or engagement, including children's social care child in need support, have they/ can they be encouraged and sensitively challenged to work with the proposed help?**

The Families First reforms will support a shift in culture so that the professional with the best relationship with a child or family are the lead practitioner for the family.

Families First reforms will be monitored by the PSCP Board where assurance will be given that these actions are being addressed.

- **Use of chronologies to see what information you know; this can help identify patterns of behaviours.**

Further training is being rolled out for staff working in the Integrated front door and Targeted Help teams within CYPFS.

Chronology tool templates and guidance on their use can be found on the Neglect Practitioner's Toolkit here: <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/chronologies/>

Partnership team to share communications about chronology tool

Making a difference: Learning From Quality Assurance Audits

2024/2025

In 2023/24 the Multi-Agency Performance and Quality Assurance Group led on the following multi-agency audits:

Child Sexual Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Neglect, Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse

Some of the themes from these audits and learning implemented:

- **Police to consider how safeguarding information could be shared with front line officers to make them aware of previous history before arriving at a job**

Communications being shared within Devon & Cornwall Police that it is vital that more information is being shared with crews before they attend an incident

- **Police to develop their recording of a child's lived experience within Public Protection Notices.**

New MNEMONIC on pronto system where information is recorded, called RESPOND is being used which has built in sections for the child's voice to be recorded, RESPOND is a prompt for the officers in attendance at incidents to remember to see a child and attend to them in detail at an incident as well.

- **Over last 6 months, ICPC attendance has been monitored and is being promoted where possible through the PSCP Board. In- person meetings are often promoted through PSCP and subgroups**

This is being monitored through PSCP Board in relation to ICPC.

PSCP will also promote in-person attendance at meetings, and the Board will always monitor this and hold agencies to account.

- **Change in language around "Voice of the Child" (Child's overall presentation) because we need to move away from the dependency on verbal report. 'Voice of the Child' podcast addition this is where the Signs and Indicators template developed by the CSA Centre could support practice.**

NSPCC Communicating with children document to be shared with professionals. Better promotion of the CSA toolkit which holds the resources and guidance. Caseloads for professionals to be reduced. CSA champions to help to embed into practice. PSCP Business Unit to promote the CSA Practice Guidance and Toolkit with managers

- **The Graded Care profile tool training to provide examples of how the tool can be used in a multi-agency way and prioritise the importance of relationship building with children, unannounced visits and observations of children's play and family interactions to understand their lived experience and the underlying issues that are causing the neglect.**

Family Hubs and the Academy supported with on how the GCP2 tool can be used with a family and their experiences. This went to the licensed practitioners. This is also available to view on the licensed practitioners SharePoint page to view in their own time. In the training itself examples are shared how the tool is used with families.

PARTNERSHIP DATA

The Partnership data scorecard is scrutinised through the Multi-Agency Performance and Quality Assurance Group, the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and by the Young Safeguarders.

The data is resourced multi-agency and during 2024-2025 we have now secured data from Police, Health and Education partners as well as Children's Services, this allows us to gain a more comprehensive picture of safeguarding in the city.

There has been the gap in the partnership of someone to analyse the data, however a recruitment process has been run in early 2025 with a new analyst due to commence working with the partnership in September 2025 to help create better reporting on data and provide full data dashboards.

FUNDING THE PARTNERSHIP

The income for 2024/25 was:

Agency	Contribution
Plymouth City Council	£115,500
Devon and Cornwall Police	£26,583
NHS Devon Integrated Care Board	£19,614
Livewell South West	£19,614
University Hospitals NHS Trust	£7,909
City College Plymouth	£4,059
Total	£193,279

The expenditure for 2024/25 was:

Item	Cost
Business Unit Staffing	£175,824
Independent Scrutiny	£12,479
Training budget	£12,000
Conference and supplies	£8748
Subscriptions	£2,939
Young Safeguarders	£1,500
Total	£213,490

At the end of 2024/2025 the partnership had reserves of **£190,000** Reserves are needed to cover unforeseen expenditure such as learning reviews as well as being able to fulfil any legal requirements in the event of staff redundancies. The reserves will also be used in 2025/2026 to balance the partnership budget.

OUR PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD INTO 2025/2026

As a partnership we made the decision to keep the same priorities areas for 2025/2026, however we have added two new priorities of Online Safety to be examined through each priority area and visibility of the partnership to ensure practitioners are aware of the partnership and the help it can provide to all in a multi-agency space.

2025-2026 Will be an exciting year in the Partnership space as Partners will work together to bring about the changes of National Reforms for children through the Families First Partnership Programme.

Going into the year ahead, the Young Safeguarders are embarking on the role of Young Scrutineers; providing independent scrutiny looking at how the voice of children, young people and families is captured throughout the partnership groups and organisations and examining how their voice influences and informs Practice, Policies and Procedures within the partnership.



Auditing, data and reviews have shown us that we still have more work to do in our priority areas therefore, we will be working on these throughout 2025/2026.

In 2025/2026 we will be improving our data dashboard to provide better analysis and performance monitoring as a partnership.

Cutting across all the priorities is a focus on organisational culture and professional support. We know that training, workshops, briefings and similar activities are helpful but fundamentally; good practice can only thrive where we have a culture of learning, respectful challenge and a partnership workforce that feels supported and valued.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

Independent Scrutineer – Deborah McMillan

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states multi agency safeguarding arrangements must include scrutiny by an independent person of the effectiveness of those arrangements. Following engagement sessions with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies, I reported on the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This is a summary of that report and a reflection on this yearly report.

