

# Annual Report

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



Norfolk Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

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## Foreword by the Three Statutory Partners

We are pleased to share with you the 2023 – 2024 annual report for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership. As the three Statutory Safeguarding Partners Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, we use these reports as an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and challenges, openly and transparently. We are jointly responsible for the effectiveness of the partnership and remain committed to keeping Norfolk's children and young people safe. As you read this document, we hope that you feel assured about our unwavering commitment to do all we can to afford our children the best opportunity to live happy lives and flourish.

This report demonstrates our focus on learning and development, listening to the voice of children, and challenging ourselves to understand where we can do more to improve our collective response. Our use of evidence, data and insight is now a strength of the partnership and supports us to prioritise our resources and consider the impact of our actions. Our continued commitment to independent scrutiny enables us to consider our effectiveness as a partnership, and to measure ourselves against both best and poor practice nationally, with an emphasis on improvement through learning. Our Section 11 process continues to develop and provides further valuable insight into the wider safeguarding partnership.

The focus on priorities - i.e. neglect, vulnerable adolescents and family and community networking, including developing father inclusive practice - can be tracked back to national and local learning about the safeguarding system and is informed by data and intelligence. Nationally there is an extremely sophisticated and mature approach to working together to safeguard children and this is evident in Norfolk's ways of working. Our priorities reflect the challenges that children and families face in the current climate and there are clear strategies in place to improve practice and have a real impact in making children's lives better.

Our workforce is the partnership's greatest asset and we continue to prioritise joint learning, training and development to support them to be as effective in their practice as possible. We remain committed to providing opportunities for staff across all agencies to learn together and further improve our joint approach to working with and for our children, young people and families.

Working Together 2023 provides us with a welcome opportunity to review and strengthen partnership working. At the time of publication, we are finalising the amendments to our local plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements with renewed energy, as we continue to engage all partners in keeping children safe. Strategic leaders in education play a critical role in our arrangements and, in the coming year, we will be formalising our governance arrangements to reflect the value we place on schools and early years in giving children the best start in life.

Most important is the children themselves. They are our biggest motivators and sometimes our fiercest critics. We are in their service and want to get it right for them. Hearing their voices is a critical success measure as to whether we are getting it right. The Children and Young People's version of the annual report reflects the value we place on their opinions and feedback and their views are spot on. We hope that this separate report and executive summary reflects our commitment to listening to them and honouring their lived experience.

This report shows that the partnership's approach is dynamic, responsive and, crucially, having a positive impact on Norfolk's children and young people. Together, we are focusing on the things that will make a difference: collaboration, learning, joining resources, being

inclusive and healthy challenge. We'll continue to work together to empower professionals, support families and protect children and young people to help.

**Delegated Safeguarding Partner**

**Lead Safeguarding Partner**



Handwritten signature of Sara Tough in black ink.

Handwritten signature of Tom McCabe in black ink.

Sara Tough, OBE  
Executive Director  
Children's Services

Tom McCabe  
Chief Executive Officer



Handwritten signature of Nick Davison in black ink.

Handwritten signature of Paul Sanford in black ink.

Nick Davison  
Assistant Chief Constable

Paul Sanford  
Chief Constable



Handwritten signature of Patricia D'Orsi in black ink.

Handwritten signature of Tracey Bleakley in black ink.

Patricia D'Orsi  
Executive Director of Nursing  
Norfolk and Waveney Integrated  
Care Board

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

## Foreword by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Independent Scrutiny Team

Independent scrutiny is an essential part of the work we do as a safeguarding children partnership. The NSCP has created a culture where scrutiny is not simply accepted, it is expected and seen as a positive tool as professionals seek to improve. This culture has been created by strategic leaders and filters through managers, practitioners and all of our partners. Scrutiny is actively sought out, expected at all levels and valued across the partnership.

Working Together 2023 sets out the functions of scrutiny, describes what the Scrutineer or Scrutiny Group should look like, the fact that scrutiny should be evidenced based and the various methods scrutiny may follow. The document states *'Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports'*. I can reassure the reader that this is very much the model used by the NSCP. The partnership has invested significantly in independent scrutiny. We have a team of three Scrutineers providing a wide range of experience to the partnership. All three are experienced safeguarding professionals, all three review safeguarding cases and all three bring different skill sets that complement the work they do. Until recently the Lead Scrutineer was also the Chair of the partnership, one scrutineer is the Independent Chair of the Workforce Development sub-group whilst the other chairs the Safeguarding Practice Review Group, giving them all insight and influence in key areas of partnership work. They attend partnership meetings and brief the Lead Safeguarding Partners regularly.

During this reporting period the scrutiny team have been commissioned to do several pieces of targeted work by the partnership. This is in addition to the work described above. Scrutiny includes: various observations of practice; providing an independent view when disputes are escalated amongst partners; continuous support for ongoing work such as engagement with fathers and Section 11 Strategic Group; and joint projects with the Safeguarding Adult Board. The scrutineers engage at all levels, meeting with strategic leads, managers, practitioners and most importantly children and families to ensure they have the best possible understanding of issues and practice. The scrutineers provide written reports to the partnership with findings and recommendations for learning and improvement. This affords the partnership an opportunity to drive continuous improvements in areas that have been identified as causing concern.

The work of the scrutineers is generally driven by the partnership or by observations they make when considering evidential presentations made during meetings. They are supported by an exceptional Business Manager and business team without whom they would be far less impactful. It is also important to recognise that over this reporting period the need to be evidence based has become far easier to achieve in our scrutiny exercises. This is largely due the excellent working relationship developed with the partnership analyst who plays a significant role in ensuring scrutiny provided is based on accurate information. His work, in turn, is supported by a partnership who recognise the importance of excellent information exchange.

I would conclude by saying that during this reporting period the NSCP has proactively sought out independent scrutiny. As the Lead Scrutineer I am confident that we could and should be used as a model of good practice. The NSCP is, in my view, exceptional in the work it does and has a real drive to seek continuous improvement.

**Chris Robson, Lead Independent Scrutineer - NSCP**

## Introduction

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership is the body responsible for implementing and reviewing the local plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). The MASA is under revision in order to fully comply with the statutory guidance set out in [Working Together 2023](#) and is due to be reissued no later than December 2024. The MASA is the responsibility of the three statutory partners, i.e. the Local Authority, the Police, and Health. The arrangements set out how they will ensure all partners fulfill their safeguarding duties.

This annual report has been written in adherence to Working Together requirements as set out in Chapter 2 (paragraphs 106 - 107). The focus of the report is to evidence what the NSCP has done as a result of the MASA, including how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

The scope of this annual report runs from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The report provides information in relation to:

- the contribution of safeguarding partners to the functioning and structure of the MASA
- themes emanating from aggregated methods of scrutiny, including reviews and scrutineer activity and multi-agency audits
- evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- an analysis of learning from serious incidents
- a record of key decisions and actions taken by the safeguarding partners in the yearly cycle, including in relation to implementing the recommendations from any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and the impact this has had
- ways in which the safeguarding partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision
- the breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements for that period, including the financial contributions of individual partners, any changes to funding and an assessment of the impact and value for money of this funding
- evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input of education at both the operational and strategic levels of the arrangements
- an overview of how data is being used to encourage learning within the arrangements and evidence of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes
- a review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure the leadership is strong and the arrangements are leading to the desired and necessary impact
- evidence that national reforms have been implemented, taking into account key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners in response to reforms, and any issues or concerns encountered within the yearly cycle

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](#).

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 adhere to Norfolk's plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. This chapter serves as a summary reference of governance in 2023 – 204.

The Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (LSPs and DSPs) named in the MASA are:

- **Norfolk County Council:** represented by the Executive Director of Children's Services, Sara Tough OBE (DSP) and the Chief Executive Officer, Tom McCabe (LSP)
- **Norfolk Constabulary:** represented by the Assistant Chief Constable, Nick Davison (DSP), and the Chief Constable, Paul Sanford (LSP)
- **Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board:** represented by the Executive Director of Nursing, Patricia D'Orsi (DSP) and Chief Executive Officer, Tracey Bleakley (LSP)

The DSPs meet quarterly. Up until December 2023, these meetings were chaired by the Chief Scrutineer (then Independent Chair of the NSCP). From January 2024 chairing arrangements were changed to comply with Working Together 2023 and the Executive Director of Children's Services now chairs these meetings and acts as a conduit for the LSPs.

The LSPs are provided quarterly written briefings and meet twice a year with the DSP meeting chair to consider MASA milestones as well as to respond to emerging challenges and maintain a strategic overview on the system.

### 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 Chief Scrutineer, Chris Robson, continues to chair the Partnership Group which meets every other month and includes partners from across the workforce, including education and the voluntary sector. He continues to attend the DSP and LSP meetings to ensure appropriate challenge and identification of strengths and areas for improvement detected in the safeguarding system.

The NSCP Independent Chair is supported by 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, Bridget Griffin.

The three members of the Independent Scrutiny Team meet regularly to triangulate their findings from their respective areas and report back to the statutory safeguarding partners. Further detail on specific pieces of scrutiny is included in Chapter 4.

### 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.

Partnership Group plays a crucial role in sense checking the safeguarding system and providing an opportunity for all partners to share concerns and find solutions collaboratively. Between April 2023 and March 2024, Partnership Group met eight times, including a priority review/priority setting workshop in June 2023.

Partnership Group agendas include priority updates as well as safeguarding issues and systemic solutions. Data and performance intelligence are also reported regularly as well as a bi-annual report from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Oversight Group. They also sign off any annual reports including this report, the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Groups, Child Death Overview Panel and Independent Services. 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. This year the event focused on collaborative leadership.

Appendix 1 lists all items discussed at Partnership Group this reporting year.

### **Strategic Overview: Links to Other Partnership Boards**

The MASA provides further detail on links to other boards. In summary:

- The Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) and the NSCP's commitment to endorsing and promoting the [Flourish Strategy](#).<sup>1</sup> The NSCP is actively signed up to promoting Flourish, for example, looking at the strategic outcomes against our priorities through a Flourish lens and writing this into the revised Threshold Guide, which has been rebranded as the Continuum of Needs Guidance (see Chapter 5 NSCP Projects, Priorities and Developments).
- The Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board, including join up on independent scrutiny and learning from safeguarding review activity.
- The Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership, including learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews and supporting on the development of the Serious Violence Strategy
- Norfolk's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, which includes the Head of NSCP Business Delivery who brings relevant items to the DSPs/Partnership Group.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board, who are sighted on the NSCP annual report as part of its sign off procedures prior to publication
- 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 2023*. The Workforce Development Group 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.

Safeguarding Information and Performance in Practice is covered in two ways: (1) through the Multi-Agency Audit Group and (2) through the Joint Strategic analysis Group who are responsible for providing qualitative and quantitative evidence of how well the system

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<sup>1</sup> Flourish is an acronym for: Friends and Family; Learning; Opportunity; Understanding; Resilience; Individual; Safe and Secure; Healthy.



is working, respectively. Of note, the use of performance and intelligence has been transformed in the last three years with a dedicated analyst employed to support with data. For more information, see Chapters 3 and 4.

### **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 effective 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 Partnership, Inclusion and Practice Directorate, the voluntary sector, and Cambridgeshire Community Services, Norfolk's 0 – 18 Healthy Child Programme provider.

### **Advisory Groups**

The NSCP is supported by 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 SPRs. They are active and supportive with the Section 11 safeguarding self-assessment process, including responding to Section 11 recommendations.

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 and housing. Through the DCAG, the NSCP holds specific learning sessions in partnership with the Adults Safeguarding Board for housing providers.

### **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 including: supporting strategic leadership; monitoring and audit; budget oversight; training provision; and key administrative tasks such as setting agendas, minuting meetings, communications, website development and event co-ordination.

The team includes a 0.5 FTE dedicated senior analyst officer, shared with the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance.

## 2. Voice of the Child

The NSCP works with the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA), specifically the Stakeholders Engagement & Insight Group and the Local Authority's Participation Team to gather feedback directly from children and families. This chapter includes some examples of how children and young people's voices were sought and acted upon.

In August 2023, Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership hosted a Youth Workshop on 'feeling safe and secure in your community', planned in response to the introduction of new Serious Violence Duty across England and Wales. This new Duty places additional responsibility on several organisations to continue working together to reduce violence and make sure that Norfolk is a safe place to live, work, study, and visit and supported the NSCP in hearing the voice of the child. Feeling 'Safe and Secure' is key element of the Flourish strategic ambition for Norfolk's children and young people. 72 young people aged 11-19 attended, representing 15 participation groups and networks from across Norfolk. 7 Youth Advisory Boards (YABs), Young Carers Forum, Norfolk In Care Council (NiCC), Disability Real Action Group of Norfolk (DRAGONS), NSFT participation group, Youth in Mind, Norfolk Police Cadets, Unity (Matthew Project participation), UK Youth Parliament. In addition to the Youth Voice Workshop in August, young people from the SEND Youth Forum, five of Norfolk Police Cadet sections, the Young Adults Forum and young people working with Norfolk's Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) have shared their views on community safety in Norfolk. In October, a steering group of 6 young people who attended the Youth Voice Workshop came together to co-produce a final report, summarising the views of all the young people who shared their experiences and thoughts. This report also set out the next steps on how the views of young people will inform Norfolk's multi-agency approach to Community Safety.

