

Welcome

to the 2023-24 Children & Young people's Annual Report

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership

Celebrating the Voice of Children and Young People
Listening to what we have to say...



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership



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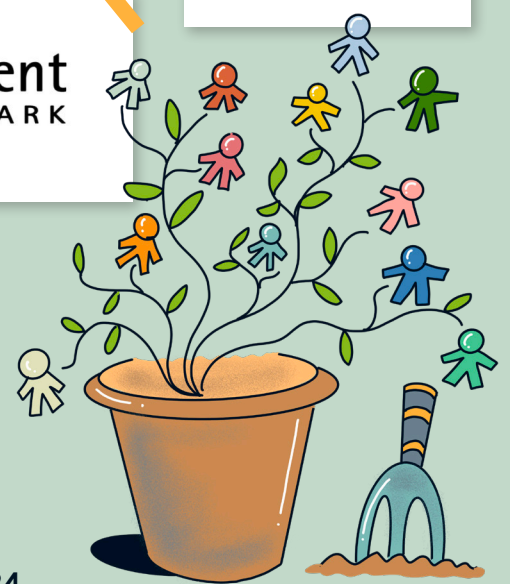
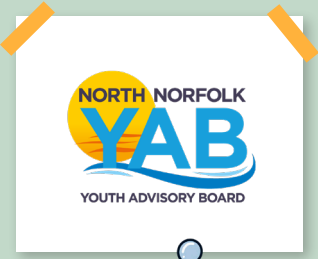
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Introduction: About Us!

Welcome to the children and young people's fourth annual report for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). Young people from Norfolk's Youth Advisory Boards, Youth Parliament and the Matthew Project with members of the NSCP Business Unit and our Participation Officers worked together to produce this report. We are happy to share our understanding and experience of safeguarding so we can help the partners appreciate what it's like to be child or young person growing up in Norfolk today.

The theme of our report is speaking out and being heard. This version of the annual report serves as an executive summary with our thoughts and experiences highlighting what we think needs to happen to keep us safe. Professionals should also see the full report for more detail on the NSCP's achievements and challenges in 2023–24.



What feeling safe means to us

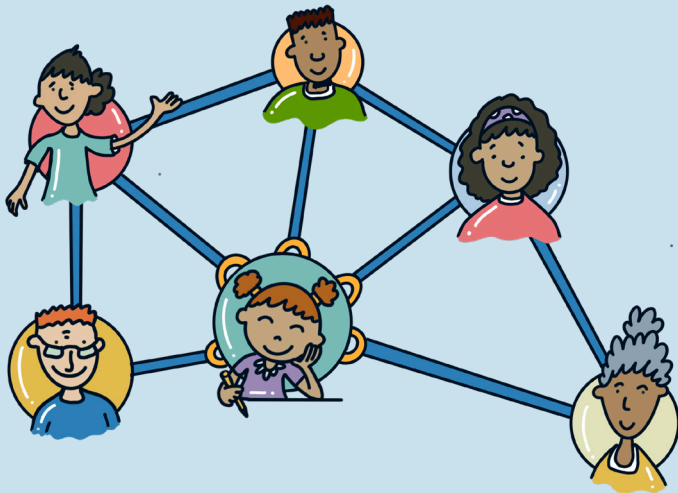
If we summed up what helps us to feel safe in three words they would be:

Relationships

Confidence

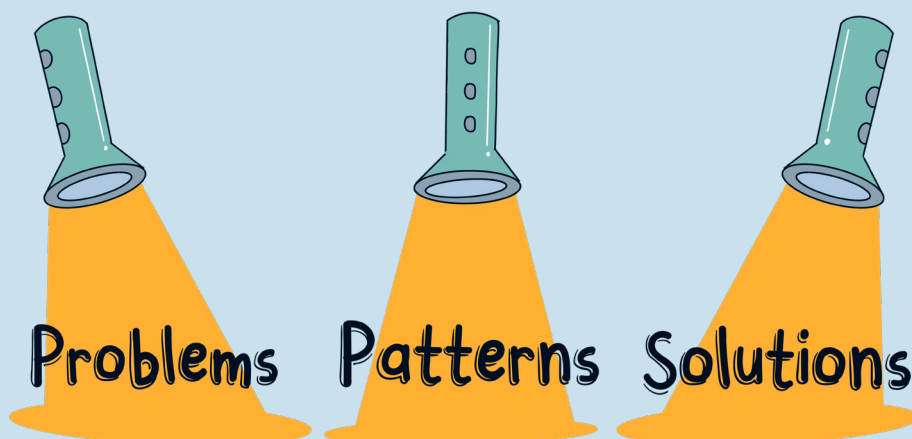
Trust

It is important that adults in our lives give us a sense of tolerance and being cared for. We need to know who we can turn to and that they will help us make sense of what is happening. Adults need to keep us in the loop so we have knowledge and awareness and can be part of any decision making processes that will affect us. We want you to shine a light on the dangers we may face and give us strategies to manage situations.



We really value a network of people we can trust, including friends, family – people who understand. If we come to adults for help, we need them to be fair, to listen to us and to take us seriously. Above all, we need them to act.

“ And guess what? Children are not perfect! We make mistakes but we need acceptance and guidance to learn. Help us to be the best versions of ourselves and celebrate our differences as well as our achievements. ”



Governance: How does the NSCP work?

Arrangements to keep us safe have not changed: they continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority (Children's Services), Police and Health. They have lots of other partners working with them like schools, nurseries, after school and youth clubs, housing providers and district councils.



Tom McCabe



Sara Tough



Tracey Bleakley



Paul Sanford



Nick Davison



Tricia D'Orsi

Education plays one of the most important roles in an average child's life. This year, new government guidance was published, called Working Together 2023. We talked about how we are going to get the 450 plus schools in Norfolk better represented in the local plan for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The plan is being rewritten and the NSCP will be working with schools to make improvements. We will report back on that next year.



Key Messages

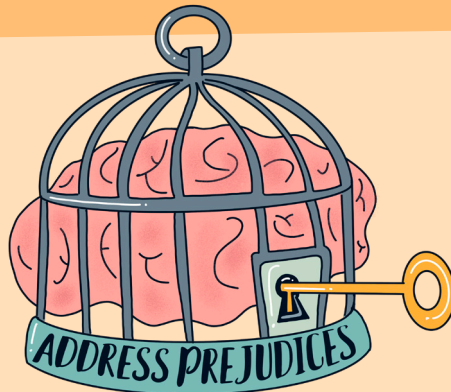
“ Give us space and time and allow us to talk through our problems and emotions when we are ready. ”

“ Open questions can help us to talk, but we are all different so you need to work out how to communicate with us as individuals. People struggle in different ways so tailor your response and the ways you interact with us. ”



“ Be mindful of how your actions might be seen by our peers. Think about accessibility and removing stigma. ”

“ Address your prejudices: don't stereotype or label. Listen to different perspectives, get the whole story, don't make assumptions; and ask questions. ”



“ Reinforce good behaviours with rewards and don't just focus on punishing us if we get things wrong. ”

“ Our voice is just as important as adults' voices. Please listen to us and don't get distracted. ”

“ Expand our thinking in a calm, friendly environment and remember what we talk about. ”

“ Your response to our worries impacts on how much confidence we have in adults to keep us safe. ”



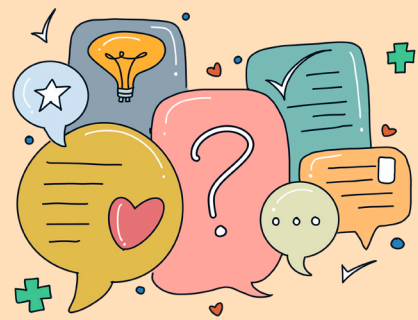
“ Slow your thinking down: understand how the brain works, so you can be calm and present. ”

“ Educate yourselves about differences in the way people’s brains work (neurodiversity) and mental health. Pay attention to difference and help us feel included and accepted. ”

“ Be curious, be humble, don’t normalise things that are upsetting us. Don’t let us reach breaking point. ”

“ Don’t just tick boxes. Get to know us. ”

“ Work with our parents, give them help and recognise our whole family support networks. ”



“ Encourage us to reach out, and equally, reach out to us. ”

“ Use positive language. ”



