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## 1. Who we are

### Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to the annual report covering the work of Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) undertaken 2022/23. The report provides an overview of this year's multi-agency safeguarding activity and reflects the hard work and dedication of all our partner agencies as they've worked to safeguard and promote the welfare of Barnsley's children and young people. Our shared [Healthy Barnsley 2030](#) ambition is that children and young people have the right support, with early help at the right time. That everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families

The national context has been an evolving landscape as services continue to adapt after the global pandemic. The legacy of lockdown continues to affect the lived experiences of children and young people, greater numbers of adults find themselves parenting in hardship, the cost-of-living crisis, and national recruitment challenges in Health, Education, Police and Children's Services.

Our lead Partners representatives changed when Carly Speechley was appointed as the new Executive Director of Children's Services in July 2022 and Simon Wanless was appointed as Chief Superintendent, Barnsley District Commander of SY Police in September 2022. Jean Imray, our

Independent Scrutineer, departed and was replaced by David Radford in the combined role of Independent Chair and Scrutineer in January 2023.

This year's annual report begins with a look at Service Development, outlined in last year's report as one of our new strategic priorities. A Joint Targeted Area Inspection in May 2022 recommended seven areas for development in the Partnership's work. These, alongside the findings of a Local Government Association peer review in March 2022, findings from an Ofsted children's home inspection, and a commissioned independent review in Children's Social Care in summer 2022, led to a request to the new Executive Director of Children's Services from the Leader and cabinet representative, to conduct a review of Children's Services' current operations and effectiveness.

The review, and a resultant action plan, are overseen by a Children's Services Development Board. Membership includes Barnsley Council leaders, Education representatives and Health and Police partners. The BSCP is fully supportive of the work of the Board and the governance of the Development Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership has been coordinated to avoid duplication and ensure joint working across shared areas. The additional funding to Children's Services and focus brought through the presence of the Development Board have made a positive contribution to furthering the Partnership's strategic priorities and our shared aims.

Health has also seen significant organisational change with the introduction nationally of Integrated Care Boards in September 2022. During this challenging time Health agencies have maintained their commitment to both regional and local partnership working to safeguard children. Our third statutory Safeguarding Partner, South Yorkshire Police, have been given independent endorsement of the way they have developed their response to vulnerable adults and children, including safeguarding. In February 2023, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection findings for South Yorkshire Police for 2021 – 22, which described its work with children as highly effective.

Our annual report recognises the progress that has been made in working together to keep children safe from harm, the challenges that have been met and the work ahead of us. We are grateful to all of our partners and their dedicated front-line staff for their support and steadfast commitment to safeguarding children in Barnsley.

<b>Carly Speechley</b> <b>Executive Director of</b> <b>Children's Services, Barnsley</b> <b>Council</b>	<b>Jayne Sivakumar</b> <b>Chief Nurse (Barnsley), NHS</b> <b>South Yorkshire Integrated</b> <b>Care Board</b>	<b>Simon Wanless</b> <b>Chief Superintendent</b> <b>Barnsley District Commander,</b> <b>South Yorkshire Police</b>
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## Forward from the Independent Chair and Scrutineer, David Radford

I am pleased to provide this forward in my role as Independent Chair and Scrutineer for the Partnership.

This report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023. However, safeguarding children does not begin and end at the start and finish of financial years and the report recognises this in the way it includes some work already started which continued into the year under review and new work that has been established and continues beyond April 2023.

I began this role in January 2023 and so my involvement in the year under review has been primarily by way of introduction. However, my predecessor, whose role was solely as scrutineer, undertook a considerable amount of work examining areas of practice and strategy and I am able to draw on her reports to inform this forward.

The purpose of the Annual Report, as set out in the government's guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' - July 2018, is to *bring transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity undertaken to safeguard children, and its effectiveness*. To do this, I hope the Statutory Partners will consider how best to disseminate the Annual Report for its messages to reach the intended audience.

