

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2023/2024



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Partners' Foreword

As the three statutory partners of the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership, we are delighted to provide the introduction to this year's annual report.

Over the last year there have been many changes to the partnership but our commitment to improving how we collectively work together to safeguard our babies, children and young people in the city remains strong. This is supported and enhanced by our ability to adapt to change and improvement.

This year has seen significant reorganisation of two of the statutory partners, which has led to new representatives being welcomed into our collaboration and they are already providing much appreciated skills, experience and knowledge to the work of the partnership.

The input and commitment of all of our partners has continued and this investment has helped to ensure progress against our priorities and consequently valuable improvements have been made in our systems and processes that support the interventions offered by our frontline staff.

As a partnership we never stand still and when new issues or policy changes arise, we are constantly considering how we can transform and redesign our ways of working in order to improve our safeguarding arrangements.

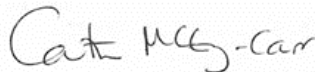
We are excited to develop and implement the recommendations and proposed changes from Working Together 2023. As a group of dedicated strategic leaders, we have been working collectively to progress our proposed model and hope that this will further strengthen our arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all of our young residents in the city.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to all of our relevant agencies for their support and commitment to the partnership this last year and we look forward to this continuing into 2025.



Richard Scott

Director of Nursing (North):
NE&N. Cumbria Integrated Care Board



Catherine McEvoy-Carr

Director of Children and Families:
Newcastle City Council



Barrie Joice

Chief Superintendent Area Commander:
Northumbria Police

Chair & Scrutineer's Report

The role I perform within Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) is one of Independent Chair and Scrutineer and I have undertaken this role since August 2021. During this time there has been national and local change to local arrangements, much of which has been outlined in this and previous annual reports.

The role of Independent Scrutiny is outlined in the Children and Families Act 2017 and within the government guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" and involves provision of assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. The decision on how to deliver scrutiny at a local level is the responsibility of the three statutory safeguarding partners (Police, ICB and Local Authority). In Newcastle this has included the development of an Independent Scrutiny position (the role I currently deliver) to act as a constructive critical friend, promote reflection and support the development of continuous improvement.

During 2023 the government updated the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" document and published the new guidance in December 2023. The partnership must publish the new ways of working "Multi Agency Safeguarding

Arrangements (MASA)" by December 2024. This has required local areas to review existing arrangements and develop and strengthen partnership working to comply with the new guidance.

Over the course of 2023/24 the three statutory partner leads in Newcastle have worked closely together to identify and transition to a new structure and new way of working. This has involved a series of development sessions at strategic level. I am aware that much work has been undertaken to develop robust arrangements that comply with national requirements, but importantly work for Newcastle children and families, and practitioners who work directly with children and families in Newcastle. The transition to the new arrangements is underway and I am confident that the new arrangements will be delivered in time to comply with national direction (December 2024).

The Northeast and North Cumbria ICB and Northumbria Police have both undertaken restructures that have impacted on the partnership arrangements. In relation to the ICB this is the second restructure since 2022. It is anticipated that there will now be a period of stability allowing focus on collaboration and development of the partnership arrangements. In relation to Northumbria Police, the transition to local command leadership involvement in

Chair & Scrutineer's Report

partnership arrangements has strengthened involvement of local police in Newcastle in developing safeguarding practice.

As part of my role in Newcastle I have Chaired the Executive Group meetings, together with the Working Together 2023 development sessions. I can report that the strategic group work has worked well together to ensure that Newcastle comply with statutory obligations and statutory guidance. At strategic level I have observed drive and determination to work together to deliver innovation, efficiency and models of working that make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in Newcastle. The Newcastle Executive are actively engaged in regional collaboration and work with neighbouring local authority areas to share information in relation to themes, patterns and trends and, identify areas of commonality.

This positive approach has led to the development of agreed approaches to some areas of practice – an example being the development of a case review learning pathway that is the same in both Newcastle and Gateshead. This allows the sharing of wider learning from cases across both areas but additionally is one pathway to follow for practitioners who work across both areas. Some of the successes delivered in Newcastle over the course of this year are outlined within

this annual report, in particular the new way of identifying and managing risk of exploitation (ROTH). The report highlights the work undertaken in relation to the priorities that were set during 2023/24 and concludes with the priorities that were set for 2024/25.

The last year has seen rising demand for service support to children and families, and this is subject of commentary within this annual report and is in line with the national position. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all those who work directly with children and families, and to thank the statutory partners and all organisations who work closely together to ensure that children, young people and families in Newcastle can access help, support and care when they need it.



Heather Pearson
Independent Chair and Scrutineer

Who We Are



What is Safeguarding?

Every child & young person has a right to be safe.

Safeguarding is everybody's business.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

All adults have a responsibility to protect children & young people. It is the role of all partnership stakeholders, including parents and carers, professionals such as teachers, learning mentors, doctors, nurses, social workers, police officers, faith leaders and sports coaches to work together to ensure that children and young people are safe.

What is Abuse and Neglect

According to the law, there are 4 main types of abuse that could cause harm or neglect. These are:

- **Physical Abuse:** when an adult deliberately hurts a child, such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating.
- **Emotional Abuse:** this would happen, for example, when a child is made to feel worthless or unloved; is prevented from participating in normal social interaction and made to feel unhappy or frightened by being bullied or seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can also occur online or through the use of technology offline.
- **Neglect:** this is when a child is not being looked after properly; for example, not getting enough to eat, or being left alone in dangerous situations.

More information about what abuse can look like at the NSCP Website. - www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk.

Demographics

Using government and local information that describes people in the local area supports the Partnership's ability to understand the lived experience of families living in Newcastle upon Tyne.

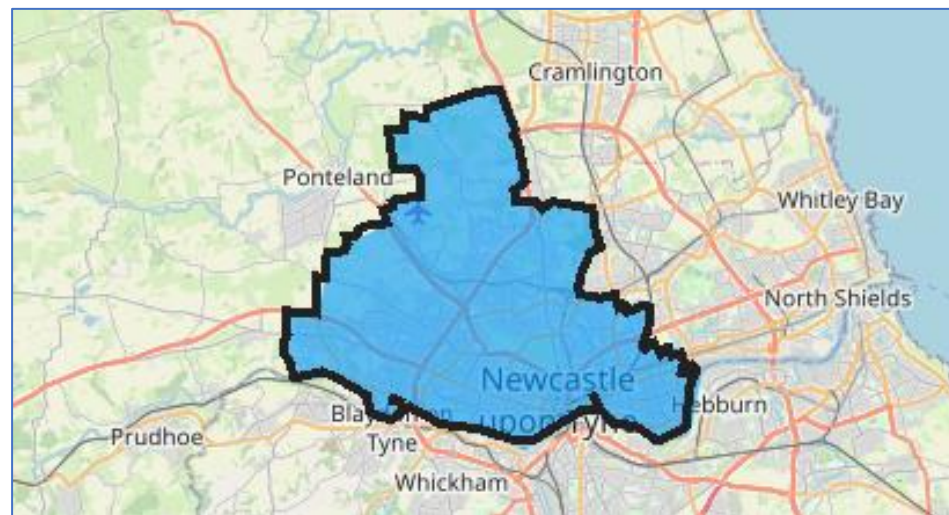
The largest age group in Newcastle upon Tyne is 20-24, with 39,056 people out of a total population of 307,565. The population is growing, with 3,056 births registered in 2023.

There are about 52,800 people under 16 in Newcastle, making up 17.2% of the population, while 14.8% are over 65. Out of the younger population, 32,799 are under 10 years old.

Newcastle has people from lots of different backgrounds, beliefs and places. There are 148 different first languages spoken in schools, and 23.2% of pupils have a first language other than English.

18.61% of Newcastle residents have no qualifications, compared to 20.30% in the North East and 18.08% in England. Parental income has a big effect on educational achievement, which is concerning since about 38% of children in Newcastle live in poverty.

90% of 16- to 17-year-olds are in education or training. While 74% of people aged 16-64 in Newcastle do some kind of paid work, 36.1% of children are eligible for free school meals, higher than the 29.2% average for similar areas. Nationally, Newcastle ranks third in need, behind Manchester (42.7%) and Knowsley (40.3%), but ahead of Birmingham (38.4%) and Liverpool (33.2%). For 2023/24, planned spending on Social Work and Commissioning in Newcastle was £15,356,325, compared to an average of £20,669,622 across all Metropolitan Boroughs.



Safeguarding Arrangements in Newcastle

As Safeguarding Partners, we are committed to improving how we all work to safeguard our children and adopt a flexible approach to change and improvement.

