

Annual Report

1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

www.norfolklscb.org

Norfolk Children and Young People Say...



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Foreword by the Three Statutory Partners

We are delighted to introduce the third Annual Report of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership. The report demonstrates the work the partnership has done over the last year to help keep children and young people in Norfolk safe.

In the last year, safeguarding has come firmly into the national spotlight, with the Independent Review into the murders of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and the much-anticipated publication of the Independent Review into Children's Social Care.

The murders of Star and Arthur identified why it is imperative that we work collectively, share information and are willing to challenge one another. In Norfolk, we have a strong partnership, that continues to grow stronger. This year, we are proud that through the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance and the Safeguarding Partnership we've been able to launch our shared vision and strategy for Norfolk's children and young people, with a shared set of outcomes and a shared ambition. We are all clear that we want Norfolk to be a county where every child and young person can flourish.

The best way we can help our children and young people to stay safe is to make sure they and their parents and carers have the support they need early and can call on the whole network of support that's around them. That's a key focus of the partnership and a clear recommendation from the independent review. As the strategic leads of the partnership, we feel confident that we are on the right track, with the right priorities, but we must always be curious, ask ourselves difficult questions, and open to challenge so we continue to grow and deepen our learning and our ability to work together.

The last year has continued to present new and varied challenges which have had a large impact on the children and families in Norfolk, and shaped the work of the partnership. Covid has remained an ongoing challenge, and we are still looking to understand the long-term implications of the last two years on young people. The ongoing cost of living crisis of the last few months will shape the lives of many children and young people for the foreseeable future, so we are now operating in a period of significant uncertainty.

We've also seen an increase in resources invested across the partnership into prioritising safeguarding. Investment has seen staff across the partnership, and in many other supportive agencies, increasingly given clear responsibility for safeguarding, ensuring we work together effectively and strategically as set out in governance arrangements.

The partnership has also continued to place vital importance on the voice of children and young people to ensure that we can hear directly from them about how we can make a difference. This has been evidenced most clearly in the Children and Young People's version of this annual report, and in through the work of the Neglect Priority subgroup, creating a campaign in which children told us "What their parents do to make them feel safe and loved".

The three priority workstreams (Child Neglect, Vulnerable Adolescents, and Protecting Babies) continue to be the focus of the partnership's work. These groups, each led by a Statutory Partner, are the beating heart of the collective approach to safeguarding in

the county. Each workstream has developed new policies, training, resources and more to help us continually improve safeguarding practice in the county.

As we said last year, our work is an ongoing journey, and there is always more left to do, but this report shows that the partnership's approach is positively affecting the lives of children and young people in Norfolk. We'll continue to work together to empower professionals, support families and protect children and young people to help them flourish in Norfolk.



Handwritten signature of Sara Tough.

Sara Tough
Executive Director
Children's Services

Handwritten signature of Tom McCabe.

Tom McCabe
Head of Paid Service



Handwritten signature of Nick Davison.

Nick Davison
Assistant Chief Constable

Handwritten signature of Paul Sanford.

Paul Sanford
Chief Constable



Handwritten signature of Rebecca Hulme.

Rebecca Hulme
Director of Children, Young
People and Maternity,
Norfolk & Waveney Integrated
Care Board

Handwritten signature of Tracey Bleakley.

Tracey Bleakley
Chief Executive Officer,
Norfolk & Waveney
Integrated Care Board

Foreword by the NSCP Chair



Thank you for taking the time to read NSCP Annual Report. This document should give you an open, honest view of how the Partnership works to safeguard our children and young people in Norfolk. As the Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the NSCP I have the responsibility for scrutinising this report and making sure it is accurate and provides the information you, the reader, requires. I hope that it meets your expectations, provides you with the information you need and above all gives you complete confidence in the way the Partnership strives to safeguard children in Norfolk.

I commented last year on the fact that Norfolk had responded to the pandemic by engaging with our communities and impressing on them how important it was that everyone took responsibility for safeguarding. The response was excellent and I hope that, as we move out of the pandemic this message is not lost. Many of the achievements detailed in the report include significant contributions from our communities. The stark reality is that whilst we may be moving away from one crisis, we are now encountering other significant social and economic challenges. A significant proportion of our families are coming under huge financial pressures and this in turn can lead to increased safeguarding concerns. It is important that we continue to harness the help and support that our communities have given us, so as you read this report, please remember that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

Over the last twelve months the Partnership has matured and I have been hugely impressed by the way in which everyone seeks to continually improve. I can assure you that Norfolk has an incredibly mature Partnership that challenges and supports each other to reach common goals. The leadership remains completely committed, supporting each other to deliver significant improvement in many areas of safeguarding. Our achievements are detailed in this report but I would like to highlight two specific areas of improvement that illustrate the commitment to learn and never be complacent. Firstly, the employment of a data analyst and development of data products that will help us understand where we have the greatest needs is a huge step forward. Secondly the genuine will to hear the voice of our children and families is illustrated by examples of 'co-production'. I have been reassured that the partners are fully committed to engaging with our children, families and communities through this work. Some of the co-production that has taken place has are evidence of how effective this engagement can be.

It is important that this report is fair, informative and balanced, having read it I am completely satisfied this is the case. I have emphasised the important role our communities play in safeguarding but it is also important to acknowledge that fact that Norfolk is fortunate to have a large number of dedicated and professional people working in safeguarding. The passion and commitment they show is reflected in our successes. I want to thank everyone involved in the NSCP for their tireless work over the last twelve months. Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CR' followed by a stylized flourish.

**Chris Robson,
NSCP Independent Chair**

Introduction

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership is the body responsible for implementing and reviewing the local plan for [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#), (MASA), published in September 2019. The MASA is owned by the three statutory partners, i.e. the Local Authority, the Police, and Health, who actively engage the wider partnership in fulfilling their safeguarding duties.

This annual report has been written in adherence to [Working Together 2018](#) requirements as set out in Chapter 3 (paragraph 42). The purpose is to be transparent with Norfolk children and families about the county's safeguarding system: the challenges we have faced as well as our achievements.

The scope of this annual report runs from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. The report aims to provide:

- evidence of the impact of the work (including training) of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision
- response to learning from child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Rapid Reviews and child death

As in previous annual reports, much of the contextual background has been stripped back to allow for more detailed analysis of the evidence of outcomes in our safeguarding system. Information on Norfolk's population and demographics can be found on [Norfolk Insight](#). This report, however, does include more data and performance intelligence than previous reports due to the investment in a dedicated data analysis officer.

It is important to note that the scope of this report covers a period of time where the world is starting to show real signs of recovery from the global pandemic. At the same time, the UK is facing real challenges in terms of understanding the impact of Covid, on both our physical and mental health, alongside unprecedented increases to the cost of living. While some of the uncertainty of co-ordinating and monitoring a safeguarding system during the Covid crisis has eased, the resilience of Norfolk's children and families continues to be tested.

The annual report is also written in the context of some significant policy change and national reporting. As our reporting year drew to a close, the Independent Social Care Review and the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review on the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson were published. Encouragingly, the Social Care Review echoes much of the approach we are continuing to develop in Norfolk – with a clear focus not only on building relationships with children and families, prevention, early help, and family networking, but also the importance of working together in a multi-agency way, sharing information and creating the conditions for practitioners to have the time to undertake effective direct work. Overall, we are in a good position to take these reforms forward.

Josh MacAlister, who is the chair of the independent review and author of the report, also highlighted the high cost, both financially and personally, of bringing children into care and

we know that through our practice that we have been working successfully to enable more children to remain safely with their families. He has recommended significant investment in children's social care, as well as the formation of new regional care cooperatives to help shape and manage the care market, which will need some time to better understand.

This report, therefore, summarises the work of the NSCP during a period of change. We have captured many of our achievements as well as the ongoing challenges and areas for development.

A separate children and young people version of this report has been produced in consultation with them as key stakeholders and this serves as an Executive Summary.

1. Governance and Strategic Overview

The overarching governance arrangements adhered to Norfolk's plan for [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) (MASA), which was refreshed in autumn 2021. The three statutory partners named in the MASA are:

- **Norfolk County Council:** represented by the Executive Director of Children's Services, Sara Tough and the Head of Paid Services, Tom McCabe
- **Norfolk Constabulary:** represented by the Assistant Chief Constable, Nick Davison, and the Chief Constable, Paul Sanford
- **Norfolk & Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group:** represented by the Joint Associate Director - Children, Young People and Maternity, Rebecca Hulme, and the CEO of the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) of Norfolk and Waveney's Integrated Care System (ICS), Tracey Bleakley

The three partners met quarterly with the Independent Chair of the NSCP to consider MASA milestones as well as to respond to emerging challenges and maintain a strategic overview on the system. In addition, the NSCP Chair and Business Manager provide quarterly written updates and hold bi-annual meetings for, and with, the Chief Officers of the respective organisations.

Independent Scrutiny Team

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership continues to invest in high levels of independent scrutiny. This reflects the value they place on their independent scrutiny team. The MASA has three clearly defined roles for independent scrutiny. The Independent NSCP Chair, Chris Robson, continues with the duties from the previously statutory LSCB Independent Chair role. As well as undertaking discrete pieces of scrutiny alongside the other team members, he also chairs the Partnership Group meetings and keeps the three named statutory partners and their Chief Officers apprised of strengths and areas for improvement detected in the safeguarding system.

The NSCP Independent Chair is supported by the two other independent scrutiny roles: the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Practice Review Group, Sian Griffiths, and the Independent Chair of the Workforce Development Group, Natasha Rennolds.

The three members of the Independent Scrutiny Team meet regularly to triangulate their findings and report back to the statutory safeguarding partners.

Partnership Group

The purpose of the Partnership Group is to support the statutory partners in the co-ordination of local arrangements and to provide challenge and feedback on the safeguarding system. In addition to the three statutory partners, membership of the Partnership Group includes:

- The NSCP Independent Chair (supported by the NSCP Business Manager)
- The Director of Social Care
- The Head of Children, Young People and Maternity, Norfolk & Waveney ICB (line manager of the NHS Designated Child Safeguarding Team)
- The Deputy Director of Public Health
- Education Representatives: Headteachers representing all phases of education as well as a Senior Education Safeguarding Adviser
- The Chair of the District Council Advisory Group

- The Chair of the Early Years Advisory Group
- Voluntary Sector Representative
- The lead officers responsible for delivering on priority areas
- The Head of Independent Services

Other partners are invited to present on specific agenda items as required.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, Partnership Group met seven times and considered a number of key multi-agency safeguarding issues. This included a face to face workshop in November 2021 designed to take stock of three key areas: (1) Early Help and Protection; (2) Children in Care and Care Leavers; and (3) Strategic Leadership. Working together, strategic leaders mapped out the strengths and areas for development evident in partnership working, including how we triangulate strategies through to casework/frontline practice and the impact on the child's lived experience of the safeguarding system. The purpose was to test our:

- Shared understanding of thresholds and access to resources where concerns are raised
- Awareness of ways of working – e.g. Vital Signs, Restorative Practice, Family Networking, Joint Agency Group Supervision policy and practice etc.
- Implementation of learning from multi-agency audits, SCRs/SPRs and independent scrutiny, and Section 11 recommendations – answering the 'so what?' question

Partnership Group play a crucial role in sense checking the safeguarding system and providing an opportunity for all partners to share concerns and find solutions collaboratively.