The achievements and evidence of impact in this yearly report are a testament to the commitment and quality of partnership working across Plymouth – the foundation of effective arrangements. Children are protected by partnership arrangements that have strengthened since the last health check. The safeguarding partnership arrangements, forward plan, and the proposed scrutiny plan will continue to provide assurance with an ambitious, child centred approach to improving practice for children.

Stability in leadership has fostered trust and collaboration across the partnership. Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) are meeting on a Pan Devon footprint, chaired by the Chief Constable. Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) demonstrate ownership, respect, and commitment. Senior leaders are visible, ambitious, and child-focused, driving service innovation and strengthening multi-agency collaboration, including with education colleagues. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) leads by example, promoting excellence. The partnership now has a clearer understanding of service strengths and areas for improvement—and is actively addressing them.

The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are providing assurance and the partnership has moved from being activity-focused to become more outcome-focused, with a strong emphasis on evidence and research. Further emphasis on the impact of the partnership in terms of outcomes for children, outcomes for professional practice, and outcomes for effective partnership working will provide assurance to the strategic partners. LSP and DSP meetings ensure engagement at all levels, with regional and local collaboration. The DSP group exemplifies a cultural shift towards open and constructive challenge.

Multi-agency safeguarding work is progressing well, although there is recognition that more needs to be done to reduce single-agency decision making. Information sharing remains an

ongoing challenge, with efforts underway to improve data-sharing agreements and analytical support. Strong partnership engagement, together with easily accessible family help hubs, is enabling families to access timely, well-targeted help when their needs are first identified.

Education is now formally recognised as the fourth strategic partner. Engagement has improved, with broader representation including independent schools. However, early years settings remain underrepresented. Two-way communication between education and safeguarding partners has strengthened, though further work is needed to ensure full sector inclusion.

Political support is robust, with active involvement from the children's portfolio holder and regular performance updates to council leaders. The Police and Crime Commissioner maintains strong ties with LSPs, and the MP engagement with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub reflects growing political interest. This support empowers senior leaders to champion children and families effectively.

The impact of the arrangements, and an understanding of effectiveness and value for money, is developing supported by improved quality assurance, multi-agency audits, and shared learning initiatives such as lunch and learn sessions. Independent scrutiny must continue to drive improvement, with clearer evidence of impact and learning from reviews.

The partnership is increasingly evidence-driven, though more time is needed for reflection and research. Learning from serious incidents is evident but reporting consistency and depth require improvement.

Children's voices are central, with leaders actively listening through audits, participation groups, and parent forums. LiveWell's participation officer and the Young Safeguarders group have influenced practice. While SEND engagement is strong, broader family representation needs strengthening.

The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Plymouth demonstrate significant progress, underpinned by strong leadership, collaborative culture, and a growing emphasis on evidence-based practice. Political and strategic support remains robust, and the inclusion of education as a formal partner marks a pivotal step forward. While challenges persist the commitment to continuous improvement is evident. With strengthened structures, clearer priorities, and a child-centred ethos, the partnership is well-positioned to deliver impactful safeguarding outcomes and ensure that children's voices remain at the heart of its work.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

There are multiple acronyms used throughout the partnership, below we have given a short explanation for some you may encounter throughout this report.

ASF – Adolescent Safety Framework

CCPT – Child Centred Policing Team

CSA – Child Sexual Abuse

CSPR – Child Safeguarding Practice Review

DASV – Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

DIB – Daily Intelligence Briefing

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead

DSP – Delegated Safeguarding Partner under Working Together 2023 Guidance

EPS – Education, Participation and Skills

ICB – Integrated Care Board

LSP – Lead Safeguarding Partner under Working Together 2023 Guidance

MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

PATH – Plymouth Access to Housing

PSCP – Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

RR – Rapid Review

UHP – University Hospitals Plymouth

TFC – Together for Childhood

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Partnership Health Check 2024

Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership – Self assessment of the effectiveness of the Multi agency Partnership Arrangements

In January 2023 the Ofsted focused visit report identified weaknesses in partnership working in terms of thresholds, information sharing, early help and accountability. Interim leadership was impacting on the effectiveness of the partnership. In June 2023 the Area SEND inspection of Plymouth Local Area Partnership reported significant concerns with weaknesses in partnership working.

Intervention and key activities

In October 2023 – the new Director of Children's Services worked closely with senior leaders across policing and the ICB, and together the Safeguarding Children's Partnership took the decision to engage with the DfE National Safeguarding Partner to facilitate use of the self-assessment health check tool to secure senior partnership engagement in the improvement journey, and to highlight key areas of focus for improvement, and to assess readiness for the publication of new statutory guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The health check took place over the autumn of 2023.

Findings from the 2023 self-assessment health check

Key observations from the workshops included:

- Leadership and systemic challenges: *'There is a culture of challenge but not fully embedded as leadership gap is not settled.'* *'Stability in leadership is needed in order to deliver.'* *'LSPs are not currently engaged sufficiently with group. PSCP (DSP level) has a good mix of relevant agencies but do not work routinely with the LSPs.'*
- Data and performance: *This is still a challenge, and departments still aren't sharing information to support early identification and assessment.'*
- Strategy: *'The partnership would benefit from a forward plan/communication strategy ... good things happening but not yet co-ordinated nor strategic'*

- Engagement: *'The Independent scrutineer seeks out feedback from parents and carers and children – this is a new priority for the partnership.'*
- Children's voice and participation: *'Voice of children – how can this effectively be captured across the partnership?' 'The voice is being heard but can we demonstrate what difference it has made?' 'Plans for children too often developed for them rather than with them.'*
- Education engagement: *'Strategically education representation needs to be considered.'*

Outcomes and Progress

In February 2024 Ofsted judged Children's services as Requires Improvement. Ofsted noted improvements in the effectiveness of partnership working: *'Since the last inspection in 2018, leaders have strengthened relationships with partner agencies. Most agencies are working more collaboratively and effectively at a strategic level and can challenge each other to ensure that both the local authority and partner agencies are working together and taking shared responsibility for the children of Plymouth.'*

Feedback on the 2023 self-assessment health check process

Delegated safeguarding partners reported that it was the richness and frankness of the facilitated structured conversations that has made a difference, and that the sessions supported the partnership to reflect on itself and determine areas for further improvement.