Three key "Safeguarding Partners" in Newcastle share the responsibility for this collaborative approach. They have an equal duty to set up strong systems to protect and promote the welfare of children. Their arrangements outline how they will work together, sharing responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of children in Newcastle.

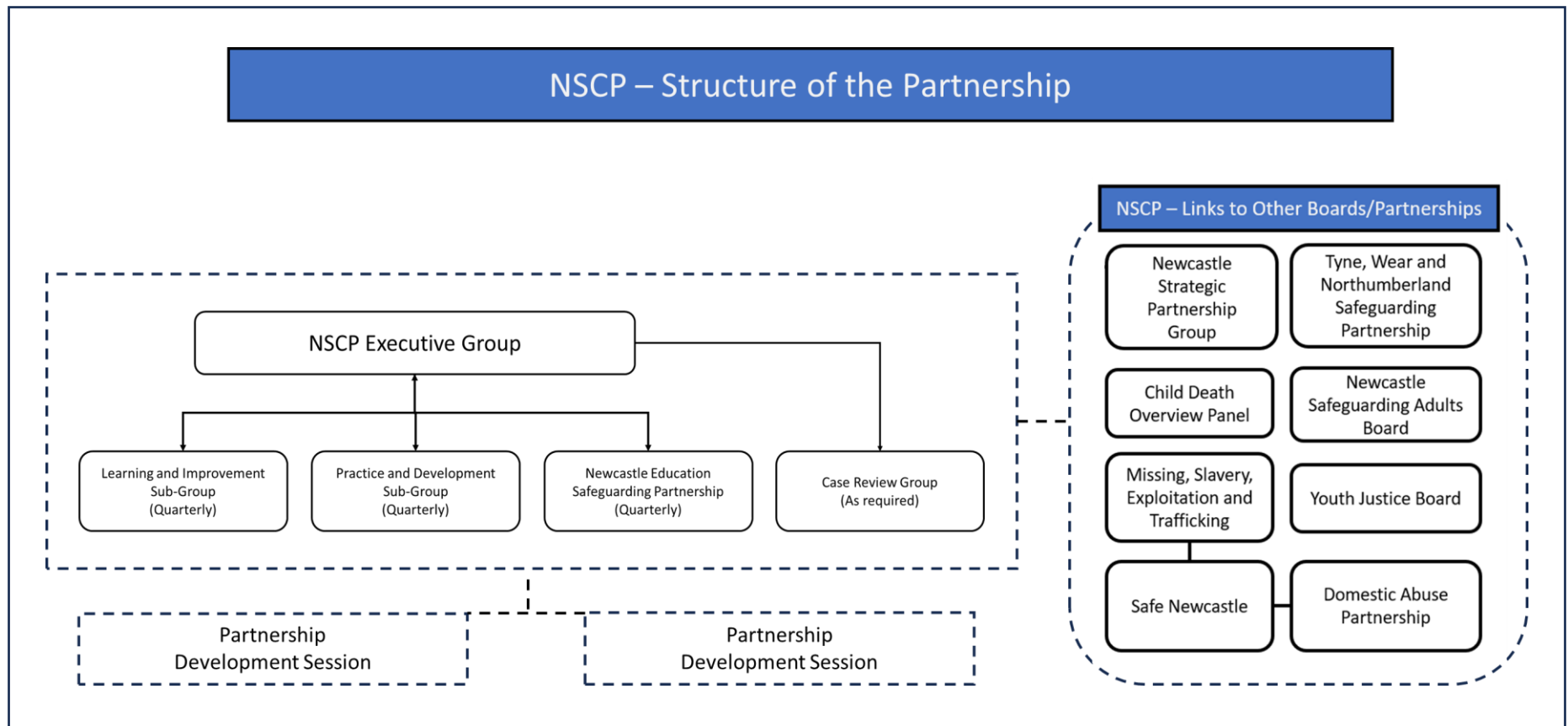


The [Newcastle Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) for Children and Young People sets out how the Safeguarding Partners will work together, and with other agencies, work to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Newcastle.

The latest version of the multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements was published in March 2023. A new version will be published in December 2024.

Safeguarding Arrangements in Newcastle

This is the structure that has been in place during 2023/24. We have been reviewing our structure and this will change in 2024/25.



Education as a Partner

Education: evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input of education at both the operational and strategic levels of the arrangements

During 2023/24 the Partnership has looked for ways to involve more partners from education settings, for example, schools, colleges and other places people go to learn.

This work has not just focussed on schools, we have also invited more council officers from the Education department into Partnership groups and made a stronger partnering connection with a local safeguarding organisation that works for almost every school in Newcastle. Through these connections the Partnership has focussed on finding out about the things that education partners tell us affect their safeguarding work the most.

This better understanding led to a special session on school safeguarding, based on partner contributions about things that are important to them, such as improving awareness of the school nurse service, sharing insights from data on attendance and exclusions, and sharing information about resources like the Violence Reduction Unit's Education Team.

This engagement has also resulted in practical resources like a

new knife crime protocol to help schools work with police and other agencies. By working to include schools in multi-agency audits the partners have significantly improved the quality and effectiveness of these audits, improving understanding of the issues and experiences of children and young people.

All the different ways the Partnership has worked to involve education as a partner has had a crucial impact on strengthening our working together throughout 2023/24. Understanding the way safeguarding works in different places and the challenges faced by colleagues in education has a positive, lasting impact on effective partnership working, beyond any single audit recommendation.

We are now planning to pull together the benefits from the different ways we have included education as a partner and make education a more fixed part of the Partnership's decision-making structure throughout 2024-2025.

This will be a key part of the next version of the Partnership's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

What Does Partnership Information Tell Us

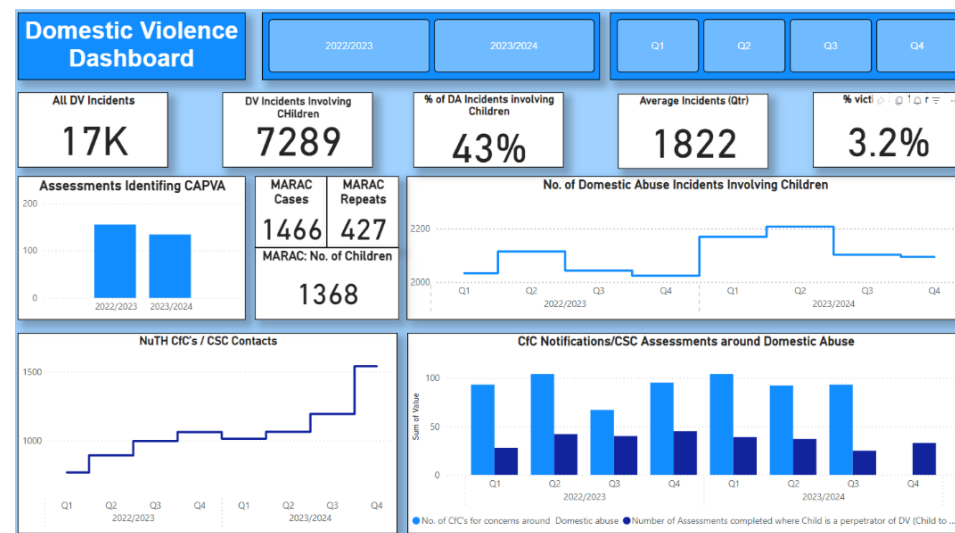


Data

Developing Data to Provide Insight and Support Decision Making.

In 2023, the Business Team suggested a new way of reporting data to the Partnership Executive to help them understand and use the information better. Throughout the year, the team collaborated with partners and the Local Authority's Informatics and Insights Team to create a new reporting format using interactive dashboards. These dashboards will show key safeguarding priorities and specific data points from different agencies, making it easier to share information by organizing and scheduling it properly.

The report will include two types of dashboards: focused ones with a few key performance indicators to help the Executive set strategic priorities, and broader ones with operational or performance data from various agencies. This approach provides more data without making it harder to understand.

