

PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

Briefing Summary - Appendix A



The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024-2025 (Appendix B) highlights the impact made for children from a mature partnership system, 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 is further supported by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements which describe the responsibilities of each agency in respect of safeguarding children. These arrangements are refreshed annually (in December) and published on the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Summary of the Annual Report

1) Safeguarding in Education

The report acknowledges that education has been lifted to be the 4th Statutory Partner in Plymouth with representation at Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partner level. The report highlights the contribution of education partners through the Safeguarding in Education Reference Group and through the Designated Safeguarding Lead meetings. Auditing in education through the s175/157 process is highlighted in the report through comparable findings through the last 2 years.

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 CAMHS place of safety and at the Probation Service, attended a workshop gathering young people's views on Policing with the Independent Office for Police Complaints and supported trading standards and the Child Centred Policing Team with a vape test purchase operation.

The Young Safeguarders have also fed into a Local Authority review of SEND services, interviewed candidates for the Local Authority Designated Officer role and completed a campaign aimed to kick start conversations around online harms and online pornography.

3) Partnership Health Check

In 2023 the partnership took part in a Health Check with the Department for Education to identify areas of growth as part of the implementation of Working Together 2023. In 2024 the partnership completed a follow up health check to identify further improvements required and to help reflect on growth over the last year. The annual report highlights improvements made in this time and has appended the full health check to the report.

4) Learning and Development

76 multi-agency training courses have been delivered by the partnership in 2024-2025 with 1135 individual practitioners attending 2135 training places.

Learning into practice tells us that training this year has helped people with confidence to gain advice from partner agencies, helped attendees to understand the vulnerabilities that children with disabilities

may have and what to look out for and when to challenge, has helped to guide partners through navigating challenging conversations with parents and how best to use language to engage a child and make them feel comfortable.

5) Priorities

The Partnership priorities for 2024/2025 remained in the areas of Neglect, Safeguarding Adolescents, Domestic abuse & Children and Child Sexual Abuse.

5.1) Neglect

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 may have helped with this.

The Neglect working group has grown in strength over the 2024/2025 period and has focused on: Oral Health Neglect, Educational Neglect, continued embedding of the GCP2 tool, focus on poverty and implementing learning from audit activity and reviews.

The annual report highlights areas where the partnership has been “making a difference” in neglect and evidences what quality assurance activity has shown us with regards to neglect.

5.2) Safeguarding Adolescents

The Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) has continued to be an asset to the city and prioritises 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. The focus of the Safeguarding adolescent group over this year has been: Child Hunger, Exploitation, Launching the new Adolescent Safety Framework, Finalising the practice guidance and toolkits on the PSCP website and implementing learning from audit activity and reviews.

The annual report highlights areas where the partnership has been “making a difference” in safeguarding adolescents and evidences what quality assurance activity has shown us with regards to this.

5.3) 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. The Objectives for 2024-2025 of the Domestic Abuse and Children Working Group have been: the toolkit and guidance, JTAI self-assessment audit, the training offer, audit activity, learning and DA Practice Week.

The annual report highlights areas where the partnership has been “making a difference” in domestic abuse and children and evidences what quality assurance activity has shown us with regards to this.

5.4) 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 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 on: 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 and audit activity and learning

The annual report highlights areas where the partnership has been “making a difference” in the area of Child Sexual Abuse and evidences what quality assurance activity has shown us with regards to this whilst also highlighting the good practice and close collaboration with the NSPCC’s Together for Childhood Programme.

6) 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.

7) National Learning

The following national learning has been shared in the report:

- National Panel report – December 2024
- “I wanted them all to notice” Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment – November 2024
- What Professionals know, think, and do to prevent child abuse – and how we can support them. A report from Together for Childhood – December 2024
- Families First Partnership Programme – March 2025

8) 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.

9) Partnership data

The partnership data scorecard is reviewed by the Multi-Agency Performance and Quality Assurance partnership group, Young Safeguarders and the Partnership Board. Throughout 2024/2025 securing data from multiple agencies including Health, Police, Education partners and Children’s services has expanded our data capability and the recruitment of an analyst due to start in September 2025 will further enhance the partnership analytical offer and associated reports for review.

10) Funding

The partnership is funded through contributions from various partners totalling £193,279 for 2024/2025 with expenditure of £213,490 and reserves of £190,000.

11) Looking Ahead to 2025/2026

Two new priorities of Online Safety and Visibility of the partnership were added to the current priorities of Neglect, Safeguarding Adolescents, Child Sexual abuse and Domestic Abuse and children and will run through all the partnership groups as they are incorporated into all of the work of the partnership.

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.

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

12)Independent Scrutiny

The partnership Independent Scrutineer Deborah McMillan contributed to the report.

Her conclusion states - 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.