In February 2024 the Safeguarding Children's Partnership asked the National Safeguarding Partner to return to carry out a review of the arrangements. Three engagement sessions were held with the DSPs and relevant agencies.

Key findings from the 2024 review:

Leadership

- Stability in leadership has strengthened the partnership, fostering trust and collaboration.
- Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) have started to form a strong relationship with the new Chief Constable set to chair the LSP group.

- Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) work well together, demonstrating ownership, respect, and commitment.
- There is a proactive approach to problem-solving, with a focus on resolving issues collaboratively rather than attributing blame.
- Visibility of leadership has increased, with leaders showing ambition for Plymouth and maintaining a child-focused approach.
- Senior leaders have continued to strengthen, improve and innovate services to benefit children and their families, and they have been influential in bringing partners together, including more recently education colleagues in the education strategic reference group.
- The Director of Children's Services (DCS) leads by example and encourages colleagues to do their best for children.
- The Safeguarding Children's Partnership has a much better understanding of the strengths and quality of the services being provided: they know where improvement is needed, and they are now making it happen.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions - Leadership

Lead safeguarding partners (LSPs) have a good relationship. The Chief Constable position has recently changed however Devon and Cornwall Police have showed continued commitment to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SCP) and the new Chief Constable will chair the LSP group. Delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs) are working well together and there is positive feedback. They have built a strong partnership where there is real ownership and respect for each other there is a workshop in March to galvanise relationships. There's been focus on ensuring educational partners are seen and valued as a fourth strategic partner.

The Director of Children's Services is rightly holding people to account and having stability in leadership is a real benefit. He takes time to build and maintain relationships with colleagues and partners, encouraging them to understand the benefits of a collaborative approach to safeguarding children and improving their outcomes. The DCS holds partners accountable, reinforcing stability and effective leadership. Because of this, there is a willingness across partner agencies to deliver the best services and outcomes for children.

DSPs and LSPs are working well together. LSPs meet sufficiently regularly once a year at regional peninsula level and twice a year locally. The LSPs are engaged and have requested data to provide assurance that the arrangements are effective and keeping Plymouth children

safe, and they have been briefed on the latest rapid review. They have met to agree funding for the partnership and have responded to the business case to increase the funding to provide an analyst and project officer post. The LSPs have a much better oversight. The DSPs also attend the LSP meetings, and the Chair is Chief Constable. The LSPs and the DSPs are active in their challenge, and it is healthy challenge. There is evidence of a cultural shift for example the DSP group. There is an open door to the DSPs. Visibility has increased of leaders. They are ambitious for Plymouth and importantly, they are child focused.

Effective Partnership Working

- The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are starting to provide assurance and a new scrutiny plan provides an ambitious, innovative approach to improving practice for children.
- The partnership has moved from being very activity-based to become more outcome-focused, with a strong emphasis on evidence and research.
- Regular LSP and DSP meetings ensure engagement at all levels, with regional and local collaboration.
- Funding for the partnership has been increased, supporting the addition of an analyst and project officer.
- The DSP group exemplifies a cultural shift towards open and constructive challenge.
- Multi-agency safeguarding work is progressing well, although there is recognition that more needs to be done to reduce single-agency decision making.
- Information sharing remains an ongoing challenge, with efforts underway to improve data-sharing agreements.
- Strong partnership engagement, together with easily accessible family help hubs, is enabling families to access timely, well-targeted help when their needs are first identified.
- Partnership arrangements are stronger. Children are protected by partnership arrangements that have strengthened since the last health check. The safeguarding partnership arrangements, forward plan, and the proposed scrutiny plan will provide assurance with an ambitious, child centred approach to improving practice for children.

What has changed has been a stability and leadership and a strong faith in the leadership and a strong commitment to the partnership. Where we have identified issues, the partnership now has a collaborative approach to resolve them asking how we can work through these issues and providing ideas to move forward rather than attribute blame. An example of this is the work on thresholds not blaming each other about making too many referrals but working together to consider how can we fix this always with a child centred approach.

When issues are raised, and brought to the attention of the partnership, they are addressed. A good example of this is the Police Protection Notices (PPNS) There was an issue identified and through working together partners have resolved the issue. There is now a Tier 1 information sharing agreement developed with support from Somerset, and a Tier 2 agreement with the front door and multi-agency safeguarding hub in progress. However, the partnership acknowledge that information sharing is still an issue as demonstrated in the last rapid review and there is work underway to tackle this.

Education as a fourth strategic partner

- Education is now recognised as the fourth strategic partner, with increased participation and engagement from education partners.
- The Safeguarding Education Reference Group has strengthened representation, including independent schools.
- While large trusts have a strong voice, early years settings are underrepresented.
- Two-way communication between educational partners and the safeguarding partnership is much improved.
- There is still work required to ensure full breadth of education representation across all levels of the partnership.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions - Education as a fourth strategic partner

The breadth of educational representation is growing and there is now a strong safeguarding education reference group and that includes independent schools. This is a military city with around 7000 children young people living within military families and therefore there is more work to do to ensure adequate representation from their schools, and also with faith groups and the grass roots voluntary sector. Education is seen as a full strategic partner and are engaged at the right level. Schools are being heard.