Working Together describes independent scrutiny as part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections. This year has seen inspectorates visiting Barnsley, or wider organisations that include Barnsley in their service provision. The feedback from these inspections has been acknowledged by the Partnership in evaluating the effectiveness of services.

South Yorkshire Police received a grading of 'Outstanding' for protecting vulnerable people in an inspection report published in February 2023 and The Public Health 0-19 Children's Service also received an Outstanding grading, updated following the inspection report published in December 2021. The vast majority of Health providers in Barnsley are also recognised by the CQC to be doing a good job.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership was subject to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to identification of initial risk and need in Barnsley in May 2022. This inspection is carried out jointly by the relevant inspectorates. It concluded that 'Most children in Barnsley receive the right support at the right time to identify risk and meet their needs across the 'front door' However, it also highlighted some key areas for improvement and the Partnership responded to this with a detailed Action Plan. The Annual Report provides a summary of progress.

In January 2023 Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit to examine the Local Authority's work with and arrangements for Care Leavers. The visit highlighted what was already known to a new senior management team, that 'Workforce challenges and workload pressures since Barnsley's last inspection in 2018 have weakened the quality and impact of frontline practice'. However, the report also concluded 'A new senior leadership team in place since the last inspection has a good understanding of what needs to be improved. Its members have secured significant investment and launched a comprehensive programme of development across the council's children's services'. 'Leaders know their services well; their self-assessment and substantial development plan reflect an accurate understanding of what needs to be improved'.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership has worked closely with the Children's Services Development Board, overseeing the programme of development. As a result, key elements of multi-agency practice, such as a review of the multi-agency 'Front Door' arrangements, and Child Neglect and Child Exploitation services, are being progressed. There has been good work done on re-examining the formal reviews of cases previously undertaken to ensure the learning has been implemented and our Partnership training offer is widely accepted as being of a high quality. There are some other areas which have been more challenging and where progress has been too slow, such as implementing the JTAI recommendations concerning the Out of hours Emergency Duty Service and the provision of a reliable data set of performance information from the new Children's Services client information database.

There is no disagreement amongst the Safeguarding Partners that good progress is being made on establishing the standards, processes and culture that underpin effective safeguarding. But across agencies and in the Partnership, it is understood that quality assurance, performance data analysis, feedback from children and families and other ways of helping us understand if we are improving children's lives must receive more of our attention. My predecessor shared this view of the progress being made, but also of the need to better understand outcomes.

My own focus in these early weeks has been to ensure that going forward the Partnership has a sufficiently robust governance structure and resources to enable it to fulfil its statutory responsibilities effectively. I will also want to ensure that where my predecessor made recommendations these have been given due consideration for implementation. The Partnership must also be ready to respond to changes in national guidance and requirements, which will impact upon how work locally.

I would like to give my personal thanks to practitioners and managers across all agencies who are working so hard to make a difference for Barnsley's children.



J. Radford

## **Role of the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)**

Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together three statutory partners (Children's Services, Police and South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)) to plan and collaborate with all partner agencies who work with children and families. Our partnership was established in 2019 following the Wood Review and the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Our aim is to be more effective together than we are as separate agencies in our shared and equal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people of Barnsley. The purpose of our annual report is to reflect upon the effectiveness of services and the impact we have made together in the past year.