The NSCP also joined forces with the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, contributing funding towards an exploitation campaign, which was developed by young people from the Media Learning Company at Norwich City. This is a multi-agency communications and engagement campaign covering all forms of exploitation relating to children, young people and adults in Norfolk. The purpose of the campaign is to give key audiences sufficient knowledge and awareness of the different forms of exploitation to enable them to proactively protect children, young people and adults who may be at risk of exploitation. The NSCP was involved with hearing pitches from the students in November 2023. The campaign will be formally launched in the summer/autumn 2024.

In November 2023, The Norfolk in Care Council Change-makers received National recognition for their hard work co-producing and launching the Changes and New Beginnings Best Practice Guide in Norfolk. The young people, supported by the Participation Team (social care) attended the Coram Voice Amplify Event, hosted in London, and were presented with 3rd place for the 'Voice' category. The change makers thoroughly enjoyed the day and reflected on the value of meeting other young people from other local authorities and celebrating the impact of participation work across the country. It was inspiring to see a whole room of young people empowered to bring about change and to have Norfolk represented so strongly in this space.

The NSCP always seeks direct feedback from children where possible, for example, inviting them to share their views as part of audit and review activity. As the year drew to a close, focus groups with 17 – 25 year olds were being arranged for April 2024 as part of the independent scrutiny on transitional safeguarding. This included care leavers, young offenders, young carers and young adults in receipt of Pathway for Adult Learning Services.

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 are really proud of the children and young people's version of the NSCP annual report and so grateful to the children who helped us with that. This year is no exception and we are pleased to publish the CYP version alongside this full report. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do!

## 3. Data and Performance Intelligence

### Using data and evidence in partnership

#### Our approach to data and evidence

Data, evidence, and analysis underpin the partnership's strategy and activity. Since 2020 a Joint Strategic Analysis Group has brought together analysts across the partnership, and a dedicated resource and role now coordinates support to deliver analytical products and outputs. Outputs from this activity include:

- Regular monitoring reports to NSCP's Partnership Group, reviewing an agreed data set, and 'escalating' emerging issues and headlines.
- Data packs to support priorities and the priority-setting process.
- Specific analyses to address emerging issues or other review activities (for example the scrutiny of particular areas or themes).

#### Making a difference with data...

Over time, this evidence-informed and data-led approach has delivered a number of benefits to the partnership. For example, analysis of the contextual factors that contribute to poor child protection and safeguarding outcomes has focused some of the priority actions on more preventative interventions and supported a partnership-wide understanding of the complex drivers of safeguarding risks. This year this has allowed us to:

- Support the development of the 'Family Connect' data transformation project, enabling practitioners to identify risk 'flags' for families from a growing range of data sources.
- Shape the Serious Violence Duty Strategy, identifying area of highest risk, and supporting the development of Priority Area Risk Profiles.
- Help the delivery of the Neglect strategy, focusing the work of the 'Large Sibling Group' working group on the risks most relevant to that cohort, and supporting the development of the Adolescent Neglect Toolkit on the most relevant at-risk groups.
- Look across children's and adult's safeguarding data to highlight differences and common themes and ensure good transitional safeguarding.

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



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

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



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



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



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

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

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

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

- **480** children and young people with a Child Protection Plan
- **1,150** Looked After Children
- **220** children and young people receiving Youth Justice Service interventions.

### Current trends from national and local data

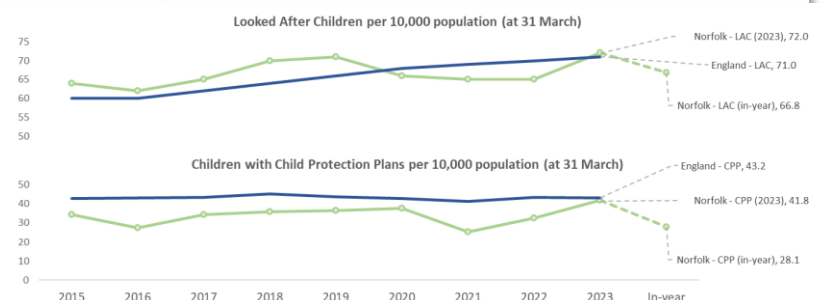
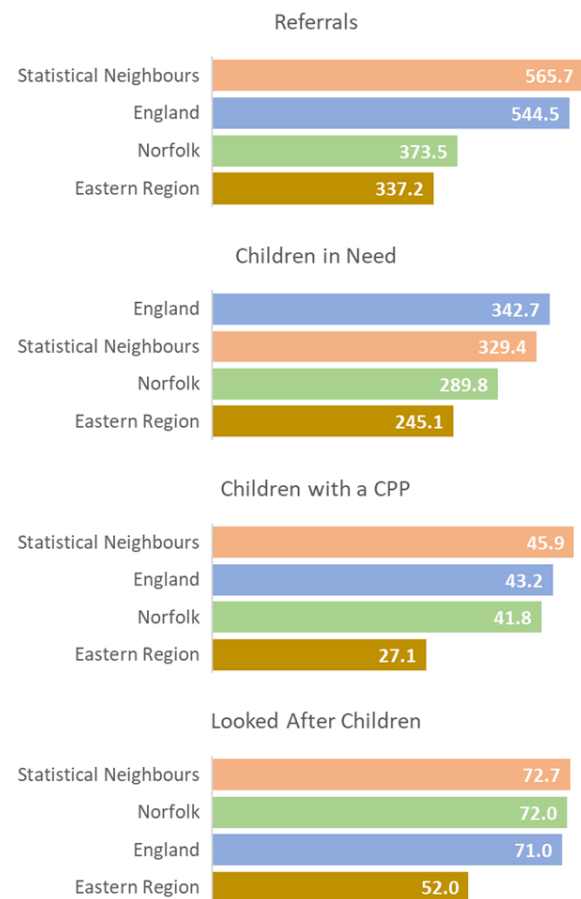
For many indicators of activity within formal safeguarding pathways, Norfolk's trends and patterns reflect those regionally and nationally.

The graph (right) shows that, for a range of measures, Norfolk's rates are generally above the Eastern Region average, but below or in line with England and statistical neighbour comparators.

There are also some notable trends in activity over time. The graph (below) shows rates of Looked After Children and children with Child Protection Plans over time. Historically LAC have tracked at just above the national rate in Norfolk, and CPPs have been a little below the national average. Nevertheless, for both the pandemic saw a notable dip in numbers, followed by an increase through to 2023, but with most recently a dip in activity suggested through in-year data. Notably, for LAC, changes in numbers in recent years have been prompted by increases in numbers of Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers (UASC). If we removed these, overall numbers of LAC over time are more stable – but even within this context, 2024 saw a small reduction.

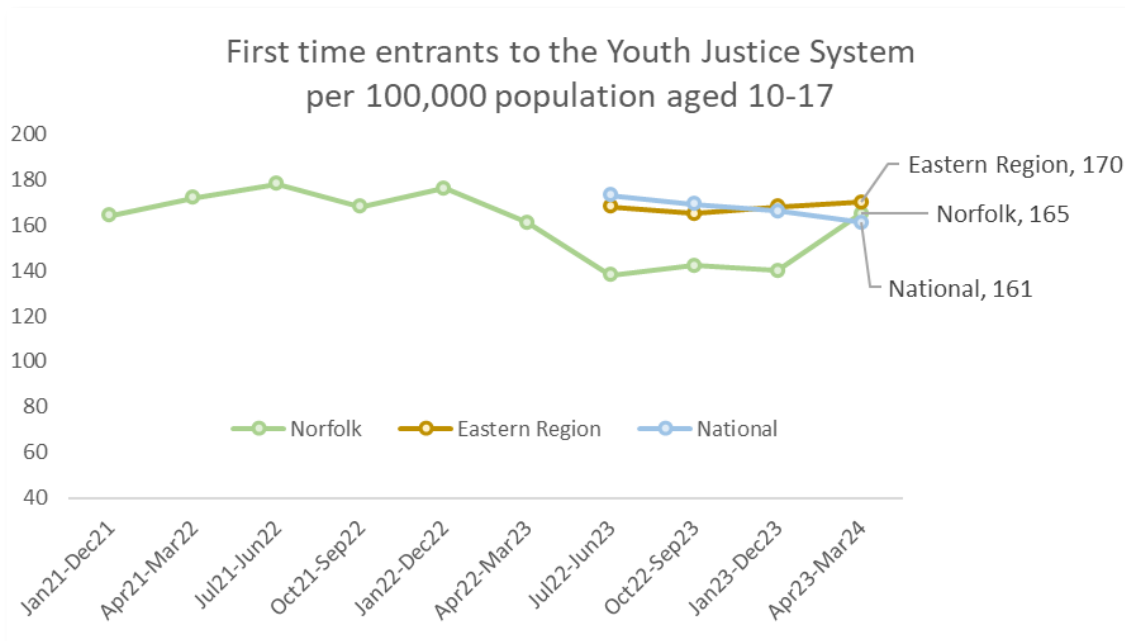
It is important to note that in-year data has not been confirmed and may change. It is also not possible to attribute the most recent reduction precisely to specific actions. Nevertheless, there has been a focus on early help and prevention activity to avoid more complex formal child

**Norfolk and comparator safeguarding activity: 2023**  
(All rates per 10,000 population)



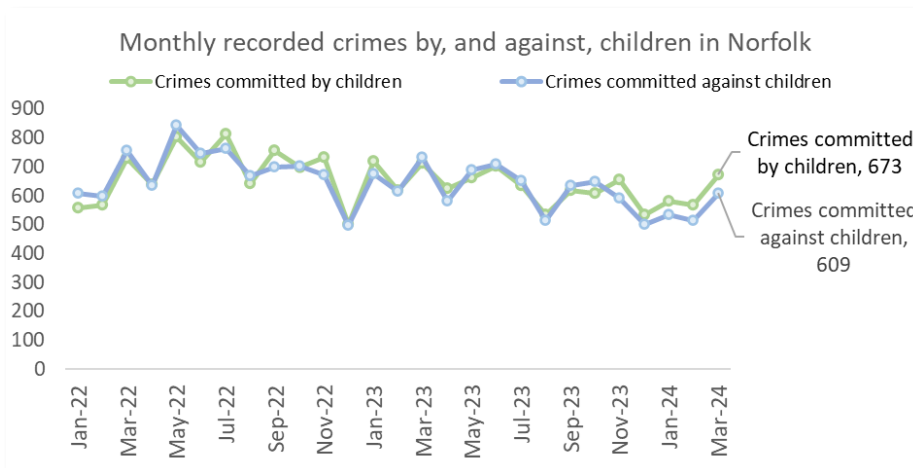
protection and safeguarding interventions, and on practice improvements to stop risks from escalating and requiring a 'step up' to CPP or LAC. As such, these reductions in the last year are likely to reflect these changes. Specific audit work has been commissioned for 2024 to test this and ensure that rates reflect improved practice.

Youth Justice Service (YJS) data shows a long-term reduction in first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System since the introduction of Norfolk's diversion programme in 2015. The first three quarters of the last year saw further reductions, but an increase in the most recent quarter has taken Norfolk slightly above national, but below the regional, average (see graph, right. For scale, Norfolk's latest rate of 165 FTE per 100,000 population equates to 130 children and young people).



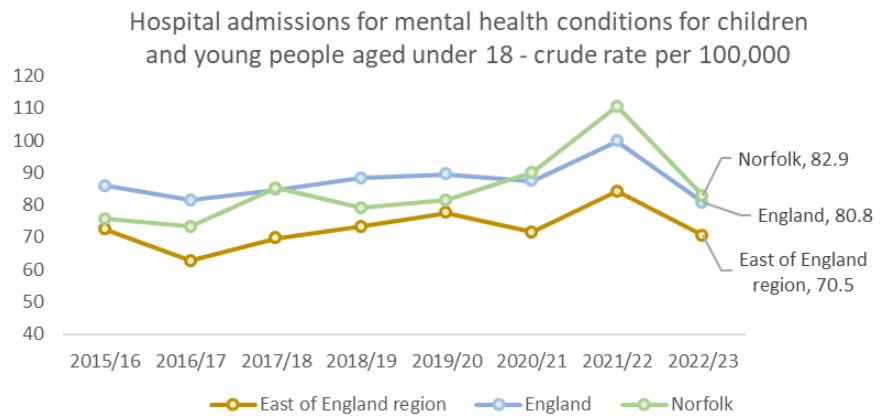
A review of Norfolk's data shows that the majority of first-time entrants from the last 2 years received a court outcome rather than a caution, and that 60% of these were previously unknown to the YJS. Analysis has been undertaken with partners to understand and learn from missed opportunities to prevent offending.

Local Police data about children and young people shows a relatively stable position. The graph (right) shows overall crimes rates (by and against children) reducing slightly, within the context of significant monthly variations. In other data a similarly stable or reducing picture is evident for stops-and-searches, and domestic abuse incidents with a child present.