With regard to education as a fourth strategic partner there is still not full breadth of education representation at all levels but much improved participation. There are representatives on each

of the subgroups and educational partners have a stronger voice particularly from the larger trusts. However, there is less of a voice from early years. There is a two-way communication flow to and from the newly formed educational safeguarding reference group.

Political Engagement

- The children's portfolio holder is actively involved in the partnership and sits on the board.
- Quarterly meetings with the council leader and political portfolio holders now include performance updates on the safeguarding children's partnership.
- The DCS is seeking to align the scrutiny agenda with partnership priorities.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner has a strong relationship with the LSPs.
- A Member of Parliament recently visited the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, demonstrating political interest.
- Strong political support ensures that there is an unwavering commitment from across the council to support senior leaders to continually improve.
- Strong political and partnership support has enabled the senior leadership team to be an effective champion for children, young people and their families.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions - Political Engagement

The Children's portfolio holder sits on the board. The Portfolio holder for children is very involved in the partnership and the Member of Parliament recently visited the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

There are quarterly meetings with the leader of the council and the two political portfolio holders, and these meetings have recently been broadened to include performance of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The DCS will consider how to ensure that the scrutiny agenda and the forward plan reflect the priorities of the partnership. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a strong relationship, and they are briefed at LSP level.

Performance, Learning and Impact

- Measuring impact is still in early stages, but improvements have been made, including an upgraded website and in meetings, a focus on the difference that learning is making, is supporting colleagues to focus on impact.

- Workforce development groups provide examples of how learning is making a difference.
- The annual report is clear, with a strong commitment from LSPs and a useful plan on a page.
- Quality assurance processes are improving, with multi-agency and single-agency audits identifying outstanding practices and focusing on learning.
- A new scrutiny strategy includes independent scrutineers conducting deep dives into key areas.
- Shared learning is taking place, including joint learning debriefs and "lunch and learn" sessions.
- The safeguarding partnership is increasingly evidence-driven but must ensure time continues to be dedicated to research and reflection.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions - Performance, Learning and Impact

In terms of seeking assurance that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective, partners have focused on learning from recent Rapid Reviews and Local Children's Safeguarding Practice Reviews. These have highlighted the same themes around information sharing. The partnership recognises this and is considering how to embed meaningful change and have recognised that practitioners across the partnership need time for shared learning. A good example of this is from Devon and Cornwall Police where Hydrant have facilitated a joint learning debrief into a seven-year child sexual abuse investigation.

In terms of measuring the impact of the safeguarding children's partnership this is early days. The website has been improved and is already much better. With regards to learning and development, every workforce development group gives examples of the difference that learning is making in their meetings.

The Safeguarding Children's Partnership annual report has been published in line with Working Together 2023, and it is good to see the introduction by the Lead Safeguarding Partners setting the vision, strategic direction and culture. The plan on a page provides clarity over the vision for the partnership. However, there are limitations in the consistency and depth of analysis provided across the report. This lack of detail on issues such as evidence of impact and evaluation of scrutiny raises challenges in comprehensively assessing the partnerships' effectiveness and progress. The National Safeguarding Partner recommends training on evidencing impact.

The partnership is more driven by evidence and research however partners need to make sure that time is continued to be put aside to do that. The partnership has shifted from being very activity based to become more outcome focused. A clear sign of a maturing partnership. The quality assurance delivery group provides learning, and the working groups deliver on that. Each partner agency is at a different stage of their learning journey and in some cases shared learning is problematic for example within wider police engagement. A good example of shared learning is Southwest Ambulance Service where there was shared learning due to a child death overview panel report. Another good example is the shared practice week which is new, and the lunch and learn events, plus observations on practice with a focus on domestic abuse.

The named nurses is focused on learning for example there has been a safeguarding conference. Multi agency practise learning reviews take place and there is a one-page learning report and partners are all leaning into this strongly.

There is a new scrutiny strategy with a group of independent scrutineers being available to conduct deep dives into specific areas as they are experts in their fields. The Young Safeguarders are the voice of young people also provide scrutiny activity. Primary legislation states that an independent person must review the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and this should be reported on in the annual report. The partnership needs to consider the best way to deliver that so that the LSPs and DSPs are assured that the arrangement are effective and keeping Plymouth children safe.

The voice of families is gathered through audit work and family hubs have new parents groups. Within the SEND area there are strong groups but in other areas there are more to do.

There is a forward plan and this feeds into the Bright Future review and strategy and there is a plan on a page. There is no communication strategy however there are good quality communications, and the group will consider how to pull this together in a strategy.

Single agency audits and multi-agency audits are seeing pockets of outstanding practice particularly in the children's centres, family hubs, and some primary schools. The partners acknowledge that rather than focus on the inadequate audits, the focus should be on sharing good practice, and the need to share that and continue to be strengths based focusing on good audits and connecting practitioners with those that are identified as inadequate.

Thresholds and MASH

- Thresholds for support at an early help level are better understood and owned by the multi-agency partnership.

- There is stronger and more robust partnership working in the front door. The family hubs provide an early help service that is starting to make a difference for children and families who need support.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions – Thresholds and MASH

One issue that has been identified is that in some areas there is still confusion over thresholds, and this has come up in a recent rapid review. This could be down to turnover of staffing however this issue has been identified as a key action following the rapid review however it is a proverbial problem. The consent to share information continues to be an issue.

The MASH is improving - there is a strong commitment, and work is in progress however there are still too many single agency decisions. Training has supported partner agencies to better understand thresholds, which is starting to have the effect that referrals to the MASH are more appropriate. There is better shared understanding and sense of responsibility. The culture of challenge has improved and there is a clear process for professional challenge and an emphasis on kindness.