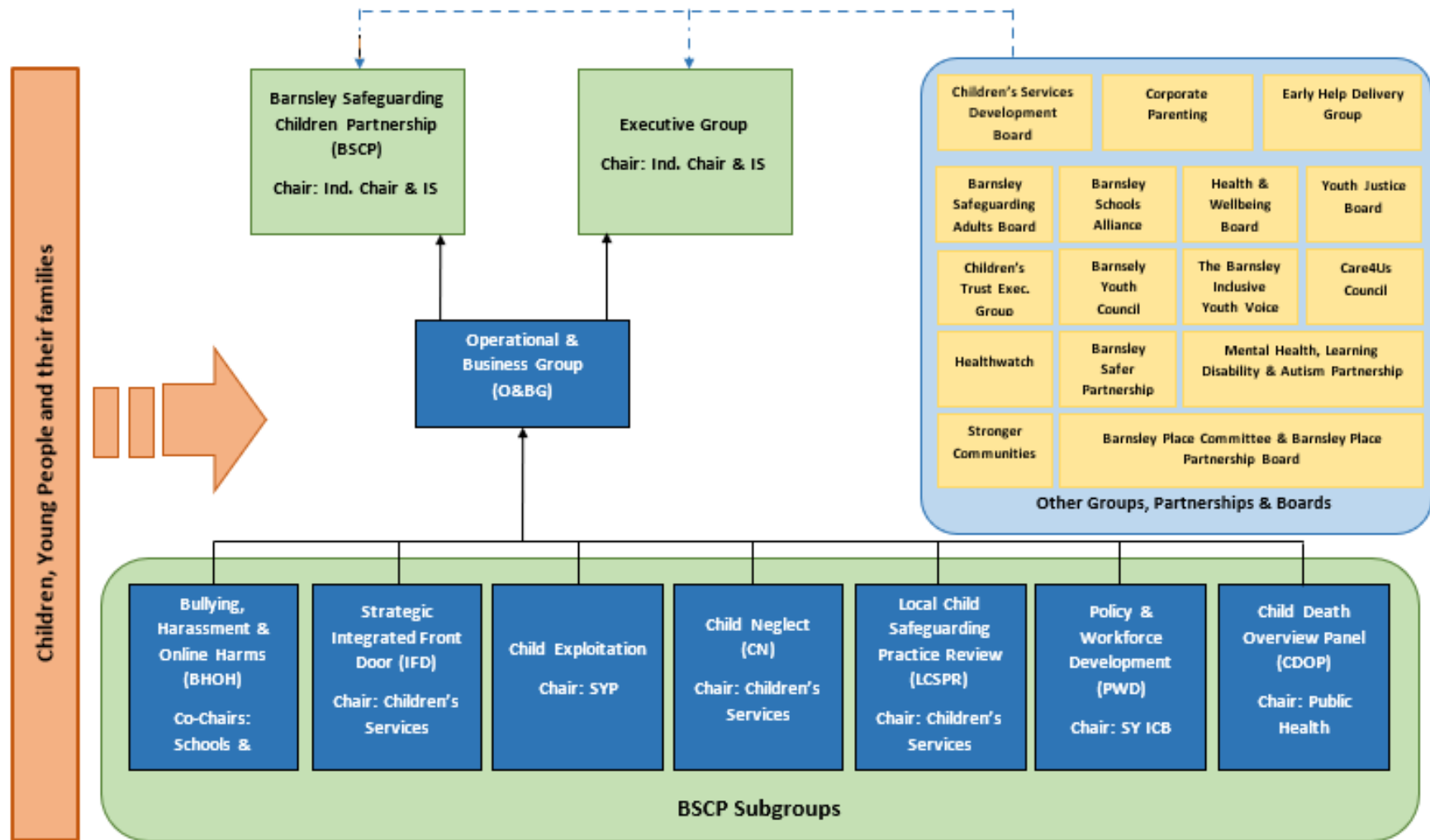
## **How the Partnership works together**

This annual report sets out national and local contexts; it includes what has been achieved in our strategic priorities and workplans (outlined in last year's report) and summarises internal partner activity across the Early Help to Care Leavers spectrum. It includes key findings from external inspections, scrutiny reports and the steps we have taken in response. Recommendations from child practice reviews have been scrutinised. It links in with the important work of other partnerships and boards across Barnsley and brings forward the voices of children and young people. Our quality assurance work is informed by single and multiagency audits, training evaluation and the work of our subgroups. Performance data helps identify where we are doing well and where we can do better. Data for this year's report is affected by the transition between Children's Services case management systems and will be at full strength by summer 2023, enabling us to finalise our partnership performance scorecard.