Partnership Group also provides support and direction in the development and delivery of Leadership Exchange & Learning Events, where the wider partnership is invited to reflect on the system. Three events were held in the scope of this annual report; they focused on:

- Building Back to Better: Dez Holmes, Research in Practice Director, supporting the NSCP to learn from Norfolk's response to Covid and thinking critically about trauma, resilience and equalities (September 2021)
- Understanding Children & Young People's Lived Experience of Trauma: Dr Margot Sunderland. Dr Sunderland, Director of Education and Training at the Centre for Child Mental Health London, supporting the NSCP to develop a shared understanding of trauma and its impact on child development (February 2022)
- Building and Show-Casing Strength Based Leadership: Wendy Hill, Signs of Safety Consultant leading on a reflective session about the role of leadership supported by Natasha Rennolds who focused on thinking relationships (June 2022)

Feedback show that the Leadership Exchange and Learning Events are well received by partners who value the opportunity to reflect at a strategic level, for example, one participant commented after an event that it was *"really well organised and thought it reached out to a really wide multi-agency audience including senior leaders so really impressed."* Feedback is used to plan future events.

Other Partnership Boards

The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) is chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services, providing system leadership to deliver the NHS Long Term

Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for children and young people. The core functions of the CYP SA are to:

- Develop and agree strategic priorities and ensure delivery of a CYP Partnership Plan
- Monitor performance in relation to securing impact and outcomes
- Develop and agree strategic commissioning and transformation priorities and processes to ensure best use of resources
- Ensure and promote co-production with service users and stakeholders
- Advocate on behalf of children and young people within wider partnerships and boards

We want Norfolk to be a county where every child can **flourish**:

family and friends
Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks

learning
Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life

opportunity
Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents

understood
Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes

resilience
Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

individual
Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness

safe and secure
Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure

healthy
Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives

As the NSCP's 'sister' board, the CYP SA has developed at pace in the last 12 months with the publication of a comprehensive FLOURISH strategy, underpinned by an outcomes framework, and strengthening synergies between the two partnership groups. The CYP SA relies on the NSCP to act as a critical friend in terms of developing and delivering operational and transformation plans and commissioning specific services that will protect children. The interface between the NSCP and the CYP SA is critical to the ongoing drive for improving safeguarding arrangements.

To enhance governance arrangements the NSCP and CYP SA have streamlined functions to minimise duplications. Workforce development and strategic analysis, including data interrogation and performance intelligence, are shared. This year engagement and participation has also been strengthened by the alignment.

CYP SA is taking the lead for Early Help and Prevention, incorporating the FLOURISH outcomes into its strategy.

The Head of NSCP Business Delivery sits on the Prevention and Early Help board and the Independent Chair of the NSCP is kept informed of development and actions, for example the feasibility study on Early Help Hubs. At the time of writing, the Norfolk Threshold Guide is being reviewed to ensure that families and professionals are correctly signposted to the services and interventions that best meet the needs of children and young people with a particular focus on our early help response.

In addition to the strong links with the CYP SA, the NSCP has continued to build on partnership networking through other fora. For example, sharing the annual report with the Health and Wellbeing Board, as well as sitting on Norfolk's Domestic Abuse Partnership

Board. The NSCP has also strengthened links with Norfolk's seven Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) through the Local Safeguarding Children Groups.

Subgroups relating to Statutory Duties

The NSCP is committed to learning and has subgroups focusing on Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Child Death. Both groups fulfil the statutory duties set out in *Working Together 2018*. In addition, there is a dedicated Workforce Development Group which looks at multi-agency training and understanding the safeguarding system from the perspective of the entire workforce, from frontline to strategic leadership. The Safeguarding Practice Review Group and Workforce Development Group are chaired independently.

Local Safeguarding Children Groups

The NSCP is represented at locality level by six Local Safeguarding Children Groups (LSCGs), made up of representatives from the multi-agency partnership in each area. An LSCG annual report on their achievements is published separately on the NSCP website. The LSCGs are an ongoing strength of the NSCP with stable co-chairing arrangements, excellent communication channels, committed and engaged members benefitting from dedicated support from the NSCP Business Unit.

The chairing arrangements continue to be multi-agency, with strong leadership from senior officers in Children's Services Community and Partnership Directorate, the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, the voluntary sector, Cambridgeshire Community Services and education. More still needs to be done to engage social care colleagues in the LSCGs.

Advisory Groups

The Health Advisory Group reconvened this year after a hiatus due to capacity issues during Covid. This group is chaired by the Joint Associate Director - Children, Young People and Maternity, who works across Norfolk County Council and Health. The Chair will ensure that safeguarding children is kept high on the agenda as we transition to the new Integrated Care Board.

The NSCP is also supported by other sector-specific advisory groups: Early Years and District Councils. These groups are made up of representatives from the relevant sectors and focus on safeguarding issues at sector level. The advisory groups have an important role in highlighting to the Board key issues they are facing and how these impact on safeguarding children as well as disseminating effective safeguarding practice across their sectors. Where relevant, they are also charged with responding to sector specific recommendations from SCRs/SPRs. They are active and supportive with the Section 11 safeguarding self-assessment process, including responding to Section 11 recommendations. (See chapter 4 on Independent Scrutiny for more information on Section 11.)

These groups ensure that we have reach into areas where professionals may feel isolated (such as childminders) and/or do not have safeguarding children as the main focus of their professional life, e.g. the District Council Advisory Group.

The NSCP now works with the Safeguarding Adults Board to deliver bi-annual safeguarding sessions with housing providers.

Regional and National LSCP Networks

Norfolk is a regular participant in the Eastern Region networking meeting for Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships. The Head of NSCP Business Delivery also continues to be involved in the development of the [Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny Framework](#). Including a national project aimed at understanding how LSCPs across the UK undertake scrutiny. The six month project included feedback from 105 LSCPs and there is demonstrable interest in sharing and developing approaches to scrutiny. The report is due to be published later in 2022.

The NSCP Business Unit

The governance structure is supported by an efficient and experienced team, including the Head of NSCP Business Delivery, a Safeguarding Intelligence & Performance Co-ordinator, a Workforce Development Officer, Safer Programme Co-ordinator and 3.5 FTE administrators. The Business Unit is responsible for supporting on a range of activities from strategic leadership, monitoring/audit, budget oversight and training provision through to setting agendas, administering meetings, communications, website development and event co-ordination.

In October 2021 the team was enhanced with a dedicated senior analyst officer, shared with the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance. The post was created to ensure we use data more strategically (see Chapter 3 on Data). At the same time, Norfolk County Council agreed funding for a safeguarding communications officer; this post is shared jointly with the Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that safeguarding messages can join up wherever relevant.

2. Voice of the Child

The NSCP is working with the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance to further develop mechanisms for hearing the voice of the child. The NSCP's Safeguarding Intelligence and Performance Co-ordinator sits on the CYP SA's Stakeholders Engagement Insight Group and can readily access young people for consultation and feedback. For example, the independent scrutiny team undertook a piece of work on children and young people's mental health and as part of that attended a workshop event in October 2021 with members of Norfolk's Youth Advisory Boards (YABs), members of the Youth Parliament and young commissioners who work with the Office of the Police and Crime and Commissioner (OPCC).

This work was co-ordinated with the Local Safeguarding Children Groups (LSCGs) who have strong connections established with their local YABs and was prompted by their local priorities. The workshop considered how to build better links between youth groups and LSCGs to raise the profile of the voice of the child and two discussion points around accessing mental health support and breaking down the stigma associated with mental health. The young people shared some of their thoughts on video which was presented to LSCGs in the November round of meetings.

The NSCP also involve children and young people in Safeguarding Practice Reviews when it is appropriate to do so, i.e. they feel able and are willing to contribute. We are also more proactive about involving them in audit, but to date, only one young person has responded.

There is always more we can learn from children, young people and families when we speak to them directly and opportunities to do this are followed up directly in any project plans or indirectly through speaking to the professionals who have established relationships with the children and young people.

We were really proud of the children and young people's version of the 2020 – 21 NSCP annual report and so grateful to the children who helped us with that. We had a lovely day out with them and took them tubing at the end to say thank you. They seemed to enjoy it as much as the adults and told us:



This year we are pleased to say that our key stakeholders have agreed to come back and help us with the second CYP version of the annual report. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do!

3. Data and analysis about children’s safeguarding and child protection in Norfolk

How do we use our data to help safeguard children?

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) outlined in its 2021 annual report a commitment to improving the use of data and analysis to support its work, and to inform decisions made by the partnership about safeguarding and protecting children.

This year has seen significant progress made against this commitment. Dedicated analytical capacity has been secured, including the recruitment of an analyst, to support the Strategic Safeguarding Analysis Group (SSAG), a group working to both the NSCP and the Norfolk Children & Young People’s Strategic Alliance (CYP SA).

To coordinate its work, SSAG has developed an intelligence plan, which is focused around answering the most important analytical questions across the partnership. Three of its key strategic questions are:

- How well do Norfolk’s safeguarding arrangements protect children and young people from harm?
- What are the current and emerging risks and opportunities for safeguarding children and young people?
- How well is Norfolk delivering its priorities?

This plan has to date delivered:



A dashboard, built on a data collection system, with data input regularly from all key partners and available for stakeholders to support their own analyses, monitoring and learning



Regular quarterly reports to the NSCP Partnership Group, identifying emerging issues and monitoring existing trends. In addition an annual report summarising dashboard and other data.



Capacity, skills and tools to undertake more detailed analysis of issues. This year this will include reviews of NSCP’s priorities, and an evaluation of tools for understanding vulnerability including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The following pages provide some context to, and findings from, recent analysis. Specifically it sets out:

1. Overall levels of activity within the partnership – through a “week in the life of NSCP”.
2. Contextual data that helps us understand the things that contribute to the risk of poor outcomes, abuse and neglect for children and young people.
3. Changing patterns – outlining what Norfolk’s data tells us about emerging trends and changes in child safeguarding and protection.
4. How Norfolk compares – looking at how Norfolk’s contextual, safeguarding and child protection data compares to other similar areas.