Voice of the child

- Leaders listen to children, families and the workforce, as well as using a range of comprehensive quality assurance and performance activities to ensure that they have a realistic understanding of the quality and impact of services they provide.
- LiveWell has appointed a full-time participation officer to strengthen the child's voice in decision-making.
- The Young Safeguarders group provides effective challenge and has directly influenced practice with an excellent example shared of seeking feedback and acting on that feedback.
- The voice of families is gathered through audit work, and family hubs have introduced new parent groups to listen to the experiences of families.
- While SEND-related engagement is strong, broader family representation needs improvement.

Brief notes from three engagement sessions - Voice of the child

With regards to child's voice LiveWell have appointed a full-time participation person. The Young Safeguarders provide a strong voice and challenge, and a good example has been shared whereby the Young Safeguarders identified an issue and were able to directly influence practice.

There is good participation work, and it is starting to make a difference.

Next steps

As quarter 4 concludes the Partnership will be preparing a strategic plan for the year ahead. As well as determining priorities for focus, the Partnership need to continue to work to strengthen the multi agency safeguarding arrangements, so that they are not just compliant with the new statutory guidance, but that they are embracing the opportunities within it to become a mature, highly effective partnership.

The Partnership will now need to focus on the Families First Partnership Programme and ensure that partners are assessing readiness for the changes.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill includes a measure to place duties on the statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, police and health) to make education and childcare settings relevant agencies by default, thereby ensuring their participation in safeguarding in their area and that their views are included and represented at strategic and operational levels in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Partnership should continue to strengthen the breadth of education partners.

Independent scrutiny has contributed to strengthening leadership and ensuring that safeguarding partners are effective in achieving their desired impact. The new scrutiny arrangements must ensure that this continues, and that the annual report demonstrates evidence of scrutiny providing critical challenge and support to safeguarding partners, helping them to maintain oversight, identify areas for development, and drive continuous improvement. The impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements should be evident as well as the way that partnerships have responded to findings and recommendations from scrutiny activities.

There is a strong commitment to learning from serious incidents and rapid reviews and evidence provided of learning events. However, there is scope for greater consistency and depth in reporting on this learning and its impact, as well as a need for more explicit discussion on evaluating the effectiveness of implementing learning from reviews and its impact on improving outcomes for children and families. Evidencing impact is a further area where there could be greater depth.

Appendix B – Family Hub Case Study 1

Introduction / background	Family consists of Mum, Dad, Child 1 (3 years old), Child 2 (1 year old) at the timework commenced. We were first introduced to the family when they attended our Step by Step group at Manor Street Children’s Centre. Parents shared their concerns regarding the development of their two young boys. Parents shared they felt that both boys were demonstrating different behaviours of the autism scale and were showing development delay. Parents shared that their family did not have additional support from agencies. Discussions progressed in the Step by Step group and observations of the children were undertaken. It was identified that an EHAT would be suitable to support the family moving forward. Subsequently, following four EHAT reviews, a strategy meeting was held. This was due to parental separation and concerns around Mum’s new partner. Specifically, concerns were around the risk Mum’s partner poses and the minimisation Mum displayed when the risks were explored. There were not any concerns around parent’s parenting capacity and parents continued to co-parent their children. Dad was
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	aware of risks posed by Mums' new partner and identified they would seek full custody of the children if it was felt to be in the children's best interest An ICPC meeting was held following the strategy meeting and the children were made subject to a child protection plan. At the next Child Protection Review Meeting, it was agreed that the children would step down to CIN as the safety plan for the children had been adhered to. Following this, the level of support offered to the family was stepped down again, as the safety plan had continued to be adhered to. It was agreed school would take the lead on the EHAT to ensure continuity with the youngest child hopefully joining his older brother at the school shortly.
Assessment measures used	Family Star Family Star review EHAT assessment Supporting Families Outcomes Network mapping discussions – to ascertain which professionals were required to support the family. The necessary referrals were made. Knowledge of Early Years development
What strategies were given to family	During the Step by Step group, strategies to support sensory seeking behaviours were shared. Strategies were also shared by staff and the specialist support worker who attended the group from PCC to encourage communication. Parents attended Makaton training to support their children to communicate alongside the speech encouraged. DASH risk assessment to explore level of risk. Safety planning completed following this, to help promote safety for the children and mum
What actions, activities and interventions were delivered	• Support was given to the children and parents weekly during the Step by Step groups. • An Early Help assessment (EHAT) was initiated to support with collating information and brining all relevant professionals together. The purpose of this was to support the children through their early stages of development; support transitions to nursery/school; consider housing needs in the context of the children's specific needs; explore strengths and concerns. Actions were agreed to promote positive progression for the children and their family. • Through referral from the health visiting team, a specialist support worker has been working in the home with child 2 and at nursery to offer additional strategies in regard to safety, communication and managing behaviour. • DASH and safety planning with mum was completed and referral to the Freedom Programme was completed. Mum subsequently expressed that she did not want to attend the Freedom

	Programme. Referral to MARAC was completed to ensure all avenues of support were being accessed. Nursery visits completed by Family Hub staff, to observe child outside of home environment
Any requests for additional services/sign posting made.	It was identified through the EHAT meetings that a health visitor, school nursing and GP were required to support the family further. I completed a referral to school nursery, contacted the health visiting team and both attended future EHAT meetings The family were signposted to the GP for additional support. Contact was made regularly with the CDC to ascertain where both children were on their respective waiting lists. Following the DASH, a MARAC referral was completed.
What outcomes were achieved as a result of the intervention	The EHAT was/is progressing positively in regard to ensuring both children have the appropriate support from professionals and beneficial IEP/my plans at nursery and school. These will support development and additional needs where challenges are faced. Working together with other agencies has been beneficial in providing a range of support to the family, at the time it was needed. Multi-agency working provided opportunities for discussion and exploration of perception of risk, both with parents and members of staff from other teams. This helped to ensure transparency and arrive at a common understanding. Following the MARAC referral, communication was made between myself, mum and the MARAC IDVA to offer additional support to mum.