Health indicators that describe or infer safeguarding outcomes show a mixed picture. Emergency hospital admissions for under-18s are below the national average and in line with those regionally; however, admissions for mental health conditions are above the national average. Admissions



for accidental injuries are similar to those of comparators. Norfolk’s under-18s conception rate is similar to the national average; however, the rate of mothers classified as smokers at the date of birth is higher than comparators.

Beyond specific indicators, the same over-arching themes are evident across data about Norfolk as highlighted in the 2023 report, specifically:

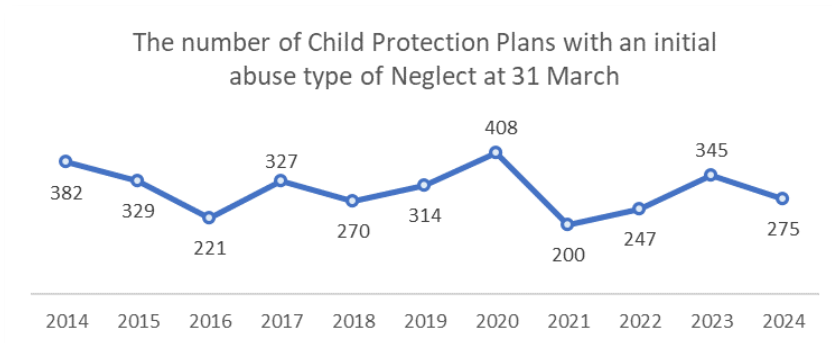
- Mental health: a range of indicators across health and social care suggest a higher prevalence of mental health problems and crises compared to other similar areas.
- The cost of living. Norfolk seems to be particularly impacted by recent economic conditions compared to other county areas in the Easter Region, with indicators around free school meals, young people in employment, education and training, and unemployment benefits take-up all indicating challenging economic outcomes.

### Data about our priorities

Each year significant analytical activity is focused on the NSCP’s priorities: assessing, where possible, the extent to which, outcomes have been improved; and undertaking specific analyses to understand the drivers and impact of risks in priority areas.

### Neglect

Last year’s report highlighted the Data Review undertaken around neglect, which prompted further work to support particular at-risk groups.



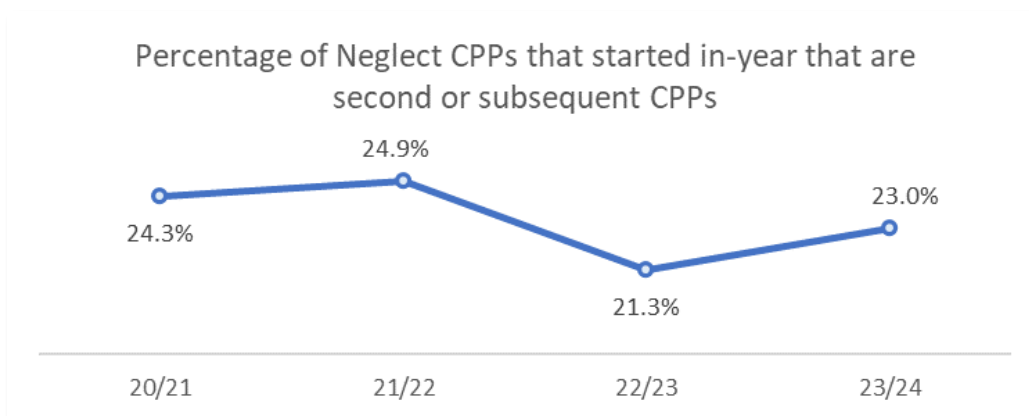
Further activity has been completed this year, building on the review findings. These included:

- Closer analysis of children in large sibling groups. This found that, whilst children in large sibling groups were likely to be in households with challenging socio-economic

circumstances, there were not significant differences in the kinds of risks and concerns identified.

- Analysis of the Flourishing Families tool data – a self-assessment tool used to help families find the right support – which emphasised the role of poor parental mental health as a driver of families’ struggles. This built on the findings of last year's review, which highlighted parental mental health problems as the concern most frequently associated with the risk of neglect.

Overall numbers of Child Protection Plans with an initial abuse type of neglect have reduced in line with overall reductions in CPPs described earlier. Nevertheless, within this context, the percentage of ‘repeat’ child protection plans has remained somewhat stable (see graph, right) and there has not been a significant change in the average length of neglect CPPs, suggesting that reductions in CPPs have not adversely impacted activity to mitigate and manage risks.

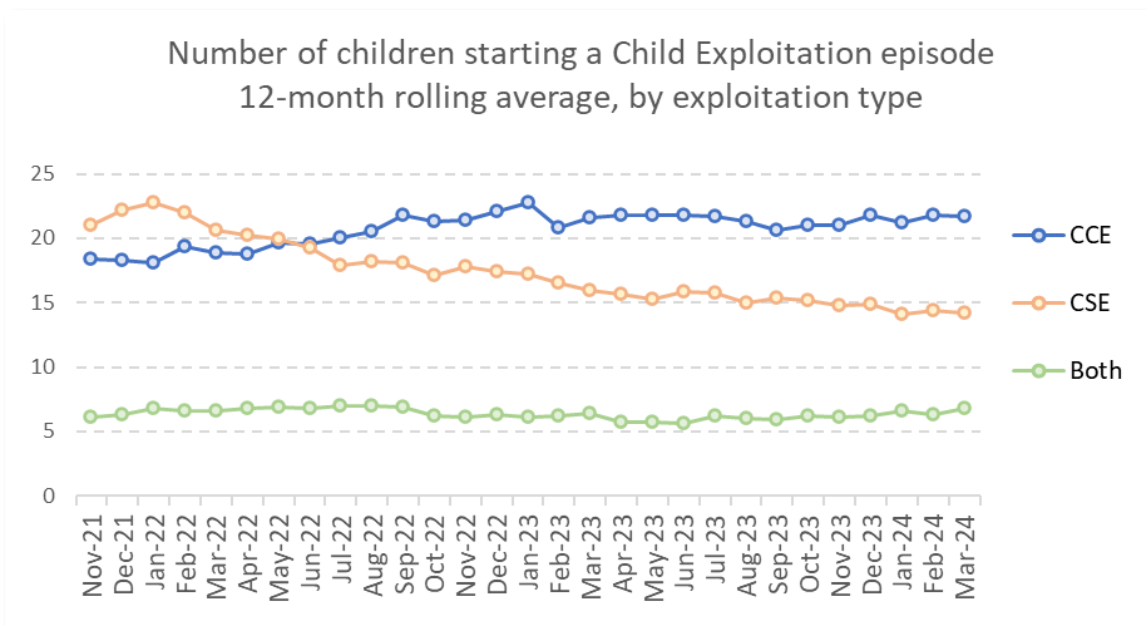


### Vulnerable Adolescents

A review of data around outcomes for vulnerable adolescents was completed in 2023/24. This helped us develop a better understanding of the drivers of risks to young people being criminally or sexually exploited. The findings of this review highlighted:

- Clear demographic trends around exploitation. Boys are more likely to be at risk of criminal exploitation, girls are more likely to be at risk of sexual exploitation; and risks of exploitation begin to emerge in significant numbers from the age of 9, with 15-year-olds most likely to have a referral that identifies a risk of child exploitation.
- Some geographic patterns – with particular areas most likely to experience criminal exploitation linked to deprivation and wider socio-economic indicators.
- A clear sense of which risks most often associate with exploitation. Gangs, trafficking, drug and alcohol misuse, and going missing associate with both forms of exploitation; and with self-harm likely to associate with sexual exploitation, and child-on-child physical abuse with criminal exploitation.
- A particularly interesting (and strong) association between poor safeguarding outcomes and school attendance – with children at risk of exploitation much more likely to have been persistently absent from school or have been excluded.

Overall numbers of children with a substantive risk of exploitation have reduced slightly over time. The graph below shows relatively stable numbers of children starting an exploitation ‘episode’ with categories of ‘Criminal Exploitation’ or ‘Both’, and slightly reducing starts of ‘Sexual Exploitation’.



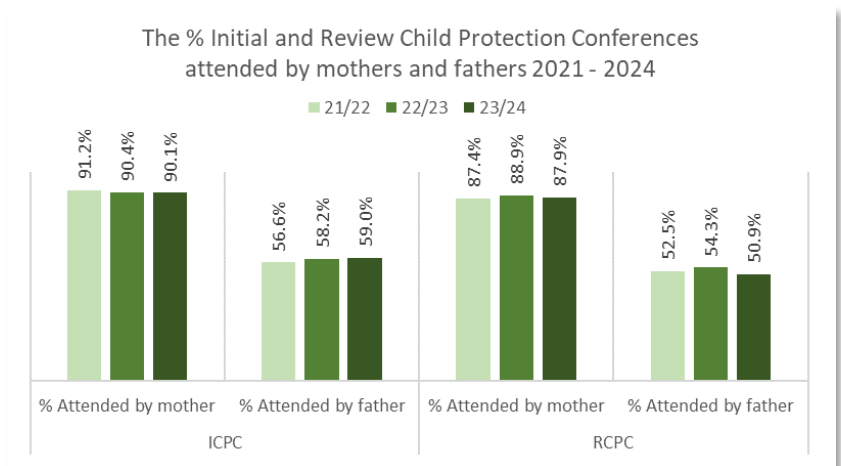
In addition to the Vulnerable Adolescents Data Review, significant analytical activity has been undertaken to support the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty, and the production of a Strategic Needs Assessment. ‘Under-25s’ are a priority group in Norfolk’s Serious Violence Duty Strategy, and analysis across the partnership has supported the development of area profiles for key places with high rates of serious violence and explore the relationship between serious violence and other risk factors identified in partners’ data.

### Community and Family Networking

This priority area does not currently have a significant amount of structured data aligned to it, and much of the focus of planning and activity is on elements of practice approaches and quality that will not be well-evidenced through numeric activity measures.

Data is available to track the involvement of fathers in some elements of child protection – and in particular their involvement in Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs), and subsequent Reviews (RCPS), with the last three year’s data presented in the graph (right).

This shows a mixed picture – with increasing involvement of father in ICPCs, but variable involvement in RCPCs. This picture will act as a baseline for future monitoring and activity.



Some of the focus of the next year’s activity for this priority will be securing relevant structured data, and where needed putting in place data capture systems to

ensure we understand the involvement of family members at the different stages of the child safeguarding and child protection pathways.

Appendix 2 lists all data sources.

## 4. Independent Scrutiny

Norfolk adheres to the principles of independent scrutiny as outlined in *Working Together 2023*, (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
- observations of frontline practice
- multi-agency audit
- Section 11 self-assessment
- external inspections

### Independent Scrutiny

The three statutory partners commissioned the independent scrutiny team to undertake two pieces of scrutiny in this reporting year: evaluating the pilot of the use of multi-agency chronologies in Child Protection Conferences; and a more extensive piece of work looking at the multi-agency response to transitional safeguarding in partnership with the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board.

### Multi-Agency Chronologies

In May 2023, NSCP board members agreed the proposal that Independent Chairs Service, in partnership with members of the Neglect Strategy Implementation Group and the wider multi-agency partnership, adopt the amended chronology format and extend the trail period of including multi-agency chronologies within CP Conferences until the end of August 2023 with outcomes of this additional testing period being brought back to NSCP Partnership Group in October 2023 for further dialogue. The pilot included children subject of an Initial Child Protection Conference in the period w/b 19th June 2023, up to and including w/e 29th September 2023. The pilot aimed to test the overall potential of Multi-Agency Chronologies [MACs] for children who are subject of s47 and child protection processes, using the amended chronology format, within the statutory timeline from s47 Strategy Meeting up to and including the Initial Child Protection Conference (15 working days). The methodology included a series of observations by the independent scrutiny team using specific key lines of enquiry to measure impact and effectiveness.

The final report resulted in the findings and six recommendations focusing on ownership and system development. By March 2024, all of the recommendations were fully or partially completed. Plans are in place to further promote MACs as a tool for oversight and analysis at the neglect tool workshops being held in June and July 2024. Feedback from the workforce and families continues to be positive.

### Transitional Safeguarding

Over the past three years transitional safeguarding has been a recurring issue that has been seen in different parts of the system, including the NSCP's Safeguarding Practice Review Group and its Vulnerable Adolescent priority subgroup. The primary issue appears to be an emergence of silo working that is not seen prior to a young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and the very different thresholds for intervention in adults and children's social care, leaving young adults vulnerable, particularly those outside of the care system and/or with undiagnosed or lower level health needs.

This is a complex area as these young people are legally adults but they may not be practically or emotionally equipped to take care of their basic needs. The areas of concern are widespread ranging from accommodation/homelessness, education/employment/training (EET), substance misuse, and mental health.

The NSCP's Independent Scrutiny Team joined with the independent chair of the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board under the direction of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners and the NSAB. The aim of this piece of scrutiny is to:

- Establish what the current single and multi-agency arrangements for transitional safeguarding are in Norfolk, focusing on what is working well and areas for improvement
- Learn from good practice around transitional safeguarding and service models in other parts of the country that could be adapted to improve the safeguarding services available to 18 – 25 year olds.
- Consider the voice of this cohort of young adults and understand what would make the most difference to helping them prepare for and transition into adulthood.

