



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

[pscп@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:pscp@plymouth.gov.uk)
www.plymouthscp.co.uk



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Our shared partnership vision: The right support is available and accessible, at the earliest opportunity, to ensure children and young people in Plymouth are safe and feel safe in their families and communities.

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR STRATEGIC LEADERS

Welcome to our Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership report 2023-2024.

This year has seen the start of a period of significant change for the Partnership with the national publication of the revised Working Together 2023 guidance, published by the Department for Education in December 2023.

This is an exciting time in the development of the Partnership as the new Working Together 2023 guidance strengthens our work going forward to provide the best possible outcomes as a multi-agency system for children, young people and families in Plymouth

Working Together 2023 has provided us with the opportunity to make clear and take ownership of our shared leadership, responsibility and accountability as leaders of the statutory organisations to ensure effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are in place across all agencies working with children and young people.

We are very fortunate in Plymouth to have a large number of statutory and non-statutory partners, who work relentlessly alongside each other to effect change and ensure effective safeguarding for children.

As outlined within the report, there has been a huge amount of activity over this last year, and we enter 2024/25 with strong foundations. We will remain focused on driving forward our shared Partnership vision for children, young people and families in Plymouth, which states we will ensure “The right support is available and accessible, at the earliest opportunity, to ensure children and young people in Plymouth are safe and feel safe in their families and communities.”

Within the report are examples of how Plymouth embraces continuous learning, which is paramount for continuous improvement to provide the best outcomes for children. In the coming year, the Partnership will focus on how to evidence this improvement activity and harness the voice of children and young people to confirm we are getting it right for them.

We are pleased in 2024-2025 to be including Education as our fourth statutory partner and we will welcome representatives at both Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partner level. This will provide a more holistic approach to safeguarding children in the City by having four key

statutory partners. Our new Governance and assurance arrangements are being finalised and will be published by December 2024.

Finally, we want to thank all those colleagues that are working across the Partnership in a variety of roles, to support children, young people and families every day. Without our strong partnership connections, we would be unable to provide the well-rounded approach to safeguarding children and young people, thank you!




James Colwell
Chief Constable
Devon and Cornwall Police



Tracey Lee
Chief Executive
Plymouth City Council



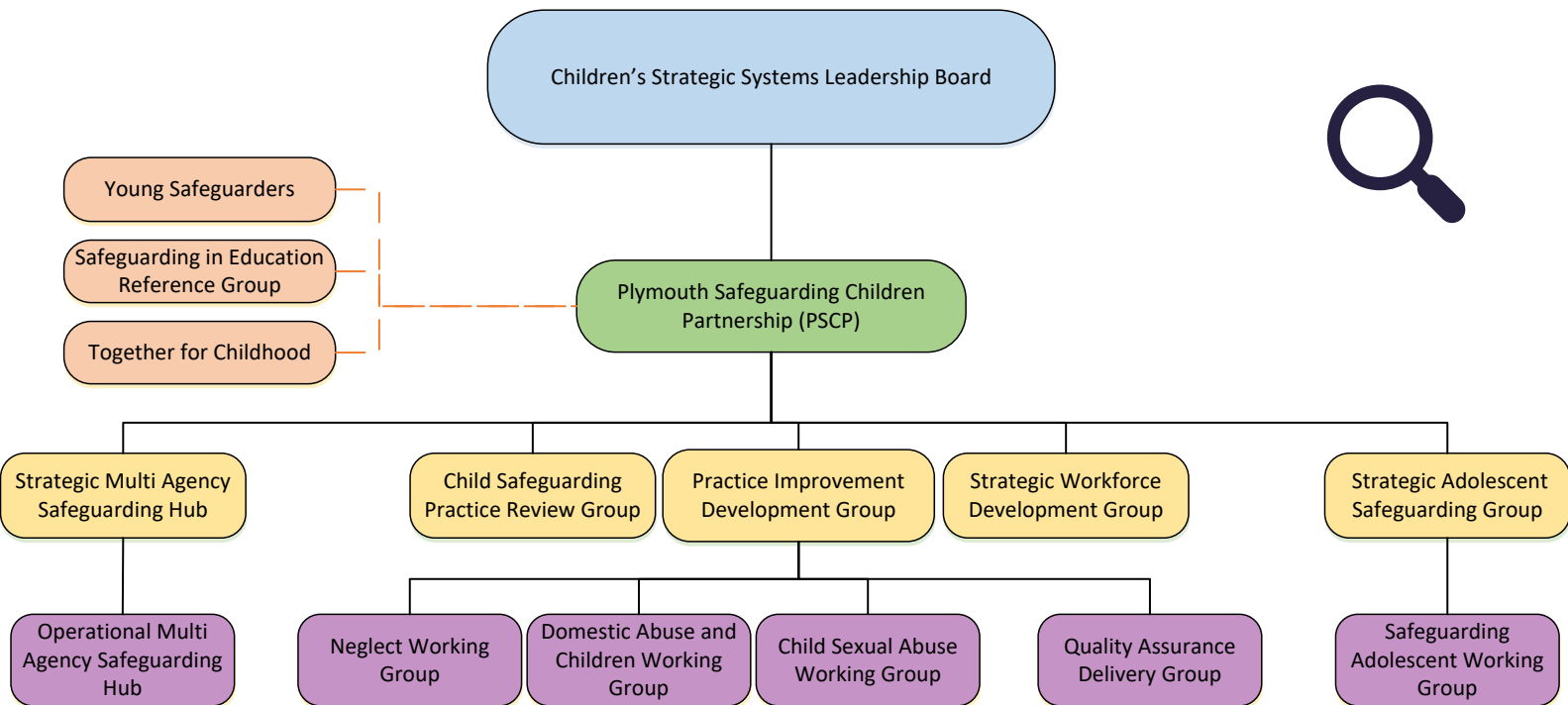
Moira Marder
Chief Executive
Ted Wragg Trust



Steve Moore
Chief Executive
NHS Devon Integrated Care Board

WHAT IS THE PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP?

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership is often 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>



WORKING TOGETHER 2023

The partnership has this year embraced the new Working Together 2023 guidance and has been utilising its content to create stronger foundations for our collaborative working.

In Plymouth to ensure we are embracing the new guidance, statutory partners and some partners from our relevant agencies have taken part in a “health check”, facilitated by a representative from the Department for Education. 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. The health check has enabled us to develop an accurate implementation plan focusing on areas we know require some improvement and we are working as a multi-agency system to ensure we embed the new Working Together guidance, so that partners can work together effectively for children, young people and families.

