



# Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) consists of Statutory partners Police, Health, Children's services and Education alongside multiple other non-statutory partners.

In December 2023 "Working Together to Safeguard Children" the national guidance informing partner agencies how they need to work together to keep children safe was refreshed and published.

The new guidance has given direction for how the annual report for the Partnership will be published each year in September and will be representative of the previous financial year.

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-2024 can be found in full here – <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/annual-report/>

The report highlights differences made for children, how the Partnership implements learning, the funding arrangements for the Partnership, independent scrutiny, an update from the young safeguarders and identifies future Partnership work.

This report was further supported by the publication of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in December 2024 which describes the responsibilities of each agency in respect of safeguarding children and can be found here (below the annual reports) – <https://plymouthscb.co.uk/annual-report/>

## Summary of the Annual Report

### 1) Working Together

The report acknowledges the changes made within Working Together 2023 and explains that education has been lifted to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Statutory Partner in Plymouth with representation at Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partner level. There is also a list of Relevant Agency Partners which contribute significantly to the Partnership.

### 2) 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. This year they have attended learning walks at the Police custody in Plymouth and within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and in 2024 they will attend the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) place of safety.

### 3) Learning and Development

113 multi-agency training courses have been delivered by the Partnership in 2023-2024, learning into practice tells us that training this year has helped people with agency referrals, changed the way people have spoken with families and helped managers with their supervision and workforce support skills.

In 2023 the new threshold document and tool was launched called Building support. 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.

### 4) Priorities

The Partnership priorities for 2023/2024 are in the areas of Neglect, Safeguarding Adolescents, Domestic abuse & Children and Child Sexual Abuse.

#### **4.1) Neglect**

Child protection plans are highest in the area of neglect, in response to this the Partnership has maintained neglect as a priority and has throughout 2023 embedded the use of the NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) as a strength-based tool to measure the level of care for a child. Training has been implemented Partnership wide in the use of the tool and partners have shared that GCP2 has been a useful tool to help them identify levels of neglect to allow families to get the right help.

ICON: Babies Cry, You can Cope! Programme has been promoted through the Partnership to help parents and carers cope with crying babies. Safer Sleep messages have been shared throughout the Partnership to help babies sleep more safely, including at public events such as a Plymouth Argyle football game.

#### **4.2) Safeguarding Adolescents**

Through 2023 a task and finish group started to create strategy, practice guidance and a toolkit for practitioners targeting areas such as mental wellbeing, substance misuse, harmful sexual behaviour and school absence. A new Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) is being created for launch in 2024. The Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) has also been created in 2023 to prioritise a child specific contextual safeguarding daily meeting to focus on young people going missing, at risk of being exploited, locations young people may go and adults of concern.

#### **4.3) Domestic Abuse and Children**

Police public protection notices have increased by 27% from 2023 to 2024 in relation to domestic abuse and therefore in Partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence board this area is a Partnership priority to ensure co-produced strategy, guidance and toolkits are in place to assist practitioners and improve outcomes for children and families.

#### **4.4) Child Sexual Abuse –**

In 2023, alongside Safer Plymouth's Community Safety Partnership, the PSCP launched an ambitious strategy, guidance and toolkit creation task and finish group for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Plymouth.

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.

Young people have also 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.

#### **5) National Learning**

The following national learning has been shared in the report:

- National Panel report on elective home education
- National Reform for children's social care – kinship strategy, framework for children's social care.

- Working Together 2023
- Transforming Data
- Information Sharing advice for practitioners

## **6) 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.

This learning is completed through Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Learning from Experience Reviews, Quality Assurance audits, S.175/157 schools safeguarding audits, S.11 Audits and domestic homicide reviews

There are examples of outcomes from some of these learning methods within the full annual report.

## **7) Partnership data**

The Partnership data scorecard is reviewed by the quality assurance group and is predominantly made of children's services data, this will be expanded in 2024/2025 where an analyst will also be recruited.

## **8) Funding**

The Partnership is funded through contributions from various partners totalling £242,579 for 2023/2024.

## **9) Independent Scrutiny**

Independent Scrutineer John Clements was the Partnership scrutineer for 2023-2024 and contributed to the report

His conclusion states, 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.

## **10) Looking Ahead to 2024/2025**

In summer 2024 the strategy, practice guidance and toolkits launched on the PSCP website in each priority area to support practitioners in these spaces.

The task and finish groups in each area became Operational Working groups to 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 we will be improving our data dashboard to provide better analysis and performance monitoring as a Partnership.

In 2023 we undertook a partnership health check with the Department for Education and in February 2025 we will be repeating this process to help identify any gaps and areas for further improvement.