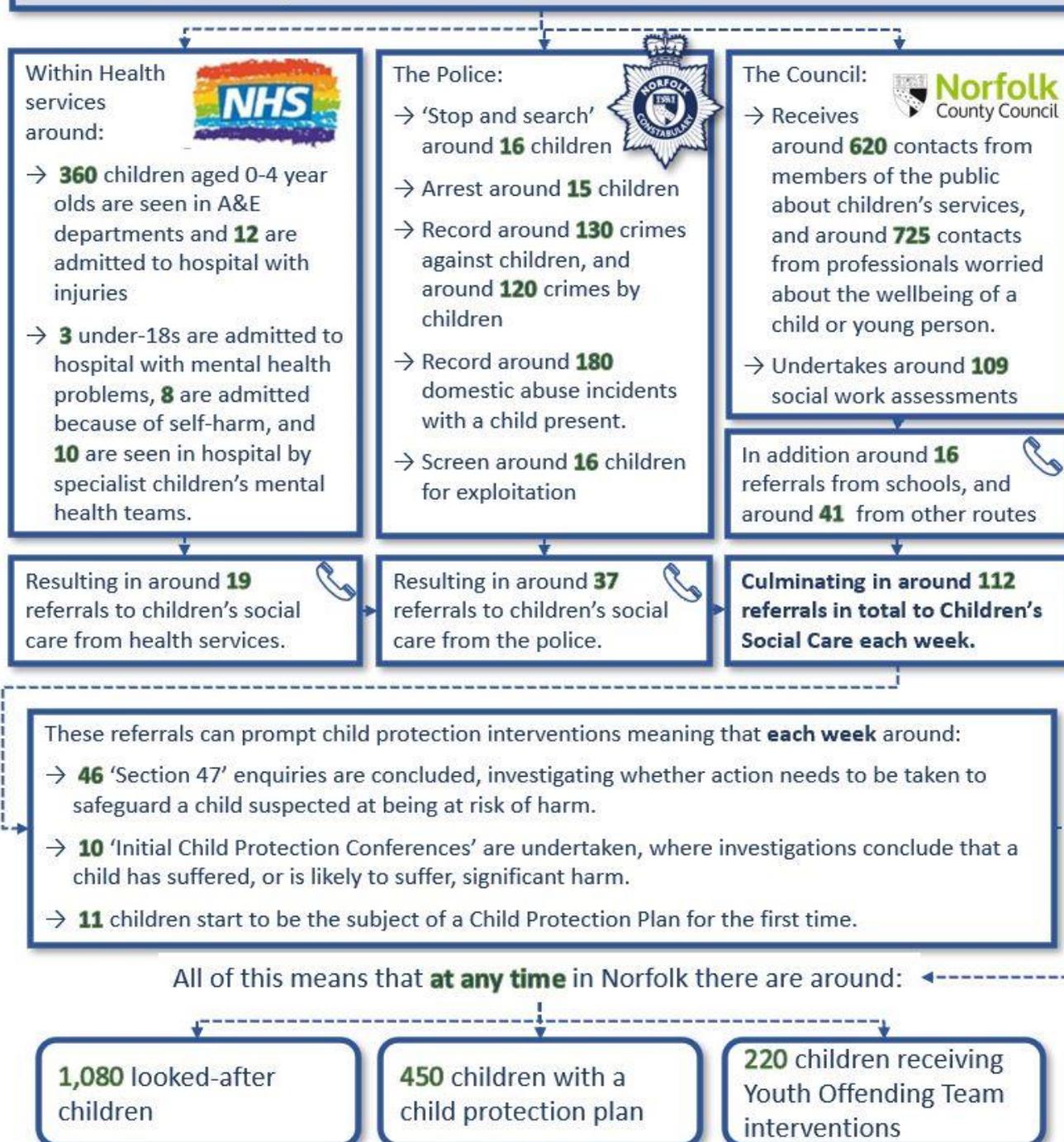
Finally, the section looks at the next steps SSAG will be taking to continue to embed a data-led approach to partnership working – including how the approach will inform and support the work of broader children and young people’s partnerships through Norfolk’s FLOURISH framework.

Using data to understand the extent and nature of the partnership's work

One of the simplest and most helpful things data and analysis can help with is to understand the scale and extent of activity levels. For NSCP this provides a baseline of activity, showing how many children and young people it supports, and through which pathways.

A week in the life of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership...

This section outlines the scale and nature of both the children and young people it supports, and the services and support it provides in a week. Looking at the most recent year's data (2021 for most indicators), it summarises key volumes of activity through key partners and pathways. It tells us that **in an average week**:



Note: as highlighted on the next page this data is from the most recent year which, for many indicators, has been impacted by the pandemic, so these figures may not be typical in the longer term.

The story behind Norfolk's safeguarding and child protection activity

The contextual data and evidence behind safeguarding risks

Understanding the broader context of children's lives is important when assessing safeguarding risks and outcomes. Whilst every child is different, and the things that drive poor outcomes are inevitably complex, the relationship between the likelihood of being vulnerable to abuse and neglect and other socioeconomic factors is well understood.

This link is described helpfully by the James Rowntree Foundation in their evidence review at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/relationship-between-poverty-child-abuse-and-neglect-evidence-review>. It is also observed in Norfolk, with significant differences between the most and least deprived areas in data around infant mortality, school readiness, obesity, A&E attendances, and a number of other indicators.

What are the big 'contextual' issues for Norfolk?

Overall Norfolk's children tend to have better or similar health and wellbeing outcomes to those experienced by children nationally. However, 3 contextual factors are particularly important in understanding Norfolk's recent child safeguarding and protection story:

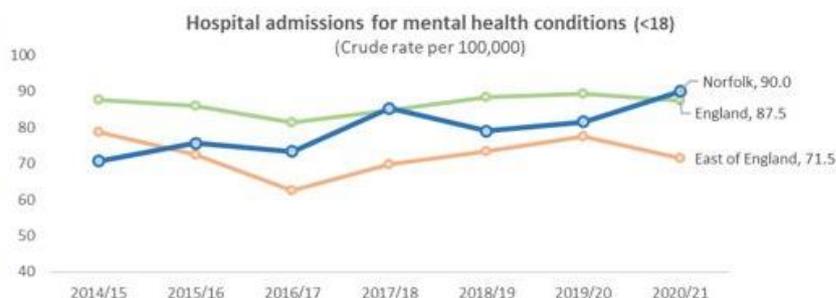
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Mental health struggles

→ Several indicators suggest that rates of children with mental health problems in Norfolk are higher, and are growing faster, than regionally and nationally.

→ Local data and national studies show that children with mental health problems, or whose parents have mental health problems, are more likely to experience abuse and neglect, and more likely to require support from children's social care.



Money worries

- Children in Norfolk are more likely to experience poverty than children in statistically similar areas and regionally, and the proportion of children in low income families is growing faster than elsewhere.
- Norfolk's economic context is complicated, with significant urban and rural deprivation, and low social mobility (see next page).
- Children experiencing poverty are more likely to experience abuse and neglect.



3



Pandemic impact

Whilst Norfolk's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic was similar to elsewhere, it had a clear impact on Norfolk's safeguarding and child protection activity. In particular the UK's three lockdowns had an impact on referral routes and numbers, prompting significantly reduced overall referrals, but with increases in in some risks (for example around domestic abuse). A rise in activity since Autumn 2021 suggests a return to more 'normal' patterns, but it is not clear whether activity levels will return to pre-pandemic levels, or the establishment of a "new normal" at a higher or lower level.

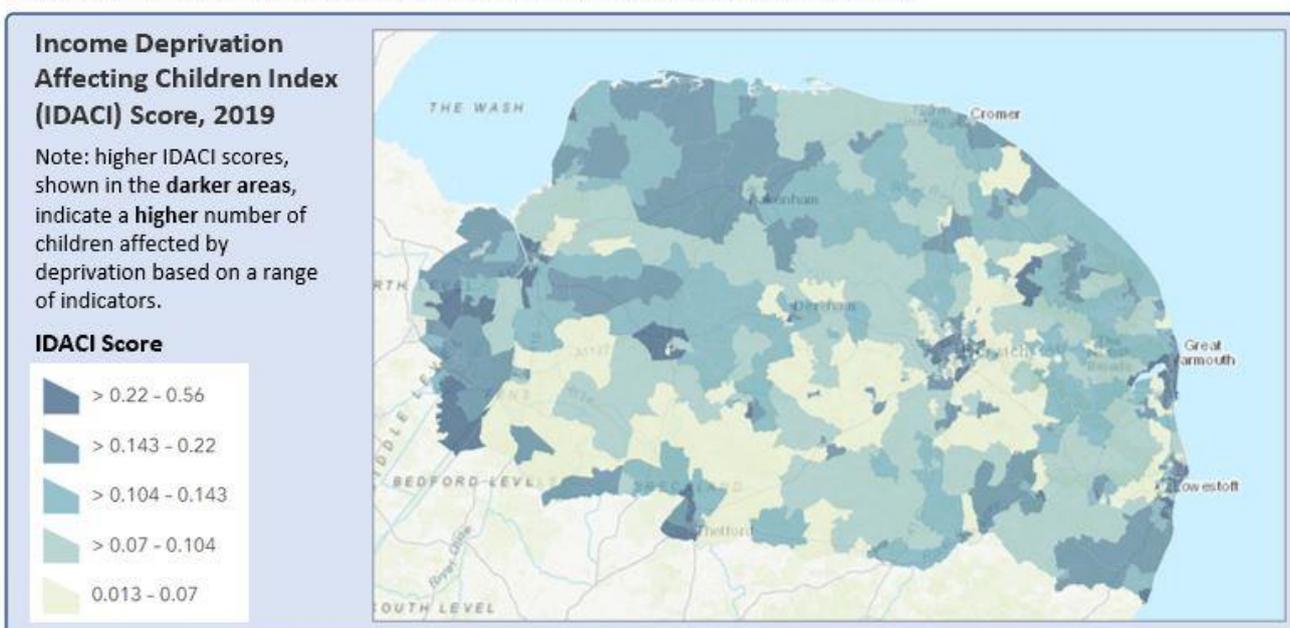
The story... continued

Does where you live in Norfolk matter?

Socio-economic measures – for example employment rates and deprivation – vary from place to place. As outlined on the previous page, the relationship between poverty and child neglect and abuse is understood. Specifically, areas with higher levels of deprivation are more likely to have higher rates of abuse and neglect.

Every 3-4 years the government publishes an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which uses a range of indicators of deprivation (for example take-up of income support and Universal Credit, and access to services) to give areas a score to represent the level of deprivation. The score, between 0 and 1, represents the proportion of people who are income deprived – so a score of 0.15 would mean 15% of people in that area are deprived.

A subsection of the IMD is Income Deprivation Affecting Children, which measures the proportion of children who are in income deprived families. The map below shows this for Norfolk, and is broken down by 'lower super output area' (LSOA), the smallest geographical level most data is available at. The darkest areas show the highest levels of income deprivation affecting children – with between 22% and 56% of the children in those areas living in income-deprived families. A closer look at the data shows that 18 LSOAs have over 40% of children affected by income deprivation – with 14 of these around Great Yarmouth, and 4 in Norwich.

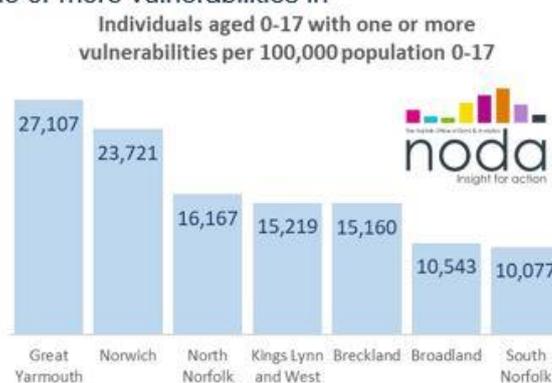


In addition to the more obvious urban areas, the map also identifies some notable rural areas with higher levels of deprivation, evidencing the complex nature of Norfolk's economic picture, and the challenging task of planning and targeting support. In particular, more work and analysis is required to explore the relationship between issues such as deprivation and child protection and safeguarding activity.

The Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics (NODA) has developed an index of vulnerability based on a range of indicators, and on people known to partners – including deprivation, access to free school meals, and digital exclusion. Over 29,000 children have one or more vulnerabilities in Norfolk.

The graph (right) shows the significant difference in the rate of vulnerable people aged 0-17 between different Norfolk districts. Again this shows Great Yarmouth and Norwich as the areas with the highest proportion of vulnerable young people.