The Children's Services Development Board (CSDB) has brought oversight to Partnership work, where workstreams that are part of regular BSCP business also had challenge from the development board's senior leaders, including statutory partners, in monthly meetings from November 2022. The reorganisation and work of the Integrated Front Door, plans for the wider multiagency Contextual Safeguarding strategy, quality assurance and ambitions for performance data have been common areas of work.

This is in addition to usual Partnership governance, where we have aligned workstreams to avoid duplication of work. Some governance structures changed temporarily to align the two boards, which led to the disbanding of the Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup (PAQA) in November 2022. A new BSCP Operational and Business Group starts in 2023 – 24 to drive delivery of BSCP's business plan.

# Governance Structure



## 2. What have we done this year?

### Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

In May 2022, the JTAI reviewed how services across Barnsley work together in our Front Door services to identify the risk of harm in children and young people. It also looked at how we work with them and their parents and carers so they get the right support at the right time. The Front Door describes the services that may be contacted if someone is concerned about a child and require support from health, social care, the police, a school or one of our specialist services. The inspection was carried out by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to see how effectively we work together as the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership.

**The inspection identified several areas where the Partnership works well. It found that:**

*Most children in Barnsley receive the right support at the right time to identify risk and meet their needs across the 'front door' services. The recently formed Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) demonstrates ambition and commitment to improve outcomes for children and their families. However, it is too early to evidence consistent progress to improve services for all children.*

The Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been re-organised with the ambition to create an Integrated Front Door (IFD). It is changing how services work together and how work is organised. Organisational changes are supported with thorough inductions and a programme of multiagency training for all staff. Processes have been updated and simplified to better support the work of practitioners and meet the needs of children and their families. An education representative is

It identified **7 recommendations**. We provided inspectors with an action plan (which they have agreed) and these have been a key area of Partnership work in the past year. The report is available on [Ofsted's website](#).

co-located with the IFD team to improve communication between schools and the IFD. They join Early Help, Health, social workers and police. A probation service representative joins in summer 2023 and there are plans for domestic abuse, adult mental health and substance misuse specialists to join the team. Staff are now sited in one location to support effective decision-making and strengthen team working. A purpose-built venue at Wombwell is planned for next year.

A strategic Integrated Front Door subgroup has been established this year to bring greater oversight in the Partnership, which reports to BSCP's board and Executive group.

## Recommendation 1

### The quality and consistency of all agencies' gathering, recording and responding to the expressed wishes and feelings of children with whom they work

- Social Care has reviewed its practice standards to ensure consistency in recording, capturing all key events and decisions. Social work recruitment and reduction in caseloads has generated more time for face-to-face conversations with families and relationship building. Independent reviewing officers have introduced a family survey at conferences from March 2023 to ensure children's wishes and feelings are visible and not lost in narrative.
- The police QATT process quality assures 20 cases each month (for vulnerable people including children and young people) which identifies individual training needs or changes to systems and scrutiny. Children are spoken to directly in safeguarding cases where appropriate.
- Every Child Matters training equips new police recruits with a consistent standard of reporting and recording, including the lived experience of children and young people. As well as a steep rise in referrals in 2021, the initial impact evidenced some disproportionate responses in use of protection powers. Referral figures this year suggest this is now being rebalanced.
- Barnsley Hospital plan a single agency audit in summer 2023 to measure progress in capturing children's lived experience in clinical records.
- All multiagency audits include voice of the child as a key line of enquiry.
- All multiagency training has consideration of children's lived experience in course content.
- The Policy & Workforce Development subgroup asked all agencies to review their policies and procedures to ensure that children's voices are included and assured us in December 2022 these are in place. Several agencies have provided pen portraits or video stories for this annual report to demonstrate responses to children expressed wishes and feelings.

Multiagency audit findings show that the capture of children's lived experiences and wishes has improved significantly across agencies but there is still room for growth and it remains a priority.