This has been an extensive piece of work and been taken in phases: Phase 1 involved desktop analysis and research which included data analysis and qualitative feedback from services across the children's and adults workforces, including education and the voluntary sector. Phase 1 was completed in February 2024 and an interim report was presented to the DSPs in March 2024.

Phase 2 involves focus groups with service providers and young people/young adults. This is due to be completed in April 2024 with a final report going to the DSPs and the Director of Adults Social Care in May/June 2024. Full findings and recommendations will be reported in the NSCP's 2024 – 25 annual report.

### **Observation of Frontline Practice**

Observation of practice is a scrutiny mechanism written into Norfolk's local plan for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. Findings are presented to the three statutory partners.

There was limited capacity to complete many observations this year, however, by end of March 2024 a report on the Joint Agency Group Supervisions (JAGS) process was completed (see chapter on priorities and projects) and observations of the multi-agency response to young people at risk of exploitation and/or serious youth violence had been completed. The report for the latter is going to the DSPs in May 2024.

### **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 and 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 completed two audits on: children with complex medical health needs; and serious youth violence using the framework for Joint Targeted Area Inspections to measure impact.

## **Children with complex medical health needs**

This audit focused on how well we identify, understand and respond to cases of potential medical neglect for children with complex health needs, i.e. those that required statutory intervention involving threshold decisions. Six cases were selected with an age range of 0 – 18 years, involving multiple health providers and open in the previous two years to social care. The overarching conclusion is that we need to improve the way we articulate our concerns and maintain an overview of the child's lived experience to assess and minimise risk. This includes better information sharing, greater professional curiosity and recognising the different professional perspectives and areas of expertise. These aspects of practice would contribute significantly to better outcomes for children and their carers.

Of the six children's records audited, auditors found that there were two that showed evidence of 'near misses' in terms of medical/life threatening incidents'. This related to poor management of the child's medical conditions. There were concerns of significant risk of harm or death as a result of the neglect of their medical needs, this was highlighted as a concern and a worry by Health, due to systemic delays and shared understanding of risk.

Not meeting a child's needs as an act of omission is neglectful and the risks need to be fully analysed, assessed, and named to ensure that the child's lived experience is understood.

A total of seven recommendations were made which can be found in Appendix 3. The learning from this audit and the recommendations were shared at Partnership Group in September 2023 and action planning to respond is underway.

## **Serious Youth Violence**

This audit aimed to understand the quality baseline of arrangements for assessment of and support offered to children and young people at risk of Serious Youth Violence. A total of five cases were selected for young people being managed under statutory Child Protection (CP), Looked After Child (LAC), and Child in Need (CIN) processes where serious youth violence is a current or significant factor. Cases were selected by Children's Services and the Youth Justice Service (YJS), consisting of children aged from 16 to 17 and involving extensive multiagency work. All of the sample were male.

In summary the audit findings were:

- Overall, there are robust and swift responses to high risk, and effective multi-agency working to safeguard against the risks posed to and by young people affected by serious youth violence.
- In most cases, professionals can establish trusting and positive relationships with young people; however, there is scope for development in this progressing beyond relationship-building, to direct and specific intervention to reduce the risk of contextual harm.
- In some cases, drive to address the wider risks such as education, emotional wellbeing, and familial relationships was not always sufficient alongside immediate safeguarding and management of behaviours. Robustly addressing these risks alongside the young person's physical safety could help to reduce and materially change the risk of exploitation and serious youth violence.
- Similarly, addressing the wider risks at an earlier stage of intervention could prevent the risk of contextual harm from escalating.



The learning from this audit and the recommendations (Appendix 4) were shared at Partnership Group in February 2024 and action planning to respond is underway. Following sign off the report was also shared with the Serious Violence Duty Strategy group which sits under the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership to ensure a co-ordinated response.

### Composite Action Plan

The MAAG monitors the outcomes of these recommendations - as well as learning from scrutiny, Section 11 and Safeguarding Practice Review - through its Composite Action Plan (CAP). The recommendations in the CAP are broken down into the Partnership's priority subgroups, who take ownership of the actions. There are now 5 sections in the CAP to align recommendations to existing workstreams against priorities with two separate tabs showing exceptions and sector specific actions. The sections are:

1. Neglect
2. Vulnerable Adolescents Group (VAG)
3. Family & Community Networks (FCN)
4. Other
5. Sector specific

Each of the sections is further broken down into subcategories: leadership; workforce development; tools and resources; and communications. This enables MAAG to analyse and summarise progress over time. Inevitably there is an ebb and flow of the volume of recommendations held in the CAP as actions are completed and new learning comes to the fore. The table below shows a summary of the 27 recommendations outstanding as of 31 March 2024.

	Neglect	VAG	Family & Community Networks	Other	Sector Specific	Totals
<b>Comms</b>	0	0	0	3	0	3
<b>Tools &amp; resources</b>	4	0	3	0	0	7
<b>Workforce Development</b>	6	1	3	4	0	14
<b>Leadership</b>	1	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Sector Specific</b>	0	0	0	0	7	7
<b>Totals - prior to March 2024 CAP meeting</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Closed Mar 24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Added Mar 24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Totals as of March 24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>

<b>Sector Specific as of 19 March '24</b>	
Children's Services	1
Health	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

#### Recommendation tracker

Date	Closed	Added	Source of additions
Feb-23	15	0	
Jun-23	5	0	
Sep-23	7	7	Complex medical health audit
Mar-24	12	6	Mock JTAI - SYV

The recommendations linked to the corresponding priorities are included in the strategy documents to maintain a clear focus on areas of improvement and ensure that the learning is incorporated into the action plans.

## Section 11 and safeguarding self-assessments

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The NSCP has a statutory function under Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 to 'to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.' The NSCP fulfils the latter part of this function through the Section 11 self-assessment and associated Challenge and Support panel meetings with partners. Norfolk has developed a dynamic approach to Section 11 which includes attention to development and quality improvement for individual organisations and the partnership.

The 2022 – 23 Section 11 recommendations were all completed and closed within the timeframe of this annual report.

The 2023 – 24 process followed the same format as reported in previous annual reports with self assessment tools completed and analysed and a staff survey sent out to the wider workforce. This year the thematic panels focused on emerging themes from the collated responses which were: (1) *Interagency communication* and (2) *Links between poverty and safeguarding and the implications for partnership working*.

In total there were 32 Section 11 self-assessments completed and returned. This is a slight reduction from the number of returns received last year; four of these organisations who did not complete a return are either national or regional and do not contribute Norfolk specific returns and the others have experienced personnel issues or changes which have made responding difficult this year. Returns were reviewed by the NSCP's Safeguarding Intelligence and Performance Co-Ordinator (SIPCo) and members of the Section 11 Steering Group.

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 functioning of the partnership. In addition, it provides reflection time for organisations to consider their practices over the year and to raise concerns that they may have. Feedback from partners supports the Norfolk approach to Section 11 with representatives from organisations reporting that the developing dialogic approach is more collaborative and supports greater confidence with partnership working and encourages a healthy approach to self-assessment.

Two recommendations were made:

- **Recommendation 1:** Partners should consider developing an implementation plan for the good practice guidance for working with fathers within their organisation.
- **Recommendation 2:** ANOOF and the Neglect Ways of Working subgroup to develop and disseminate expertise regarding the operational approach to tackling this challenging area of practice.

For further detail on both of these recommendations see the chapter on NSCP priorities.

## External Inspectorates

Norfolk County Council continues to build on strengths and address areas of concern identified in the very positive [Ofsted inspection report](#) published in January 2023. The Executive Director of Children's Services has ongoing conversations with Ofsted and keeps her Delegated Safeguarding Partners updated about any developments.

## Youth Justice Service

In November 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published [A joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](#), which involved 10 Local Authorities, including Norfolk's Youth Justice Services. Norfolk's strengths included:

- Staff know children well. Strong relationship based practice is evident (child first/ flourish principles embedded in practice) YJS practitioners work creatively to make a difference where systemic issues were identified.
- Skilled and knowledgeable staff and management team – appropriate priority given to this cohort of children
- The YJS strongly advocates for children -disparity work highlighted (particularly in relation to eastern European children
- Good understanding of data from the management team
- Praise for the Early Intervention Custody Project – look to expand
- Assured that the YJS advocate for appropriate placements including appropriate challenge where moves are required
- Evidence of flexible approach to supporting children
- YJS are 'highly regarded' by partners
- Assessments were sufficient (desistance, ROSH analysis) Initial assessments were of a good standard. Planning and implementation is good
- Strong trauma focussed health offer
- Bespoke bail packages are robust and are potentially preferable to bail ISS
- Dedicated court team model is good – positive that staff are rotated to ensure skills and knowledge development
- Evidence of quality assurance processes
- Good regional links with other YJS leading to timely information exchange
- Governance arrangements are sufficient with good links to other relevant strategic boards

Areas for consideration were:

- Some failure by partners outside of the LA to take a Child First approach – leading to unnecessary adultification of older children
- Immediate action to be taken by board to address disparity in outcomes for children heard in Saturday/bank holiday courts
- Explore reason for high numbers of community sentences following remands
- Board links with the secure estate are underdeveloped
- Take action to explore how data relating to SYV can be utilised to strengthen prevention and understand the cohort
- Ensure children subject to RUI have offences resolved as quickly as possible - some children are at risk of turning 18 prior to court, or being unable to access ROTL
- Resolve proactive use of PACE beds – develop police and EDT understanding regarding security thresholds and ensure sufficient availability
- Review the use of criminal behaviour orders. Undertake analysis of the effectiveness of CBOs
- Social care – engagement not consistently sufficient, particularly in relation to placements and children remanded. Ensure early planning to ensure sufficient bail accommodation

options are available to the courts (in terms of sufficiency, Norfolk reflects the national picture)

- Address disproportionality in relation to criminalisation of looked after children (review data collection processes LASPO)
- Consider streamlining of 'clunky processes that duplicate (ie lac reviews /remand reviews)
- Address court backlogs
- Children missing education- identify reachable moments to prevent children coming into the criminal justice system (requires strategy (including children with unassessed SEN)
- Ensure practitioners are confident and competent to move from relationship building to behaviour change interventions (Bail)
- Court staff to ensure assessment includes sufficient analysis (particularly where children are not known to us)

This feedback has been considered by the Youth Justice Board, which is also chaired by the NSCP's Chief Scrutineer, which supports joint working. Actions are being taken to respond to the areas of consideration.

### **Norfolk Constabulary**

Norfolk Constabulary also contributed to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) [inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk). Norfolk was one of six police forces included in this thematic inspection. A total of nine recommendations were made, with two main areas for improvement:

- All chief constables should work with their statutory safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively in their forces.
- This should include consideration of options such as the advice given in the [Home Office disruption toolkit](#) and an Operation Makesafe (a national police initiative to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in the business community) type of approach.

The report has been decanted into a RAG rated action plan for Norfolk Constabulary which they are driving forward through their Child Protection Working Group. Their MACE team provision and excellent partnership working mean that the great majority of this plan is already in place.

### **Probation**

In March 2024, Probation Services were in the process of being inspected. This report will be published and reported on in 2024 – 25. Probation has made real time improvements with renewed engagement with the NSCP in the interim.

## 5. Norfolk Safeguarding Priorities, Projects & Developments

The NSCP continued to work on its priorities throughout 2023 – 2024. In June 2023, Partnership Group held a priority review/priority setting workshop, assessing the achievements and work outstanding against each area. This resulted in stepping down the priority around Protecting Babies and adopting a new priority focusing on Family and Community Networking. Actions taken and rationale for stepping babies down was included in the 2022 – 2023 NSCP annual report.

Each priority area is led by one of the three statutory partners, Children’s Services, Police and Health. 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 high level actions against each priority area.