Appendix C - Family Hub Case Study 2

Presenting Issues. What did the referral come in for? What were the presenting concerns for the family when completing the initial outcome star?

The initial referral came from Children's Social Care requesting attendance at ICPC for a potential Family Management Skills Assessment (FMSA) due to severe Domestic Abuse (DA), substance misuse, poor mental health of both parents and neglect of the children and home. During the meeting it was decided by all professionals that a Graded Care Profile Assessment (GCP2) would be more suitable as there was a concern of neglect for the children due to domestic abuse and home conditions. The GCP2 would help identify the areas of neglect and create a clear action plan to sustain change for the family. During the initial home visit, it was identified that to help improve the home conditions grant for a carpet and furniture would also be needed to support positive change for the children.

Case Background/ Family context. Who is in the family home, who are the significant people in the child's life, what did life look like for the children in the home prior to our support, what support have the family had prior to our involvement, have the family had previous outreach support from us, were other agencies involved and what had they already put in place?

The family home is a privately rented 1st floor 2-bedroom flat, there is 3 children, twins aged 2 and a 4-year-old who share a bedroom and the children's mother. The children's father has contact with the children every weekend and this is shared with the paternal grandmother. Prior to our support the children's father also lived within the family home with the mother and children. Children's Social Care was notified after a Police call to the family home for DA, there was concerns for the high level of risk for the mother and the home conditions were deemed unliveable for the children. Due to the high risk towards the mother, a MARAC was held, and safety planning was put in place by professionals which resulted in the father leaving the family home.

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Explanation of Outcomes Achieved/Type of & Impact of intervention	
Type of intervention: What we did	
Outcome: What happened as a result?	
Impact: What changed?	
E.g.	
• Type: Shared information with the parent about nursery funding for ..., subsequently supported the parent to apply for Me2 funding and find a nursery place at a local nursery • Outcome - ... attending nursery 2 days per week • Impact - ... is having positive social interaction regularly and his speech and language has improved as a result	
Please list each intervention separately	
Child	The three children have experienced trauma due to the incidents of DA that they have witnessed and through being exposed to ongoing, severe, abusive and violent behaviour in their home. Additionally, the home living conditions were very poor and deemed inhabitable by professionals. This alongside substance misuse and poor mental health of both parents resulted in the children being at risk of significant harm. To support with this Childrens Social care became involved and all 3 children were placed on CP plans. A GCP2 was initiated on 14.05.24, which identified neglect in all focused areas. A review will be completed on 13.01.25 which will hopefully show improvements in the identified areas of neglect and home conditions. Mum has been aided by her Supporting Families Workers by the Domestic Abuse Pathway (DAP) to understand the impact of being exposed to DA has on herself and her children. Mum will also be completing the You and Me programme as part of DAP, which will further support her in her awareness and understanding of trauma in children who have experience DA and how to manage their challenging behaviour.

	Supporting Families Workers approached a nursery and obtained 15 hours me2 funding for the twins, this will support with social and emotional development, confidence and self esteem and provide them with play opportunities. Due to poor home conditions grant funding was applied for to obtain new carpet for the living area, furthermore a new sofa suite was donated by another family receiving family support within the service. At Christmas toys were provided through the Salvation Army Charity, for all 3 children. Regular safe contact with the children's father and paternal grandmother promotes the children's identity, positive relationships and sense of belonging.
Parent	Mum has started the DAP Pathway which is a suite of 3 courses running concurrently alongside each other, the courses are Stronger Us, the Adult Domestic Abuse Recovery Tool Kit and You and Me and Mum programme. Mum has expressed that she is enjoying the course and finding attending beneficial for her mental health and her journey of recovery. The GCP2 assessment was completed with mum who engaged well and was open and honest. Mum received feedback from the GCP2 and mum agreed with the scale scores and action plan to move forward.
Family	The family are trying to rebuild their lives after the severe Domestic Abuse that they have all experienced. Home environment has improved but is still an ongoing concern. Hopefully the GCP2 review will empower mum to continue to improve and maintain the home conditions moving forward. It is hopeful that mum will continue to engage well with DAP and take onboard the strategies and the awareness regarding how the Domestic Abuse has impacted on her as a parent and the children.
Comments/Feedback from Family/Professionals	

Allocated Social Worker feedback:

“Thanks again for your support, I did raise to my team that in recent times I don’t think I have had as much support and pro activity from other agencies as we have had from the support workers from Barnardo’s”

Good Practice/ Lessons Learnt -Identified by Practitioner

Consistent/empowering engagement between support workers and mum has been a benefit in this case. Empathy and a deep understanding of Domestic Abuse and trauma is vital when working with such complexity. It has also been noted that a victim of abuse will not start their journey of recovery until the time is right for them, this may not be until severe events occur prompting them to keep themselves and their children safe from harm. A safe and supportive environment was created which enabled mum to share her and her children’s experiences with workers, which has started to rebuild mum’s confidence. A positive is that the children are now attending nursery and school regularly which supports and promotes their own development but also allows professionals to monitor the situation to keep them safe from harm.