## Recommendation 2

### The quality of referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), including the timeliness of those from general practitioners (GPs)

This recommendation was echoed by the Independent Review of Practice in summer 2022. It found that referrals varied in quality, analysis and detail, so that IFD teams spent too much time researching further information to fully understand concerns. An internal review found that high numbers of contacts required no further intervention from social care. Thresholds were not consistently applied by referring agencies (or by screening itself) and consent from families was a significant area for improvement.



It is essential that we make timely, appropriate, and proportionate decisions for children, so that they are not left at risk or overly intrusive interventions are made which are disruptive to the child and/or family. There is a commitment to “getting it right” for children and recognition that change is required.

- Posts have been increased in Early Help and Social Care and the addition of an Information referrals officer has increased information gathering capacity.
- The triage system, in place from January 2023, has enabled swifter response and improved turnaround of contacts and referrals, with increased provision of advice where there are consent or quality issues that impact on progress and decision making for children. This has also enabled a more timely and targeted response by screening social workers in relation to those children requiring further consideration and multi-agency information checks.
- Hub partner meetings enable multiagency discussions where there is a difference of opinion regarding proposed next steps in referrals. This has improved partnership relationships and strengthened decision making for children.
- The new interim structure (Triage Team and Screening Team) has delivered significant improvements in timeliness. Contacts processed to conclusion within 24hrs were at 32% in December 2022, 48% in January, increasing to 75% in February 2023.
- Feedback from multi-agency colleagues making referrals has been positive and those working in the IFD have noted that the working environment is less chaotic, and new processes support improved quality and reflective practice.
- The timely submission of police referrals is monitored through Force Daily Management meetings. There is further work to do to ensure consistency and work is in hand to explore speedier communication.
- In a change of practice, GPs now refer directly to the IFD, rather than through other health routes, reducing delay in getting children help and support at the right time.
- Multiagency audits have evidenced improvements in quality of referrals, which will continue as a measure of continuous improvement in 2023 – 24.

### Recommendation 3

**The timeliness of the local authority sharing information with partner agencies, including the outcome of referrals and the minutes of child protection strategy meetings**

**Child Protection Strategy meetings:** Increased business support has supported timely and effective communication of strategy meeting outcomes and minutes.

**Direct education representation** has had a positive impact. The representative has access to systems and is in close communication with schools, facilitating accurate and timely information sharing. Screening time is reduced and combined with accurate information sharing, enables agencies to contribute to proportionate decision-making, so that right service at the right time is more available to children and their families. It demonstrates the potential for wider direct agency representation in the IFD team.

**Escalations:** As part of JTAI recommendations, we reviewed the escalation policy. It has been promoted through familiarisation briefings to encourage timely resolution of professional

disagreements and remove barriers to support for children. More multiagency conversations take place, which progress to positive and timely outcomes for children and young people. The new approach has brought transparency to decision-making and recording that was not evident when escalations relied previously on informal resolution.

- The policy is accessible, with easy-read pictorials and online reporting.
- Education settings, Social Care, Barnsley hospital, police, Early Help, health visitors and children's mental health services have used the new process.
- The impact has been a four-fold increase in escalations. 85% are resolved at stage one.

Escalation themes include the application of thresholds, timely communications with schools, families and services, invitations to conferences and meetings, and health pathways.

**Learning has led to the following improvements:**

- An improved process for reporting between police and Return Home Interviews for children who go missing.
- A refresher session how to report FGM concerns at the January schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads forum.
- Clarified police attendance at child protection conferences.
- Clarified decision-making processes for child protection medicals between the IFD and Barnsley hospital.