As part of this implementation, the Lead Safeguarding Partners have been working together to improve outcomes for children by setting the strategic direction for the partnership which will form the basis for the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements due to be published by the end of 2024.

Relevant Agencies

As well as the three Statutory Safeguarding Partners, there are several partner relevant agencies. 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
- NHS England



- University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
- Livewell Southwest
- Southwest Ambulance NHS Trust
- Adopt Southwest
- Registered fostering agencies
- CAFCASS
- Probation
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
- British Transport Police
- Port and local border police force
- Action for Children
- NSPCC
- Barnardo's
- 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

Find out more:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf

YOUNG SAFEGUARDERS

In our city we are very lucky 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.

Previously, The Young Safeguarders produced The Ten Wishes, and these were embedded in the PSCP multi-agency training programme. They have since been updated and relaunched.

This year, the Young Safeguarders have looked at the impact of social issues including the cost-of-living crisis and mental wellbeing. They have also spent time understanding vaping and access to toilets for other young people in schools and completed a survey with their peers, feeding this information into the Safeguarding in Education Reference Group.

TEN WISHES

What Children and Young People in Plymouth want from you...



We want professionals to be easier to contact.

We want professionals to be on time, as they expect us to be.

We want professionals to be properly trained and for us to be involved in the training.

We want professionals to ask us what we need and not to assume.

We want professionals to do what they say they are going to do, to listen and stand up for us.

We want professionals to use words we understand.

We want professionals to reassure us something is being done and tell us how long it will take.

We want professionals to understand when we need to talk to them one-to-one.

We want professionals to ask us 'do you feel safe?'

We want professionals to respect us and how we feel.



Making a difference:

The Young Safeguarders also scrutinise the work of the partnership and have reviewed the new Building Support document, making edits to it, as well as reviewing and asking questions to the learning and development lead about how the Graded Care Profile 2 neglect tool works and is implemented in Plymouth, so they can understand it.

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 Police custody in Plymouth and within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Making a difference:

During the Young Safeguarders learning walk within Police Custody, they highlighted that they felt Young People were treated differently by officers on different shift patterns.

The Young Safeguarders commented on how officers perceived there to be a culture that young people have the power “on the streets” but the Police have the power within custody; and how custody could benefit from a consistent approach to under 18’s in the custody suite to avoid bias or confusion, this was fed back to the Police via a report.

The Young Safeguarders have been working with CAMHS to plan their next learning walk in 2024 at the Place of Safety for a young person undergoing a Mental Health Act Assessment, they will be evaluating the suitability of the environment and whether the needs of young people are properly reflected.

The Young Safeguarders have also highlighted young people’s attitudes, interactions and approaches within online spaces and how young people are taking dangerous risks based on preconceptions, and that online is no longer virtual but now a real factor in young people’s lives. The Young Safeguarders identified that online pornography is normalising sexual violence against women in the attitudes of young people and raised concerns regarding how easy it is for young people to access pornography without appropriate checks or boundaries.

The Young Safeguarders have supported partnership work alongside Together For Childhood around pornography which included contributing to a play and are now leading the next phase of the campaign, developing assets to support peer-to-peer conversations and critical awareness of porn influence and its contribution to harmful behaviours.

Find out more:

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

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, including updates in relation to Prevent, information on new training offers through the PSCP and current themes and trends in relation to safeguarding adolescents.

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.

Below is a sample of four of the questions within the S.175/157 this year.

Where the establishment's premises are used by independent services outside of school/college hours the Governing Body/Trust Body have sought assurance that the service has appropriate policies and procedures in place, including safeguarding policies, operate safe recruitment practices and have appropriately trained staff to deal with incidents of actual or suspected abuse	Previous Year 85%	This Year 99%
Relevant staff members have completed Operation Encompass training to receive Public Protection Notices	99.01%	
Training, policies and procedures are in place to support students experiencing domestic abuse in the home	99.01%	
The setting is aware of the neglect Graded Care Profile and the requirement to engage in its implementation	83.17%	

This year the SERG has worked closely with Children's Services Education, Participation and Skills (EPS) team and The Young Safeguarders to look at vaping and the vaping of illegal substances, and how this can impact access to toilets in schools and lead to permanent exclusions for students.

Making a difference:

The SERG and EPS have been working closely with Public Health to support schools to address the concerns surrounding the vaping of illegal substances. There has since been a significant drop in the rate of permanent exclusions for this issue throughout this academic year.



BUILDING SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN PLYMOUTH

In Summer 2023 the Plymouth Partnership recognised there was a lack of understanding around consent, thresholds and information sharing associated with referrals into Children's Services following implementation of Building Support guidance in 2021/22.

Therefore, in September 2023 partners gathered to review the building support document and alter it to meet the needs of all partners, and a new version of "*Building Support for Children, Young People and Families in Plymouth*" was launched to address the confusion.

All agencies signed up to this at a senior and strategic level to enable shared responsibility for practice development and improved consistency of practice for children and families.

The launch of the new document was followed by a series of free workshops for all agencies delivered by colleagues from across the Partnership to build confidence with assessing risk and thresholds for referrals. In total, 473 staff attended these workshops.

As part of our quality assurance process, we collected evaluations at the end of each workshop. The evaluation forms had several questions that were rated on a scale of 1 - 5 (With 5 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest score). Below is the average score from the 228 evaluation forms we have received on each question:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. How helpful was the pre-reading: | 4.17 Out of 5 |
| 2. How was the quality of the presentation: | 4.37 Out of 5 |
| 3. Did the content meet your needs: | 4.32 Out of 5 |
| 4. How useful will this learning be for the work that you do: | 4.41 Out of 5 |



Building Support for Children, Young People & Families in Plymouth

ENSURING THE RIGHT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN,
YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES IN PLYMOUTH

Making a difference: A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Review Following Building Support Professional Enquiry Training Workshops

What difference has been made to the quality of referrals?

The quality of the referrals from some services, particularly from Schools, Health CAMHS and Health visitors have generally improved. The MASH would like to see more training to improve the quality of the referrals made in some areas of the wider system.

How has the understanding of thresholds, as evidenced by referrals and calls to the professional's enquiry line, been affected?

It is fair to say schools have a better understanding around the levels of need for a child since the completion of the training. Similarly, Health Visitors and Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service equally have a deeper understanding of the levels of need for children.