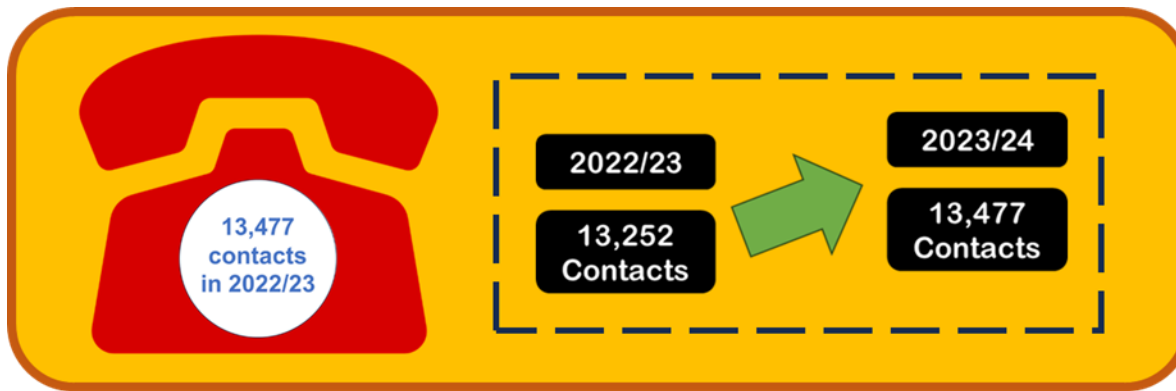


The dashboards will be the main way for the Executive to access and understand data about safeguarding. They will help ensure that data is reviewed consistently and decisions about strategic priorities are made effectively. Using the PowerBI application, partners and decision-makers can interact with the data anytime, not just during meetings. They can apply their own filters to focus on specific time periods and areas of interest, making it easier to understand the data.

The first 'test' dashboards were ready by the end of the business year as planned and will continue to be improved and expanded in 2024/25. This includes adding an Education dashboard to increase engagement as we work to introduce the Working Together 2023 guidelines.

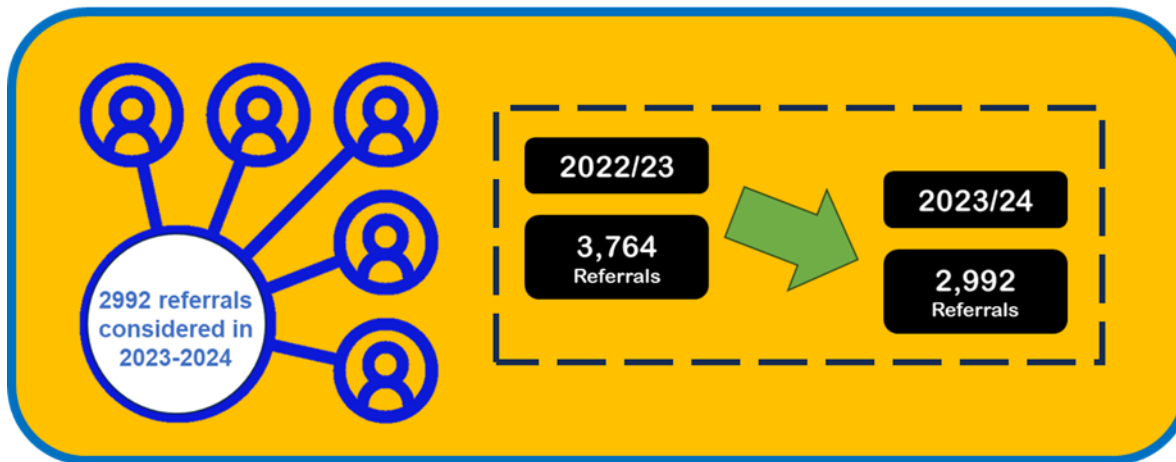
Safeguarding Data

An annual review of information that helps the partners to be aware of how agencies are responding to need and identify new areas for working together.



Children's Social Care received 13477 contacts in 2023/24.

While this is a lot of contacts, averaging more than 250 every week, after each contact has been checked around 1 in every 3 or 4 lead to a referral.

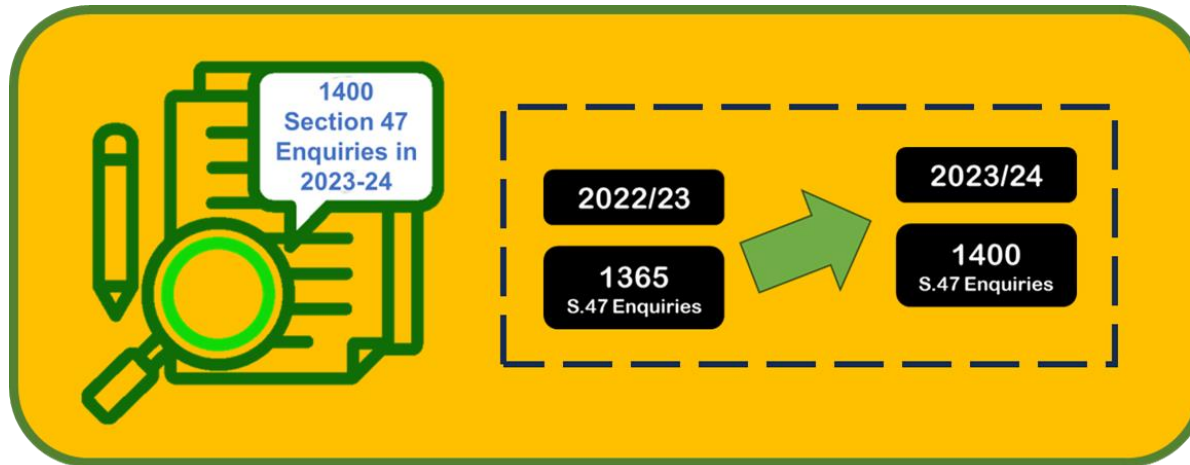


A referral is a request for services to be provided by Children's Social Care, usually following a contact.

2,992 referrals were considered in 2023-2024 with almost a quarter of these being re-referrals of children who had been known to social care within the previous 12 months.

There was an average of approximately 250 referrals per month during the year and June and October were the months with the highest number of referrals received.

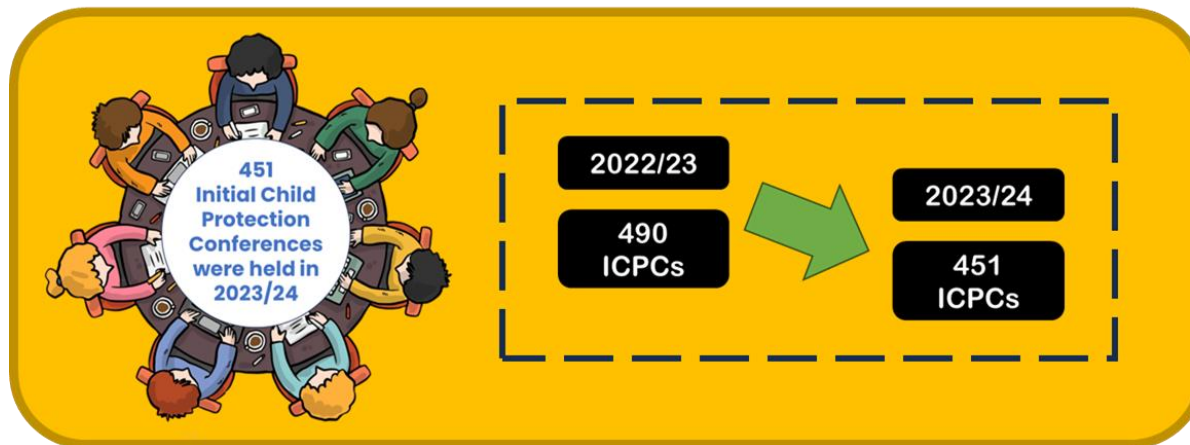
Safeguarding Data



A Section 47 enquiry is when a social worker is asked to find out more about the things that people think might be affecting a child or young person.

The enquiry begins after a referral has been accepted and helps to make a decision on what the best thing to do is.

There was an average of 117 Section 47 enquiries initiated per month during the year and July and November were the months with the highest number of enquiries.