### Neglect

The NSCP Neglect Strategy has made significant progress in the last 12 months. Strategy implementation is overseen by the Neglect Strategy Implementation Group (NSIG) which is chaired by Children’s Services Director of Partnerships, Inclusion & Practice. The strategy has two clear workstream:

- Ways of Working, which focuses on using data to better understand contributory factors and best practice in terms of: the needs of children and young people; the needs of parents/carers and the wider family network; and the needs of the workforce and developing a systemwide toolkit for managing neglect cases – led by the Assistant Director of Independent Services & Practice and the Police
- Accumulative Neglect Operational Oversight Forum, which focuses on specific cases requiring strategic leaders to look at barriers to success and themes emerging from an operational perspective – led by the Assistant Director of Family Help & High Needs (social care) and the Head of Safeguarding for Cambridgeshire Community Services (0 – 19 Healthy Child Programme)

### Section 11 findings in relation to Neglect

In both the staff survey and the Section 11 returns there was a high level of confidence in responding to neglect whilst recognising the difficulty that this area of work presents to professionals. Overall, returns in 2023 showed shift in appreciation and approach towards neglect from the previous year. In the Section 11 report 2022 it was noted that: “Partners feel that they understand how to recognise neglect as they see it on a regular basis but what they are uncertain about is how to address it effectively.” The returns for 2023 evidenced all the ways in which organisations are tackling neglect including use of the Norfolk Graded Care Profile, multi-agency chronologies in child protection, activity from Neglect Champions and promoting the [Flourishing Families tool](#). Whilst partners were not specifically asked about the Norfolk Graded Care Profile (NGCP), over 60% of respondents referenced positive engagement with the NGCP and its role within their approach. Alongside the positive responses in the Section 11 returns, comments in the staff survey reveal a level of confidence and a feeling of progress in the approach to neglect as exemplified below:

- *We are working on this all the time. Flourishing families has now come out alongside training for staff and neglect champions. I feel that we are learning and making changes in light of serious case reviews.*

- *I am directly involved in this area, and have seen improvement, we need to be better at listening to ALL teams within NCC*
- *We have regular updates at staff meetings so I feel confident*
- *I think we receive really good advice around this from leadership*
- *Continue to share wider information about the strategy so that all teams can focus on this priority*

Staff identify the need for further support to tackle neglect in terms of training, awareness raising, interagency communication and also greater understanding of the impact of long-term neglect as with the examples below:

- *Better understanding amongst operational staff of the long-term impact and identification of neglect*
- *This is a hard one as we know neglect can often not meet thresholds but long-term neglect leads to poorer outcomes. More early intervention for sustained changes.*

The multi-agency Accumulated Neglect Operational Oversight Group (ANOOF) has been established to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of long-term neglect by identifying learning, both what works and areas for further development, from discussion regarding neglect cases worked within the multi-agency forum.

#### **NSIG achievements 2023 - 24**

The Section 11 findings are reflected in the summary of achievements below:

- Further embedding use of the Norfolk Graded Care Profile – seen in ANOOF cases
- Increased pool of neglect champions: from 213 at 30 June 2023 to 349 at 31 March 2024
- Extensive neglect toolbox developed; in addition to NGCP toolbox includes:
  - Resources for working with parents with Learning Difficulties or Disability
  - Clearer guidance on self-neglect and hoarding from child’s perspective
  - Multi-agency chronologies, now used as standard at CPC
  - Comprehensive drugs and alcohol training offer
  - Change models: questions for success and motivational interviewing
- Conference held March 2024 – 171 people attended *“By far the best [conference] I have ever attended in the years of conferences and training”*
- Accumulative Neglect Operational Oversight Forum (ANOOF) established
  - Positive feedback from professionals presenting cases: *“I just wanted to say I was worried I would come out of these meetings feeling deflated but its quite the opposite. Really helpful reflections and given us thoughts on taking this and other neglect cases forward - Thanks All.”*
  - Evidence of NGCP and Joint Agency Group Supervision in operation
  - Less evidence of family networking as viable part of planning and interventions
  - Cases not being put forward from across the partnership: tend to come from Children’s Services and CCS only and often held at S47
- Data profile completed and used to inform planning and measure impact

#### **Neglect Champions**

The neglect champions are key to the improvements to practice. The table below shows the sectors where they influence practice.



## NEGLECT CHAMPION: ANALYSIS OF REACH

Children's Services	56
Health	42
Police	17
Education	141
Early Years	22
District Councils	21
VS	32
Change Grow Live – substance misuse service	13
Other	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>349</b>

Health	
Acutes	7
Community health	24
NSFT	8
Primary Care	2
Integrated Care Board	1

Children's Services	
Social Care	21
Early Help	12
Intensive Support Services	10
Education Advisers, incl EY	13

Champions are provided with dedicated support by the NSCP's Workforce Development Officer, the Head of Practice & Principal Social Worker and one of the Chairs of Ways of Working; the latter is now head champion. Examples of support include:

- Neglect Champions Forum providing opportunities to bring the Champions up to speed on developments around Neglect in Norfolk and for them to share their experiences of working with Neglect. This enables them to feel part of a bigger team in addition to raising their awareness of neglect tool development and strategy implementation.
- Quarterly newsletters
- Priority placements at best practice events and conferences

### Neglect conference

The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) was approached in September 2023 by the Early Childhood and Family Service (Action for Children) regarding the possibility of organising a joint multi-agency conference with a focus on 0-2 year olds. The decision was taken that the primary focus would be Neglect of 0-2 year olds as Neglect is an ongoing priority in Norfolk. The conference was held in March 2024 with 171 people attending. The programme included:

- A Presentation on Norfolk's Family Hub development – Tim Eyres, Assistant Director Commissioning & Partnerships, Children's Services
- 'Neglect in the early years: attachment and psychosocial development' – David Howe, Emeritus Professor of Social Work - UEA
- 'Working with parents with learning difficulties where there are concerns regarding neglect' – Beth Tarleton, Bristol University and Danielle Turney, Queens University Belfast
- 'The role of poverty and equality in child neglect' – Joe Lane, Head of Policy and Research, Action for Children

- ‘The role of the professional having courageous conversations and effective interventions’ – Larissa Mulholland, University of Illinois, Chicago
- The launch of the Norfolk Neglect toolkit and a reflective session on what attendees would pledge to do differently following attendance – Michelle Dunsire, Head of Practice and Principal Social Worker, Children’s Services.

The conference evaluations were extremely positive. Plans are in place to follow up learning in summer 2024 with dedicated workshops for the neglect champions to showcase the neglect toolkit and provide them opportunities to develop skills in supporting sustainable change. In addition, following the launch of the Neglect toolkit at the conference there were over 100 views 48 hours after conference and 32 new registrations for the professionals’ pages.

### **Neglect next steps**

While there has been significant progress against this priority there is still work outstanding. In addition to the summer workshops, in the next financial year we aim to:

- Measure the impact of the NGCP through a survey with everyone trained to use this tool and a multi-agency audit planned spring/summer 2024
- Ways of Working: tools still to be developed
  - Adolescent toolkit
  - Mentalisation skills
  - Parental mental health
- Develop and embed the Family Networking approach in neglect cases with particular consideration to be given to families with parental LDD
- Ongoing support and governance for neglect champions
- Improving case selection and feedback loops for ANOOF – review planned for July 2024
- Data review of baseline neglect data profile established last year.

### **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. 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 Group which reports on areas of drug supply, exploitation and emerging themes and trends associated with county lines; this sits under the

Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership which is also responsible for delivering the Serious Violence Duty agenda

- The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance which has governance over the Youth Strategy
- The New Roads Board.

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. They recently received additional funding from the National Lottery and at year end were preparing the recruitment packs to further expand their workforce in the Nelson Ward in Great Yarmouth. With this they will be setting up a youth panel and creating two 'Safe Spaces' once the recruitment is complete. They also provide Post 16 transition support for young people in the ward, working with those at the highest risk of NEET. There is evidence of strong partnership working, for example, the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP) <sup>2</sup>are completing a heat map of what is available and finalising the consultation piece which will guide where funding goes next with delivery from September. They also work closely with schools in the local area.

Right to Succeed are delivering the Central Great Yarmouth Place Project. A co-designed project utilising young people, residents, charities and professionals to achieve improvements in literacy, youth offer, education and employment and training. A successful launch event was completed on 11<sup>th</sup> April to bring together the new co-designed branding and partnership project work.

Workstreams currently include:

- The Literacy workstream aims to help schools work collectively to improve the literacy capabilities of children and young people supporting them with higher education & future employment opportunities.
- The Education, Employment, and Training workstream aims to support young people who are at the highest risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) to transition into sustained post 16 and post 19 education, employment and/or training.
- The Youth Offer workstream aims to develop the services & provisions available for young people, funding access to safe spaces, positive activities, role models and the support they and their families need. Ensuring they are empowered to make decisions about their local neighbourhoods.

## **Section 11 Findings in Relation to Vulnerable Adolescents and Exploitation**

As with the responses from 2022 there is a good level of confidence across the partnership that the framework and foundations for tackling child exploitation are in place. In the 2022 responses there was an expressed need from partners for more information to build their own understanding and levels of confidence in how to keep up to date with developments with this priority. The returns from 2023 similarly express the need to keep up to date with their learning but with an increased sense that this is ongoing work rather than new work. This is also reflected in the staff survey with colleagues expressing the need to keep up to date on this area with comments to the question of "What do you need from your organisation to help you to address this priority in your work?" such as:

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<sup>2</sup> MAP is a voluntary organisation, providing advisers, counsellors and youth workers who work together to provide the best help we can in a way that makes sense to you. We also provide education and training for young people, parents, carers and other workers. We work from our centres in Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

- *Policies are in place as well as regular online training to raise awareness of the issue and procedures for reporting concerns.*
- *Keep staff up to date on training*
- *To continue to work together as an organisation*
- *Regular updates and information sharing with partner agencies at practitioner level*

Returns from several partners highlight the need to develop greater understanding about transitional safeguarding for young people as they move into adulthood and also to address the Serious Violence Duty.

### **The Vulnerable Adolescent Group's achievements:**

- **Support to YEF Neighbourhood Fund Project** – from concept through to implementation in Central Great Yarmouth – Right to Succeed are delivering the Central Great Yarmouth Place Project. A co-designed project utilising young people, residents, charities and professionals to achieve improvements in literacy, youth offer, education and employment and training.
- **Review and updating of online resources** – housed on NSCP website – A review of all current website content has been completed with policies and procedures checked/updated and all information for national, regional and local support services including contact details added.
- **Consolidation of training** – implementation of online Introduction to Exploitation package and whole day Tier 2 Vulnerable Adolescent Training – Tier 2 training has been completed in six sessions delivered by external training partner (Interface).
- **Coordination across partnerships** – County Lines Strategy Group, New Roads, Youth Justice Board, Pathfinder Project – The chairs of CLSG and VAG attend the other respective meeting (or appoint a member of their group to attend) to ensure cross representation and understanding. Work is ongoing to co-ordinate MACE, Youth FAST, TYSS and New Roads in community of practice events. High risk multi-agency SMT panel co-ordinated through EEOF and CPM good practice guidance in place across partners.
- **Embedding, improvement & promotion of MACE Processes** – CE Screening and alignment of Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Team, Youth FAST (social care) & Targeted Youth Support Service – CE screening process has been reviewed and good practice guidance developed/amended through EEOF to ensure consistent application of MACE model.
- **Strengthening of operational oversight and scrutiny** - through the Exploitation Operational Oversight Forum (EEOF) -
- **Development of CE Data Dashboard** – helping to inform oversight work of EEOF – CE Dashboard is fully functional and forms part of EEOF oversight/review
- **Multi-Agency Audit on children at risk of exploitation**– completed and lessons absorbed into EEOF
- **Development of Good Practice Guide for Managing CE** – disseminated and added to online resources

- **Development of Serious Youth Violence Good Practice Guide** – including notification to partnership senior leadership and joint management of immediate risk
- **Support to schools to reduce permanent exclusion** – including the provision of an Inclusion Support Directory
- **Delivery of exploitation related schools programs** – including St Giles, Tricky Friends and Safer Schools Partnership sessions

In April 2024 work commenced on a third year review of a five year strategy. At the time of writing, the intention is to keep exploitation as a priority with an increased focus on sexual exploitation. The Vulnerable Adolescents Group is also responsible for actioning recommendations from learning in relation to Serious Youth Violence.

## **Serious Youth Violence**

As noted in achievements above and in the scrutiny chapter, two pieces of work were completed in relation to serious youth violence (SYV): the multi-agency audit and a thematic learning review following the death of an 18 year old's fatal stabbing. The learning from these activities align and more focussed work is being planned, including improvements to:

- Early interventions, including work with primary schools
- Education, employment and training and vulnerability to SYV
- Children's mental health, in partnership with the NSCP's sister board, the Children & Young People's Alliance
- Understanding the adolescent brain: identity and healthy masculinity
- Understanding gang culture in Norfolk
- Ways of working with parents

Learning from the scrutiny on transitional safeguarding will also inform this work when it is completed.

VAG will continue to liaise with the working group implementing the Serious Violence Strategy to co-ordinate its response.

## **Family and Community Networking**

Family and Community Networking (FCN) was adopted as a priority in June 2023. The strategy has been signed off and is available on the NSCP website. The NSCP's aspiration is to ensure that all Norfolk children have the support and resources of a healthy family and community network to not only give them a sense of belonging but also provide them with a safe, secure base which nurtures their sense of identity and place in the world. The strategic aims and objectives fall under four main headings:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Father Inclusive Practice
- Restoration

Due to staff sickness in leadership roles progress in actioning the strategy has been delayed. It was not included in the 2023 – 24 Section 11 tool as self assessment was underway at the point of priority setting. More detailed progress will be reported in the next annual report.

## Father Inclusive Practice

One aspect of this priority that is much further developed is the work we have done on father inclusive practice. This project has been live since April 2022 and was commissioned in response to the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review [The Myth of Invisible Men](#), published September 2021, which highlighted the need for all local authority areas to improve the way that they engage and work with fathers and father figures. In order to facilitate this, it was recognised that work would need to be coordinated and this coordination role was taken on as a 0.4 FTE addition to an existing post. A target time of three years was agreed as the very minimum time required to begin to make a cultural change to existing practices across the partnership. This financial year marks the second year of the project and a midway report was presented at Partnership Group in February 2024.