Schools make good use of the professional enquiry line and will explore Early Help Support as an option available. When schools are advised to make a referral to the MASH, they are prompt to do so.

When the professional line was initially introduced, some professionals did not understand its purpose. Though it took time to explain to professionals the aim and objectives of the professional line, the MASH has seen good use of the line by professionals calling in to have hypothetical discussions and to explore creative ways to support children and families.

What difference has the training made to obtaining or consideration of consent?

There is still some work to be done within the MASH and the wider system around consent, information sharing and where consent can be overridden for safeguarding concerns, this will be addressed widely through the launch of our multi-agency information sharing agreement later in 2024.

Find out more:

www.plymouthscb.co.uk/building-support



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:

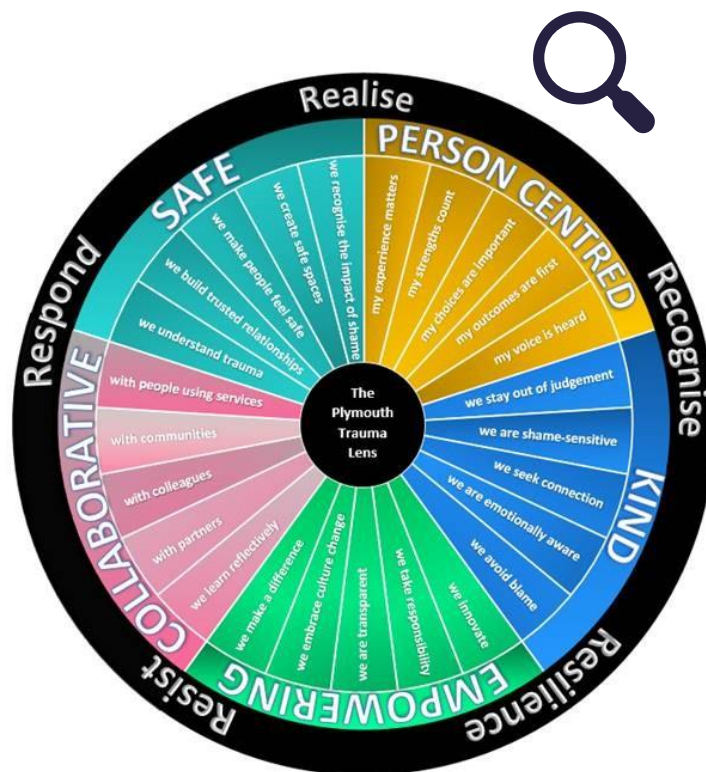
Safe: there is consideration of the psychological safety of those involved in and impacted by its safeguarding arrangements. When meeting, engaging and working with children, young people, families, communities and professionals all efforts shall be made to establish trusting relationships.

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.

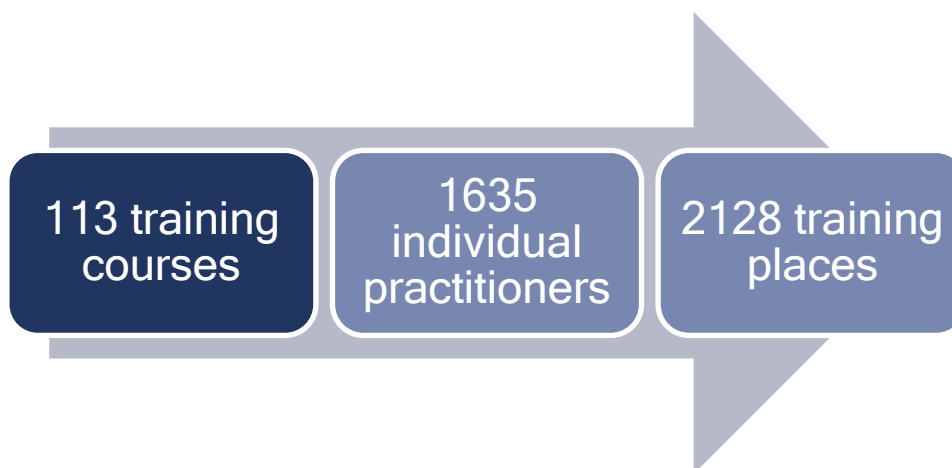
Empowering: there is an overriding expectation that the PSCP safeguarding arrangements shall make a genuine difference. All involved, engaged or working within safeguarding services deserve to know that their contributions have influenced real change and that the PSCP is going to ensure that learning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



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.



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



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

We feel that it's important to not just offer the training but to go back to practitioners after they've had time to reflect and ask them what difference it has made to their practice. We currently ask for these reflections three months after a training session. Here is some of the feedback received:

Making a difference:

One of the partnership trainers shared that during delivery of a Child Sexual Abuse workshop an attendee identified some concerns regarding the leader of a local activity group. They discussed these concerns with the facilitator and was escalated to the Local Authority Designated Officer, the police spoke to the individual and they no longer work with children in that role. Specifically, it has been noted that the Paths to Perpetration section of the CSA workshop informed the decision for the attendee to report their concerns.'

In the last couple of weeks, I have submitted a CP review report and was able to focus much more on positives for the parent/family due to the training and the new reports looking at what they have done well and not solely discussing the negatives.
Working Together to Safeguard Children Course



'The levels of risk infographic has really helped, as a DSO I have to make referrals across England and many MASH teams use this, so it can help when making referrals to articulate what support we feel that young person may need. I have marked the previous question as a 3, only because I have done so many training courses before I was well versed in signs and symptoms of abuse. I would add that it was expertly facilitated and by far the best safeguarding training I have attended in my 15+ years of working in adult mental health'

Understanding Child Protection Course

The course helped me to change the way in which I speak to families rather than sound like I am speaking from a textbook.

Working Together to Safeguard Children
Course

Making a difference:

A Senior Professional Youth Worker shared they had attended the PSCP training on Supervision Skills & Workforce Support and that it was excellent. It really helped them think about how they can support others and will be putting those skills into practice.

Making a difference:

After attending one of our "Introduction to child sexual abuse" workshops, a member of staff at PATH (Plymouth Access to Housing) identified a family they had been working with where there were concerns about an adult with previous sexual offences towards children. They were able to identify the risk using the information gained at the workshop and they contacted the NSPCC Together For Childhood for further guidance. The child in that household was protected from harm. Being an adult facing service they did not initially consider that the workshop would have been relevant to them."


OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED

The Partnership agreed 4 priority areas of focus for 2023-2024 and created a Plan on a Page highlighting these and the partnership vision. The current priorities are neglect; child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour; domestic abuse & children, and safeguarding adolescents.