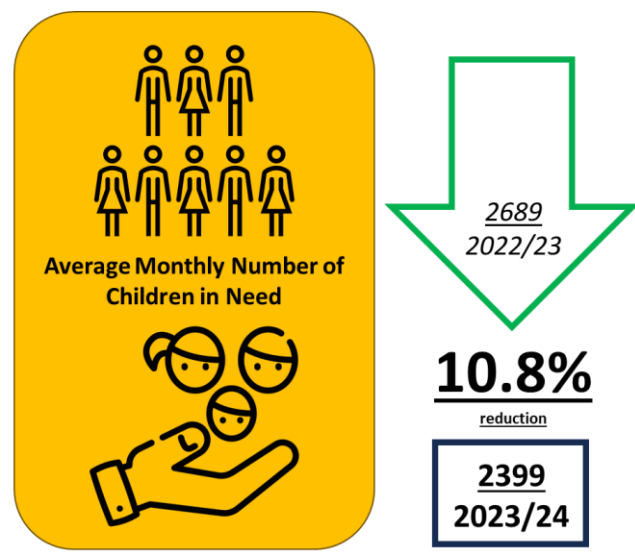
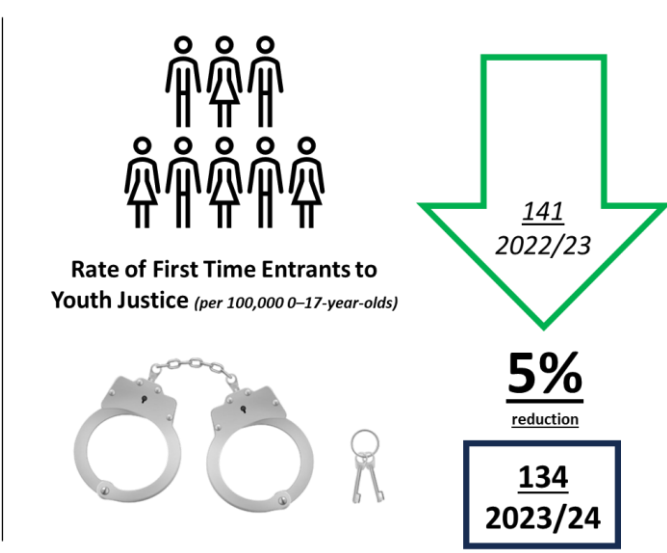


Families, social workers and other safeguarding workers met to hold 499 initial child protection conferences in 2023/24.

An initial child protection conference (ICPC) is called when a section 47 enquiry finds that child protection may be needed.

The conference is led by a social worker not involved in the case to make sure that the family and the children have a say in deciding on the best next steps.

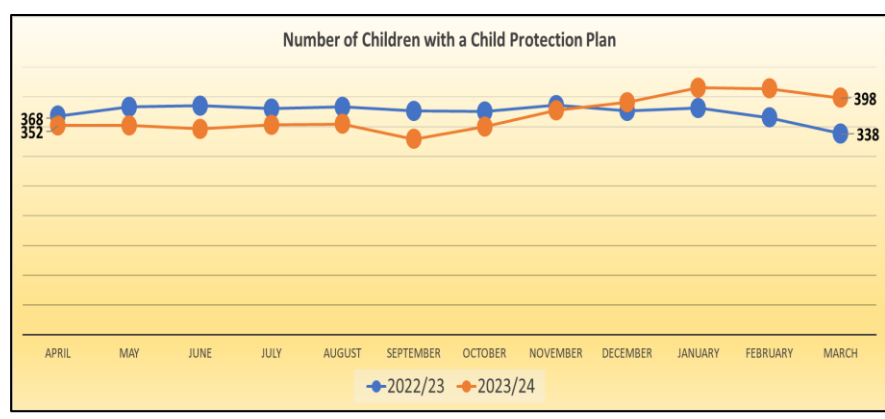
Safeguarding Data



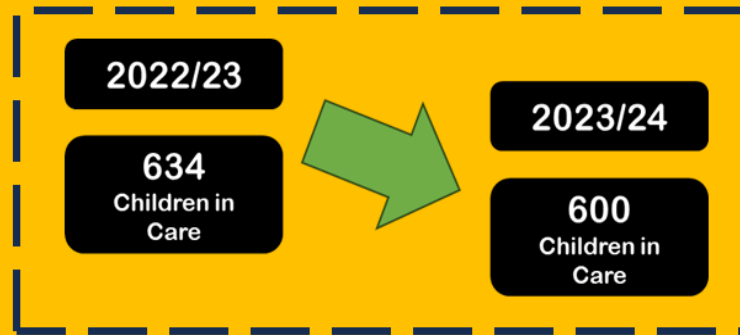
Comparing 2023/24 data with the previous year's data shows improvement in rates relating to a range of safeguarding performance indicators.

However, partners noted an unexpected upward trend in the number of children with a child protection plans in the second half of the year.

This data prompted quality checks and reporting to all partners regarding decision making in this period which provided assurance that plans were appropriate, and partners were engaged in the process.



Safeguarding Data



Across the country the numbers of children in care has been steadily increasing for several years. However, in Newcastle partners have managed to reduce the number by 5.4% compared to the previous year.



All Missing Incidents for Children in Care



947
2023/24

10%
increase

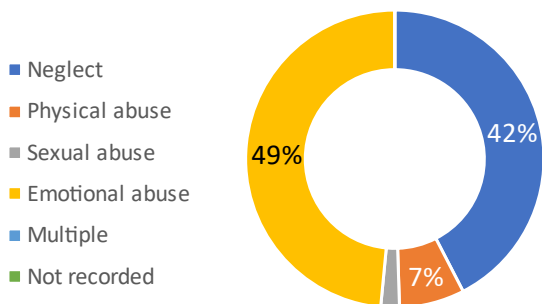


There is an established link between increased potential for criminal exploitation and young people going missing. Children in Care are particularly vulnerable to exploitation so as partners make progress in reducing the number of children in care, they have also been working together to seek ways to respond effectively.

Partners have worked together to set up new relationships and groups for better information sharing, created new processes for identifying and responding to risk early (see [Risk Outside the Home](#)), ensuring support is at hand for children and young people identified as at risk (see [Exploitation Safeguarding Nurse](#)).

Safeguarding Data

Category of Abuse
Child Protection Plans

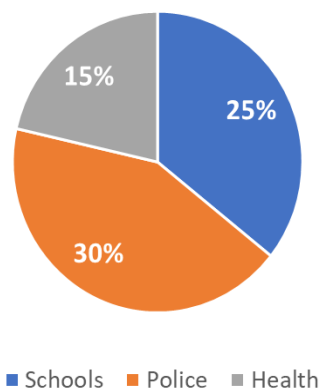


Most referrals come from Police and this reflects their policy of submitting a concern notification for most of the young people they have contact with.

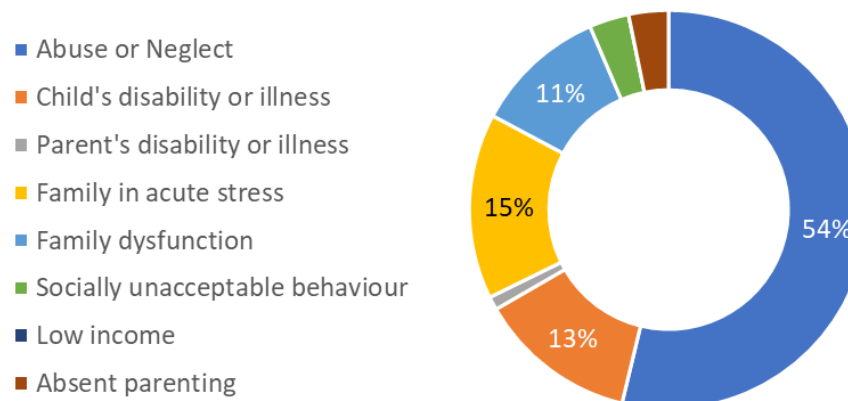
The proportion of referrals from schools saw the biggest increase on the previous year. This went from 21% of referrals from schools in 2022/23 increasing to 1 in 4 of all referrals in 2023/24.

While the rate of repeat referrals for the same person reduced slightly to 23.8% from 24.2% this is still higher than the national average of 22.4%. Having this data did have an effect as Partners decided to have a closer review of decision making to seek any themes that may be influencing re-referrals.

Referral Sources



Children in Need by Category/Type



Our Priorities and What Has Happened



Partnership Priorities 2023/2024

Strengthen Practice Responses to Neglect

Improving Responses to Risk Outside the Home

Children have a strong voice in informing the work of partners

Improve Practitioner Knowledge and Responses to Mental Health

Reducing the Impact of Domestic Abuse

Learning, partnership development and practice

Strengthen Practice Responses to Neglect

Throughout the year Partners have tried to understand the different ways they respond to situations where neglect of a child is identified, and how these responses can be made more effective.

A multi-agency audit of partner responses to neglect highlighted two important and related problems. The audit found:

1. Workers from different partner organisations had different views on neglect and how to recognise it.
2. There wasn't a shared tool that workers could use that would make sure they were all responding to neglect in a way that was agreed by all the partners.

The impact of the audit findings was the decision to bring together a group of partners to create solutions for both of these key obstacles to good partnership working.

This group has continued to work on the problems into 2023/25 and have kept the wider partnership up to date on progress by sharing what they are working on with other partners through the Practice and Development subgroup.

The group is working on a new tool that will combine the best parts of tools that are already being used by different partners. But also adding new parts that will help anybody who is unsure, to decide whether they have found neglect and then what to do about it.