The aim of the work is 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. The need for services to engage more effectively with fathers in the national report is not a new finding. The evidence has been visible and known for decades; Professor Olive Stevenson highlighted this in Norfolk over 35 years ago talking about the "specific problem of shadowy male caretakers, fathers, stepfathers and cohabiters, who feature so prominently in inquiry reports".<sup>3</sup>

Implementation science highlights the need to bridge the gap between what we know from research and other evidence and what we do in our everyday practices. The Myth of Invisible Men highlighted that the changes required need to be systemic and cultural and the work in Norfolk was planned around this. Training is an essential component of facilitating change, but on its own is unlikely to effect transformation, particularly when the challenge has been longstanding and cultural. The project was therefore designed to try to understand and then address what creates the gap between knowing and doing. To understand this, clearer identification of what prevents engagement was essential.

### Father Inclusive Practice – project achievements:

- **Foundation building:** this included a panel of expert advisors, local service providers and fathers themselves as well as identified advocates from all agencies
- **Information and awareness raising:** this included a survey for Norfolk fathers (74 respondents to share their experiences of engaging with services; consultation with over 200 multi-agency staff
- **Good practice guide** developed and launched at **conference** held in November 2023; 91 people attended
- **Training and workforce development:** in partnership with Family Hubs, a comprehensive training programme commenced in February 2024. This will be rolled out in three waves, with ongoing cohorts being trained into 2024 – 25. Participants are expected to attend follow up community of practice sessions in order to evidence impact and changes to practice.

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<sup>3</sup> Professor Olive Stevenson "Practice Issues Arising from Inquiries" 1988



## NSCP Projects and Local Developments

### Joint Agency Group Supervision

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.

In spring 2023 a series of observations were undertaken by an independent scrutineer and findings were reported to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners in July 2023. The learning raised some concerns about the fidelity of the model which had evolved from its original purpose. As a result a Task and Finish Group was formed to address these concerns and by year end a proposal was tabled for the DSPs approval. At the time of writing monitoring and quality assurance systems are still in development.

### Continuum of Needs Guidance

As reported in the NSCP's 2022 – 23 annual report, the Norfolk Threshold Guide was revised and rebranded and is now available as the [Continuum of Needs Guidance](#). The updated guide incorporated learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and was launched in September 2023.

The guidance now includes a separate toolbox to support professionals to identify and articulate risk. The toolbox also includes some useful tools such as genograms, chronologies, the father inclusive good practice guide, and a consent leaflet to support difficult conversations and emphasise the benefits of consenting to early help. By separating out the core guidance and tools, we are in a better position to make update and keep the guidance fresh and relevant. This has been well received by the workforce it serves.

### Start for Life and Family Hub Approach

The Continuum of Needs Guidance was launched to coincide with the launch of a changing approach to family hubs. Details of this are written into the guidance, but it marks an important and exciting evolution of our early help offer in Norfolk.

The Start for Life and family hubs approach is enabling us to build on the work already happening to support families with children up to the age of 19 (25 with special educational needs and disabilities) within local communities. This includes working with community groups and in the places that families already go, such as community supermarkets or libraries, where families access information, advice, and guidance. This way of working is ensuring that families can receive support that is better coordinated and is meeting all their needs as a family.

Resources for families have been brought together online, so that it is easier for them to access information, advice, and guidance. Whilst most of the work will be delivered in the local community or families' homes, families will also be able to access existing community buildings that they already use. At least seven of these venues, covering each district area,

will extend the services available onsite and be designated as a family hub site where a range of professionals are co-located from. There will also be more opportunity for families to access support from another parent or carer as we develop more volunteer peer support opportunities.

The join up between the NSCP and the Family Hub approach was promoted at the neglect conference in March 2024.

### **Family Help Pilot**

In July 2023, Children's Services launched a Family Help Pilot, which is being tested in two of our existing localities. Family Help is an exciting innovation in how we operate to support vulnerable families and children. The Local Authority is trialling the impact of larger multi-disciplinary teams, bringing together key family facing teams (Family Assessment and Safeguarding Service (FAST), Family Support and some specialist roles from Intensive and Specialist Support Service (ISSS). This approach was designed to greatly enhance the "team around the child" model, supporting practitioners to work collaboratively and removing the delays linked to moving families, children and young people around the system, referral processes and the like. This model aims to ensure families can get the support they need at the right time, and will also allow practitioners to maintain the key relationships they have worked hard to build, even when additional support is being called in.

The new Family Help Teams comprise the key services we know our families rely on, but they also have access to existing call-in services so for a swift response to more specialist needs when required. As such, Norfolk families will be working with one team throughout their time open to the Local Authority, with no step up or down and addressing challenges regarding traditional issues with consent. There is also now dedicated specialist support to practitioners around Child Protection, Court Proceedings and in delivering Interventions to prevent escalation of cases, provide early intervention and support our families the moment they are ready.

The Family Help model is underpinned by relationship-based practice, teamwork and valuing the skills of all our practitioners to build a rich picture of what life is like for the families we are working with, and what interventions we can offer to help keep children safe and happy at home in line with the FLOURISH framework. This is an extended partnership model, bringing teams of practitioners together and enabling them to work alongside each other much more fluidly. The Family Help Pilot aims to deliver:

- A faster response to families who need our help
- Better outcomes for children and families
- Practitioners feel supported and valued at work.

Each locality in the pilot has three family help teams (FH1, 2 and 3) with family practitioners, social workers, domestic abuse practitioners, intensive specialist support workers, and homebased workers. Each team has network coordinators to support the practitioners and managers in their work. They continue to work closely with Children's Advice and Duty Service where all contacts will continue to be assessed.

### **Children and Young People's Mental Health**

The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) is the NSCP's sister board and have mental health as a priority. This is an area that has clear connection to safeguarding and the NSCP provides appropriate challenge and support. Work to improve in this area includes:

- The launch of the new [For Your Information \(FYI\) Norfolk website](#) which is a new self-care website for anyone aged 11-24 years old in Norfolk and Waveney, offering reliable information on health and wellbeing. Clinically validated and designed with community input, the website covers a wide range of topics, including emotional and mental wellbeing, relationships, family life, education, additional needs and disabilities and much more. The site also offers further resources and information about local services to ensure that young people have access to the right support at the right time. The creation of the FYI website has been an 18-month journey of incredible system working and, most importantly, co-production and collaboration with more than 300 young people. The process of the initiative included engaging with youth groups, schools, and individuals to gather insights and feedback, highlighting the importance of community involvement in developing resources that truly resonate with young people's needs. FYI will continue to grow with ongoing engagement and collaboration being at the heart of its evolution. Young people can contribute their experiences by submitting them through the site, or schools and settings can get in touch if they would like to find out more about getting involved. It has been built and will be maintained by the team behind Just One Norfolk from Norfolk & Waveney Children and Young People's Health Services.
- In January 2024, it was announced that Norfolk's children's mental health and wellbeing programme, Rise Up, has supported more than 10,000 in its first year. The Rise Up programme gives children and young people valuable knowledge and strategies to support their mental health and is being delivered in secondary and special schools across the county. Thanks to the programme, more than 350 teachers across 62 secondary and special schools in Norfolk now have the RISE Up toolbox of strategies, physical activities and a comprehensive set of help to support the mental wellbeing of children and young people. This is another example of us leading the way on a national level on supporting young people with more and more areas of the country following our lead. This was led by Children's Services, including professionals working in the Virtual School for Children in Care, Previously in Care and Children with a Social Worker.

## Awards and National Recognition

Some examples of good practice have been nationally recognised, including:

- Norfolk Family Information Service received the esteemed Families First Quality Award. The award is an established national quality assurance and improvement framework designed to help organisations demonstrate excellence in helping families and recognises services that exceed the requirements set out in the legislation and statutory guidance.
- Norfolk Children's Services were awarded Earned Autonomy status for our Supporting Families programme in February 2023. The government see Earned Autonomy as those areas leading the way locally and nationally, which help to develop future policy and strategy by demonstrating what is possible. This status is held by only 14% of local authority areas: great recognition for Norfolk for our Early Help System and our data maturity. Colleagues from Community and Partnerships facilitated a rigorous assessment process at the end of last year when visited by the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing, Department of Health & Social Care, and the Department of Work and Pensions. Feedback was complimentary of the partnership approach to prevention and early help in Norfolk.

- The Head of Safeguarding in Cambridgeshire Community Services, Norfolk's 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service provider, received a Queen's Nurse award. This award is given to nurses in the community for their contribution to community nursing. The Queen's Nurses are a group of nurses who all work in the community and are involved in national work. The CCS colleague was awarded due to her role in safeguarding and supporting practitioners.

## 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. 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 April 2023 and March 2024, no SPRs were published and one SPR was commissioned. The Local Authority submitted a total of six Serious Incident Notifications (SIN) within this period, triggering Rapid Reviews, including the case proceeding to SPR.

A further three referrals were made to SPRG from other agencies:

- one from Cambridgeshire Community Services (0-19 Healthy Child Programme Provider) in relation to cumulative neglect. This resulted in convening a stage 4 resolving professional disagreement meeting as the case did not meet the criteria for an SIN/Rapid Review/SPR.
- one from Children’s Services in relation to the death of a care leaver; this was fully investigated and occurred prior to the Working Together 2023 guidance was published.
- the third from the Integrated Care Board’s Designated Doctor in relation to the physical harm of a three year old. This was deemed a ‘near miss’ case and it was agreed to conduct a local Rapid Review, i.e. without a SIN submission. Further detail on learning is included below.

NB These referrals were made prior to the changes to Working Together which shifted to making the submission of SINs a shared responsibility for the safeguarding partners from 15 December 2023.

A total of 9 local cases were considered by SPRG. A summary of Norfolk cases and issues is included in the table below:

Type of Activity	No.	Date and Presenting Issues
SINs/Rapid Reviews – not proceeding to SPR	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apr 23: non fatal injuries to three year old; children not known to services and made safe</li> <li>• Jul 23: death by overlay, services in place and safer sleeping advice given; no new learning identified</li> <li>• Jan 24: care leaver with life limiting conditions; SIN submitted in adherence to WT23 – did not proceed to RR</li> <li>• Jan 24: death of premature baby with parental DA and substance misuse. Prior to her birth, robust plans for removal were in place as there were known risks which were mitigated against</li> <li>• Jan 24: death of an adult and two children. Not previously known to services. Proceeding to Domestic Homicide Review</li> </ul>
SPR commissioned	1	Jan 24: child with complex medical health needs and perplexing presentation. SPR in progress. Learning pending.
Non-SIN referrals	3	As noted above.

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.

### **Learning from Rapid Reviews**

As noted in table above, the Rapid Reviews followed robust procedures allowing the NSCP to draw out relevant learning and make proportionate decisions. For example, the decision to join with colleagues from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) who lead on Domestic Homicide in relation to the murder of two children in January 2024 is a better use of resources and an opportunity to join up. The Head of NSCP Business Delivery and the NSCP's Father Inclusive Project lead will both be sitting on the DHR Panel.

One of the recurring themes was concern around parental substance misuse, particularly with newborns and infants, and as such the Protecting Babies Operational Group were tasked with developing an education and communications programme to raise awareness with the workforce about different types of substances, the impact on parenting and the child's lived experience.

In partnership with Change Grow Live (CGL), the substance misuse service provider commissioned by Public Health, a comprehensive training programme has been developed for 2024 – 24. The aim of the training is to raise awareness of the effects and impact of alcohol and drug misuse for everyone working in a professional capacity with children, young people, adults, families, and communities. The learning outcomes are to improve understanding of:

- The effects of different drugs and alcohol.
- The differences of dependant and problematic drinking, as well as the physical and psychological effects of alcohol.
- Alcohol detox, how to recognise withdrawal symptoms and what you can do to support someone struggling with alcohol use.
- Other substances including opioids and benzodiazepines and how our services support our people with the aid of prescribed medication.
- The use of non-dependant substances such as Ketamine and Cannabis and how we support people to become drug free.

The training is being funded by Public Health with links to the NSCP training offer. CGL is supported in the delivery by the Matthew Project and Children's Services delivering sessions on how they support young people, unborn babies, and families and how **everyone** can play a role promoting safer sleep for parents of young children.

This is an exciting development. There will be face to face training opportunities on a monthly basis and the impact and reach will be reported in the next NSCP annual report.

### **Learning from Non Statutory Cases**

In the cases that were non statutory, i.e. did not meet the criteria for an SIN, resources were put in place to draw out the learning as appropriate.

The neglect case was concerning but all partners were open to resolving the professional disagreement and the Phase 4 meeting was chaired by the Chief Independent Scrutineer (at the time working in his capacity as Independent Chair prior to the changes to Working Together 2023). The case was also raised before the Accumulative Neglect Operational Oversight Forum



was established (ANOOF). The aim is to give these types of cases a home with ANOOF in the future.

The death of a care leaver was concerning as it was a suicide. Children's Services provided assurances of internal investigations. In the future, under Working Together 2023, this case would trigger a Rapid Review.