“ We also want to thank you when you listen and deal with our problems. For example, it is really helpful when you recognise patterns of events and help us to build a bigger picture to get some perspective. We have adults in our lives who we feel safe with and we can tell them everything, like our YAB workers or our safeguarding leads in schools. ”

“ Thank you as well for the times when you make things fun and give us things to look forward to. ”

Data and Independent Scrutiny–

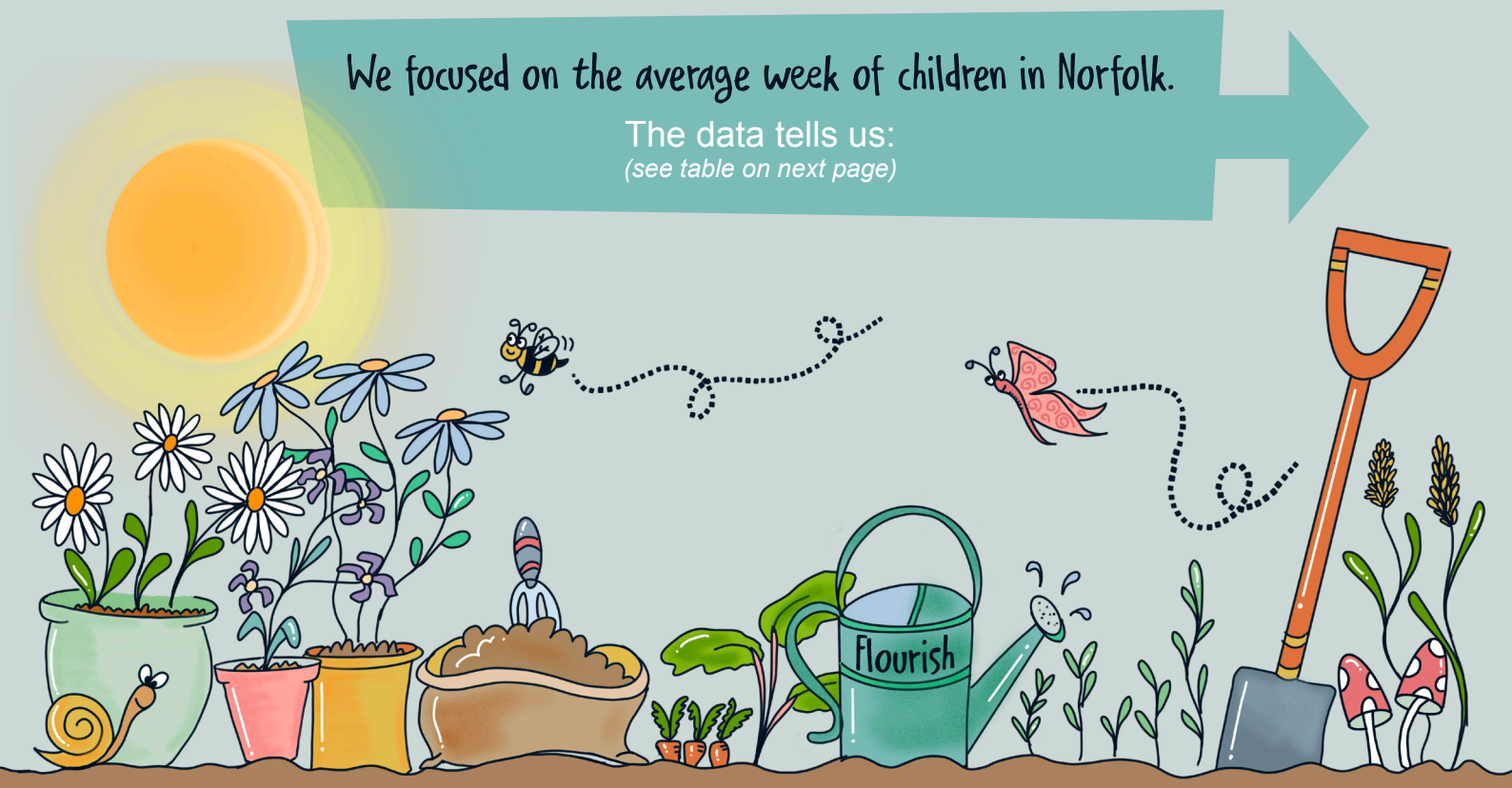
Ways of Understanding Safeguarding



The chapter on data in the full report is really comprehensive and interesting and looks at trends and patterns as well as how the NSCP uses data on understanding its priorities. The NSCP is getting much better at this as they have a dedicated data analyst. Next year the analyst is going to join us for the work we do on the annual report as he is a great story teller.