The impact of having this shared Neglect tool will be that partners will know what to expect their role to be when they work together in response to Neglect. It should also make it easier for partners to check with each other if the right information is being shared and that everyone is understanding the information in the same way. It also means that children, young people and families will receive the same support and information from any of the partners they might be working with.

By having everyone working with the same tool and having a shared understanding of what is expected, it is easier for partners to both support and to challenge each other to make sure that support to families and safeguarding responses to neglect are as effective as it can be.

Improving Responses to Risk Outside the Home


Using information from learning reviews, regional and national developments, and a growing awareness of the impact of 'Risk Outside the Home' on children and young people, Children's Social Care has played a leading role in efforts to improve how different agencies respond to this issue.

When Newcastle City Council's Children's Social Care started seeing more young people at risk outside their home and family, they decided to try a different way of working and started trial project called the Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Pilot in 2023.

They needed to work differently with these young people, their families, and supporting agencies to reduce and manage the risks by understanding how to disrupt the way young people were getting involved in risky activities and create more ways to make them safe. The pilot project is still ongoing, with plans to use the lessons learned to make this approach a regular part of their work.

Partner agencies have said they like the new approach. It tries to make sure that more partners from voluntary organisations and education are involved early on in strategy meetings, helping to understand the issues better and making joint decisions.

Partners say this approach is improving understanding of children's experiences outside the home, making relationships stronger with agencies and families, and leading to better and more creative ways to manage and reduce risk.



Mum made several comments on how the social worker has helped the family, stating she responds when there is a need, she answers the phone, calls her back and mum does not feel she is alone. MST and Side-Step were also praised by Mum. When mum was asked why she felt things worked so well she stated, 'the relationships between us all' and 'the social worker loves her job and doesn't give up'

Parent December 2023

Risk Outside the Home

To help Children's Social Care test a new Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) model, the Partnership created and shared with partners a five-part training program:

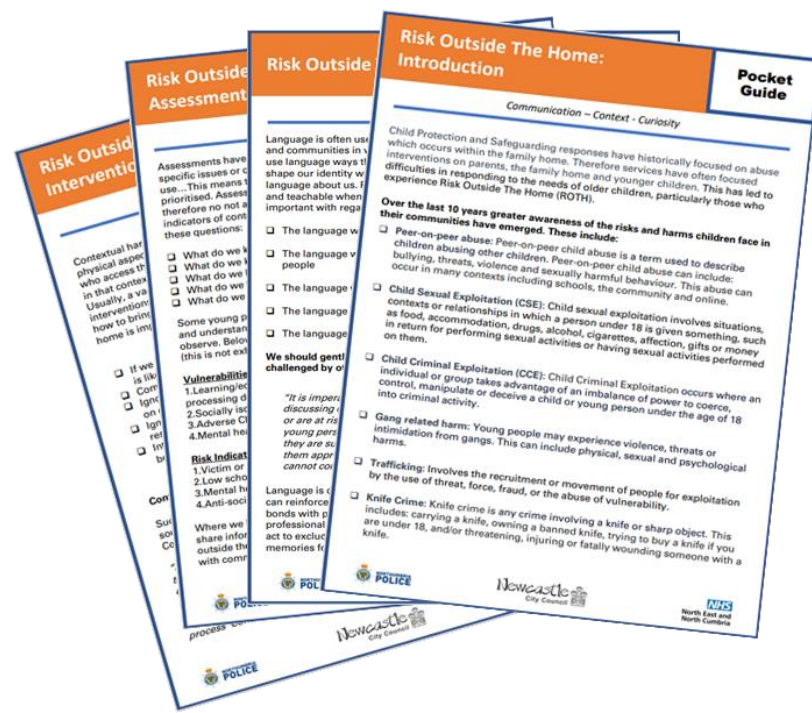
- Introduction to ROTH (3 sessions)
- Local Learning from ROTH (3 sessions)
- Thinking About Language and ROTH (3 sessions)
- Assessing and Planning for ROTH (2 sessions)
- Disruption and Interventions for ROTH (2 sessions)

A total of 313 professionals attended the 13 sessions, with a good attendance rate of 90% of those registered.

The Partnership has focused on understanding the issue and identifying where the potential value from working together lies. The impact of this has been practitioner-led, multi-agency reviews which have led to improvements, such as:

- Establishing a shared understanding of 'positive' outcomes to make interventions more focused and track progress better.
- Restarting an inter-agency intelligence sharing forum to focus on early interventions for potential youth violence.
- Emphasizing to Education partners the importance of access to appropriate education, employment, or training.

One ongoing challenge has been the ability of partners to influence school decisions on excluding pupils. Partnership activities have shown a link between vulnerability to exploitation and school exclusion. Efforts have been made to improve information sharing between police and schools, involve partners in exclusion decisions, and have schools check for risks before excluding pupils, but no effective solutions have been found yet.



Utilising feedback from children and families to influence provision

The Safeguarding Children's Partnership and our partners remain committed to hearing the views of children and young people and working with them to make change.

To make this happen the Local Authority's Voice and Influence team have continued to grow participation groups made up of children and young people working with local services, including work with Action Foundation to ensure we hear the views of refugee and asylum-seeking young people.

In March 2024 we elected our first Youth Council and members of the UK Youth Parliament since 2019 with more than 7,000 votes cast.

With an increasing number of children and young people sharing their views it is important that we work with them to make change. Work over the last year has included:

- Work with Curious Monkey theatre company senior leaders and Councillors to strengthen understanding of the experiences of our children in care.
- Work with Coram Voice to undertake our first Your Life: Your Care survey with more than 150 children in care responding.



Youth Council at their first full meeting in April

Utilising feedback from children and families to influence provision

Access to Opportunities: As part of the council's Evry plan this project gives care experienced young people aged 16 to 21 free access to all gym, swimming, and fitness classes within Newcastle's four leisure centres. The Newcastle specific health and fitness pass is now in place for 170 Children in Care aged over 16 and Care Leavers. While the pass is free to young people there are subsidised soft play and swimming also available for Newcastle Foster Carers. The schemes are consistently evaluated with young people and work is also ongoing with young people on the local offer webpage to make sure it is accessible and easy to navigate.

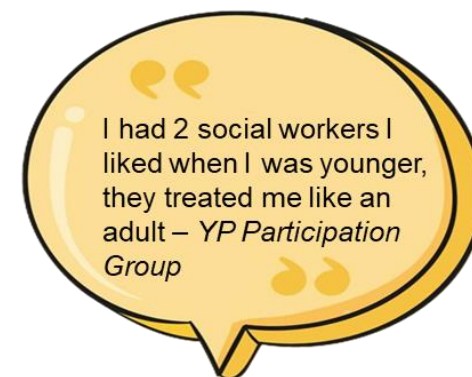
Youth Justice Office: Workers in the Youth Justice Team have worked with young people to improve the appearance and presentation of the Youth Justice building. Utilising direct feedback every room has been made more welcoming with local artists,



helping young people to make graffiti related artwork on the walls with specially designed feature walls that feature designs they feel best represent the city of Newcastle.

Food in Fostering and Residential: Young people are involved in developing training for foster carers and residential staff with an emphasis on meal planning, shopping and cooking within the home. The Life Experience Group is planning to produce a short video animation and booklet to be used in training by partners.

Parks: Children in Care participation groups are involved in a joint project with Urban Green around developing Park Management Plans to improve the parks and green spaces in the city.