Encouragingly, the 'near miss' case of physical harm to a three year old led into a robust piece of work. The child came from out of county and the Rapid Review was conducted with a partner Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. It was agreed at the Rapid Review meeting that Norfolk would hold a professional learning event to better understand the child's lived experience as well as the professionals' thinking.

Discussion and contributions at the event were thoughtful and constructive and it became clear that there had been some very good practice. The outcome of this learning event was reported to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners in February 2024. Headlines from this report show that this case was a good example of **what works well**. Good practice points included:

- The two children of the father and his partner had been open as CIN previous to ARC's arrival into the family. **Good working relationships** between Health and Social Work had been established - e.g. confidence in "just picking up the phone" and having messages/e-mails responded to - and there was **good understanding of the family's history**.
- The Social Worker specifically asked to be allocated to ARC's case because she had worked with the family previously, i.e. was in a strong position to **build on established relationships**.
- Quick response by the social worker on seeing the photos shown by a family member, i.e. **listening to the family** linked to learning from the National CSPR on Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson
- The **crisis team** were quickly involved and were able to begin work with the family as **early as possible**.
- The crisis team is able to match skills and gender of staff to families, taking into account the backgrounds of both family and the allocated worker to ensure the **worker best meets the family's needs** and is well placed to build relationships.

SPRG has been tasked with developing products to promote learning from this case.

### **Out of county Cases**

In addition to local cases and referrals, Norfolk supported Suffolk and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Partnerships in responding to the death of a two year old in Ipswich. The family passed through Norfolk between 1 and 19 June 2023. The Rapid Review was submitted by Suffolk, where the incident took place, while Central Bedfordshire took the lead as the local area of origin. The Head of NSCP Business Delivery sat on the SPR Panel and co-ordinated Norfolk's response and contribution. The report is due to be published following the trial, which is scheduled for autumn 2024 at the earliest.

### **Learning from National CSPRs**

Within the scope of this annual report, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (National Panel) announced two national reviews they will be undertaking: [Baby M](#) and [Child Sexual Abuse within the family environment](#). [Learning will be disseminated locally on publication.](#)

The [government response](#) to the review into 'Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex needs in residential settings' was published on 18 December and shared with the Delegated and Lead Safeguarding Partners.

The National Panel's annual report was also shared with the LSPs and at SPRG. In addition, Norfolk attended their first conference in June 2023 as well as regional roundtable discussions in October 2023 to ensure that we are well sighted on national developments.

### **Dissemination of Learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

This reporting year the NSCP did not publish any SPRs, however we continued to promote learning through our project work including the fathers inclusive practice conference in November 2023, the neglect conference in March 2024 as well as in best practice events for neglect champions, safeguarding trainers and the wider workforce.

The NSCP remains committed to promoting learning from local and national CSPRs. Learning options are written into our [local Child Safeguarding Practice Review guidance](#).

## 7. Training and Workforce Development

The Workforce Development Group (WFDG) is a subgroup of the NSCP. This chapter provides a summary of the WFDG's achievements in 2023 - 24, sets out the key areas of progress and challenge, and outlines the work planned for 2024 – 2025.

The WFDG includes a wide variety of multi-agency partners and members representing the private and voluntary sector. The range of members has recently changed with welcomed additions to the membership including SEND and mental health services. The WFDG continues to benefit from good attendance and engagement by members. It is independently chaired by Bridget Griffin, a member of the Independent Scrutiny Team.

The Chair provided a longer version of this summary to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners in March 2024.

### Multi-Agency Training

The NSCP provides a comprehensive programme of learning opportunities regarding safeguarding children. The training needs of the workforce are informed by statutory guidance, national and local serious practice reviews and by members of the WFDG who may identify a gap or a specific training request emerging in their services areas. The 2023-24 training year saw the commencement of a new contract for commissioned multi-agency training with Interface Enterprises being the successful bidder. In the 2023-24 training year 12 separate courses were commissioned from our training provider with a total of 59 sessions delivered through a mixture of virtual and face to face delivery. The commissioned courses covered:

- Neglect
- Vulnerable Adolescents
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Working with Families
- Domestic Abuse
- Assessing, Managing & Holding Risk
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Children with Disabilities / Complex Health Needs
- Professional Curiosity and Challenge
- Reflective Supervision Skills
- Voice of the Child

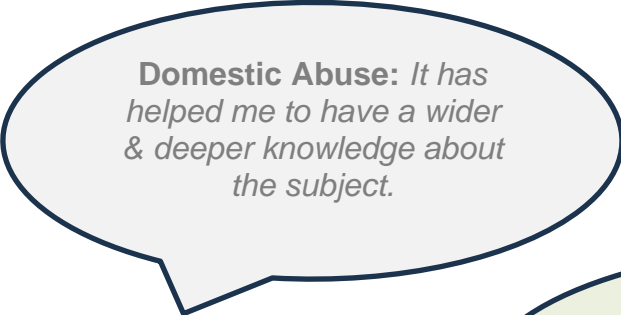
In addition, the commissioned training programme is supplemented by an extensive programme of courses offered by partners. In the 2023-24 training year 130 sessions were delivered by local partners, including sessions on:

- Signs of Safety/Family Networking
- Child Protection Conferences
- Early Help Assessment and Planning
- Gypsy Roma Traveler Cultural Awareness
- Substance Misuse in the Family
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer
- Protecting Babies
- Parental Conflict
- Working with Children's Services
- An introduction to multi-agency working for new practitioners.
- Questions for Success


The NSCP Workforce Development business unit also supported the pilot of Health Education England's Wider Children's Workforce Mental Health Training; managing the bookings for the 22 sessions which ran. In addition, four Safeguarding Practice Review Roadshows were facilitated and two launch events for the new Continuum of Need Guide. In total, the learning opportunities commissioned and supported by the NSCP Workforce Development business unit during 2023-24 included approximately 4000 attendances from

across the multi-agency network. Quality assurance of these various courses is achieved by a system that includes members of the WFDG observing the training and providing feedback, quality assurance mechanisms within single agencies reporting into the WFDG and evaluations received from participants.

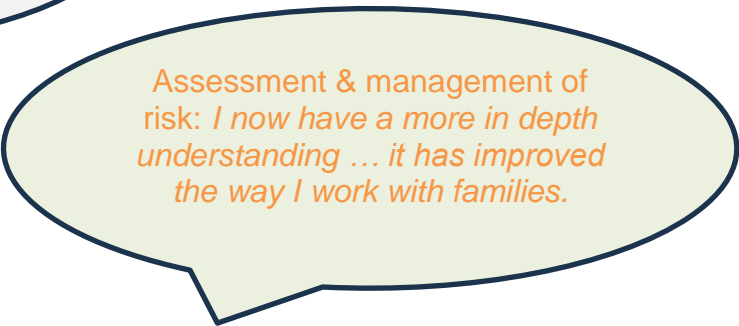
### Selection of Feedback Quotes



**Domestic Abuse:** *It has helped me to have a wider & deeper knowledge about the subject.*



**The Voice of the child:** *I feel more empowered to engage children.*



**Assessment & management of risk:** *I now have a more in depth understanding ... it has improved the way I work with families.*

### Multi - Agency Practice Week

The design and delivery of Multi – Agency Practice Week is supported by NSCP/WFDG. This took place in November 2023 and was attended by over 900 multi-agency practitioners, managers and service leads. There was a range of workshops covering practice issues (such as Family Networks, trauma informed practice, learning from lived experiences, think family and engaging fathers) and a conference. 99.3% agreed that attendance would have a positive impact on practice.

**Trainers’ Events:** Trainers’ events take place twice yearly providing an opportunity for trainer development to anyone designing or delivering safeguarding children training in Norfolk. Attendance varies from colleagues delivering training within key statutory partners, to small organisations. These events are used as an opportunity to ensure that those delivering training in Norfolk are up to date on developments, but also as an opportunity to share good practice in training and develop skills.

The events in 2023-24 ran in July and December. The learning outcomes described key areas that the delegates would be expected to commit to after attending the event. These are included as Appendix 5. The combined total attendance for these event was 40 multi-agency practitioners, managers and trainers. The trainers’ events receive consistently positive feedback with delegates valuing the opportunity to attend.

### Training Impact

Following a recommendation arising from the Scrutiny of Neglect Cases in 2021: *NSCP should develop a system that would effectively measure the impact of training on practice. This would involve 6- and 12-month reviews of the effect training has on service delivery for individuals*, a task and finish group was established in an attempt to gather information about the impact of training on practice. This group undertook a pilot seeking to understand the impact of three specific courses.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Voice of the Child, Domestic Abuse, Managing & Holding Risk

Questionnaires were sent to staff who had attended these courses prior to the course and at intervals of 3 and 6 months after attendance. A poor response rate in the early stages led to a change in the way questionnaires were sent. The pilot was evaluated in December 2023 concluding that despite various methods aimed at improving the response, the rate of response was consistently low<sup>5</sup> and therefore little conclusive evidence could be gleaned about impact. The T&FG were asked to consider what more could be done to improve participation in this work including considering how line managers might be included. This group acknowledged the significant time/resources that had been employed to conduct this work, the low response rate, they questioned the outcome of this work and whether this pilot constituted *a system* (as set out in the recommendation). These questions were discussed at the WFDG in March 2023. The conclusion of this group is that several key issues arise:

- **Implementing a system to effectively measure impact** requires a systems approach that includes gaining evidence from a range of quality assurance activities such as single agency and multi-agency audits. **Action taken:** WFDG members have been asked to include training impact as an audit variable in single agency audits, NSCP have been asked to include this as a variable in MA audits and discussions are taking place in respect to including this as a question in Sc11 Audits.
- **Resource constraints** : The resources required to implement a whole system approach to the training provided are not in place and the results do not justify continuation of this pilot.

These issues have been raised with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs).

## Recruitment and Retention

The WFDG are clear that the quality and access to training across the workforce is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of staff, although are mindful that the group has not focussed exclusively on recruitment and retention in its widest sense. It is recognised that recruitment and retention of staff is a key priority across the system and that multi-agency services routinely progress various initiatives to improve recruitment and retention. The WFDG have requested guidance from the DSPs in this area.

## Trauma Informed Training & Workforce Development

In 2022 the NSCP received funding from Norfolk and Waveney CCG to deliver a programme of learning events around Trauma Informed Practice to the children and vulnerable adults safeguarding sectors in Norfolk. A multi-agency task and finish group, including representatives from across agencies working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, was formed to design the programme of learning.

Based on a survey conducted with staff which gained the experiences and views of 286 multi-agency staff members, a programme of training a multi-layered programme of learning was delivered in 2023 and into 2024.

- half-day Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice sessions
- full day Trauma Informed Practice training
- two-day Reflective Supervision Skills training
- Trauma Toolbox for Staff sessions which aimed to address the impact of working with trauma on practitioners

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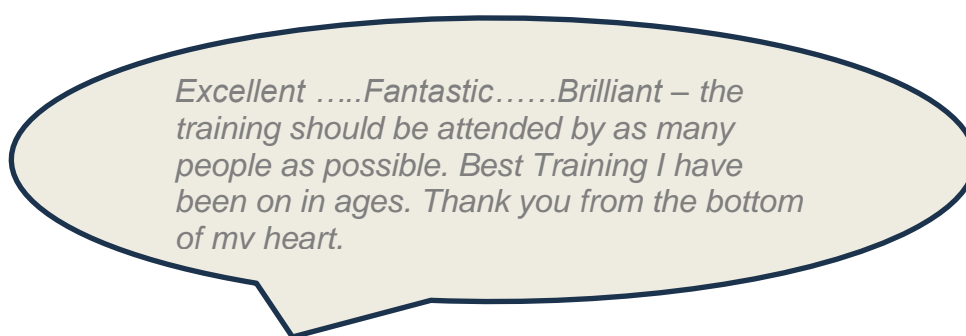
<sup>5</sup> At 3 months 19.6% responses received at 6 months 16.9% response

- a two-day leadership conference to consider organisational and secondary trauma lead by Dr Karen Treisman.

The Task and Finish Group continued to meet regularly to review how the programme delivery was proceeding and to determine the best way forward with regards to expenditure of the budget. In total there have been 601 attendances across the various multi-agency services and a variety of learning opportunities offered.

**Evaluation:** Detailed evaluation of the training was completed by the NSCP Workforce Development Officer.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the feedback received thus far across the training programme has been very positive with delegates speaking very highly of the facilitators, the content of the learning opportunities and the chance to engage and benefit from learning with multi-agency colleagues. Across the learning opportunities offered delegates have indicated a good level of confidence post training in their knowledge in relation to the learning outcomes.

In relation to the Trauma Toolbox sessions, there was evidence in the pre attendance questionnaires that practitioners are aware of the emotional and psychological impact of the nature of this work on them as individuals and valued the opportunity to develop techniques to help them address this impact. Funding was provided by Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) to enable additional workshops to be held.



**Legacy:** The TI Task and Finish Group has continued to meet throughout 2023 and 2024. Research continues to grow about the benefits of maintaining a clear focus on, and investment in, trauma informed services and there is a strong desire to continue to build on the development of trauma informed organisational cultures. An example of an initiative that works well exists in NSFT in the form of TRiM ( Trauma Risk Management). There is significant evidence that this approach substantially benefits staff and service delivery. The recommendation of the WFDG is that NSCP considers how trauma informed organisational cultures will continue to be strengthened. Four different models have been put forward to the DSPs for consideration and decision is pending.