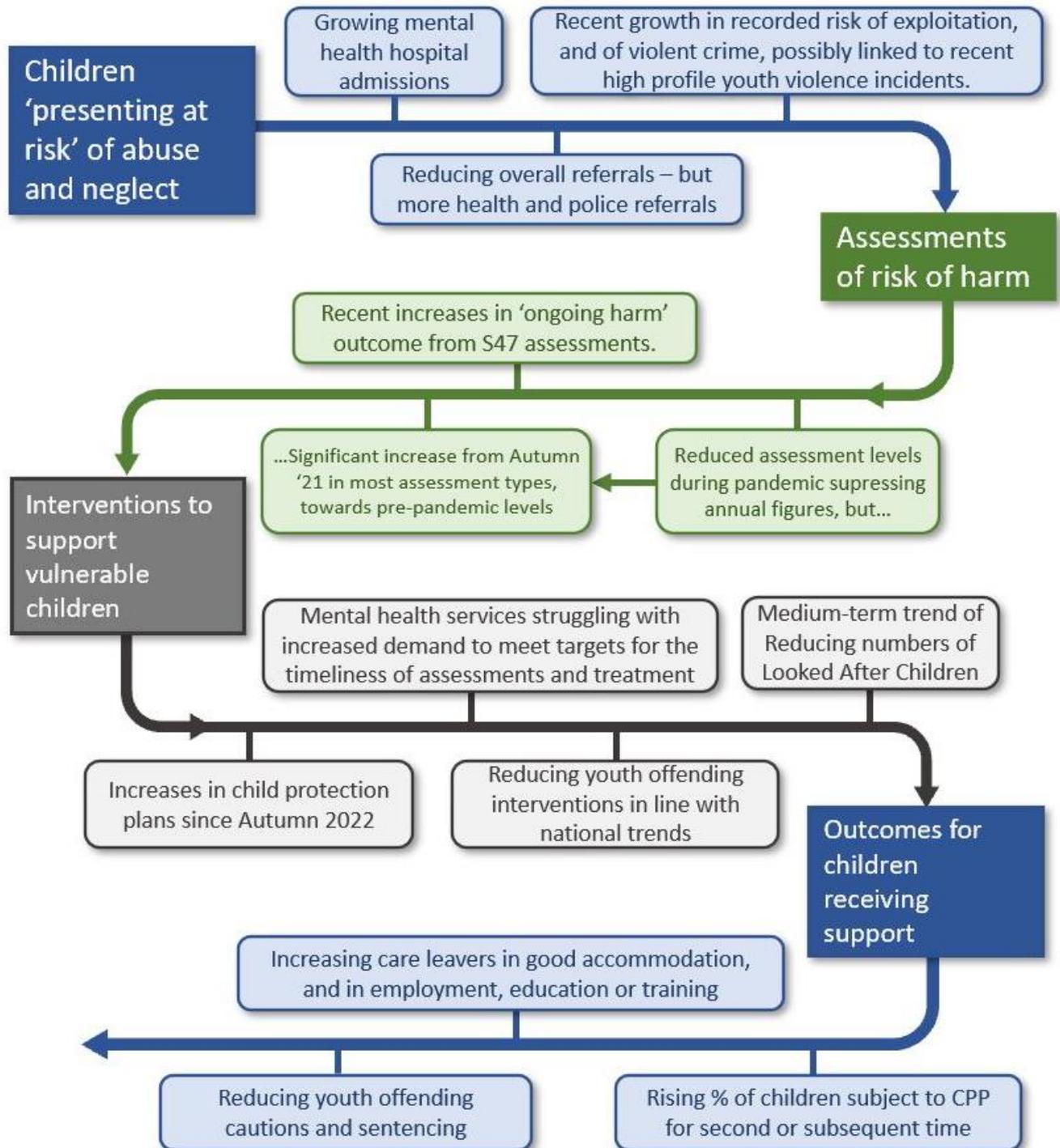
The Strategic Safeguarding Analysis Group will work with NODA in the coming year to evaluate the use of other indicators of vulnerability, and mapping these against safeguarding and child neglect activity from different partners, to assess the extent to which data might be used to identify risks at area, family or individual level.



Norfolk's changing picture: emerging issues and trends

Whilst almost all of the 100+ indicators that the NSCP monitor change over time, a number of emerging issues have been identified through regular monitoring, usually by combining changes in the data with events, changes in policy and other 'soft' intelligence. Some of these are long-term trends, and others are emerging themes that may or may not continue over time, but are significant enough to warrant further analysis or consideration by the partnership.

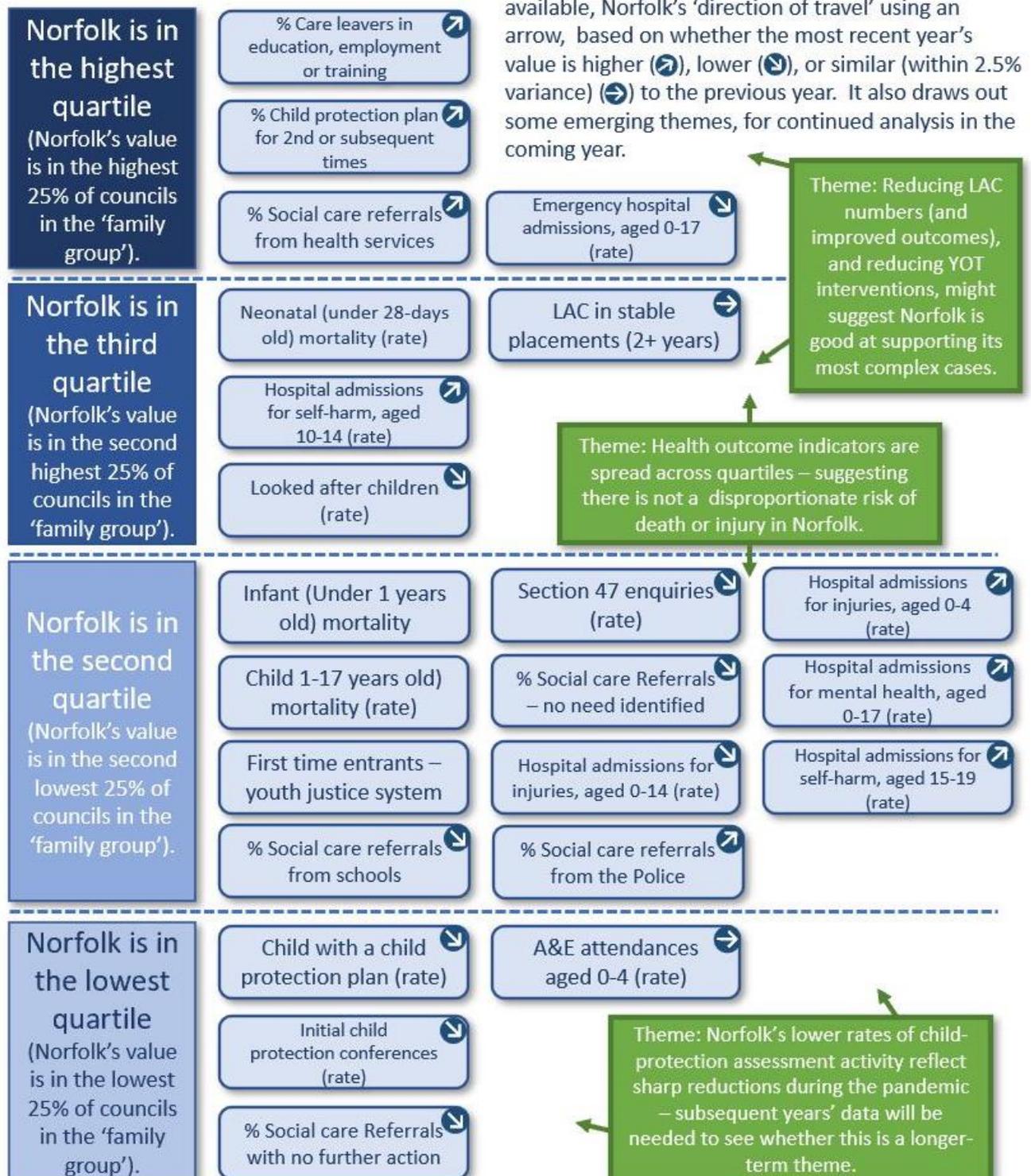
The diagram outlines these, grouping them along a logical pathway from '..Presenting risk' through to outcomes experienced by children and young people.



How Norfolk compares...

Benchmarking data is an important part of the analyses of Norfolk’s safeguarding and child protection story. Understanding how other areas are doing – particularly those in Norfolk’s ‘family group’ of statistically similar areas – can help us see where we may have unusually high or low numbers, and can suggest where we might improve and where we can be confident of arrangements.

The below diagram breaks some key indicators down into quartiles based on Norfolk’s most recent annual value, and those of its statistical ‘family group’ of 11 similar areas. **Note: the quartile determination is based on the indicator value – so being in the highest or lowest quartile does not necessarily mean the best or worst quartile in performance terms.** The diagram also shows, where available, Norfolk’s ‘direction of travel’ using an arrow, based on whether the most recent year’s value is higher (↗), lower (↘), or similar (within 2.5% variance) (↔) to the previous year. It also draws out some emerging themes, for continued analysis in the coming year.



What does this mean for our planning and next steps?

So what does all of this mean for safeguarding and child protection in Norfolk?

Overall the data suggests some important trends that may have an impact on the number of children requiring support, and on the kinds of support required. In no particular order, reflecting on the findings in this report, the following are likely to be important in planning of services and support in the coming year, and in work to monitor and analyse data:

- The proportion of referrals from health services and the Police: increases in both may reflect pandemic trends (when these services were in close contact with many vulnerable people), or may reflect real increases in risks identified.
- The 'resetting' of core safeguarding and child protection activity levels. As outlined, many areas saw reduced levels for much of 2020 and 2021, but these increased sharply towards pre-pandemic levels in Autumn 2022. Is this a return to 'pre-pandemic' levels, or a 'new normal' that will settle at a different level?
- Pressures on Mental Health services, and whether this has knock-on impacts on child protection activity.
- Planning and supporting early help services with data and analysis. Pressure on traditional services suggests that identifying the right localities, families and individuals to support with early help will be vital. There are complex data governance, practical and ethical challenges in this area, and it will be important to begin to make progress.
- The impact of serious violence and gang activity. A serious violent crime incident in February 2022 had a notable impact on recorded data, including increased stop-searches, and in wider identification of exploitation across the partnership. These impacts are well-understood by Norfolk Police – but what impact might this have on work and awareness across the partnership as evidenced through data?

Next steps...

The Strategic Safeguarding Analysis Group's intelligence plan sets out agreed actions in data and analytics for 2022/23, including:

- Continued quarterly monitoring of existing and emerging issues.
- Reviewing the data around NSCP's priorities on Protecting Babies, Neglect, and Vulnerable Adolescents.

A vital development for the coming year will be growing these data and analytical provisions to support the Norfolk Children and Young People's (CYPs) FLOURISH outcomes framework – a broader framework that covers wider outcomes for children in Norfolk.

Activities will include introducing a wider range of measures into existing dashboards, and developing reports to cover the key FLOURISH domains (see right).