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 ensures we are being ambitious about making a difference with our priorities to keep children and young people safe in Plymouth.

These strategies, practice guidance and toolkits are to be launched in Summer 2024 on the PSCP website and the task and finish groups will then become working groups to deliver on the strategies and to implement learning from local and national learning reviews and emerging themes and trends in these priority areas.





PSCP Vision & Plan on a Page 2023 - 2024

Vision

The right support is available and accessible, at the earliest opportunity, to ensure children & young people in Plymouth are safe and feel safe in their families and communities

Response to Neglect	Response to Sexual Harm	Response to Domestic Abuse	Safeguarding Adolescents
<p>What we want to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved early help offer - Reduction in Child Protection Plans for neglect - Practice tools support change with families <p>How we will do that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update our neglect strategy - Implement the Graded Care Profile 2 - Undertake quality assurance activity to find what is working and where we could do things differently. 	<p>What we want to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved identification of signs and symptoms of sexual harm - Increase in Child Protection Plans for sexual abuse - Improved access to support <p>How we will do that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embed Together for Childhood learning across the city - Create a strategy to drive change and improvement. 	<p>What we want to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved access to support for child and adult victims - Improved access to support for those who cause harm. - Improved early help offer to prevent escalation of harm <p>How we will do that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen our 'routine enquiry' skills and response - Focus on the impact of early intervention within our reviews. 	<p>What we want to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assurance that young people receive support that understands their development needs and the types of harm they may experience. <p>How we will do that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and re-launch the Adolescent Safety Framework - Update our Adolescent Strategy

Underpinning Themes

1. Organisational Culture & Professional Support: Underpinning all that we do will be a focus on ensuring the right organisational culture and professional support is in place across all agencies. We know a healthy and stable workforce is key to engaging in the work of our partnership.
2. Trauma Informed & Restorative: In all our work, we will understand how trauma shapes children, families and communities experience of the world. We will support change with children, families and communities by being restorative, strengths based and daring to do things differently.
3. Whole Family Approach: We will always work 'with' families and adopt a 'family first' mind-set to help keep children safe, happy and at home.

Partnership Pledges

1. We will work respectfully with children and their families, making sure we know how they live their lives and include them in decision making.
2. We will be positive in our work with children and their families, recognising what is working well and building on strengths.
3. We will build relationships with children, families and communities; and with colleagues across the workforce, to give us the best chance of success.
4. We will be professionally curious and open to different opinions, making sure we are acting in the best interest of children.
5. We will have an appetite to learn and aim to continuously improve.

pscp@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouthscp.co.uk

PSCP Vision & Plan on a Page 2023-24
May 2022 v2

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: NEGLECT

Children with Child Protection plans are highest in the category of neglect with figures indicating an increase in the numbers from 35.5% in early 2023 to 50.6% in early 2024.

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.

In 2023 the PSCP embedded the use of the NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2). The GCP2 is an NSPCC strengths-based assessment tool that uses a graded scale to measure levels of care for a child. It 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.

The hospital dental theatre lists show the poor condition of a child's teeth is a good indicator of neglect. This year, UHP identified 267 children who had dental extractions or full dental mouth clearances due to dental caries.

Making a difference:

A school trust shared that practitioners are reporting that they are finding the GCP2 to be a very useful tool especially around cases of long-term neglect. This is supporting the identification of levels of neglect and therefore helping families get the right help as well as provide more accurate data for schools in terms of the nature of the neglect they are working with.

The partnership has delivered many training inputs across multiple agencies around GCP2 and there has been positive progress from using this tool, however there is still some way to go to embed the tool within Children's Services and this is being promoted within individual teams, through the Partnership, through the Social Work Academy and this will be addressed even further into 2024.

Making a difference:

A family support worker shared how using the GCP2 with a family in child protection planning was a useful way of helping the family understand the worries shared by professionals in a clear and easily understandable way and therefore supporting carers to help them focus on the children's needs.

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

- Some persistent efforts to build trusting relationships with children and share information across the Partnership have enabled better understanding of children's lived experience.
- The MASH consultation line is proving useful for timely advice.
- Partnership confidence is growing relevant to the need for consent from families to make a MASH referral.
- Since September Police Public Protection Notifications are timelier and the content and language is clearer.
- Some children are being kept safe with safety equipment that the Partnership is providing to families.
- Parenting groups are supporting some parents to develop improved strategies to manage neglect and to ensure better boundaries and routines for children.

In the last two years, Police state there has been significant progress in the ability to prosecute neglect cases which enables effective whole system safeguarding.

Making a difference:

A mother was found by police to be intoxicated looking after her two-month-old child. A joint investigation commenced with Children's Services and the child was removed by Police and put into the care of the Local Authority who placed child with father. Investigating Police Officer, Children's Services and other partner agencies worked together to support the child and father and help him obtain a court order to protect the child and himself from the mother.

Making a difference:

Child C had experienced domestic abuse. Mother and child left and when mother and child were living alone, concerns were raised around neglect, due to poor home conditions and no routine. GCP2 was completed with the family and a realistic cleaning schedule was created in partnership, practical support was also offered to clear some items. Parenting sessions were offered to support the development of routines, positive management of behaviours and child's language and development. Mother and child were also signposted to other community resources and supported to access funding. A grant was also secured to ensure a lock on the property could be fixed. Child C is now attending nursery and benefitting from regular opportunities to play, socialise and learn. Routines are in place and mother feels confident managing behaviours. The home environment is clean with space for the child to play.

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership support and are members of the ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope! programme which helps parents and carers cope with a crying baby. Looking after a baby is an incredibly special and wonderful time. We also know it can be a very stressful time and trying to calm a crying baby is something all parents and carers experience. The Partnership promotes the training and online tools available from ICON.

The partnership is also supporting the multi-agency workforce to be aware of the safer sleep message and share in the responsibility to help all Plymouth babies sleep more safely. Understanding and promoting safer sleep for babies is a universal message for all families.

In 2024 we will be launching our ambitious neglect strategy, practice guidance and toolkit which will not only assist practitioners but will also highlight what we plan to do as a partnership to prevent neglect and provide better outcomes for children.

Making a difference:

In March 2024, members of the partnership from health and the partnership team attended Plymouth Argyle football club fan zone and held a stall promoting safer sleep for babies.