Improve Practitioner Knowledge and Responses to Mental Health

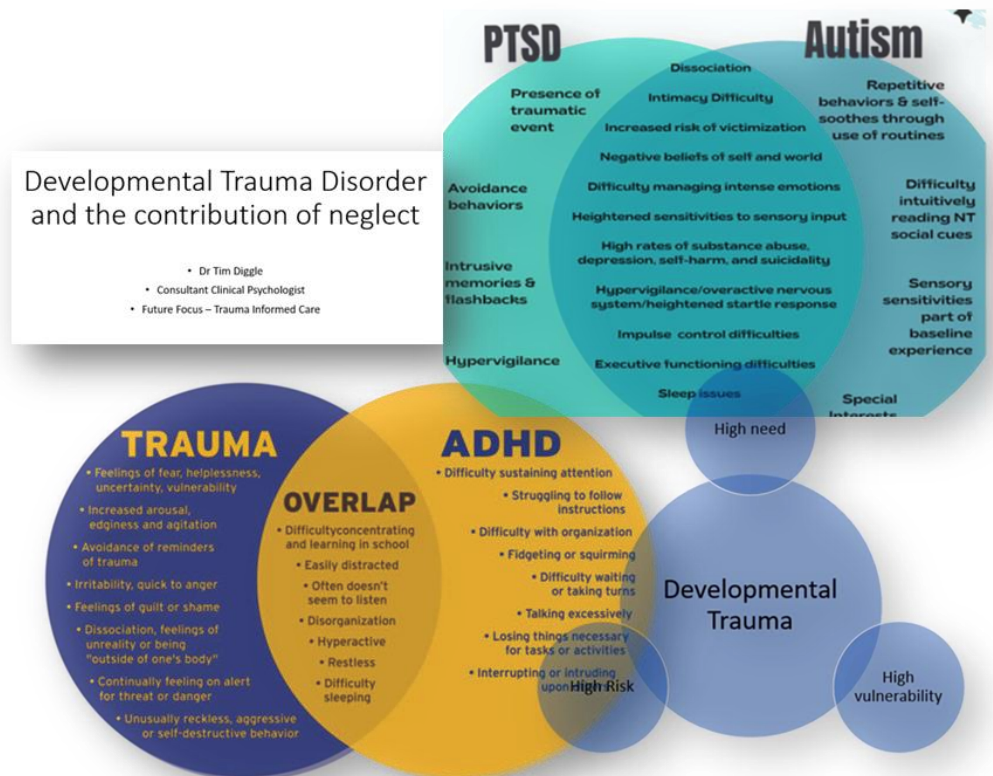
The Partners have looked for opportunities to improve access to mental health awareness training for all staff. This is to build the abilities of practitioners to use a “trauma informed” approach. One example of this is the way the Local Authority’s team working with children in residential care are supported by the development of the new “Future Focus” team.

Since 2019, Children’s Social Care have been using a therapeutic approach to help children in care. With new funding, we created the Future Focus Team in June 2023. This team helps foster carers, residential carers, social workers, and other care team members understand and deal with the effects of trauma on children.

The team includes psychologists, speech and language therapists, and advanced mental health practitioners. They work with social workers, foster carers, and residential home staff to provide advice and develop trauma-informed strategies that the main carers can use.

The Future Focus Team is crucial in helping us respond to the needs of children in care. They work closely with

carers and the care team to support children in either returning to their families or staying in stable long-term placements, depending on what's best for them.



Reducing the Impact of Domestic Abuse

The Partners have worked to address the impact of domestic abuse in various specific pieces of work, such as reviewing the resources available to practitioners' addressing child on adult violence and abuse.

Working with Safelives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, the Police have delivered training to more than 1500 front line practitioners. The aim of this training is to ensure greater effectiveness of actions to tackle domestic abuse, particularly in recognising the signs of coercive and controlling behaviour and emotional abuse.

The impact of this training is that it allows partners in Northumbria Police to check every domestic abuse incident to see if there was alternative or additional options to use, such as checking Claire's Law to give safeguarding advice at the earliest opportunity.

High risk domestic abuse cases are now managed by teams of detectives and robust performance monitoring has been developed. Quality check panels and reviews of video recordings from police body-worn cameras now help to make sure that local officers are doing and saying the right things in the best way when they visit homes to support victims.

Police Neighbourhood Teams help victims of domestic abuse and work on plans with the victims to reduce harm. They aim to find out the causes of the abuse and put in place safety measures, solve problems, and provide access to support services. They also take strong action against those who commit the abuse. The impact of this work has been to commit to increasing availability of support through the development of Operation Aegis.

The Force has started Operation Aegis to find the domestic abuse cases which come back again and again. Neighbourhood Officers are put in charge of these cases and work to solve the problems with the victims and stop the criminal abusers. The impact of this work has been to issue more Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) to better protect victims.

The early testing of the operation has had a positive impact on reducing the number of domestic violence crimes. In the first set of 20 addresses where police used their Operation Aegis approach, they measured the number of calls for three months before and three months after using Aegis and found a reduction of 60 incidents.

Working in Partnership



Work by Sub-Groups

Throughout 2023-24 the Partnership has used three sub-groups, each with its own plan of things to do. These are called sub-groups because they are the way practitioners can work together on smaller tasks that relate to the Partnership's overall priorities.

The Learning and Improvement Sub-Group (LIG)

The Learning and Improvement Sub-Group is led by a Nurse with special responsibility for Children's Safeguarding and Children in Care. This group meets every three months to report on its activities and its main focus is to identify and act upon lessons learned about keeping children and young people safe. The group doesn't wait for things to happen but looks for learning opportunities and ways to improve joined-up working through tasks like the partnership's yearly multi-agency audit programme.

The sub-group collaborates with the Partnership's Training and Communications Officer to ensure that learning is built into activities based on the Partnership's Learning Framework.

The yearly programme of multi-agency audits are led by practitioners from different partner agencies and involve a wide range of partners to create practical actions based on the audit findings. Action plans are also created from recommendations of various learning activities, such as reviews, and the group ensures that these actions are carried out to improve partnership work.

In 2023-24 the sub-group met four times and completed their planned activity which included things such as:

- Priority: Strengthen Practice Responses to Neglect
 - Multi-Agency Audit concerning Resource Effectiveness in Early Help interventions.
 - Multi-Agency Audit concerning Identification and Responses to Neglect
- Priority: Improving Responses to Risk Outside the Home
 - Multi-Agency Audit concerning Recognising Risk Factors relating to Serious Youth Violence.
- Priority: Learning, Partnership Development and Practice
 - Initial compilation and categorisation of more than 140 local procedure resources.
 - Review and finalisation of all learning review activity between 2019 and 2022 (11 reviews).
 - Development of NSCP Learning and Improvement Framework focussing on three key elements of practice, Communication, Curiosity and Context.

Examples of outcomes from the work of partners engaged in the Learning and Improvement Sub-Group include:

- Introduction of permanent Education representative at Strategic MSET group (Modern Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking) to improve awareness of contribution of issues to education settings.

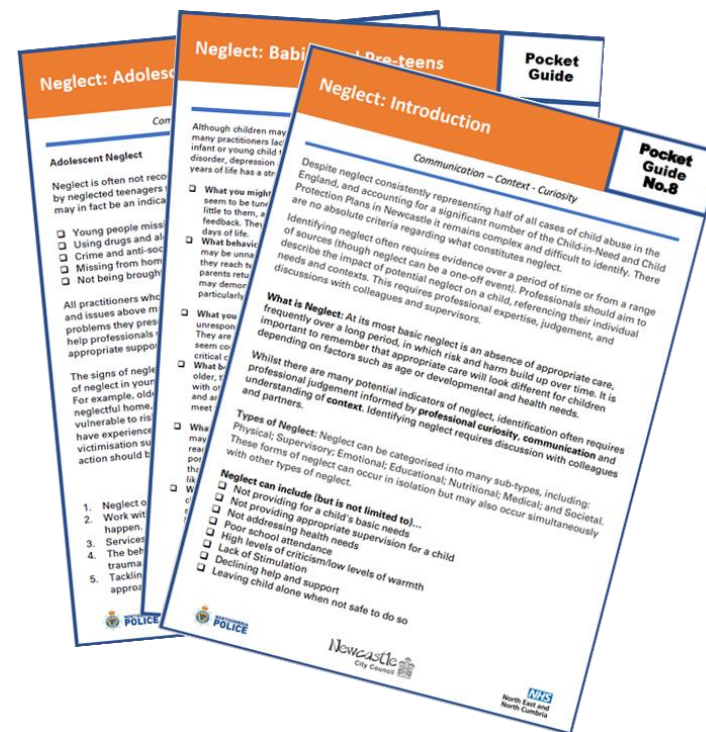
- Changes to Police recording processes within multi-agency triage to improve information sharing with Early Help practitioners.
- ‘Risk Outside The Home’ training programme, including supporting resources and communications developed and delivered to partners to increase awareness of issues and awareness of potential multi-agency practice pathways and interventions.
- Review and introduction of a local, multi-agency practice guidance on the management of fabricated or induced illness in children including management of perplexing presentations.
- Working group focussed on development of shared methodology and tool to support identification of Neglect across partner agencies.
- Review and coordination of new regional pathway for practitioner responses to bruising in immobile children to ensure timely interventions and reflecting national guidance on good practice.
- Identification of improvements to information sharing between statutory and Early Help provision regarding diversionary behaviour and operational intelligence.

Practice and Development Sub-Group (P&D)

The Practice and Development (P&D) sub-group meets every three months. They share and receive information with the LIG and report to the Executive group. This group challenges partners and encourages new ideas for improving tools and processes in safeguarding children.

Partners in P&D look at how practice changes by other groups and boards affect children and young people. They make sure plans for changes by single agencies or other groups are discussed with partners and are shared so other organisations know what is happening.