We want Norfolk to be a county where every child can **flourish**:

- f**amily and friends
Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks
- l**earning
Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life
- o**pportunity
Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents
- u**nderstood
Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes
- r**esilience
Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges
- i**ndividual
Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness
- s**afe and secure
Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure
- h**ealthy
Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives

4. Independent Scrutiny

Norfolk adheres to the principles of independent scrutiny as outlined in *Working Together 2018*, (Chapter 3 page 77) and has dedicated resources in place to fulfil this statutory function in our local safeguarding arrangements. The NSCP's scrutiny arrangements include a range of mechanisms, deployed to provide robust examination of performance and practice. This chapter focuses on actions and outcomes from:

- independent scrutiny undertaken by the independent scrutiny team
- multi-agency audit
- Section 11 self-assessment
- external inspections

Independent Scrutiny Team

The three statutory partners commissioned the independent scrutiny team to undertake four pieces of work looking at: a review of the NSCP subgroups and governance to feed into revisions for the local plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements; mental health; Early Help; and the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk within Norfolk. Two of these have been completed; the Early Help scrutiny was stood down while the Local Authority completed their feasibility study on Family Hubs and there were concerns about duplication; the scrutiny on initial need and risk is in progress.

Review into NSCP governance arrangements

In summer 2021 the independent scrutiny team was commissioned to review the governance set out in Norfolk's plan for Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA), published in 2019. This review was conducted by the scrutiny team and involved observation of the three Statutory Partners meeting, Partnership Group and all statutory and priority subgroups. The report provided comment across each of these groups but focused predominantly on the role and function of the Partnership Group. NB At the time the scrutiny was undertaken, the Leadership Exchange and Learning Events written into the original MASA had not been fully realised as described due to Covid.

The outcome of this review was updating the Terms of Reference for Partnership Group, delivering Leadership Events for the wider partnership as originally planned and refreshing the MASA to ensure it was an accurate and current reflection of Norfolk's local arrangements.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

In October 2021 a proposal was made by the Independent Scrutiny team to undertake a time limited and bounded piece of work on the effectiveness of Children and Young People's Mental health provision in Norfolk in the context of safeguarding. The scope for this was agreed as follows:

- What is it like to be a child or young person in Norfolk living with unmet Mental Health needs, who has either not reached the threshold of receiving specialist intervention or is waiting for specialist intervention?
- To increase understanding of the multi-agency safeguarding response to these children and young people in relation to: identification of need; early intervention and support

- The purpose of the scrutiny would not be to review children's mental health services/provision or the specific needs of children with complex mental health concerns, work which is being undertaken elsewhere

The methodology adopted followed a similar approach as previously taken with Adolescent Neglect, i.e. a concise literature review, data analysis and focus groups. However, the work also began with a number of individual interviews with key senior service representatives, including commissioners, to provide an overview of the landscape. The following meetings and focus groups took place throughout December 2021 and January 2022:

- Interviews with 9 identified Service representatives (Health and health commissioners, Social Care, Voluntary Sector)
- 10 Focus Groups involving a total of 43 operational managers and front line practitioners from across the safeguarding partnership.
- Attendance at a meeting of young people from the various participation groups, discussing mental health.
- Discussions with Senior Data Analyst (Safeguarding Strategic Analysis Group – the NSCP Data Officer)

It became clear that the scope and resources available to the scrutineers within the remit of Independent Scrutiny could not do justice to the children and young people that the partnership serve, or provide confident, robustly evidenced recommendations, that would work in the context of the whole system.

Triangulating information and perceptions about services and responding to increasing requests to contribute was beginning to take us well out of the planned timeframe. The absence of a simple accessible map of the different services available and the continuing developments to those services has also proved time consuming for this piece of work and is itself an issue for practitioners. It has further become apparent that there are some bigger questions of principle and achievability, that need exploring by the partners before considering where to go from here.

Whilst this piece of work cannot be definitive, the hard answer to the first question in scope is probably that too many children are not having their needs met, despite the significant efforts of many. It is crucial that this is understood within a wider national context. For children accessing secondary services, both data and practice experience suggest that the increasingly acute and complex levels of distress on presentation, rather than an overall increase in numbers, is at the core of some of the current difficulties. The effectiveness of prevention and early intervention is harder to assess, but consistent feedback from the meetings with staff suggests this an area for concern.

Nevertheless, it is important to say unequivocally that the contributions of all concerned have demonstrated a real passion about improving children's wellbeing and mental health. The engagement with this process has been impressive and offers a strong sense of optimism for the future. There is no doubt that there is excellent work being done with individual children as well as in developing and improving systems and services. However, there are also significant vulnerabilities and pressures which continue to be difficult to resolve.

Key Issues and Emerging Themes

The following represent some of the key issues that have been highlighted:

- **When is mental health a safeguarding issue?** A key question that has emerged is how to define the link between safeguarding and mental health. Should all mental health presentations be considered as a potential safeguarding issue or is there some sort of ‘threshold’ linked to abuse or neglect? How this is understood impacts both on strategy and governance, as well as on the experience of individual children. One example being the relationship between Public Health and the Partnership.

Data analysis in relation to understanding the relationship between children’s mental health and safeguarding is complex but can provide some basis for strategy and decision making. This was helpfully summed up by Jeremy Bone, Senior Analyst as follows:

“Our data suggests that children and young people with mental health problems are more likely to experience a safeguarding episode, and whilst we don’t understand the nature of the relationship between the two factors (and strongly urge against assuming one causes the other), knowing this might prompt further analytical work, and improvements in the way we assess individuals’ risks and circumstances when we know that mental health problems may be a factor”.

- **Emotional wellbeing or Mental Health:** How well does the system understand the spectrum – to what degree is there a risk of medicalising normal emotional responses to stress? The implications of labelling children unnecessarily are a particular cause for concern.
- **Where are the normal, safe spaces where young people can find support,** learn to manage life stresses, regulate emotion etc. What replaces those crucial services lost during austerity (e.g. youth work), or affected by the pandemic? Whose responsibility is it to provide this? The simple answer to that is ‘Everyone’s’ – but what role does the Partnership play in supporting this?
- There is a need to develop **professional confidence** in working at lower levels. Having conversations with children, offering care and kindness which can prevent escalation into more serious problems. How to do this given the reality of current pressures.
- What will be the **impact of the pandemic long term**, how to plan for possible permanent changes. What will be different, what may not have changed?
- **Waiting lists** were the most frequently referenced worries – the impact on children and families, the gaps that young people can fall through, the impact on practitioners. The focus that has been given to reducing waiting lists is impressive, but this is likely to continue to present a pressure.
- **How we communicate with children.** Are we over reliant on non-face-to-face means of supporting young people?
- Practitioners really value **joint working**, access to consultancy and multi-disciplinary approaches. How can this be developed further?
- Irrespective of the quality of the work, **short term interventions** are not the answer for many young people and can damage trust and confidence in some circumstances.

- More need for **family-based work** – supporting a child in the absence of support/change for the parent carer generally not effective. More focus on parental and environmental factors needing a holistic response.

Whilst the above gives a flavour of the problems being identified, it is not exhaustive. Tackling individual aspects of the system can only have limited impact because of the complex way in which children's needs, and the responses to those needs, impact and have knock on effects. A key pressure point starts with the high number of referrals into secondary services within Norfolk compared to the national picture. This then contributes significantly to a set of intersecting circles: waiting lists; inability to access services at the right time; limited early intervention (resources & professional skill/confidence); risks of unnecessary diagnoses/misdiagnosis; professional exhaustion and more. The results of all of which is too often that children end up moving round the system with inevitable additional pressures consequent for services.

Unpicking this, understanding fully how parts of the system impact on each other and what the implications are for funding and for holistic child focused practice presents a significant task.

The three statutory partners accepted that this report posed some difficult questions and went beyond safeguarding. This is also in the context that mental health is a national issue and the Norfolk Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) is progressing its transformation agenda in this area. At the time of writing, it was agreed that the findings would be taken to CYPSA for them to agree any further scrutiny linked to safeguarding based on the themes above to tighten the parameters of enquiry.

Multi-Agency Audits and Monitoring

The NSCP's Multi-Agency Audit Group (MAAG) is chaired by the Head of NSCP Business Delivery and provides valuable information on how well the system is working in practice. In addition to commissioning and undertaking audits, the MAAG is also responsible for monitoring the Composite Action Plan to track the response to recommendations from across all scrutiny work and evidence impact on practice and improvements to the system.

Within the scope of this annual report, MAAG members struggled with capacity and agreed to focus on quality of audits rather than quantity. Over the last 12 months, MAAG completed an audit on child exploitation. At the time of writing an audit on pre-birth assessments is in progress. The MAAG is exploring ways to increase audit capacity.

Child Exploitation Audit

The methodology for the audit was developed using the Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) [framework](#) on the theme of child exploitation (updated February 2020). The MAAG also utilised the learning from Oxfordshire [Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Jacob](#) "Untouchable Worlds": Protecting Children who are criminally exploited and harmed (January 2021) and the City and Hackney [Serious Case Review Child C](#) (December 2020).

The scope of the audit was planned to include eight pre-selected cases of children, three screened as medium risk, three as high risk and two standard. The cases audited had a clear focus on identification of risk, front door arrangements, performance, impact and outcomes in respect to exploited children. The cases did not include siblings as separate cases but where there were siblings in the family, the auditors reviewed the whole family whilst maintaining the main focus on the identified child.

The audit of case files was carried out in October and November 2021. The parents of the child in the selected cases were contacted and invited to contribute to the audit. One mother and one father took up the offer and shared their perspective on the support they and their respective children received from the multi-agency partnership. Case workers were contacted and asked to consider inviting the young person to contribute to the audit. Two young people were identified and one of these contributed to the audit.

The audit report focused on:

- Levels of risk
- The voice of the child
- Communication and multi-agency working
- Contextual safeguarding
- Victim blaming language

The report concluded that there was clear evidence of good practice across the partnership and also the need to ensure greater consistency of practice in all the above areas. Early and advance planning will help to secure better outcomes and a smoother journey for young people as they are supported to strengthen their resilience and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation. Transitions by their very nature can be difficult to negotiate and services must focus on how to make these less stressful and more successful.

Two recommendations were made which are being taken forward by the Vulnerable Adolescent Group as one of the NSCP priority workstreams. The recommendations are:

1. The Vulnerable Adolescent Group (VAG) delivery plan includes the objective “Comprehensive multi-agency assessments identify risk within families and contextually, especially within extra-familial relationships, peer groups and potentially harmful environments.” The VAG should ensure that in the implementation of the delivery plan there is:
 - a) a focus that all potential partners are identified and included from the earliest opportunity and that safety plans are structured with a focus on outcomes.
 - b) sufficient attention is paid to assessment of peer groups and networks that vulnerable young people are part of or have belonging to.
2. [Good practice](#) guidance about avoiding victim blaming language should be promoted. Work should continue to address Recommendation 5 from the 2020 Norfolk Section 11 report: “Victim blaming language both written and verbal should be challenged at all times to support the necessary culture change and support given to the workforce to understand the necessity for the change.”

The MAAG will monitor the outcomes of these recommendations as part of NSCP priority progress reporting and through its Composite Action Plan which includes recommendations from all scrutiny activity and safeguarding practice reviews.

Section 11 and safeguarding self-assessments

Norfolk continues to be proud of its Section 11 process which has evolved over the years to move beyond compliance checks to a much more nuanced and sophisticated challenge and support process. Process development is overseen by a multi-agency steering group which is chaired by the Independent Safeguarding Practice Review Group Chair. In addition to completing a self-assessment tool, agencies are invited to challenge and support meetings to review their returns with a multi-agency panel and subsequently develop an action plan.

The 2021 – 22 Section 11 process followed the same format as reported in previous annual reports with self assessment tools completed and analysed and challenge and support panels reviewing the returns with the submitting agency. In total there were 47 Section 11 self-assessments completed and returned. There were 23 responses from statutory partners 11 from Medical Practices. with a further 13 received from the voluntary sector.