We have learnt that it is important for the home environment to be kept in a good enough condition, as appropriate hygiene is critical for prevent the spread of infectious diseases and helping children to lead long and healthy lives. It also prevents them from missing school, resulting in better learning outcomes.

Lessons Learnt - Managerial reflective summary

There have been instances with this family where the social worker was asked to complete tasks beyond their role. The key takeaway from this is that it's okay to maintain boundaries when necessary.

Having to workers complete the GCP2 has worked well for this family.

Appendix D - Family Hub Case Study 3

Presenting Issues.
Complex family significant history - Continued involvement with CSC Substance misuse Mental Health Domestic Abuse Parental Offending Ongoing conflict and lack of effective communication between Mum and Dad. Support needed to put child at the centre and keep safe. Lack of trust between parents leads to inconsistency in contact, lack of communication and breakdown in relationship.
Case Background/ Family context
Mum and Dad share custody of Child F. Ongoing Domestic Abuse, conflict, drug misuse, offending and allegations between Mum and Dad. Repeated attempts previously to engage family in support, lack of engagement despite ongoing efforts. Dad - referred to AP who has worked hard to build a relationship with him, and offered one to one Solihull parenting support due to inability to join groups or programs in the day due to work. This has been inconsistent, and AP offered flexibility around calls and appointments to fit in with his schedule however, due to 4 missed appointments outside of AP's working hours, the decision was made to close to Dad, due to reluctance to engage or attend appointments despite flexibility. Mum agreed to work with practitioner and is communicating daily with her. As both parents are in constant conflict, workers are briefed on ensuring the highest level of confidentiality, and not to engage with either parent about the work they are doing separately, high risk of being drawn into conflict or allegations being shared back and forth to cause further conflict.

Due to the inability to split families on Estart, child F is recorded twice under two separate ID numbers.

Both parents under a CP plan with actions to complete parenting programs and separate actions to improve their parenting. Engagement has been sporadic and inconsistent. Dad has worked 1:1 with AP on doing the Solihull course, however, has disengaged and will not return AP's call's or texts or attend core groups.

Mum call's ? regularly and asks for advice around keeping F safe, ongoing court involvement and attends core groups consistently.

Explanation of Outcomes Achieved/Type of & Impact of intervention

Child	Mum is more focused on F's needs now her needs are met more effectively, and F is put first by Mum. Mum regularly refers to keeping F safe and is asking for advice on how to communicate effectively with Dad. F has been having contact with Dad, however, it is unclear how effective this is as Dad has ceased engagement with AP.
Parent	Both parents have engaged in courses- COS, Freedom, Solihull however, Dad has disengaged from this support and did not complete the Solihull training. Ongoing concerns around conflict, complex family involvement, inability to stick to the CP plan or agree on actions. Mum has made a good connection with KW and is asking questions seeking emotional support and trying to follow advice given.
Family	

Good Practice/ Lessons Learnt -Identified by Practitioner

Communication between agencies can be a challenge, minutes from meetings do not always come through, dates are not set at the previous meetings so often meetings are missed. CP plan has not been shared with us, and only one core group has been attended. ? works hard to try to join up communication and ensure information is shared clearly to prevent breakdown in communication between mum and dad.

Lessons Learnt - Managerial reflective summary

? called for Feedback from family member - Mum

"I have Worked with a couple of months - she helps with housing, parenting courses, haven't started yet but I start Tuesday.is so supportive and amazing, but can't always help me how she wants to as she doesn't have the plan or minutes from the social worker which she has already raised. The minutes never come after the meeting which is super important as it means me and my ex are on the same page and it can't be manipulated if it's written down and everyone agrees."

..... is always contactable - she has children's best interest at heart

Support that given me keeps steady, consistency and support. Don't understand why minutes aren't sent out, if one of parents aren't there parents lose communication, certain bits aren't minutes, everyone's not on same page. These minutes need to be clear, and the safety plan needs to be shared and professionals. Mum feels this is easily manipulated if it isn't written down.

? to reiterate to staff the importance of professional challenge and escalating concerns or asking for support from safeguarding leads to communicate with CSC. This is a complex case with lots of contributing factors, communication between two FSW's working with the family has been encouraged to ensure a joined up approach but as Dad has disengaged, work has been paused with him until he is ready to re-engage.

Appendix E – First Light Case Studies

Case Study – Client E

Client E is in their 30's. They are non-English speaking and in their day-to-day life rely on internet translation services. This was how we had to work with each other over the 9 sessions we had.

The work was pretrial therapy, as they had an open right to review with the police. The client found navigating the relationship with the police difficult and also the changeover between ISVA services. Due to the language barrier, they were often confused where one service boundary ended and where one began.

E was sexually abused regularly leaving them physically injured. The perpetrators violent treatment of them has left them with ongoing physical problems, which with support they are now seeking treatment for.

During the sessions it became apparent that the perpetrator had also been sexually interested in one of the client's 3 children, who was under 11 at the time. From the sessions the counsellor was able to assist client E in making a police report for their child. The child now also has an open case.

The client had 9 full sessions with us. They will soon be having a further 6 in our added value program "Safe Parent" as we try to help them with what has happened and is happening with their child. The child is now on our CYP waiting list for sessions to start as soon as possible.

It is worth noting that the biggest barrier to accessing services for this client was language. Both First Light and the client were unable to provide translators due to cost. The client had been in the UK for quite some time, but had no friends, and is estranged from family, so the support for them was exceptionally limited and they were isolated. The client lacks community and sense of belonging. They are going to be referred into a local family hub, where they and the children will be further introduced to the community.

Client F

Client F has a 14-year-old child who was sexually assaulted in a playground near their home. The alleged perpetrator was known to the client and their child. The client and child live locally to the adult perpetrator, who has special educational needs.