One member of the public stated that he was pleased he had chatted with the team as he was unaware of the current safer sleep guidance, and he would now be mindful of this while caring for his young family. The advice and visual aids from the Lullaby Trust proved to be useful conversation starters, and many people took these away with them to share with family members.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: 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. This strategy addresses specific needs and concerns which directly affect our adolescents including mental wellbeing, substance use, harmful sexual behaviour and absences from school. As part of the toolkit creation and following feedback from partners, this multi-agency group is also creating a new, more streamlined version of the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) which will launch in 2024 with training inputs.

There is a correlation between exclusion from school and safeguarding concerns.



Our operational Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings have undergone a review and have moved to a Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) model. This change now allows for a better daily focus on contextual safeguarding by concentrating on those young people most at risk of going missing and being exploited alongside a focus on themes, locations and particular adults of concern. The outcome is a more joined-up multi-agency response to protect young people.

Making a difference:

The DIB has had a positive impact in young people and families as the support/intervention is offered more promptly and it promotes effective partnership working given that a response is planned, and all agencies are fully aware of their commitment to that response. The DIB prioritises missing children, children in custody, children at risk of exploitation and the response occurs more quickly than previously as there is no requirement to wait for the monthly operational MACE meeting.

Making a difference:

The DIB identified two 16-year-olds who were staying in an unsafe environment with access to drugs supplied by an adult. Agencies worked together to safeguard the young people and arrest the adult; Partners have then subsequently worked with the young people and their families to provide ongoing support.

A Quality Assurance multi-agency audit was completed at the end of 2023, this highlighted the success of the DIB, however showed that the current group of professionals is a strong group which may be too dependent on working relationships where professionals go “above and beyond” rather than having a robust system in place to provide long-term support in this area. The action from this was to further develop the Adolescent Safety Framework, as well as review commissioned specialist support services across the local authority.

140 home educated children have been supported to return to school.

Making a difference:

Support from the Child Centred Policing Team has led to feedback from a parent whose son has now joined the army to which the parent credits the quality of support and intervention from Police and partners.

Partners have highlighted that there is a lack of provision for young people at risk of exploitation and County Lines as most activities available are sport related and many young people would engage in other activities such as hair/dance/beauty which is currently not offered and may be more attractive to our young people. This will be addressed alongside the Community Safety Partnership and through the Safeguarding Adolescent Working Group with oversight of the Partnership in 2024/25.

Adolescents have their own dedicated ward in University Hospital Plymouth, Wildgoose Ward. Paediatric staff are trained to respond to adolescent needs.

Making a difference:

Partnership work between an educational psychologist, social worker and school led to a young person being placed on a Child Protection plan following risks of sexual exploitation and abuse where parents had been unable to safeguard. Agencies will work together with parents to help safeguard the young person.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: DOMESTIC ABUSE AND CHILDREN

The PSCP, in partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence partnership board, have started the creation of a strategy, practice guidance and toolkit to address Domestic Abuse and Children, focusing on children as survivors.

This ambitious co-produced strategy, guidance and toolkit will help practitioners to identify Domestic Abuse and its impact on children and know what to do to improve outcomes for children, young people and families who are experiencing domestic abuse. Top tips are being developed to support this for practitioners in different roles e.g. Family Hubs and community support, schools etc

The DA and Children Strategy will help form the priorities for the upcoming commissioning of Workforce Development, behaviour change and DA support services for children and their families. The guidance and toolkit when completed will be shared with the DASV Partnership. The partnership working has helped to move towards the Coordinated Community Response that is being developed in Plymouth.

DA Commissioning lead, Plymouth City Council

Domestic abuse continues to have a significant impact on children and is reflected by the significant numbers of children subject to a Child Protection Plans who have a history of experiencing domestic abuse within the home.

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

- Timely referrals to Early Help.
- Child centred practice.
- Where there is evidence of good multi-agency working and information sharing, the risks to children are better identified and supported to reduce the risk of domestic abuse.
- Families feeling supported and guided by practitioners.

Police Public Protection Notices (PPN's) have increased to **10366** children in early 2024 compared with **8155** the previous year indicating a **27% increase** in notifications over the last year. Police must complete a PPN for all incidents of Domestic Abuse.

- Knowledge of recent changes in legislation where children are identified to be victims of domestic abuse has supported parents to consider the impact of children's experiences of domestic abuse.
- Evidence of good supervision in some agencies.
- Trauma informed working.

Identified Learning for the Partnership:

- Social workers need to share information with partners when children are closed to Children's Services.
- We need to understand what information is stored by partners.
- Consent from parents can be a barrier.
- We need to spend more time with children to really understand their lived experience.
- We need to improve our understanding of each other's agency roles.
- We need to embed the routine enquiry in all agencies practice.

Making a difference:

A health visitor requested support for a parent who has historically fled domestic abuse. The Family Hubs team met with the parent and children and discussed services and support. The parent said they felt attendance at Step-By-Step (which is a group for children and their parents/carers when there are concerns about development) and a parenting group would be beneficial. The parent has attended both. Staff have offered regular check-ins and support during the parenting programme. Overall, this support has enabled the child to benefit from additional opportunities for socialisation, as well as have a parent who feels more able to support development and manage guidance, boundaries and routines at home. Attendance at these programmes has also supported the parent in building their peer support network.

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has commissioned the Interpersonal Trauma Response Service (ITRS) across GP surgeries in Devon including Plymouth. ITRS trains GPs to identify domestic abuse, sexual violence and indicators of related trauma in patients.

Included in the support offer from ITRS is support for children affected by domestic abuse. ITRS employ 2 children's specialist workers and have recently appointed a new young person specialist post for: 14-17yr olds who have experienced any form of domestic abuse, 18-21yr olds who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence with an ability to support up to the age of 25 if there are additional factors, for example - care leavers.

The Local authority Education Participation and Skills service are regularly involved in supporting schools to understand the ongoing impact of domestic abuse on children and young people's neurodevelopment. They also offer trauma informed information, advice and guidance to all childcare settings through training and bulletins.

UHP will place a 'risk of domestic abuse' alert on the child's hospital records so that if the child presents to UHP, the clinician is aware that there is a domestic abuse risk and inform assessments and plans of care.

Following Barnardo's DA pathway work in family hubs, children have told us.
"My relationship with my mum has become stronger and better"
"Mum is happier, I am happier"

The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Team have

created Local authority Level 1 DA e-learning available to external partners. We can track the numbers of external staff by organisation who complete this training. The VAWGDASV workforce development programme is being commissioned to include Level 2 and 3 DA training.