The P&D sub-group also helps solve practical problems in new developments and lets partners share their solutions to new issues. It’s a place for partners to share good practices with the partnership and the Executive.



In 2023-24 the sub-group met four times and worked on a programme of development that included elements such as:

- Priority: Improving Responses to Risk Outside the Home
 - Practitioner review of proposed Knife Crime protocol.
- Reducing the Impact of Domestic Abuse
 - Practitioner review of pathway Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse.
- Priority: Learning, Partnership Development and Practice
 - Partners review of findings from single agency auditing.
 - Practitioner review of Early Help JTAI criteria
- Priority: Strengthen Practice Responses to Neglect
 - Initiation of a 'Neglect' working group focussing on shared tools and partner agency practice.

Examples of outcomes from the work of partners engaged in the Practice and Development Sub-Group include:

- A Partnership map of mental health services for children and young people in Newcastle
- A practitioner's Knife Crime Protocol for schools.
- Development of improved practitioner resource for identifying responses to Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
- Identification of additional resource developments to improve responses to Neglect (to be developed 2024-25)

Newcastle Education Safeguarding Partnership (NESP)

The Newcastle Education Safeguarding Partnership (NESP) provides the mechanism for the Safeguarding Partners to fulfil the requirements of Working Together (2018) and enables representatives from schools and other education service providers in Newcastle, to engage with representatives from the partnership including local authority education, police and health agencies to engage and influence the work of the Safeguarding Partners.

Partners at NESP provide feedback to the Partnership Executive relating to safeguarding activity and emerging concerns. This supports review of policy and helps to identify strengths and gaps in the development of partnership responses to issues such information sharing, exploitation, and serious youth violence.

The group also provides an opportunity for practitioners working in schools and similar locations to identify and share good practice in safeguarding.

In 2023-24 the sub-group met four times and worked on a programme of development that included elements such as:

- Priority: Learning, Partnership Development and Practice
 - Review of effectiveness regarding partnership working between education locations and local authority Education officers/resources.

- Understanding contributions schools and other education service providers can make to safeguarding partnership working
- Supported the development of an All-Partnership Safeguarding Event “Safeguarding in Schools”
- Priority: Improving Responses to Risk Outside the Home
 - A working group to identify key areas of concern within schools and recommendations for action regarding online safeguarding.
 - Exploring processes for education locations to ensure participation by safeguarding partners in decision making at exclusion panels and cross referencing on CYP known to be exposed to ROTH.

Examples of outcomes from the work of partners engaged in the Newcastle Education Safeguarding Partnership include:

- Proposed general statement of agreement for schools in Newcastle regarding gender identity and responses in schools.
- Establishing clear lines of communication between Education SPOCs and school representatives to ensure effective participation in multi-agency audits.
- A set of recommendations to improve safeguarding policy and practice in relation to online safeguarding.
- Feedback influencing development of support and safeguarding resources provided by local authority, education, police and health agencies to engage and influence the work of the Safeguarding Partners

General statement of agreement for schools in Newcastle regarding gender identity.

"We, as school leaders in Newcastle, affirm our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all pupils and their families.

Recognizing the diversity of gender identities, we embrace and respect the right of every individual to express their gender identity authentically.

Our schools are dedicated to fostering understanding, acceptance, and dignity for all students, and we pledge to support pupils and their families who identify with alternative gender identities.

By fostering an environment of empathy, education, and open communication, we aim to ensure that every member of our school community feels valued, safe, and empowered to be their authentic selves."

Value vs Impact

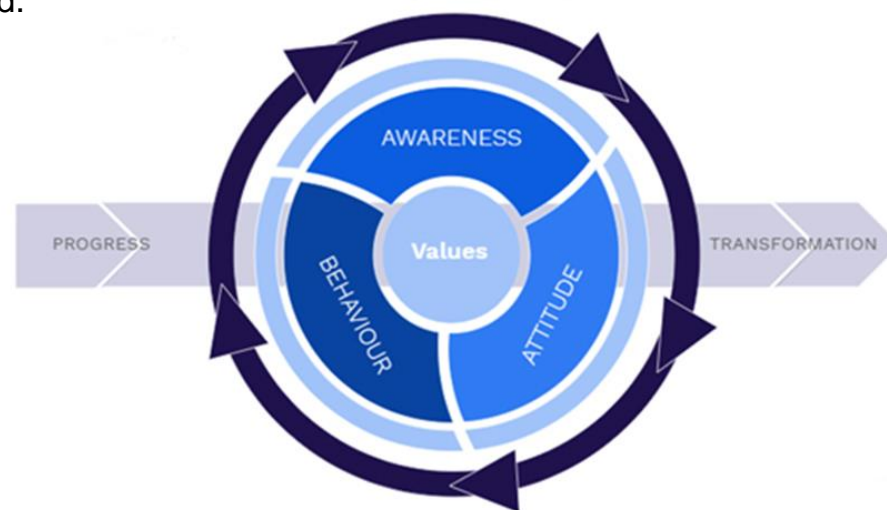
It's hard to tell if these new initiatives have had a positive impact in just a few weeks or months. Immediate effects might be too subtle for user surveys or numerical data to capture accurately. Just because something has an impact doesn't mean it has value; impacts can also be negative or unintended.

We understand that if an outcome has value, it has an impact. Sometimes, measuring this impact takes more resources than achieving the outcome itself. The Partnership continually looks for value, often seen through stronger relationships and increased confidence among partners.

For instance, simply creating and promoting a map of mental health services in the city won't show its impact just by looking for more referrals. Many factors could increase referrals, and more referrals might even lower service quality.

However, the map's value lies in relieving pressure on school staff who can now direct parents to available services. It also helps health teams connect with partners they didn't know before, enhancing collaboration and capacity building in safeguarding efforts.

The Partnership sees one of the great challenges of the next two years as working on better ways to describe and demonstrate value created by achieving clear direction from the vision of Lead Safeguarding Partners. We're also exploring improved methods to track and build on this value, aiming to capture evidence of long-term, sustainable impact beyond the short-term business year.



The impact of values LVG & Co.

Training and Practice Development

An overview of the work undertaken by the NSCP in relation to learning, training and development between April 2023 and March 2024.

Throughout 2023/24 the NSCP has undertaken a significant amount of work focused on supporting learning, training, communication and the wider development of the partnership. This has included:

Learning: The NSCP has delivered briefings on the wide range of government publications, with recordings made available online to ensure the widest availability to partners. The outcome of this activity is greater awareness amongst partners of the policy environment shaping practice focus. The impact of this is to introduce a system awareness and appreciation of the factors at play across the different partner organisations to facilitate better working together.

In relation to local learning we have produced practitioner guides to share learning from local reviews and additional supporting resources such as pocket guides for practitioners on related topics such as Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) and Neglect and issue specific tools such as multi-agency screening tool to identify neglect in different practice contexts.

The outcome of this activity is to introduce the beginnings of consistency in the assumptions which underpin partner practice. While there is rarely a single definition for the different forms of 'safeguarding' delivered by partners the impact of having resources

such as these widely distributed is to challenge partners to see their work from a shared perspective rather than a single agency's idea.



Training and Practice Development

Training: Over the course of the last year we continued to deliver much training to a wide and varied audience. We continue to seek development of online training content to increase our own potential within the resource available and have commissioned additional E-Learning modules focused on Child Sexual Exploitation and Gangs and Youth Violence.


To ensure our focus is relevant to the needs of practitioners we established a multi-agency training group to review and revise the Level Three training to include updates from Working Together (2023) and to develop and update it for increased face-to-face delivery in 2024/25. An outcome of this work has been the development of a Minimum Standards and Capability Framework for exploitation training in conjunction with the Adults Safeguarding Board, the impact of bringing this framework into existence locally has led to the subsequent production of an agreed multi-agency Exploitation training package.

Development: Over the course of the last year we have examined the effectiveness of our website, recognising it as a key element in the safeguarding system. The outcome is the recognition is that the partnership website is not fit for purpose. This has set a challenge for the partnership to improve this key tool communicating and influencing partnership practice and safeguarding system effectiveness. The Business Team has started the process of addressing this need and we expect the

outcome of a new site in 2024/25 with a positive and wide-ranging impact on the effectiveness of the partnership generally.