## **Recommendation 4**

### **The consistent application of thresholds for children stepping down to early help services**

The thresholds of intervention guidance booklet and request for service form have been completely revised through extensive multiagency consultation with schools, health, CAMHS, GPs and commissioned services. It supports everyone working with children to ensure families receive the right support at the earliest opportunity from the right service. It was launched in March with training to support delivery. Feedback has been very positive. Early indications show a higher percentage of acceptance. Reviews and quality assurance work this year will evidence whether we have the correct thresholds and whether they are consistently applied. See guidance [here](#)

## **Recommendation 5**

### **The provision of an appropriate adult when children are arrested by the police**

Appropriate Adult provision was previously ineffective because the service relied upon volunteers and focused on those children where release from custody could be expedited. To ensure that all detained children receive appropriate support, the contract with the South Yorkshire Appropriate Adult service was renegotiated in June 2022 at the request of the Youth Justice Service. There are now revised contract arrangements with the existing provider which ensure this service can be provided on a full 24hr basis (Change, Grow, Live). The contract now requires 24/7 AA cover for children for all interviews during the custody period, aligning it to PACE 1984. This will continue to be the model at the point of re-tendering. The service is now fully compliant and fit for purpose.

## Recommendation 6

### The timeliness of the police response to all incidents when there is an identified risk to children

Some children have previously not been seen quickly enough where there has been a reported police incident, which has left those children at risk of harm.

- All incidents receive a THRIVE assessment, which is repeated if deployment is delayed, or the incident remains unresolved. Domestic abuse and child concerns are flagged and are identifiable.
- Police increased force management updates from once to twice daily in December to better track progress. Whilst the new process has brought closer management of incidents, feedback from the IFD confirms that whilst some are timely, some delays remain. If timeliness in all cases is not operationally deliverable, the primary concern is that instances of serious risk are prioritised, and CSC or EDT are alerted immediately. The IFD has planned quality assurance work to identify scale and risk.
- Police training is in place to improve coordination with social workers prior to use of police protection powers, through bespoke police training days, quarterly sergeants' away days and one to one supervision.
- Performance data will test the effectiveness of these measures in future.

## Recommendation 7

The review of the Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours service) took place in March 2023 and has an action plan with the purpose of creating a dedicated children's service to ensure the needs of children and young people are prioritised.

- An Achieving Change consultation is in hand which will create a permanent staff team of specialist practitioners.
- The children's service social work team has been increased to ensure the service is fully resourced in the interim.
- Risks associated with internal telephony and data capture are recognised and have been escalated through the Development Board and have leadership oversight.
- Review of management sign off arrangements has commenced and will be included within a practice handbook, currently in development.
- The launch of the new model is scheduled for late September 2023

The EDT will be based at Churchfields with police teams, enabling improved links and joint decision-making. Police colleagues provide regular operational feedback to ensure partnership working

### Summary

Cross-board work between BSCP and the Development Board has significantly progressed JTAI recommendations and strengthened working together in Front Door services to identify risk of harm to children and young people.

Capacity has increased and there is a focus on improving relationships between partners through a collaborative approach where all professional opinions are shared. The IFD team is co-located and has the ambition to be a truly Integrated Front Door that delivers good outcomes for children and their families. The centrality of children and young people's lived experiences is reflected in all

processes. Results show improvement in quality and timeliness at screening. Numbers of strategy meetings have reduced. New thresholds for intervention and guidance are in use in IFD teams. A fit-for-purpose Appropriate Adult service is in place and the EDT has a dedicated children's service and is progressing towards a permanent model. There is still further to go and our focus in the months ahead will be on the impact of the work of the past year.

## **Childrens Services Development Board**

The work of the Development Board focuses on the Executive Director of Children's Services' review of current operations and findings from recent inspections and independent reviews.

Summary findings from the review of current operations confirmed that:

- Staff are committed and loyal to Barnsley and work hard to make sure that children, young people and families receive the support and help they need.
- There are significant recruitment and retention challenges in Barnsley (a national issue) which makes it difficult to meet demand across the service.
- Caseloads were high, leading to fewer opportunities to build relationships with families and undertake direct work with children and young people.
- Staff sickness and turnover was higher than the norm and morale was low.
- Practice was variable, with children not always receiving timely support.
- Timely and effective multi-agency decision making was not always evident.
- Gathering and recording information and acting on the voice of the child was inconsistent across individuals, agencies and the multiagency partnership workforce.
- Thresholds of need were not understood by partners and not consistently applied within the Council or across the partnership.
- Our performance framework and quality assurance mechanisms required strengthening.
- There are not enough local placements to support local children and young people.