Devon and Cornwall Police Central Safeguarding Team (CST) have increased the school database for Op Encompass with 100% of Plymouth schools subscribed. This is now being extended to include Early Years.

Find out more:

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. <https://www.operationencompass.org>



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

In 2023, alongside Safer Plymouth's Community Safety Partnership, the partnership launched an ambitious strategy, guidance and toolkit creation task and finish group for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Plymouth. This group is chaired by a representative from the NSPCC Together for Childhood programme and has members from multiple organisations within the partnership to provide a collective input and sign up.

"There has been significant change in the local system response to CSA this year culminating in the delivery of a CSA 12-month strategy and associated CSA guidance & Toolkit."
NSPCC - Together for Childhood

The Workforce Development Group has led the delivery of harmful sexual behaviour training with inputs delivered by named nurses from University Hospital Plymouth and Livewell Southwest. Together for Childhood has been facilitating focused projects with the CSA Centre of Expertise, specifically to work with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, utilising 'CSA signs and indicators' tool and introducing managing harmful sexual behaviour in schools with education colleagues in the city.

Making a difference:

The NSPCC has seen signs that there is an improving approach to recognising signs and indicators of CSA, particularly from education partners who are using the tool to record and build a picture of concerns about CSA.

The training from the PSCP is well received and local collaborative working to develop the CSA training offer and delivery has benefited the local partnership.

Multi-agency CSA case audits have been integral to developing the knowledge of the partnership and have been critical in formulating training, the strategy and key priorities.

University Hospitals Plymouth, with multi-agency input, has Safeguarded 19 cases of Child Sexual Abuse that have presented to the hospital this year.

Making a difference:

A practice learning review identified lack of CSA knowledge and confidence within Children's Services. This has led to a pilot where Children's Services have had inputs from the CSA Centre of Expertise and the NSPCC to use the signs and indicators tool to help identify CSA at the earliest opportunity.

Young people have been working to make a difference in relation to CSA:

- Partnership working with City College and NSPCC has resulted in young people developing and testing a Young Persons led delivery on CSA awareness, peer to peer.
- Young People in primary and secondary schools have been using the EMPOWER framework to quality assure their healthy relationships education, helping to ensure young people voice is embedded in the planning and delivery of education.

Making a difference:

Child A reported CSA to the Police. Support for Child A has been achieved through positive partnership working between Children's services, Health, Police and School enabling child A to build trust with all agencies to help build a safe environment and guidance through the legal process.

Significant gaps remain in CSA Recovery Services and Harmful Sexual Behaviour services from a commissioning and safeguarding position, but this is improving now that there are commitments within the CSA strategy.

With growing crime trends in the online space, Devon and Cornwall Police Paedophile Online Investigation Team has good links with Children's services and has conducted many joint operations to safeguard children at risk of harm this year.

Making a Difference:

Audits show us that -

- timely referrals from partners to Children's Services in relation to CSA, increase more timely actions to keep children safe.
- Children who are seen and spoken to alone with a safe relationship with their social worker are sharing their lived experience and wishes.

NATIONAL LEARNING

National Panel Report

The national panel published their annual report detailing themes from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) alongside Rapid Review examples, which were reviewed by 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.

National Panel Report on Elective Home Education

This report has been shared with partnership colleagues for dissemination through our CSPR group.

National Reform

In December 2023 the Department for Education published several documents looking at national reform for Children's social care -

National Kinship Strategy - this is evidenced within Plymouth Children's Services records where consideration is given to placing a child with another family member where required and appropriate.

National framework for children's social care - This has been considered as part of the Plymouth Children's services 3-year plan for improvement.

Working Together to Safeguard Children - This will be implemented as per the Working Together pages in this report.

Transforming Data - In Plymouth we have had no Police data since November 2022. This is a significant data gap in the partnership and will be resolved in 2024. As a partnership we have a plan to build a comprehensive data dashboard which will coincide with the Children's Social Care dashboard. Currently we have a small amount of data for a dashboard which is reviewed in our Practice Improvement Development Group.

In March 2024 - The Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services.

We are working with a Department for Education lead authority - Somerset, to create Tier 1 and Tier 2 information sharing agreements for the Partnership which are due to be signed off at the PSCP executive meeting in 2024.

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. At the beginning of 2023, we decided that the decision for a Rapid Review would be mutually agreed by senior representatives of the three statutory organisations. 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. This method of decision making was further reinforced by the Working Together 2023 guidance which has also moved to this model.

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 Quality Assurance Delivery Group (QADG) 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 actions 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 QADG 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: Rapid Review 2023/24

In Plymouth, we have had one rapid review in 2023/2024 which was completed within the 15-day time frame and the report shared with the National Panel who agreed a local CSPR would not be required. The learning from this has been tracked through actions disseminated to the multi-agency system from the CSPR group.

Some of the themes from this Rapid Review and learning implemented:

Professional curiosity around new partners and the myth of the invisible man to be shared.

- The myth of the invisible man has been shared with all partners and a reminder around professional curiosity has been provided through the leaders for excellence programme in Children's Services, QA and Ofsted ILACS activity has not found this to be a continued issue.

Accurate chronologies. - Training has been rolled out across Children's Services to include use of the chronology tool and the importance of accurate chronologies.

Strategy Discussions to not be delayed for medical examinations. - This information was disseminated to the appropriate teams in Children's Services and audit processes in January 2024 have shown timely strategy meetings.

Health to review family records as well as identify child's lived experience for the child and historic risk factors - This learning was shared with teams and managers to share across the health system.

Timely referrals to the MASH when concerns of possible non-accidental injury. - This has been sent to all staff in an email as well as incorporated in training supported by the hospital safeguarding team in office hours.

Ensure risks to siblings are considered when treating a child with non-accidental injury. - Emergency staff in the hospital have been advised to consider this and call the safeguarding team in the hospital during office hours or the out of hours Children's Services Team outside of these times.

ICB to lead on embedding ICON - There is an ICON/Safer Sleep multi-agency working group in place which have been working on a media campaign and working with GPs to help embed across the system.

Domestic abuse training to be explored in agencies and external providers to ensure it contains required information and guidance - As per the Domestic abuse update in this report, training is being created and commissioned by the DASV board and is being held alongside the domestic abuse and children working group.

Making a difference: Learning from Experience Reviews 2023/24

In Plymouth we have had two learning from experience reviews in 2023/24

Some of the themes from these learning from experience reviews and learning implemented:

Conduct work to ensure staff belonging to PSCP member organisations, and our community, understand the nature and prevalence of child sexual abuse. CSA working group is working with the Workforce Development Group to embed understanding & prevalence of CSA. Multi-agency training is also being delivered.