Multi-Agency Training Delivered by Partners: The Partnership also encourages partners to both have ownership of the outcomes of training but the input of content and expertise that increases the system value. The Exploitation Safeguarding Nurse, a role commissioned by the ICB, works closely with the Partnership's Training and Communications role. Through working together to co-produce, develop and deliver multi-agency training to raise awareness of exploitation, the messages to partners are informed by a practice environment that is very much on the frontline of delivery and which is itself influenced by the voice and lived experience of young people. To ensure that the training is impactful children, young people and adults at risk are consulted about what messages they would like professionals to hear, and these messages are incorporated into the training to positive effect, demonstrating positive collaboration not only with agencies but with children, young people, and adults at risk also.

In keeping with partnership working, training has also been co-developed with other multi-agency partners to promote awareness of emerging trends such as home invasion and safeguarding in schools.



Take time to get to know me before they start coming in and just telling me that my relationships are bad for me – 16-year-old female

The Work of the Partners



Contribution of Partners to the Functioning of the Partnership

“The contribution of each safeguarding partner to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements”

Every one of the three partners helps make the Partnership safeguarding system work by joining the Executive Group meetings and leading different subgroups. For example, Children's Social Care leads the Practice and Development and Local Case Review Groups, and the NHS health partner leads the Learning and Improvement group. A headteacher leads the Schools group. People from these partner organisations also join other partnership activities, like groups to finish special tasks and multi-agency audits. The Local Authority also helps by having its specialist teams process data from partners and report it to the Partnership Executive.

But, it's really important to involve all partners, not just the main ones. We want everyone to share their ideas for improving how we work together to keep children safe in Newcastle. We do this through a newsletter and website updates, and by having partners at the centre of our learning and auditing activities. The partnership actively promotes teamwork as the most important thing for effective safeguarding, no matter what different professionals do.

To make sure everyone is able to be recognised the Partnership has special award that is given to any partner who is identified by the people they work with as really making working together better in Newcastle.



Recognition of Good Practice Award

The Safeguarding Partners of Newcastle's Safeguarding Children Partnership recognise the good practice and contribution to safeguarding in Newcastle made by

**Multi-Agency Child Concern Notification Triage
Newcastle City Council**

Nominated by the Early Help Development Manager for their commitment to multi-agency cooperation in response to police notifications. Their approach has fostered a mutual understanding of agency roles and supported effective information sharing to safeguard babies, children and young people and families effectively.

The Delegated Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Cath McEvoy-Carr
Director of Children, Education and Skills
Newcastle City Council

Lyn Peart
Detective Chief Superintendent Safeguarding
Northumbria Police

Richard Scott
Director of Nursing for the North
North East and Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Safeguarding Week

In December 2023 the partnership organised a week-long programme of at least three partner-led sessions every day. These partner contributions were designed to share, explain and highlight activities, projects and practice that were happening in Newcastle and were relevant to issues and work partners had raised throughout the year.

Each session was designed and presented by a partner representative and the sessions were open to all practitioners in Newcastle. Sixteen different presentations were delivered during the week and recordings are available for partners who were unable to attend sessions, on a dedicated page of the NSCP website. These recordings have continued to be accessed by practitioners throughout the year with feedback highlighting them as a valued resource.

Across 16 sessions by 13 different organisations there was more than 500 registrations for attendance with more than 350 separate individuals participating in sessions from across the Newcastle safeguarding community. The outcome of safeguarding week was to foster a sense of ownership of the partnership amongst the wider membership.

The impact of safeguarding week reaches beyond the obvious increased sharing of knowledge and experience or awareness of availability of colleagues working on similar issues. The positive relationship building with key contributors has had a meaningful impact on improving partnership working generally, through increasing the effectiveness of ongoing engagement of individuals in the delivery of partnership safeguarding objectives.



Exploitation Safeguarding Nurse

“The Exploitation Safeguarding Nurse is commissioned by the ICB, leading on health responses to exploitation and a collaborative relationship with partner agencies, in particular the Multi Agency Exploitation Hub and the Prevention Hub.”

The Exploitation Safeguarding Nurse is very involved in important meetings where children and young people might need some support and isn't afraid to speak up when needed to make sure their voice is heard. They help kids and adults who might be victims of exploitation, working with families and other partner organisations to provide support in one-to-one and group settings.

The nurse's ability to connect with families is very important for good teamwork among all partners. They make a difference by sharing the experiences of families and young people so we can learn more from them and reviews of our work, which helps create better responses. This collaboration has led to the development of helpful tools and training programs for everyone involved.

Partners consistently give positive feedback, appreciating how the nurse encourages curiosity and ensures the voices of children and adults are heard.



"I can talk to Kath about anything – she listens to me and is honest, she doesn't make me feel like I'm too blame"

(15-year-old female)



Thanks for coming with me to the police station today and for helping me to sort my head out afterwards. I always feel better after spending time with you I think you just get me

(16-year-old male)



Children and Families Newcastle and Early Help services



Children & Families Newcastle (C&FN) helps the local authority and partners work together with families early on, identifying strengths and providing the right activities, advice, and support when needed. A new model called Early Intervention Conversations (EICs) was introduced to guide early discussions between practitioners and families. These conversations identify both the family's needs and strengths, allowing for better collaboration with partners.

Strong relationships with schools have led to the successful development of the Team around the School model in secondary schools. This involves working with Educational Psychology, school nursing, and other agencies all working together to meet needs. From April 2023 to March 2024, 2,969 children participated in these Early Intervention Conversations, and this made a change by improving the understanding of what is needed in neighbourhoods and helping to ensure a joined-up approach when using support from more than one of the partner agencies.

Before an Ofsted visit in May 2023, Early Help led a multi-agency check on of how useful their resources were in Early Help interventions. The audit found partners used good ways of working, especially in using Intensive Family Support resources, but also highlighted that providing Early Help is complex because it often must deal with several different needs and risks at the same time.

Challenges identified include differences in the approach to joined-up working by different partners, this meant that support was not always applied in the same way. This affected how different partners were aware of changes that people were able to achieve, and differences in understanding needs, risks and roles.

As a result of the audit recommendations, changes were made to improve communication between police and key practitioners, improve information sharing with GPs, create an Early Help Pocket Guide for partners, review the 'Was Not Brought' policy in local hospitals, and update Level 3 safeguarding training for partners. It is too early to tell what change has happened because of these actions but partners are confident that these will improve Early Help for children, young people and families.



***“There is a strong multi-agency early help offer in Newcastle that provides children and families with a wide range of support. This means that families receive the right level of intervention at the right time for them.*”**

Safeguarding in Northumbria Police



In 2023/2024 the safeguarding children partnerships from across the region came together to review how partners worked together to identify the best support for young people who were affected by exploitation and who might also go missing. The partners had identified that the way of working that had been in place for several years was not as good at creating safeguarding responses as it had been.

The police created a new Prevention Department within their structure to help identify and manage safeguarding risks relating to these issues better. The new department includes prevention, early intervention, and problem-solving in their everyday work.

Police now have a dedicated specialist Inspector and Chief Inspector to ensure good focus on risks that young people might face outside the home. As part of the regional review, they have designed a new 'PREM' model, a development of the processes relating to Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking, that will be introduced in 2024/25. This new approach will not only identify and support victims but also address problems related to offenders and locations in the community.

They also started a new team dedicated to handling missing persons. This team will ensure that risks are assessed accurately, partner responses to missing episodes are effective, and special plans are created for those who frequently go missing. This team is part of the new Prevention Department and will work with partners to reduce vulnerability.

With the introduction of PREM, the partners will have a better way for different agencies to work together to protect people and address issues related to missing persons and exploitation. PREM will not only focus on keeping victims safe and reducing the risks they face but also on understanding and stopping the behaviours of criminals and identifying high-risk places. This will help partners to respond more effectively to offenders, improve targeted actions, and better manage hot spot locations.

Priorities in 2024/25

Strengthen Practice Responses to Neglect

Improving Responses to Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence

Improving Partnership Working in Response to Exploitation

Revising Partnership Governance and Safeguarding Arrangements

Improving Evaluation and Evidence of Impact

Learning, partnership development and practice

National Reforms

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 brought important changes to how our Partnership will be managed and operates. The partners have been thinking about a new structure that will help us follow these rules while also improving how we work together in Newcastle.

The partners are looking for new ways to plan our activities, such as setting up good ways to measure success before we start any work. This will help us see the impact of what we do. The roles of the Partnership Chair and Independent Scrutiny will now be separate, which means we'll need to find new ways to ensure strong leadership and direction from our main partners and develop effective challenge and assurance through independent scrutiny. These and other challenges will shape how well we can improve real partnership working among practitioners in Newcastle.

However, it's crucial that we involve all partners, not just the key ones. The Partnership strongly believes that teamwork is the key to effective safeguarding, no matter the role of each professional as we will also be working on ways to encourage everyone to share their ideas on how to better work together to keep children in Newcastle safe.