We focused on the average week of children in Norfolk.

The data tells us:
(see table on next page)



Telling our story with data: the scale and range of safeguarding activity in Norfolk

In each week in Norfolk...

- In each week, in Norfolk, around **150** babies are born.
- There are around **188,000** children and young people aged 0-19, with around **125,000** attending schools.

Within the context of this, each week there are around:

Within Health services around:



- **960** A&E attendances for Under-18s
- **350** for under-4s
- **21** acute hospital admissions caused by injuries for under-15s
- **4** acute admissions for mental health problems
- **3** for alcohol-specific conditions

The Police:



- **8** children are screened for exploitation by the Police
- **95** Police investigations are started where domestic abuse is suspected and there is a child present
- **11** children and young people are stopped and searched, and around **23** are arrested

The Council:



- Around **930** contacts are made to the Children's Advice & Duty Services (CADS);
- around **250** from schools and education services
- around **200** from the Police
- **160** from members of the public
- **110** from health services

Where contacts suggest there may be a risk to the safety or wellbeing of a child, partners work together to agree the best course of action through formal safeguarding routes. Each week this is around:

- **71** referrals prompt a social work assessment, and around **45** prompt a multi-agency strategy discussion.
- **11** children start a Child Protection Plan, including around **3** who will have had a previous CPP; and **7** children will become looked after.
- **3** children and young people entered the Youth Justice system for the first time.

All of this means that at any time in Norfolk there are around:

480

children and young people with a Child Protection Plan

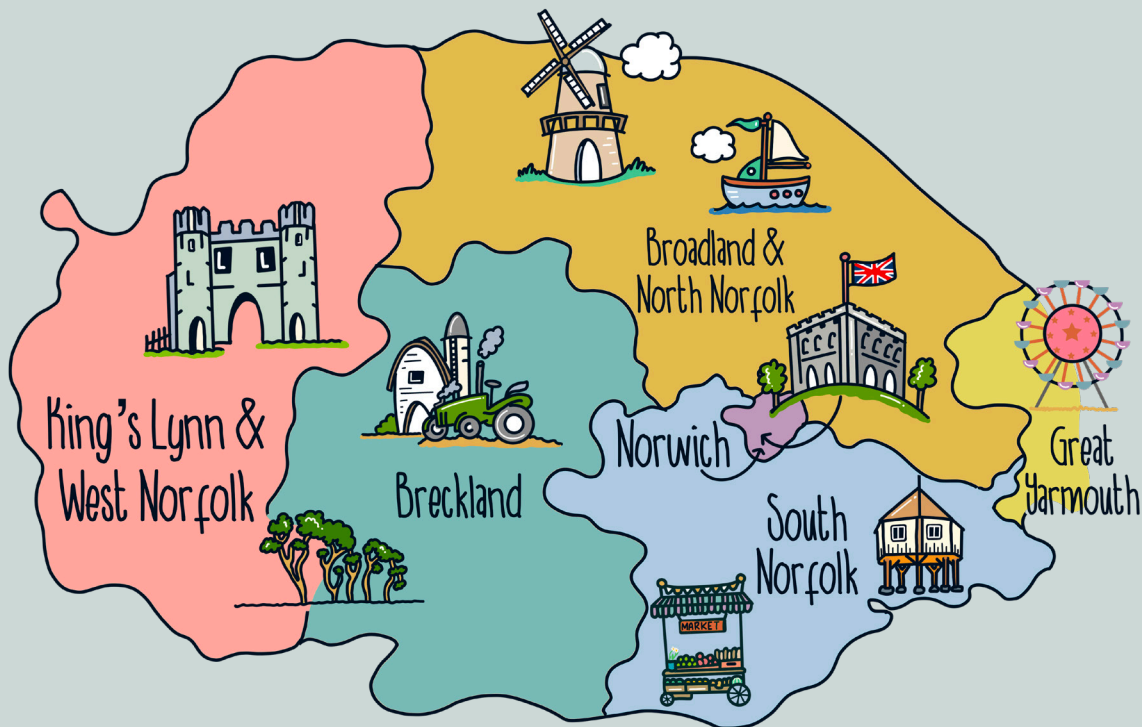
1,150

Looked After Children

220

children and young people receiving Youth Justice Service interventions

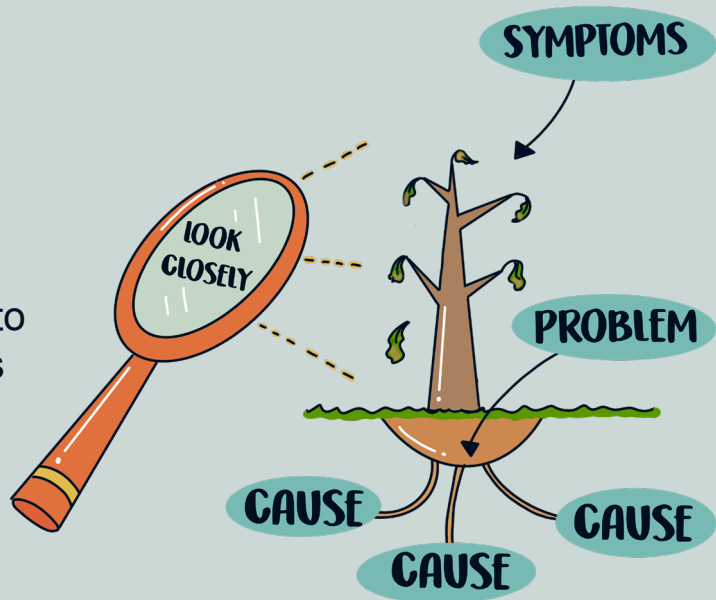
We reflected on this information and came to the conclusion that Norfolk is a big county! From the data we can see that there are a lot of problems and people are doing a lot to help, but we wondered is it sustainable?



Can we do more to prevent bad things happening?

Do we look closely enough at the causes of the problems rather than the symptoms?

It is reassuring to know that the NSCP uses data to help with targeting and prevention and that the data analyst always explains how numbers are only part of the story. We were also pleased to hear that there is a lot of further analysis of data by location and we compare Norfolk statistics to other areas.



Some of the things that caught our eye in the average week were around:

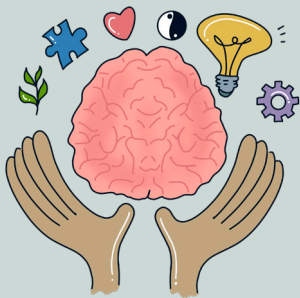


- **School attendance:** should we be worried that some children are missing education? Why? What are they doing instead?

- **Youth justice:** what leads to a young person being arrested?



- **Mental health:** the figures seem low. How bad does it need to get for mental health to be recognised?



- **Workforce:** It would be helpful to see staffing levels; is there any correlation between children's experience of the safeguarding system and the people employed to keep children safe?



Overall, it looks like Norfolk is a safe place.

When you look at the data about exploitation or child protection sometimes the average person might think **'That will never happen to me'** and we recognise that statistics do not always translate to the lived experience of an individual. In other words, data gives information, not the full picture, that is why the NSCP does other pieces of scrutiny. The full report gives details of some of this activity including safeguarding self-assessments, multi-agency audits and the work of the NSCP's independent scrutineers.



The NSCP Priorities and Projects

The full report gives good examples of all the different things that the NSCP has done - or are planning to do - to get better in certain areas. We discussed our experience and knowledge of the NSCP priorities: child exploitation; family and community networking; and neglect.