The process now also includes mid year action plan update meetings which provide an opportunity to reflect on actions taken and any barriers. As a result, the Section 11 report opened with a comprehensive summary of progress against the 13 recommendations made the previous year, of which over half were closed and the rest nearing completion.

The effort that goes into Section 11 from all partners is significant and should not be underestimated. The process in Norfolk is robust and provides valuable insight into the function of the partnership, in addition to this it provides reflection time for organisations to consider their practices over the year and to raise concerns that they may have

The Section 11 report concluded that in response to the challenges to the system working through the pandemic there is evidence of strained capacity for both individuals and organisations. However, there was also evidence of increased resilience and heightened attention to safeguarding across the partnership. Whilst there was acknowledgement of robust relationships at a senior level and positive partnership working being strengthened by the impact of the pandemic, a number of organisations felt that silo working had increased and work on developing relationships across the whole of the partnership at all levels needs to continue.

There were fewer recommendations this year than previous Section 11 reports in Norfolk over the last few years and this indicated a real sense of maturity and growing confidence within the partnership around safeguarding practices. Four recommendations were made in total:

1. The [Learning Events and Strategic Management Response to Protecting Babies From Non-Accidental Injury](#) report to be shared and promoted widely across the partnership.
2. All partners should complete the Norfolk trauma informed practice toolkit and contribute to the good practice learning events.
3. Learning from the independent scrutiny paper on neglect training and the impact on practice (2021) recommendation 5 should be promoted across the partnership.
4. The section 11 steering group to explore the potential for thematic challenge and support panels and propose changes to partnership group for consideration.

External Inspectorates

While no inspectorates had a focus on safeguarding this financial year, Norfolk Children's Services continue to have regular conversations with Ofsted. The feedback from the focused visit in October 2021 was encouraging. Headline messages were:

- Inspectors found that most children in Children's Services care are well looked after and receive good support for their emotional and mental health and education.

- They also highlighted the effective joint working between health and social care, and the partnership work with police in supporting those vulnerable to criminal exploitation.
- The overall feedback was very positive and confirmed that Children's Services know our children well, listen to them and help them to understand their experiences.
- This demonstrates significant progress since the last full inspection in 2017 and is testament to the dedication of those working across the system to support some of our most vulnerable children.
- Ofsted commented on Children's Services "coherent vision" to improve further. There is still more to do, which Children's Services are aware of. For example, they referenced some of the delays in assessments for specialist mental health and autism but were clear that where this happens multi-agency planning is helping to mitigate the impact.
- They also highlighted consistency in the quality and matching of placement information and the timeliness, rigour and recording of assessments of family and friends foster carers, as areas for further improvement. These comments mainly related to how information is recorded, which is an area of practice Children's Services will tighten even further.

A full inspection is anticipated in 2022 - 23 and the NSCP regularly updates the Library of Evidence. Both the Local Authority and the partnership are inspection ready and would welcome the opportunity to formally assess the progress made over recent years.

Within health, in April 2022 the CQC made a judgement that the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust was inadequate overall, but the child and mental health wards were judged as requires improvement within that. As noted above, mental health is an area of local and national concern, but with trauma informed and resilience oriented leadership and practice as an NSCP priority, the partnership aspires to have a whole workforce skilled up to support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service undertook an inspection of Norfolk Constabulary in the first half of 2022. The report will be published later in the year and relevant findings shared with the partnership.

5. Norfolk Safeguarding Priorities and Projects

The NSCP continues to work on its three priorities: neglect, child exploitation and protecting babies. Each priority area is led by one of the three statutory partners, Children’s Services, Police and Health (Cambridgeshire Community Services/0-19 Healthy Child Programme provider), respectively. This ties in neatly to our governance arrangements and reinforces the message of joined up leadership. Strategies have been published against each area and are available on dedicated pages of the NSCP website. The Business Plan includes actions against each priority area.

In addition to the safeguarding specific priorities, the NSCP is committed to developing trauma informed and resilience oriented leadership and practice. This is followed through in a number of ways, for example, in Leadership Exchange and Learning Events, Section 11 self assessment, through policy review and development and in training.

Neglect

The NSCP Neglect Strategy identifies three clear strands of work: community engagement, contributory factors and the emotional impact of neglect. Strategy implementation is overseen by the Neglect Strategy Implementation Group (NSIG) which is chaired by Children’s Services Director of Commissioning, Partnerships & Resources; each workstream has been allocated to senior leaders across the partnership, including Children’s Services, Police, Health and the Voluntary Sector. This provides the most senior leadership to deliver against the outcome focussed action plan.

NSIG achievements	NSIG next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Community Engagement</u> and communications: an animation to focus on children’s needs was co-produced with the help of CYP • <u>Understanding Contributory Factors</u>: a neglect assessment tool was developed and a cohort of professionals from health, social care and education were trained to pilot the process • <u>Emotional Impact of Neglect</u>: practitioners have access to opportunities to attend Reflective Practice Sessions and/or request Joint Agency Group Supervision to reflect on challenges in managing neglect cases • <u>Independent Scrutiny</u>: scrutiny undertaken in 2020 – 21 on the impact of learning about neglect resulted in a number of recommendations which are being taken forward in collaboration between NSIG and the Workforce Development Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are in place to review the existing Neglect Identification Tool and co-produce a family friendly version with parents/carers and children. • Further community communication campaigns in development • Evaluation of the new assessment tool and roll out across the county with clear monitoring and feedback systems in place to measure impact on practice • Data profiling of neglect as an issue, using the dedicated data analyst resource now in place • Quality assuring revised training offer and planning for roadshows to pull together all NSIG’s assets for workforce to access easily • Promotional communications material in development to support professionals working with neglect.

Child Exploitation: Vulnerable Adolescents

The Vulnerable Adolescent Group (VAG) is chaired by a Detective Superintendent. The VAG's focus is on extra-familial harm, with an emphasis on child exploitation (both sexual and criminal), serious youth violence and radicalisation. The NSCP's Strategy to Protect Vulnerable Adolescents from Extra-Familial Harm has four clear strands of work: Awareness Raising; Early Help and Identification; Safeguarding Exploited Young People; and Identifying and Disrupting Offenders.

The VAG also oversees a [Youth Endowment Fund project in Norfolk](#), working in partnership with Right to Succeed to target community interventions at ward level to reduce and prevent youth violence and criminality. After extensive data analysis, the Nelson Ward in Great Yarmouth Borough council was selected and a steering group with key stakeholder input was established in spring 2022.

In order to deliver against the strategy, the VAG is supported by:

- a Vulnerable Adolescent Partnership Forum, including the voluntary sector;
- an Exploitation Operational Oversight Forum responsible for a detailed data dashboard that is capable of drilling down to individual child level to monitor risk and impact of intervention;
- a Contextual Safeguarding Sub-Group to develop Norfolk's response to safeguarding in 'places & spaces'; and
- a Child Exploitation Training Sub-Group

The VAG also has strong links with the following groups, which sit outside of the NSCP structure, but which are fundamental to the system-wide approach to child exploitation:

- County Lines Strategic Board which reports on areas of drug supply, exploitation and emerging themes and trends associated with countylines
- The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance which has governance over the Youth Strategy
- The New Roads Board.

VAG achievements	VAG next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Awareness raising</u>: Tricky Friends video developed in collaboration with Adults Safeguarding Board and teacher pack in place for KS2 and KS3. Website updated with current resources and information. • <u>Early Help & Identification</u>: multi-agency CE screening process utilised for all CE referrals and monitored regularly by Exploitation Operational Oversight Forum. • <u>Safeguarding Exploited YP</u>: the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) process ensures victims and families affected by exploitation are identified, referred and assessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen awareness of contextual factors to ensure they are considered in all MACE Strategy Meetings, Child Planning Meetings and RAISE meetings. • Create and monitor a process that captures feedback from exploited CYP and ensures it is acted upon. • Ensure links between CYP mental health and risks of exploitation are assessed early. • Monitor multi-agency training framework in collaboration with Workforce Development Group.

VAG achievements	VAG next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Youth Endowment Fund</u>: Vulnerable Adolescent Group providing governance around YEF Neighbourhood Fund with data analysis completed and locality identified. • <u>MA audit</u>: some evidence of good, joined up working. • <u>Multi-Agency Training Framework</u>: online training package developed for entire workforce and wider community. In depth CE training day developed for key practitioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report on progress against interventions delivered through the YEF and disseminate learning and best practice across Norfolk. • Utilise learning from audit to review and improve practice to ensure CYP receive consistent response, with focus on avoiding victim blaming language. • Deliver a communication strategy in conjunction with the Countylines Strategic Group and deliver a campaign across Norfolk to raise awareness of child exploitation.

Protecting Babies

The Protecting Babies Steering Group (PBSG) is chaired by Cambridgeshire Community Services Head of CYP Services in Norfolk. The Protecting Babies Strategy has four strands of work: Non-Accidental Injury to babies (NAI); safer sleeping; concealed or denied pregnancy, including pre-birth assessments; and a communications campaign on All Babies Cry, which signposts parents of newborns to the [Just One Norfolk](#) website for resources and support.

In the summer of 2020, the PBSG led on a significant piece of work on NAI which involved three separate learning events focusing on babies born during lockdown, the risk factors of NAI and the legislative framework which impact on decision making alongside the role of the paediatrician in assessing harm. The [report](#) was shared widely at the time and has been disseminated again as an action from the 2021 – 2022 Section 11 recommendation. The learning from the report has also fed into the action plan sitting under the strategy.

PBSG achievements	PBSG next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Babies Cry communications campaign launched in summer 2021. 164 professionals attended 10 briefing sessions to upskill support families with newborns between Apr 21 – Feb 22. • Safer Sleeping videos developed in consultation with parents and campaign launched December 2021. (See comms, below) • Learning events focusing on babies who suffered from Non Accidental Injury (NAI) in summer 2021. This included interviews with parents of babies born during lockdown. • Policy review: focus on medical examinations (bruising in babies) and risks associated with denied or concealed pregnancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified dedicated resource to develop father inclusive practice project from April 2022, in response to national CSPR <i>Myth of Invisible Men</i> (see below) • Data profile of safeguarding issues involving babies in progress including how we assess and measure presenting risk factors with vulnerable parents/carers • Policy relaunch and conference/workshop scheduled for July 2022 for professionals to advise how they have put learning into practice and identify any barriers to learning

PBSG achievements	PBSG next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case review on parents who absconded from hospital with newborns where safeguarding concerns were known; findings being taken forward by Protecting Babies Steering Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concealed pregnancies strategy to be finalised and launched, and updated medical examinations policy to be promoted across the partnership Communication tools to be developed for parents who do not bring babies to medical appointments

Inclusive Father project

The Inclusive Father project was agreed in a local response to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review [The Myth of Invisible Men](#), published September 2021, which outlined the pressing need to engage with fathers and father figures more effectively.

“It is the recommendation of this review that all local safeguarding partnerships respond comprehensively to these challenges and develop local strategies and action plans to support improved practice and effective service responses.”