## **Financial Investment**

In response to the review, the Council has agreed an additional financial commitment of £13.5m to enable the service to respond to the review findings and improve outcomes for vulnerable children in need of help and protection.

## **Progress**

### **Development Board / Governance**

The Development Board commenced in October 22 and put six workstreams in place:

- Workforce
- Performance and Data
- Quality Assurance and Practice improvement
- Sufficiency
- Enabler and Infrastructure
- Contextual Safeguarding

Additional scrutiny is given to specific areas including contextual safeguarding, the Integrated Front Door (IFD), workforce and performance.

## Our Vision

Colleagues worked together to develop a vision for Children’s Services; that Barnsley is a place of possibilities: We are one service with one goal, working together to build a brighter Barnsley for every child. We will achieve this by:

- Putting children & families first
- Working together in partnership to deliver joined-up care.
- Delivered by a strong & valued workforce

## Caseload levels

One of our most immediate concerns in November 2022, and prior to the investment into Children’s Services was the high caseloads of our Early Help practitioners and social workers. It meant fewer opportunities to build relationships with families and undertake effective direct work with children and young people. To address this, we set a clear expectation of maximum caseloads:

- 20 children for experienced social workers
- 14 children for newly qualified social workers
- 12 for Targeted Family Support workers

We know that there is more work to do, as caseload levels still fluctuate due to demand and social care teams still find it difficult to recruit experienced social workers. However, since June 22, caseloads have reduced.

Caseload	June 22	March 23
Average FTE caseload for Assessment Team	37.3	17.2
Maximum FTE caseload for Assessment Team	38	23
Average FTE caseload other teams	22	19.6
Maximum FTE caseload other teams	35	26

*(note: - ‘other teams’ include Children and Young Peoples Social Care Teams, Disabled Childrens Team Children in Care Teams and Future Directions Teams)*

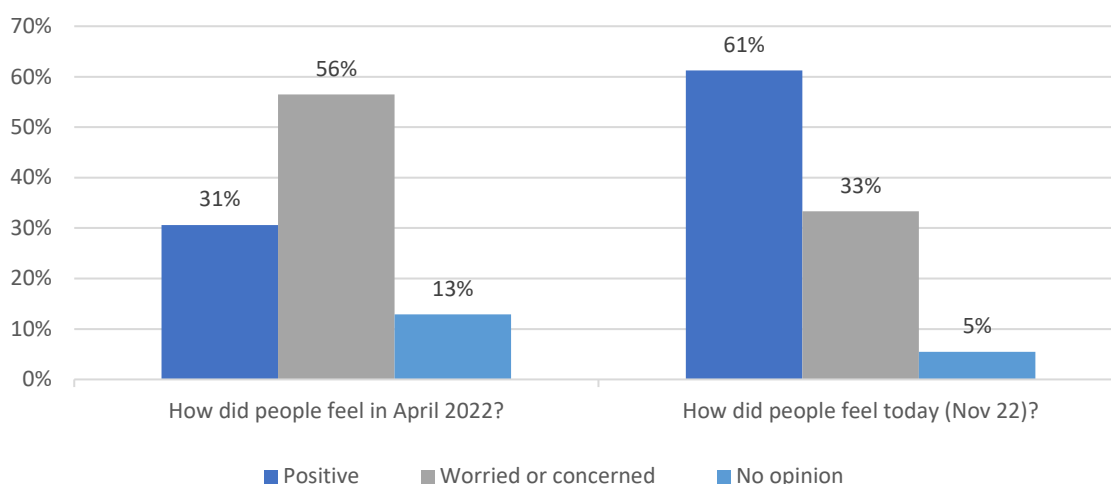
## Communication and engagement with staff

A primary goal to improve the operating environment for our staff is achieving a culture of open communication and engagement. A monthly practitioner forum supports the development of the recruitment and retention strategy, improves communications and engagement, and shares open and relevant feedback. Regular information sharing and engagement activities through team meetings, extended leadership meetings, whole service events, social care forums and Early Help conferences ensure dialogue continues.