Police are informed and there has been an ongoing investigation for over 2 years. The case is coming up to being ready to go to the CPS. The child had counselling with us and the parent was supported with the Safe Parent Program.

In the past client F has had many angry outbursts with professionals and we were particularly supporting with this and how F, could manage their anger with police and professionals and look at ways to best help themselves and their child during an extremely difficult and distressing time.

Client F is a single parent and raises their child alone. They are very lonely as both their parents have died, and they have very little family support, They are also in the process of ending a current relationship of their own.

During one of the sessions when F was talking about their child, they told the counsellor that whilst they were also a child, they too had been sexually abused, and this was an extreme source of trauma for them. They said the incident was unreported and they had kept this assault within them all their lives.

From this disclosure we were able to offer client F 9 sessions of counselling in their own right. We were able to offer more focused support for them to look at their trauma burden and see how to manage complex feelings of anger, shame, loneliness and rejection.

Appendix F – Safe Families Anonymised Case Study

Family Number: 25107

Referring agency: Social worker in school team (SWIS team)

Guidance: Janet (Mum) and Roger (8)

Brief Summary of Family:

Mother and father have separated, and Roger has not seen his father for several years due to him being in prison and safeguarding concerns around his contact.

Family live in a home unknown to Roger's father as an ongoing safety measure. His father has applied to the court for contact with Roger which has unsettled him, and Janet and she seeks to protect him without preventing him from having contact with father which is being assessed and reviewed by a legal process.

Mother would benefit from talking to someone each week so that she can offload any anxieties and fears whilst undergoing court proceedings. She would also benefit from building a trusting friendship with another person who she could meet on a fortnightly basis.

Were the children considered on a trajectory into care? No

Family Goals

- Volunteer to listen and hear what Janet wants to share. Ensuring she feels understood, supported, and builds upon her confidence and self-esteem.
- Trauma has affected this family so a sense of belonging and friendships to develop over time through face-to-face fortnightly catch ups. Janet to have someone who can come alongside her as a friend.

Support provided

Janet was brave in connecting with her volunteer who was patient and took her time forming a link with her over a period and exchanged messages. During our initial referral to connection with the volunteer, the family were opened to a child in need plan due to concerns raised around Janet being able to identify any risks her new partners might be to her son.

Janet was supported through ending her relationship with a controlling partner through having the volunteer to share her thoughts and feelings with and reports that the connection supported her and helped build upon her longer-term resilience.

The volunteer has spent time getting to know the volunteer and regular face to face meetings take place not only in the family home, but in the community.

Volunteer has supported Janet in attending meetings with social workers and Roger's school as part of the child protection plan. Janet initially shared her worries to her volunteer, and the FSM was able to empower Janet in the meetings to share her thoughts and grew in confidence, often correcting the professionals.

Janet was supported to build up to a point where she felt confident sharing with professionals and reaching out when she needed to especially in crisis to get some gas support in collaboration with the social worker.

Janet was supported with food provision in crisis and long-term plans made to support her accessing short term food banks. The family support manager and the volunteer supported with collections to ensure the family could eat.

The volunteer went with Janet to a debt advice meeting, and we were able to put some resources in place to support her with her cost-of-living crisis she had found herself in. With support from ACTS 435, Janet and Roger were provided with the following resources:

- A tumble dryer so she could dry the family clothes more efficiently
- A shopping trolley which allowed Janet to carry more shopping allowing her to purchase food which can last over longer periods of time
- A microwave to reduce the cost of using her oven every day.

All based on the advice given during the meeting with Janet.

Janet was supported to attend other meetings with her volunteer alongside her and was supported to make appointments and make calls without her volunteer being present.

Janet and Roger were also able to attend a day out to the beach that we arranged for the families. Janet does not get to go out with Roger often and shared on the day that her mum's ashes were sprinkled in the sea at the beach she was visiting so she had been particularly excited to visit to see the beach finally. She also got to meet families and share her details to connect with them past the trip.

Jane was supported by her volunteer by being able to talk through her fears and worries during her court proceedings. This supported her to remain positive and able to deal with the situation she was going through. The court case was successful, and Roger's need to slowly have communication from his dad was agreed.

Outcomes and Parent Feedback:

Family Feedback:

Janet has thanked us throughout and has been appreciative of the support we have offered her. She has valued her volunteer and has always stated that she is getting 'everything that she had hoped for and reflected that she has never had a true friend like her before in her life.' She is looking forward to the ongoing friendship and they have successfully introduced the children to each other as part of on-going connection during holidays. Janet says that Roger has thrived due to the support she has received as she has been able to continue to positively parent him. She has reached out and started to spend more time with her family which has built a stronger connection around her and Roger. Janet says Roger feels 'safe and confident' and has started to open up to others and herself to express himself. He has built new friendships and engages better in the class and with his 1-1 support.

Professional Feedback:

The FSM attended the final child protection meeting to inform the professionals that we are closing our support, explaining that the volunteer and Janet had built a friendship and will still see each other.

Janet proudly announced the news of the closure to Safe Families. Social services concluded that they felt that Janet no longer met any thresholds to keep her open to social care. They acknowledged how far she had come, reflected on how well she had embraced the plan and had achieved so much. They echoed parts of our reflection and celebrated her achievements and new friendships.

Volunteer Feedback:

The volunteer stated that it was a highlight to see the family signed off by social services. Janet had worked hard to ensure she met all the expectations the child in need plan sought and had come so far. She also reflected that she was so happy to have made a new friendship with Janet. Helping Janet and accomplishing so much was a great experience for her. Their friendship felt just like a catch up and no longer a support session.