### Additional Work Streams

In addition to the standard programme of multi-agency training, the NSCP Workforce Development Officer also supports specific workstreams. During 2023-24 this has included:

- Designing and delivering Train the Trainer sessions for the implementation of the Norfolk Graded Care Profile roll out
- Supporting the Norfolk Neglect Champion Network by managing applications and maintaining the list of champions, writing the Neglect Champions' Newsletter, managing the Neglect Champions' Teams channel, delivering sessions (where requested) to inform

<sup>6</sup> Trauma Informed Practice Interim Evaluation Report December 2023



practitioners about the role of Neglect Champions, and organising and providing additional learning opportunities and forums for the Champions including supporting the upcoming Neglect Conference

- Working alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and other partners to commission training around Adultification, Gangs and Serious Youth Violence to address an identified multi-agency learning need.
- Chair of the Regional LSCP Training Group.

## WFDG Workplan 2024 – 2025

- **Continued evaluation of training**
  - Training observations to take place across 2024 – 2025
  - Multi-agency training review (to take place towards end of 2024)
- Review of **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** and implementation, where relevant, in terms of workforce development
- **Competency Document** to be reviewed to consider required training and timing of training to be undertaken by the workforce
- **Training Strategy Review**
- **Continued awareness raising of the learning** arising from Rapid Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and reflective learning reviews in Norfolk
- **Mapping links between WFDG & other panels/forums** through membership and clarification of roles & responsibilities of WFDG members
- Supporting the **Neglect Graded Care Profile** implementation/roll out
- Planning and delivery of **Best Practice Events 2024 – 25**
- **Trainers Events x 2** to be designed and delivered
- Scope and plan support required for **implementation of NHS England's Workforce, Training and Education Mental Health Programme**

Work streams associated with issues discussed in this chapter will be progressed at the direction of the NSCP's DSPs.

## The 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 [annual report](#).

Safer has continued to grow from strength to strength during 2023-2024. Safer currently has 735 members, 165 members joined during 2023. Alongside this, Safer has strengthened its partnership working and developed new relationships with a wider range of partners, which has led to a new variety of free workshops being provided to members. Workshops have been delivered by the Disclosure and Barring Service, The NCC Prevent Co-Ordinator and Gamcare. This has also allowed members to access a wider range of advice and guidance on specific safeguarding issues.

Safer had a complete rebranding with new logo and marketing assets to provide it with a fresh professional look, also aligning it more closely to the NSCP and the NCC Flourish. Connected to this was using a new platform to deliver the monthly newsletter, which has provided consistency in design.

Safer continues to strengthen communication with members. In the 2024 annual survey members were asked how satisfied they are with the current level of communication that they currently receive from Safer. The average rating for this year was 9.04 out of 10. Safer now has a LinkedIn Page to reach a wider range of organisations and professionals

who are working with children and young people. This is a new platform to help communicate with our current members and attract new members.

Feedback from the Safer members' survey reflects the value they place on the programme:

- *“Safer has supported us with documentation and enabled us to undergo training opportunities that not only supports our volunteers but also the wider community”*
- *“It gives us peace of mind to know that we have covered the bases and we are putting the right processes in place”.*
- *“Being part of Safer have gave us knowledge, training and shared information that has been beneficial in all aspects of our organisation”*

## 8 Funding

The three statutory partners contribute equitably to the NSCP pooled budget. Children's Services and Health also cover funding for the Child Death Overview Panel, including the independent CDOP Chair and the electronic data system.

In addition to statutory partner contributions, the NSCP's income is supplemented by:

- The seven District Councils
- Training income – charges to non contributing partners and fees for late cancellations or no-shows
- DfE funding linked to project work to father inclusive practice, focus on Family Hubs
- The Safer training programme
- Drawing down from a historic reserve to support improvement projects

The funding arrangements are summarised in table below:

<u>Funded by:</u>	<u>Income Budget</u>	<u>% Income budget</u>	<u>Income To Date</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
Norfolk County Council	£138,620	28%	£138,617	
Health	£148,130	30%	£148,132	
Police	£59,750	12%	£59,751	
District Councils	£35,530	7%	£35,525	
Probation	£4,000	1%	£4,000	
Recharge - Grant Funding	£0	0%	£3,000	Neglect Conference funding from SA8030 Family Hub
Training Income	£85,850	17%	£97,145	Income from Education of £24,482 for NSCP Carried Forward to 2024-25
Funding for Fathers	£0	0%	£824	Income of £41,237 carried forward to 2024-25
Department for Education	£0	0%	£0	£47,300 DfE Funding carried forward into 2024-25
Use of Safer surplus	£11,440	2%	£11,440	
Forecast Use of Reserve	£18,400	4%	£18,561	
<b><u>Total Income</u></b>	<b>£501,720</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£516,994</b>	

The DfE also provided every Local Safeguarding Children Partner with one off grant funding when Working Together 2023 was published. This is being carried over into next year's budget and the intention is to spend this on priority work and independent scrutiny.

## 9 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 continue 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. We continue to approach systemic learning with energy and commitment to improving our services so we get things right for Norfolk children and families.

This is not to say that we are complacent in any way nor are we naïve about the challenges that lie ahead. We recognise the challenging times we have lived through in recent years and the direct impact that has on family life and 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 2024 - 25 include:

- Priority review scheduled for June 2024 and ongoing monitoring of impact on practice and outcomes for children
- Applying the learning from independent scrutiny on transitional safeguarding and continuing scrutiny work on identifies areas of the system
- Developing robust monitoring and quality assurance systems to better support Joint Agency Group Supervisions
- Continue to utilise the performance intelligence, data and qualitative feedback to ensure we are targeting our resources correctly and addressing any gaps
- Multi-agency audits planned for the Norfolk Graded Care Profile and Domestic Abuse
- Disseminating and implementing learning from local and national Safeguarding Practice Reviews and local Rapid Reviews, including promoting learning from the what works well case undertaken this reporting year
- Evaluating the impact of the substance misuse training programme commissioned in response to learning from Rapid Reviews
- Ongoing monitoring and review of learning and actions against recommendations from scrutiny, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Section 11 and audit
- Develop and implement monitoring and quality assurance systems for Joint Agency Group Supervision
- Delivering on the Workforce Development Group forward plan with a particular focus on measuring the impact of training on practice
- Working directly with the children, young people and families of Norfolk to ensure that their voices are heard and they contribute directly to strengthening the safeguarding system
- Continue to promote and support the FLOURISH agenda
- Continue to promote equality and inclusion and celebrate diversity in Norfolk

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.

## **Appendix 1: List of agenda items covered in Partnership Group meetings.**

- Anna Freud Project overview
- The NSCP's input into the social care reform consultation on the National Framework and Dashboard
- Changes to Child Protection Conference processes
- A briefing on Family Hub arrangements
- Continuum of Needs Guidance sign off
- Respect Young Peoples Programme (RYPP) – Norfolk response to Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (known as CAPVA)
- National surveys: Working Together and Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse
- Priority updates: vulnerable adolescents, neglect and father inclusive practice
- Policy sign off: Safeguarding Response to Obesity when Neglect is an Issue
- Use of Multi-Agency Chronologies (MACs), piloted between June and September
- Norfolk DA Partnership: response to legislation for accommodation of 16-17 year olds
- Evaluation of Leadership Programme: sessions from August 2023
- Oversight of Serious Violence Duty strategy and JSNA
- Family Connect and Data Transformation project
- Implications arising from Working Together 2023
- Evaluation of the Every Relationship Matters in Norfolk programme
- Feedback on the recently established 'reflective spaces' for neglect champions
- Section 11: safeguarding self assessment report
- Evaluation of the November multi-agency safeguarding practice week
- Updates on Rapid Review and Safeguarding Practice Review activity
- Audits: outcomes from the multi-agency audits on \ children with complex medical health needs and Serious Youth Violence – the latter using criteria set out in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) framework published in
- Update from Children's Services on the partners' collaborative bid for Pathway finders
- Cambridgeshire Community Services Digital Pathway
- Briefing on Early Years wraparound provision
- Celebrating Norfolk County Council achieving autonomy for its Supporting Families programme

## Appendix 2: Data Sources

Data about an average week taken from national returns and local systems, using the most recent data available, and using either the most recent snapshot figure or an average figure for the last 12 months. Sources include:

Demographic data from Office for National Statistics (Nomis):

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/pestnew>

School population data from the Department of Education: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables>

Data about births, hospital admissions and mental health from Public Health's Fingertips Child and Maternal Health profiles: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles/data#page/1/gid/1938133230>

Youth crime and youth justice data is from the Youth Justice Statistics publications:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023>

Data about formal child protection pathways (e.g. referrals, child protection plans, Looked After Children) come from the Department for Education's Children in Need and Looked After Children publications: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>.

A number of data items come from local systems and is shared within the context of the Joint Strategic Analysis Group's arrangements for monitoring activity. These include:

- Monthly data about crimes by and against children.
- Monthly data about children starting a child exploitation episode.
- Data about parents' involvement in child protection conferences and reviews.



### **Appendix 3: Recommendations from the audit on children with complex medical health needs.**

1. Referrals for children with complex health needs; Health practitioners working in the MASH, (or the referrer, if it was a Health professional), must be consulted if more detailed medical information is needed on complex cases, to fully understand the health needs and inform next steps. More explicit reference to the complex medical needs protocol (see recommendation 2 below) when making referral would support better risk assessment.
2. Auditors recommend a review of the policy [3.14 Managing Concerns about children and Young People \(C&YP\) where there are Medical and/or Complex Health issues and Escalating Safeguarding Concerns Policy](#) to be assured it reflects the recommendations made in this audit. This guidance should include signposting for advice and guidance for complex health needs, particularly for out of hours professionals.
3. Social workers need to provide greater evidence of challenge on complex cases, where medical information was not provided or was insufficient to inform or support the initial referral. This was particularly noticeable when the initial referral is not from a medical practitioner.
4. Multi-agency chronologies, need to be used early in the planning process, for children with complex medical needs, giving a holistic approach which informs decision making and next steps. The Norfolk Graded Care Profile (NGCP) must be used if neglect is identified as a concern.
5. There needs to be evidence of greater involvement of non-resident parent and partners being involved in assessments or planning for children with complex medical needs. (This recommendation is linked to similar recommendations made in the 2 previous thematic audits i.e., Pre-Birth Assessment - Oct 2022 and Referrals for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time - Feb 2023).
6. For children with complex medical needs, all agencies, including Education and Early Years, must be included to contribute to the planning and assessment process. This will ensure that all relevant information about the child and their family is included in the assessments.
7. In cases where parents or carers do not give consent - or do give it and then withdraw it – this should always be reviewed collectively by the professional network around the child, and considered and recorded as a concern, so it is easier to assess the increased risk. This is particularly relevant when professionals are not able to gain the child's voice, or the child is non-verbal and therefore we may not fully understand their lived experience.

#### **Appendix 4: Recommendations from the Serious Youth Violence audit**

- 1) All agencies ensure that education remains central to planning, and all relevant education services are included within multiagency planning and review.
- 2) Consideration by Health as to how young people's educational needs can be included within Liaison and Diversion screening tools and assessments.
- 3) Agencies to consider more frequent updating of needs assessments and planning, with a specific focus on impact and effectiveness of intervention, where the risk of exploitation and serious youth violence is not reducing or materially changing.
- 4) Learning from this audit to be shared with colleagues leading on the implementation of the Serious Youth Violence Strategy with a particular focus on the quality of assessment and early intervention where indicators of exploitation and serious youth violence are a factor and/or emerging concerns.
- 5) Contingency planning processes should be developed in order to address wider risks, i.e., education and mental health, in the event that agreed interventions are unsuccessful.
- 6) Learning from this audit is used to inform the independent scrutiny on transitional safeguarding to explore how transitions toward adulthood are being supported and risks are being mitigated.
- 7) Education and support for parents and families to understand criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and adolescent development is developed and promoted.
- 8) The audit has identified the gap in therapeutic provision that current services are not sufficiently meeting. Consideration could be given to identifying a therapeutic pathway that is specifically targeted at the trauma associated with criminal exploitation and serious youth violence, and how these factors can shape and influence identity during adolescence.

## **Appendix 5: Safeguarding Trainers' events learning outcomes**

### **July 2023**

- Commit to reflecting Norfolk's priorities in relation to safeguarding children in your training.
- Have knowledge of the Health Education England Children's Mental Health training and have considered training implications for Norfolk following the pilot.
- Be up to date on the development of Family Hubs.
- Have knowledge around changes within the structure of Children's Services.
- Have considered implications for training and practice of the new Continuum of Need document.
- Have shared good practice and innovation in training.

### **December 2023**

- Using the Continuum of Need Guide in safeguarding children training.
- Be up to date on the launch of the Working with Fathers Good Practice Guide.
- Understand the practice developments around the Neglect toolkit.
- Be up to date on the progress of Family Hubs in Norfolk.
- Have shared good practice and innovation in training.