This resonates with the repeated learning from local Serious Case Reviews, Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Norfolk report on Non-Accidental Injuries to infants. The NSCP agreed at Partnership Group October meeting to develop a strategic approach with the aim to implement a father inclusive strategy across the whole partnership to improve the engagement of fathers in Universal, Early Help and Specialist Children’s Services. This approach is being led by Dr Mark Osborn, the NSCP’s Safeguarding Intelligence and Performance Coordinator, and requires the engagement and participation from a wide range of organisations working with children, families and adults.

The project was launched officially in April 2022. The work developed within this project will be child centred and focused on improving the health, well-being and safety of the children of Norfolk. All work will be aligned to the eight FLOURISH principles developed by the Norfolk Children and Young People’s Strategic Alliance:

The project aims to implement a father inclusive strategy across the whole partnership to raise the visibility of fathers and improve the engagement of fathers in Universal, Early Help and Specialist Children’s Services. There are 9 objectives, extracted from the national report as follows:

1. Develop ante and post-natal health provision to fully include fathers and to include extra support to those who need it and increase their ability to early identify risk factors
2. Ensure a greater integration of children’s and adult service provision, especially adult mental health and substance misuse services
3. Integrate response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, how they will ensure a focus on the risks to babies and children and how they will work with perpetrators
4. Ensure that children’s social care lead on the development of practice that improves the engagement and assessment of men involved in children in need, child protection and children in care services
5. Develop leaving care services to ensure they address the need for preparation and support for parenthood
6. Promote father inclusive practices in all partner agencies and across the partnership
7. Investment in the voice of the father
8. Increase visibility of positive and inclusive messages and information to fathers
9. Evaluate impact, evidence and promote good practice

At the time of writing the project is still in its infancy, however, it has started at pace. An Advisory Group is in place, utilising local and national expertise and there is also a stakeholder group of fathers to help to guide the work. Public Health have agreed funding for a monthly media broadcast to support father engagement and promote public health messages. The SPR process also now includes the project lead so local reviews can be sense checked for father inclusive practice.

NSCP projects

Communication campaigns

The joint safeguarding communications officer, shared across children’s and adults, took up post in October 2021. This has developed into a system critical post, building on the communications campaigns developed during Covid, as reported in the 2020 – 21 annual report. In October the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Gold award was given to Norfolk for the best Covid response communications and a Silver award for the *See it, Hear it, Say it* campaign.

The join up between adults and children’s safeguarding messages is now built into the work programme, for example, developing the ‘Tricky Friends’ animation from a vulnerable adult campaign to incorporate messaged for young people at risk of exploitation.

The safeguarding communications officer has taken the lead in putting a communications strategy in place and ensuring that campaigns are monitored. The NSCP has focused on the priority areas and some examples of impact and reach are included below.

Neglect				
In Dec 2021 a campaign was launched called ' Feeling Safe and Loved ', featuring an animation and new resources on the JON website. The aim was to help parents understand the impact their actions can have on children, using the voice of children in Norfolk to show what small things parents can do to help them feel safe and loved.				
The animation and resources have been viewed over 4,000 times. A follow up project is being developed currently for release in Aug 2022 which focuses on Family Networking, raising the profile of the project among the general population in Norfolk. The aim is to encourage families and their connections to proactively plan their family network and take time to discuss how to support children in the best way. A second animation, and new information about family networking is being created in partnership with JON.				
Protecting Babies				
The two main communication campaigns were led by Norfolk’s 0 – 19 Healthy Child Programme provider, Cambridgeshire Community Services, focusing on messages around All Babies Cry and Safer Sleeping. These were promoted on the Just One Norfolk website and activity on Facebook and Instagram between April 2021 and March 2022 was monitored.				
	ALL BABIES CRY		SAFER SLEEPING	
	Facebook	Instagram	Facebook	Instagram
Reach	19,990	3,839	36,896	3,099
Likes/reactions	127	644	74	137
No. of posts	32	23	23	22
Shares	68	n/a	56	n/a
Link Clicks	263	n/a	2,979	n/a

Vulnerable Adolescents:

The 'Tricky Friends' animation was further developed by the Education and Inclusion team to include lesson plans for Key Stages 2 and 3 as well as a webinar. These resources were incredibly well received by schools and provide a clear illustration of where the additional support can maximise impact. 120 colleagues attended the 'Tricky Friends' webinar. The majority fed back that they:

- felt the webinar has increased their ability to create a safe whole-school and class based environment for learning about Child Criminal Exploitation to be effective
- will use the 'Tricky Friends' resource to support effective RSHE teaching
- felt the webinar and resource will increase the impact of the animation

Great to be able to talk through the resource instead of it just landing through our letterbox. I'm hoping it will support staff tackle this important area and give them the confidence to share the appropriate material.

This has been incredibly helpful - well delivered, concise and totally relevant to our needs. [The] insight and expertise is always welcomed, and these practical resources are spot on. This hour will definitely have an immediate impact in our schools.

Joint Agency Group Supervision and Reflective Practice

The NSCP's [Joint Agency Group Supervision procedure](#) (JAGS) was introduced in 2020 and continues to be monitored to understand impact on practice. The procedure was developed to provide a safe forum for exploring complex or challenging cases where there is drift has been a recurrent theme in several SCRs/SPRs, including cases published recently. JAGS purpose is to empower and enable multi-agency professional networks by:

- promoting a better understanding of children's lived experiences
- ensuring we take a trauma informed view
- increasing awareness of different perspectives, and
- promoting system wide learning.

The rollout of JAGS was evaluated and findings reported to Partnership Group in February 2022. The evaluation included a survey of JAGS participants and facilitators as well as 1-2-1 conversations. Overall, the procedure is viewed positively with many respondents reporting increased confidence and clarity in terms of their role and the impact that will have on the case. Further work needs to be done to ensure consistency in the process and plans are in place to develop promotional material to provide clarity and guidance for the workforce so that children can continue to benefit from a joined up approach.

The introduction of reflective practice sessions reported in 2020 – 21 has continued to develop. Norfolk continues to maximise its technology and online platforms to develop an offer which aims to both support the workforce to think reflectively about the child's lived experiences as well as build it into our overarching learning offer.

In 2021-22 reflective practice groups were established, with staggered starts within a 9-month period. 12 groups were facilitated lasting between 6-9 months, alongside 41

thematic reflective practice groups with the early years' workforce. This work was evaluated and the methodology included:

- Survey of participants from reflective practice groups with a return rate of 42%
- Survey of Reflective Practice Facilitator with a response rate of 60%
- Reflective Practice working group evaluation, with a response rate of 89 early years practitioners and managers and 59 LSCG members across two LSCG areas and 8 DWP colleagues
- Collation of feedback gathered from thematic early years reflective practice groups.

The evaluation concluded that reflective practice is welcomed by the workforce, demonstrated by the sign up of participants and their subsequent attendance and engagement in groups. The model used to facilitate reflective practice discussion supports the workforce to respond to the emotional impact of their work, with emotional outcomes of participants feeling relieved, relaxed, happy and pleased.

Through working together the partnership can resource the facilitation of reflective practice groups from differing professional backgrounds, with contributions from health now being an opportunity due to the vaccination programme plateauing. However, the resource required to administrate and coordinate reflective practice groups is onerous and beyond the 'in-kind' offer made by system partners. Both thematic and pre-arranged bookable groups work well, although thematic groups setup appear to be more self-sufficient and sustainable. Sessional offers of reflective practice group sessions provide maximum flexibility and practitioners and managers appear to self-nominate or encourage others to attend as an on-going commitment is not required. These do require careful facilitation and can require further check ins or follow ups depending on who attends and the subjects raised.

Both JAGS and the reflective practice offer will continue to be monitored and developed in the next reporting year.

New Roads

Norfolk Children's Services have also engaged in excellent partnership working to introduce the New Roads service, which has been running for a year. The council launched New Roads after successfully obtaining £5 million of funding from the Department for Education Strengthening Families Protecting Children (SFPC) Programme. The model is based on the successful No Wrong Door model, developed by North Yorkshire County Council.

The service ensures young people get the help and support that they need through an integrated team that sticks with them. Based out of two hubs in Dereham and Norwich, it supports young people who need to live in the hub for a short time or are still living at home but likely to need to come into care in the near future. It also supports young people in care in foster placements.

New Roads offers each young person a dedicated key worker and gives them access to specialist support at the hub which includes:

- life coaches (clinical psychologists)
- communication support workers (speech and language therapists), and
- police liaison officers.

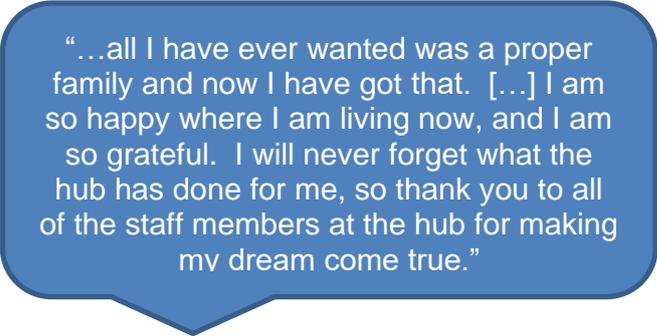
They receive support focused on their specific needs, which includes: support with rebuilding relationships, building resilience and self-esteem, managing life stage transitions, mental and physical health and education and training. The aim is to give young people

stability, reduce risk-taking behaviour and help to avoid the need for long-term residential care, as well as longer term costs to themselves, the wider system and communities.

Since its launch, New Roads has supported 170 young people aged between 12 and 17. It has:

- prevented 100 young people from coming into care, by enabling them to stay living with their families
- paved the way for 12 young people, who were previously in care, to go home to their families
- achieved a six per cent reduction in the number of 12 to 17 year-olds in care in Norfolk
- achieved a 72% decrease in arrests of young people supported for six months or more who were at risk of criminalisation

The success of the project is recognised and articulated by the young people themselves. As one young person said



“...all I have ever wanted was a proper family and now I have got that. [...] I am so happy where I am living now, and I am so grateful. I will never forget what the hub has done for me, so thank you to all of the staff members at the hub for making my dream come true.”

6. Learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews

The NSCP's multi-agency Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) is chaired by Sian Griffiths, one of the Independent Scrutiny Team. SPRG oversees all aspects of child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and annually refreshes its local guidance in line with national learning and local feedback. This chapter sets out activity against Rapid Reviews and SPRs, including publication of reviews; learning from Rapid Reviews and specific actions taken or planned in response to reviews published in the last 12 months; and a summary of dissemination of learning.

NB learning from child death is reported in a separate annual report produced jointly by the Norfolk and Suffolk Child Death Overview Panels.

SPR and Rapid Review activity

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the NSCP published one SPR, Case AJ, in March 2022. Two SPRs were commissioned in this same period following Rapid Review meetings. The Local Authority submitted two further Serious Incident Notifications (SIN) within this period, triggering Rapid Reviews, but not proceeding to SPR.

Four referrals were made to SPRG from other agencies – the Child Death Review Team, Education, the Youth Offending Team and the Fire and Rescue Service – where the presenting issues and potential learning were discussed. Two of these referrals involved the deaths of 18 year olds which inhibited learning in the absence of a legal framework to gather information. None of the cases were taken forward to a learning review.