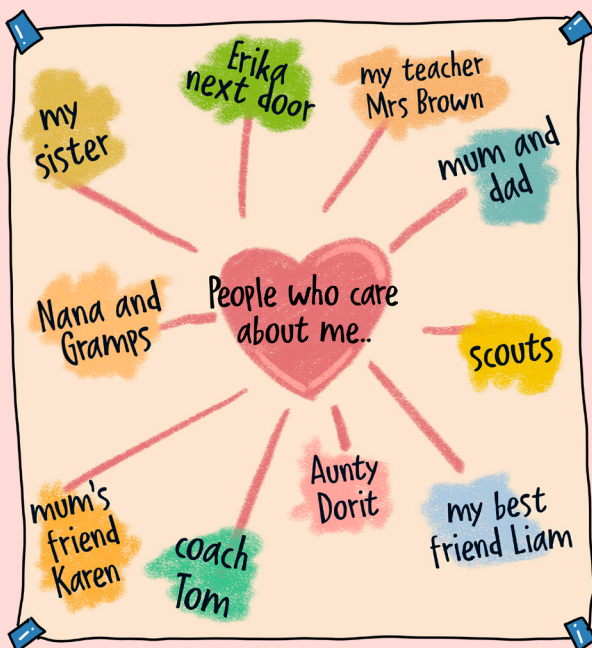
● Child Exploitation

We understand that exploitation means when people, including children and young people, are used by others. This can be life changing. Many of us have learned about exploitation in our schools. We were told about how to recognise signs of exploitation, but not how to avoid or what to do. If we knew someone who was being exploited, we would go to the police but we are not sure how that would help. We need to be confident that we are not victim blaming when children and young people are exploited.



● Family & Community Networking

Networking is about getting more people involved when a child or family is having a tough time. This is good but could leave some family members feeling anxious about taking on more responsibility. They need a structure and space around them to support them when this happens: i.e. they need help to do be part of a network. It is important that families and professionals work together and learn from each other. For professionals, they need to understand the emotional impact on families.





The NSCP is working on a big project to get better at including fathers in safeguarding. Fathers are as important as mothers and if they are not included this can put pressure on other family members. We have to make sure that we hear everyone's views because this gives us a bigger picture. It is normalised that dads are ok or, at the other end of the scale, that dads are the problem: either they don't need any help or support, or they are doing badly. We need to approach this differently. Sometimes with fathers there is an assumption that if they are not

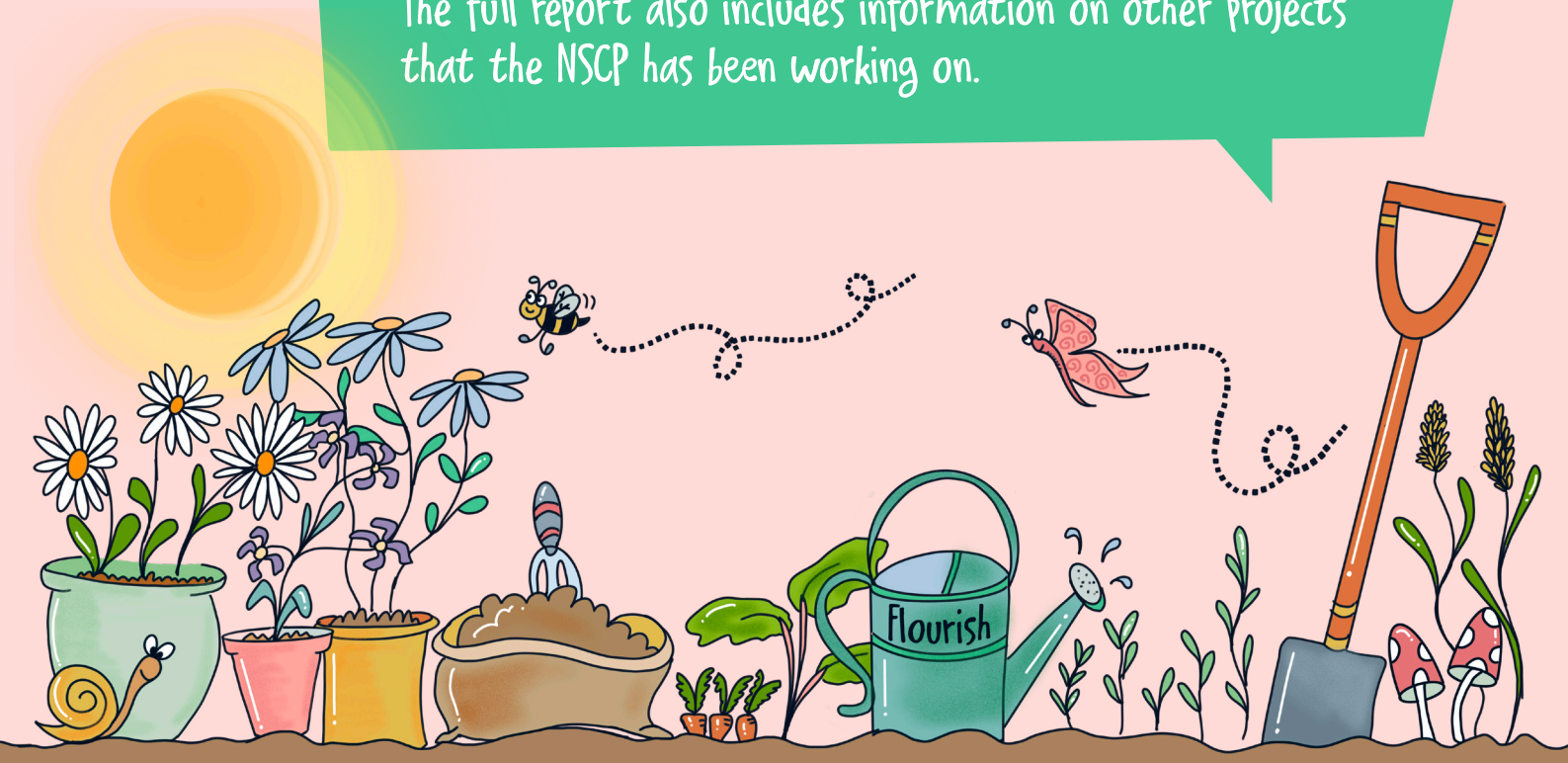
getting it right, it's because they don't *want* to get it right. People need to recognise how bad things can be for dads as well as mums and that dads aren't as good at asking for help.