Decision makers across the Partnership to recognise the seriousness of sexual abuse and to ensure the right thresholds are applied. Building Support document has been redesigned alongside the signs & indicators toolkit. NSPCC Together for Childhood has provided training to social work managers. CSA training is available through the PSCP and the CSA working group is developing strategy, guidance and toolkits within this space.

Staff of PSCP member organisations to gather all available information in potential child sexual abuse cases, to fully understand the potential risks and guard against 'unconscious bias. The Signs & Indicators tool helps focuses on eliminating unconscious professional bias and increasing visibility. Partnership training offers also address this.

PSCP to review how to ensure communication in complex cases in maintained for the benefit of all professionals involved, and especially the child. Communication in complex cases has improved since this review. Discussion of complex cases across Partner agencies is regular and ongoing where thresholds for CSPR are not met to identify potential learning for the Partnership as a whole. Strategy discussions within the MASH are happening in a timelier fashion with direct feedback to the Strategic MASH group.

Mental health services to create an internal pathway so that referrals can pass between the services rather than be declined. This has now been changed so that mental health referrals can be passed from provider to provider and not declined back to the referrer delaying the referral.

Police to consistently share relevant information with parents/ appropriate adults and partner agencies and ensure Community Resolution Orders (CRO) for children are signed by a parent/guardian or appropriate adult. More guidance is being given to officers regarding CROs for young people so that phone calls are made to parents/carers for example. Since this incident the CRO forms have also changed, and it has been made clearer that juveniles need an appropriate adult present as they can help the child better understand what the CRO is.

Making a difference: Quality Assurance Audits 2023/24

In 2023/24 the Quality Assurance Delivery Group led on the following multi-agency audits:

Domestic Abuse - May 2023, Neglect - July 2023, Child Exploitation - December 2023

Neglect - February 2023

Some of the themes from these audits and learning implemented:

Provision for Perpetrator programmes that are readily accessible for this client group. Ahimsa are the only people commissioned to provide perpetrator work in Plymouth and DA commissioning of new services is currently in the process.

Publicise our Partnership resolution policy so that it is clear across the partnership. Case resolution protocol has been shared and promoted throughout the partnership; however, no referrals were received in 2023/24

Complete a further multi agency early help and domestic abuse audit exercise to evidence progress made with the recommendations. This has been put onto the workplan for the Quality Assurance Delivery Group for 2024/25.

Increase in timeliness of sharing PPN's. Police have changed their processes to allow more timely sharing of PPN's which will mean more timely safeguarding measures for children.

Increased ability and confidence in recognising neglect and having curious conversations - consider workforce development and 'themed' conferences Professional curiosity is a cornerstone of the neglect strategy working group's guidance. This is also being addressed within the Police via specific neglect training, they have offered that Partners can also attend this training.

Review PSCP training programme on exploitation needs more detail on risks, what they are, how to report, what support is out there, and the roles of the team involved. This is being reviewed alongside development of strategy, practice guidance and toolkit.

Encompass style emails to inform agencies of A&E attendance/DIB intel. Children's Services are exploring options with Somerset for a system which would share this information, ultimately having more timely outcomes for children as all agencies would be appraised.

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. This will be explored by Workforce Development Group.

PARTNERSHIP DATA

The Partnership data scorecard is scrutinised through the Quality Assurance Delivery Group, the Practice Improvement Development Group and by the Young Safeguarders.

The data is resourced multi-agency, however the majority has come from Children's Services in the last year, due to a lack of Devon and Cornwall Police data following a change of computer system in November 2022. This data will be shared during the year 2024/25 after work to restore it by the Police.

A real gap in the partnership currently is a data analyst to analyse the data and help provide a more comprehensive dashboard going forward. This will be addressed in 2024 and work is currently being scoped to create a large, shared data platform across multiple partnerships in the city to allow a whole family approach to data analysis which will contribute to performance.

FUNDING THE PARTNERSHIP

The income for 2023/24 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
Probation	£2,000
Working Together 2023 Grant	£47,300
Total	£242,579

The expenditure for 2023/24 was:

Item	Cost
Business Unit Staffing	£178,665
Independent Scrutiny	£20,681
Training budget	£15,588
Conference and supplies	£6,558
Subscriptions	£2,939
Young Safeguarders	£1,500
Total	£225,931

At the end of 2023/2024 the partnership had reserves of £124,711 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.

OUR PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD INTO 2024/2025

As a partnership we made the decision to keep the same priorities areas for 2024/2025 as 2023/2024.

In the summer of 2024 the strategy, practice guidance and toolkits will launch on our website in each priority area to support practitioners in these spaces.

The task and finish groups in each area will become Operational Working groups which will deliver on the strategy and the learning from audit and review processes to ensure “closing the loop” and ultimately better outcomes for children, young people and families.



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 2024/2025.

We will also be creating an overarching strategy linking the cross-cutting themes of our priorities across the whole of the partnership in 2024/2025.

In 2024/2025 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 Scrutiny

I have worked with the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership for the last two years. My comments are based on working within the partnership, oversight of reviews and quality assurance meetings, attendance at meetings, conversations with leaders and staff, and the review of documents.

Leadership

In the two years I have worked with the partnership, I have seen much change. Leaders and managers have changed, and new initiatives have been introduced. The partnership has experienced leadership and management instability, but over the past twelve months this has improved. The arrival of the current Partnership Manager in June 2023 has improved continuity, consistency and planning for the partnership, as has the appointment of a permanent Director of Children Services at Plymouth City Council. The partnership is still waiting for permanent delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs) for both the Devon and Cornwall Police and the NHS Devon Integrated Care Board. It is understood that permanent appointments are due to be made, but until they are the leadership of the partnership at this level is not secure.

Relevant Agencies

The partnership is supported well by local 'Relevant Agencies'. Health, education, Probation, Voluntary and Community, and Community Safety organisations work effectively within the partnership. Organisations are committed, contribute resources, support new developments, engage with reviews and quality assurance, participate in learning and instigate new conversations. I feel this is a strength of the partnership.

I note the connections made with 'sport' representatives and it will be interesting to see how this develops. There are new opportunities to widen the partnership's influence into local sporting groups, and I recommend the partnership monitors this over the next year.