A summary of cases and issues is included in the table below:

Type of activity	Presenting issue
SPR – AJ	Non-accidental injury to baby (published March 2022)
SPR - AK	<i>Death by overlay – neglect an issue (in progress)</i>
SPR – AL	<i>17 year old death, apparent suicide – pending inquest verdict (in progress)</i>
Rapid Review	Non-accidental injury to infant under 2
Rapid Review	Death of premature baby following home birth – pre birth assessment identified risks and plan in place
Referral: non SIN	Premature baby death
Referral: non SIN	SEN pupil with LADO involvement
Referral: non SIN	Serious youth violence
Referral: non SIN	Neglect and home environment issues
Total number of cases looked at 2021 - 2022 (July – June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 on babies (2 x NAI, 2 x premature babies, 1 x overlay) • 4 on teenagers (1 x probable suicide, 1 x abuse by person in position of trust, 2 x 18 year olds)

The prevailing issues – babies at risk of harm, neglect and drift, and vulnerable adolescents - are linked to the NSCP priority areas to a greater or lesser degree and where recommendations have been made, these have been incorporated into the relevant strategies, i.e. Neglect and Protecting Babies.

The two SPRs currently in commission appear very different on the surface:

- Case AL involves a six week old baby who died from overlay while his mother was under the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- Case AK involves a 17 year old suicide with a history of familial mental health issues and parental substance misuse.

The common denominators for these cases are recognising neglect, the impact of Covid, and to a greater or lesser degree, the way we work with fathers and understand their role and influence within family dynamics.

In addition to local cases and referrals, Norfolk provided information on SPRs being conducted by three other local safeguarding children partnerships: Suffolk, Essex and Brighton & Hove.

SPRG continues to monitor and improve its internal processes, using feedback from the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to refine the systems. The National Panel agreed all decisions made and feedback has helped us improve the way we draw out the key issues from SPRG discussions, including the key points that we agreed on and, where a decision was reached to proceed to a local SPR, the key lines of enquiry emerging.

Feedback from the National Panel



“We noted that this was a clear Rapid Review (RR) that had a good grip of the issues. We would like to commend you for how the shared learning has been disseminated and previous review actions tracked.”

Learning from National CSPRs

Within the scope of this annual report, the National Panel published two national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews: [The Myth of Invisible Men](#) (September 2021) and the review into the [Murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson](#) (May 2022). Norfolk’s response to the former is included in the Chapter on NSCP Priorities and Projects. We are still assessing the implications of the latter report but the findings and recommendations have been shared across the partnership.

Learning from Rapid Reviews

As noted above, many of the Rapid Reviews are captured in the ongoing work against the NSCP priorities. For example, the ongoing issues with managing risks to unborn and new born babies is incorporated into the pre-birth assessment audit scope and followed up through the Protecting Babies Steering Group. Immediate learning is fed back to the chairs of the relevant priority workstreams and plans are in place to include the members of the Neglect and Babies steering groups in learning events as part of the SPRs currently in commission.

The referrals from external agencies that did not trigger Rapid Reviews have been acted upon. For example, the cases of the two 18 year olds posed challenges around transition and raised questions about early help and prevention. The case of serious violence is being scrutinised by the Vulnerable Adolescent Group. Appropriate links are also made with the Safeguarding Adults Board to explore opportunities for joint working.

Dissemination of Learning from Serious Case Reviews

SPR activity has reduced in recent years which allowed resources to be diverted into implementing the learning. This reporting year we did not undertake any SPR roadshows as

such, however there was a retrospective look at learning from reviews where children with complex health and medical needs featured. While there were a number of successful initiatives, such as training events on managing cases of complex health needs, the introduction of the Joint Agency Group Supervision procedure and evidence that concerns around these cases were being escalated and resolved effectively, it was felt that more could be done. A major piece of work involved a series of learning events held between July and October 2021.

The aim of these learning events was to promote best practice around working with children and families where complex medical health needs presented. It incorporated both learning from historic reviews as well as cases brought to joint supervision and cases escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Children Team (Norfolk & Waveney ICB). The purpose was to establish what is working well and what we need to do differently to improve practice when working with children with complex health needs. It was also used as an opportunity to frame our thinking around trauma informed leadership and practice for both the workforce and families. The themes explored included:

- Diagnosis and misdiagnosis: impact on child's treatment and identity
- The effectiveness of plans and the safeguarding element within the plan(s)
- Working in silos, both within health and between health and partners
- The child's voice
- The impact of Covid-19
- The perspective of the parent/carer

One of the most powerful presentations was from a partner from Family Voice ¹Norfolk, who is also the mother of a child with complex needs. 114 professionals from across the partnership attended and feedback on this presentation was compelling:

Parent perspective was very powerful and an excellent way to open and set the context.

Family Voice network presentation really did home in on the lived experienced of both the family and child or young person and that really did resonate and home in on the importance of not just hearing but listening to that voice.

Being new into Norfolk and in a team that has been newly set up all the information was fantastic but the presentation by Family Voice Norfolk was amazing and so thought provoking.

The events also included presentations from Starfish Learning Disability Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and concluded with examples of best practice. All the

¹ Family Voice is a voluntary sector organisation made up of parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Norfolk. Their aim is to improve services for their children and young people by ensuring that families' voices are heard by planners and decision-makers.

professionals who fed back gave concrete examples of how they would put the learning into practice and the evaluation report was shared with Partnership Group.

Scope for learning from what works well

The 2020 – 21 annual report set out a clear intention for undertaking a 'what works well' review to showcase good practice and have a positive learning model. Due to Covid pressures, partners did not have the capacity to commit to this piece of work. It continues to be discussed at SPRG and the ambition is to complete this activity in the next reporting year.

7. Training and Workforce Development

The NSCP's multi-agency Workforce Development Group (WDG) has an Independent Chair, Natasha Rennolds, one of the three members of the Independent Scrutiny Team.

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Learning Offer

The NSCP continues to deliver an extensive programme of multi-agency learning opportunities. These have been delivered by In-Trac Training and Consultancy and also, increasingly, by local practitioners. Training has continued to be delivered online via Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

In the 2021-22 financial year, In-Trac delivered 35 training sessions and local practitioners delivered 131 sessions. This is a significant increase on previous years and is indicative of a local desire for NSCP to be seen as the 'home' of multi-agency safeguarding children training.

	No. of courses	Places available	Places Taken	% take up	Did Not Show
In-Trac	35	706	559	79.2%	114

(Comprehensive attendance data is not available for sessions delivered by partners as not all partners report attendance figures due to administration pressures.)

The In-Trac training courses on offer can be found on the NSCP website. Partners and the NSCP training team supplemented the offer with learning sessions including:

- Restorative Approaches (10)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (28)
- Substance Misuse (5)
- Child Protection Conferences (4)
- Signs of Safety (6)
- Family Networking (5)
- LADO Process (2)
- All Babies Cry (10)
- Children's Advice and Duty Service briefings (4)
- Early Help Assessment and Planning (23)
- Reducing Parental Conflict (18)
- Responding to Children with Complex Health Needs (3)
- Working with Central and Eastern European Migrant Families (2)

In addition, there were two development sessions for Safeguarding Children Trainers.

Delegates who signed up but did not show or cancelled within seven working days were charged a fee.

Awards

The NSCP Workforce Development Group (WDG) was shortlisted for two awards in 2021. One from the Public Sector People Managers Association (PPMA) and one from the Local Government Chronicle (LGC). The focus of the submissions was the innovative work which the WDG has undertaken in developing a support framework for those designing and delivering safeguarding children training in Norfolk, and also the work undertaken on the online training Quality Assurance system. Although ultimately the WDG did not win it was fantastic for their work to be recognised.

Impact of training

A multi-agency working group of Workforce Development Group representatives are currently undertaking a project alongside the NSCP Safeguarding Intelligence &

Performance Co-ordinator and the Data Analyst officer to look at the impact of the multi-agency training. The initial focus is on the Voice of the Child and Domestic Abuse courses. Pre course questionnaires have been developed to benchmark delegates' knowledge and expectations prior to the courses. Follow ups will then be undertaken with the delegates at three and six month intervals to monitor how the training has been applied to practice.

Developing the Learning Offer

The last two years have provided some valuable learning for the Workforce Development Group (WDG); this is closely related to the significant changes made, which have provided valuable insights for the WDG. Some of these were unforeseen e.g. the pandemic, others were anticipated e.g. the full implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. Other changes still provided unique opportunities for development e.g. the strengthening of arrangements for the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA). In pulling all the information together, a different landscape for learning and development has emerged and the WDG are proposing a different way forward. This is a timely response as it coincides with the need to recommission our external training provision.

The principles for moving forward aim to address how the partnership delivers multi-agency opportunities for the children's workforce and are based on the following:

- Access to learning should be varied, proportional and appropriate to the different levels of knowledge/skill need across agencies.
- The training offer to build on 'expertise' both local and national.
- The relationship between multi-agency and single-agency learning offers should be complementary, contain common threads and reflect the intended audience.
- Recognising and responding to the difference between knowledge based and practice-based opportunities.
- Assuring the quality of safeguarding training provision, as required by Working Together 2018.

The three statutory partners have agreed for the WDG to explore the development of a blended approach for training courses, utilising both online and offline environments. This includes developing a central multi-agency learning hub with access to self-directed learning as well as easy links to other training opportunities including the booking of courses. The learning hub will act as central point for all learning opportunities for the children's workforce to include joined up approaches for safeguarding, SEND and C&YP mental health. We will continue to provide a mix of delivery by partnership agencies and an external provider for both taught and independent learning opportunities.

Safer Programme

The NSCP's Safer Programme is a service provided by the NSCP Business Unit to meet the safeguarding procedural, policy and training needs of the voluntary, community and private sectors of Norfolk. Safer produces a standalone [Safer-Annual-Report-2021-Final-Version.pdf \(norfolkscb.org\)](#)

Safer has seen several developments and innovations this year under the watch of the new Safer Co-Ordinator. These have included a revamp of the Members' Newsletter, a new Facebook group to build the Safer community and a new briefing session for District Councils covering both Adult and Child Safeguarding which has been developed alongside Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board and District Councils.

8. Conclusions and Formal Summary Statement

This report provides an overview of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's many achievements over the last 12 months. We have reason to be proud of the mature and successful relationships strategic leaders have established which underpin the way we work together to safeguard children and protect them from harm. This work has been recognised through national awards and nominations and we continue to approach systemic learning with energy and commitment to improving our services so we get things right for Norfolk children.

Our aim to be a trauma informed and resilience-oriented partnership continues to develop and we are committed to supporting and containing the workforce so they can focus on the children, their lived experience and improving the outcomes for families.

This is not to say that we are complacent in any way nor are we naïve about the challenges that lie ahead. We anticipate that the cost of living increases are going to hit families hard across the country and will have a direct impact on our work to protect children. We are also mindful of the changing policy landscape and the implications that will have on our local safeguarding system.

While this report records many achievements, we also recognise the work that still needs to be done. Our challenges and ambitions as we move into 2021 – 22 include:

- Independent scrutiny on initial assessment of need and risk to children as well as local initiatives, such as our approach to Family Networking
- Utilising the performance intelligence, data and qualitative feedback to ensure we are targeting our resources correctly and addressing any gaps
- Developing our learning offer and measuring the impact of training on practice
- Continuing to promote and support the FLOURISH agenda
- Increasing the number of multi-agency audits completed
- Reviewing our Threshold Guide and ensuring all multi-agency policies adhere to national policy change
- Disseminating and implementing learning from local and national Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- 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
- Promoting equality and inclusion and celebrating diversity in Norfolk

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership is well placed to build on its strengths and meet the challenges set out above, with the commitment and resources that are in place. The NSCP's Business Unit is funded to support this work and ensure that organisational memory and good working relationships across the partnership continue into the future.