● Neglect

Neglect is difficult to understand if you haven't experienced it. For those children that do experience being neglected, they may not know anything different, so being neglected is normal for them. We need to help these children, and their parents and carers, to have higher hopes and aspirations so that their lives get better.



The full report also includes information on other projects that the NSCP has been working on.



Learning and Training

In the full report there are two chapters that look at learning and training. We looked at all the training course that the NSCP offers. There are a lot! We like that this training includes lots of different professionals including social workers, police officers, health professionals and teachers. This helps them to understand different perspectives – particularly around Mental Health.

The benefits of this approach to training and learning are:

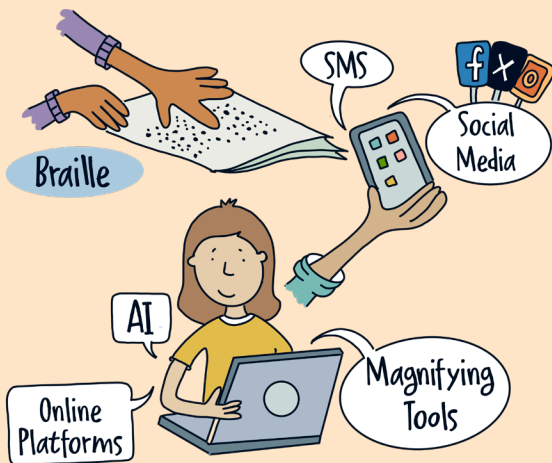
1. Understanding the importance of your own and others' jobs/roles.
2. Gaining and applying skills needed to keeping children safe.
3. Putting the emphasis on the child.



We thought about the skills and knowledge that we want to see in the adults responsible for keeping us safe. It is important for us that adults are caring; this includes for our physical and mental health and wellbeing in general. Professionals need to be able to help children and young people feel calm and cared for. We also talked about our need to know who to contact when we are not feeling safe. Some of us had heard about FYI. This is a space provided by one of the NSCP's health partners, Cambridgeshire Community Services, for young people to make contact if they are struggling with their mental health. More could be done to promote this service and the Just One Number contact.

www.fyinorfolk.nhs.uk

If we could teach adults anything it would be:



- Setting an intention to be kind, and have a caring attitude.
- Adapting communication methods: being flexible and creative, accessible and inclusive.
- Prioritising children who need help: managing and giving attention to all children and young people, even those who are quieter.
- Looking for hidden signs.