Participation

The 'Young Safeguarders' Group continues to be strength of the partnership and has contributed throughout the year. A new group of Safeguarders have been inducted. They and their predecessors have completed work for the partnership, providing a view from young people on topics including the use of police custody, children and adolescent mental health

services (CAMHS), and the effects of pornography. The value of these insights cannot be understated, and it is reassuring to observe partners respecting and acting upon the findings. I have suggested the partnership should have a wider perspective from children and families, to build on what the 'Young Safeguarders' provide. I am aware there are plans to develop this through each of the partnership's subgroups. I recommend this plan is monitored closely, as I feel, this is a risk to achieving what was intended in Working Together 2023, in respect of participation.

Learning

When I report on learning I mean both the learning the partnership provides to local staff, and the learning it gains through conducting reviews, and recognising what has been learned elsewhere.

In both respects I feel the partnership has performed well. The learning offer is based on a robust needs analysis and reflects the priorities of the partnership. The quality of inputs is high, they are valued by local practitioners and inputs are evaluated. The Workforce Development Group is flexible and has varied the learning offer to meet emerging needs of the partnership, e.g., the Building Support learning programme.

The partnership has developed its ability to learn from experience and has performed well. It has clear processes in place, local leaders understand what is required of them and work together to meet timescales. Thresholds are correctly applied; work is timely and completed thoroughly. Findings are clear, monitored and subject of regular oversight. There are good examples of reviews being conducted and acted upon.

Priorities

The partnership has made good progress on most of its priority areas over the past twelve months. Special mention must be made of the Partnership Manager, who created the vision, drove the activity and inspired others to follow her example. The partnership has enviable resources in respect of Neglect, Child Sexual Abuse, and Safeguarding Adolescents. I recognise the effort being made into child victims of domestic abuse and appreciate the same type of resources are close to being available. I note there are positive signs of improvement in these priority areas, but it is still early to truly understand how outcomes are being affected. I know work is planned to monitor the outcomes being achieved.

Early Help

Although the Early Help and Family Hubs activity does not sit under the Safeguarding Children Partnership, I feel it should be referenced. Early Help has developed across Plymouth, with a

clear focus on local communities. The ten Family Hubs/children centres have provided a focus for the activity and the local workforce has been enriched and empowered through additional learning opportunities. There is still much to do but plans are being developed to improve the connection between community and statutory resources, connect local partners and develop resilience within the communities.

Quality Assurance

Over the past year the quality assurance processes across the partnership have matured and these provide a mostly accurate, reliable and regular set of indicators into how well the partnership is performing. One significant gap throughout the past 12 months is the absence of police safeguarding information. Despite numerous promises this has not been provided and has left the partnership at a disadvantage. I recommend pressure continues to be placed on the leadership of the Devon and Cornwall Police to address this issue.

Multi-agency case auditing (MACA) has been strength of quality assurance, with one MACA being conducted during each quarter. This MACAs have focused on priorities and have been used wisely to assess progress in some areas, e.g., Neglect.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

The work before and after the publication of Working Together 2023 in December 2023 has been significant for the partnership, and particularly the Partnership Manager. Working Together 2023 has given the partnership an opportunity to develop child safeguarding. I feel the partnership has ensured it will meet the technical requirements, i.e., publishing the annual report and the new safeguarding arrangements. I have concerns that the partnership has not developed sufficiently in other areas, e.g., the involvement of Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs), the working together of DSPs, and creating plans to support the 'whole family'. I feel these are areas where the partnership needs to focus.

Conclusion

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership is in a much healthier situation than it was 12 months ago and has the potential to develop further. The key processes and structures are secure and there are plans for all its priorities. The partnership needs to monitor its plans to ensure progress continues. I feel particular attention needs to be placed on its leadership to ensure the LSPs and DSPs work together to optimise the opportunities available through Working Together 2023 and Early Help initiatives.

John Clements, Independent Scrutineer. August 2024

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

There are multiple acronyms used by partners and throughout the partnership, below we have given a short explanation for some you may encounter throughout this report or when in contact with the partnership.

DIB - Daily Intelligence Briefing

MACE - Missing and Child Exploitation

ASF - Adolescent Safety Framework

CSA - Child Sexual Abuse

DASV - Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

PSCP - Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

DSP - Delegated Safeguarding Partner under Working Together 2023 Guidance

LSP - Lead Safeguarding Partner under Working Together 2023 Guidance

NSPCC - National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

ICB - Integrated Care Board

UHP - University Hospitals Plymouth

TFC - Together for Childhood

PATH - Plymouth Access to Housing

CCPT - Child Centred Policing Team

DSL - Designated Safeguarding Lead

EPS - Education, Participation and Skills

CSPR - Child Safeguarding Practice Review

RR - Rapid Review

CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

If You Are a Member of The Public

If you're worried about a child or young person, or think they're being abused, please speak with a professional that works with children at the earliest opportunity. If possible, speak to someone that works with the child/family you are worried about. If you can't do this or need any support, then please call **01752 668000** or email the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub at **MASH@plymouth.gov.uk** or outside of normal working hours call Plymouth Out of Hours Service on **01752 346984**.

If You Are a Professional

If you are worried about a child or young person then in the first instance, please read our guidance on the **Building Support** section of our website, to help you understand how to best support that child, young person or their family. Where the involvement of statutory services (Children's Social Care) might be appropriate, please complete a **MASH Contact Form** found on our website. If you have an urgent child protection concern, then please call Plymouth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on **01752 668000** (or **01752 346984** out of hours). You will be asked to follow up your call by submitting a MASH Contact form the same day.

MASH Consultation Line for Professionals

If you are a professional you can call the MASH Consultation Line for Professionals where you can call for advice and guidance around those situations where you're unclear or unsure about the appropriate support, or if a referral into children's social care is needed. You can speak to the MASH Consultation Line about a range of hypothetical issues or concerns.

To speak about a specific child, you should have consent from the parents or carers providing it is safe to do so. The only time this isn't applicable is when seeking consent might place a child at risk of further harm.

The number to call is *01752 304339* and is open **9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays)** and will not be available during hours that are covered by the Out of Hours Team.

The consultation line does not replace the right of partner agencies to make a referral directly into Children's Social Care when the concerns may constitute significant harm.

Online Professional Enquiry Form

If you want to speak to the allocated social worker for a child already receiving children's social care support, and it's not an urgent safeguarding concern, you can request a call back by completing the online Professionals Enquiry Form on our website.

Find out more:

<https://plymouthscb.co.uk/making-a-referral/>