- Developing interpersonal skills: being easy to talk to, ability to listen.
- Addressing online bullying and impact on real life.
- Being motivated: like children, like your job!



Rapid Reviews and

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews



In the full report there is a chapter on cases where children have died or been seriously harmed. The NSCP has a duty to learn from these cases and there is a system in place to make sure that these children do not go unseen. A Rapid Review happens quickly: the NSCP partners provide a lot of information and analysis of their involvement with a case in order to understand what lessons they need to learn. Sometimes they don't get enough information from a Rapid Review and they have to do more work so they expand on the information provided and do a full Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

This year, the NSCP did six Rapid Reviews, which included one case that is now being taken forward as a Child Safeguarding Practice Review. When that is completed it will be published on the NSCP website. Publication means that the NSCP is upfront about lessons learned and these cases raise awareness with the public. This is important for children and young people as they – or someone who cares about them - may recognise themselves if they are in similar circumstances, and they can reach out for help.





In conclusion

We hope that you have noticed all the great things the NSCP has done this year and that it has achieved a lot. With safeguarding there is always a lot more to be done as children grow up and society changes. We don't know what lies ahead of us, but there are certain things that the NSCP wants to get better at.

This is what it says in the full report:

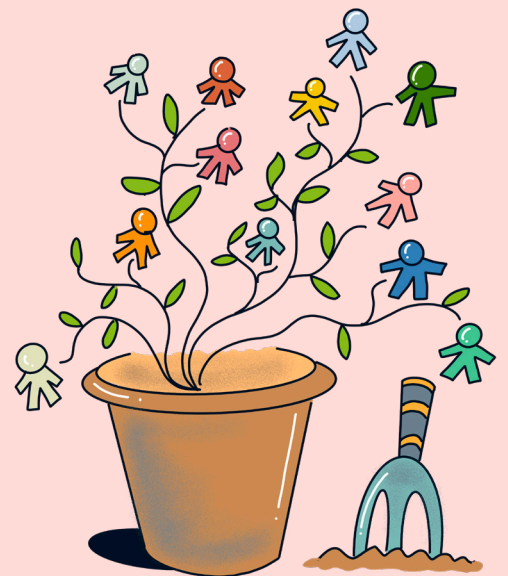
- Priority review scheduled for June 2024 and ongoing monitoring of impact on practice and outcomes for children.
- Applying the learning from independent scrutiny on transitional safeguarding and continuing scrutiny work on identified areas of the system.
- Developing robust monitoring and quality assurance systems to better support Joint Agency Group Supervisions.
- Continue to utilise the performance intelligence, data and qualitative feedback to ensure we are targeting our resources correctly and addressing any gaps.
- Multi-agency audits planned for the Norfolk Graded Care Profile and Domestic Abuse.
- Disseminating and implementing learning from local and national Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local Rapid Reviews, including promoting learning from the what works well case undertaken this reporting year.
- Evaluating the impact of the substance misuse training programme commissioned in response to learning from Rapid Reviews.

- Ongoing monitoring and review of learning and actions against recommendations from scrutiny, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Section 11 and audits.
- Develop and implement monitoring and quality assurance systems for Joint Agency Group Supervision.
- Delivering on the Workforce Development Group forward plan with a particular focus on measuring the impact of training on practice
- Working directly with the children, young people and families of Norfolk to ensure that their voices are heard and they contribute directly to strengthening the safeguarding system.
- Continue to promote and support the FLOURISH agenda.
- Continue to promote equality and inclusion and celebrate diversity in Norfolk.

“ We hope that we, the children and young people of Norfolk, are fully involved in supporting the NSCP achieve its future goals. ”



Notes





The full version of the annual report can be found on the NSCP website:

www.norfolklscp.org.uk

*There are loads of resources on there for professionals
as well as children and families!*

If you are worried about a child you can call Norfolk's Children Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the NSPCC's Childline to help you.

Their phone numbers are:

CADS: 0344 800 8020

Childline: 0800 1111

Or you can always phone the NSCP Business Unit on:

01603 223409

and they can signpost you to the best person!



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