Staff surveys tell us that the changes are having a positive impact.

## Short Survey April to Nov 22

In April 2022, 56% of colleagues felt worried or concerned about the future of Children’s Services, 31% of respondents felt positive and 13% had no opinion. By November 2022, this has shifted significantly with 61% of respondents feeling positive about the future and 33% feeling worried or concerned.



Further surveys in 2023 continue to confirm that workers feel positive about children’s services.

### Staff recruitment

Whilst recruitment remains a challenge, we have made progress. The Leadership of Children’s Services has stabilised, and all senior roles will have permanent post holders in position from July 2023. Our recruitment and retention strategy includes a rolling advert for social workers (our hardest to recruit group), alongside targeted recruitment adverts and a dedicated recruitment officer to support our activities. We know that our agency numbers are still high at 22%. We are showing positive changes with fifteen agency workers transferring to permanent posts across the service. Our retention rates of case-holding social workers have improved and absence levels have reduced or maintained across the service.

### Performance and Quality Assurance

A new Practice Development Hub supports workforce development. It is responsible for the development and launch of Practice Standards across Children’s Services and has updated the Quality Assurance Framework. The comprehensive professional development offer for social workers includes ‘back to basics’: bespoke training for specialist areas of practice and more experienced practitioners. A team manager training programme starts in June 2023 to lead a positive culture across the service and drive good outcomes for children.

Feedback shows a positive impact:

- *“It was food for thought. This was really beneficial to my role and helped me to understand how to make my recording more purposeful and it helped me know what I need to do. (Recording Expectations)”*
- *“Excellent course. All children’s practitioners and managers need to do this course to ensure consistency in decision making and better outcomes for children. (Good Practice in Section 47 Training)”*

Signs of Safety is a widely recognised collaborative practice model that has been chosen to deliver a consistent, evidenced based approach to assessing and managing risk. The model uses a questioning approach that involves the wider family and practitioner network, driving better decision making that keeps the needs of the child central.

Our challenge is to change the culture of how we work with children and their networks. The model affects all aspects of partnership safeguarding work to share a common approach and language. Introduction sessions were held in early 2023. Advanced multiagency leadership training is due in May 2023 and a launch across Children's Services, with partner briefings, in early 2024.

The Quality Assurance programme focuses on improvements in practice to drive better outcomes for children, young people and families. It considers findings from case audits within an annual programme and in line with ILACS auditing requirements. A key element is a training offer to improve auditor confidence, comprising of 'understanding what good looks like', support and guidance to improve audit work

## **Looked After Children Commissioning / Sufficiency**

The purpose of our sufficiency strategy is to provide sufficient, safe, secure, and appropriate placements for Children in Care and young people over the next 3 years and support children and young people to stay with their families where it is safe to do so.

The implementation group is looking at properties to expand Barnsley's own provision, including sixteen plus accommodation, specialist residential care and investigation options to 'block book' suitable provision.

Our Children in Care and Care Leavers have taken part in Bright Spots' online surveys, sharing their lived experience of living in care. Results will be shared at the Development Board in September 2023 and will help to shape and improve future services for children and young people.

## **Partnership working**

Our aspiration is to become a fully Integrated Front Door (IFD). The work plans of BSCP and the Development Board have aligned to take our ambition forward. The IFD, Social Care and the Vulnerability Hub are working together to develop a Contextual Safeguarding Response which will hold its first cases in June 23. Clear pathways will be developed into this service for Missing Children, Children exhibiting Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Children on the Edge of Care.

## **Next steps**

The development plan is continually reviewed through the Development Board and quarterly reports to BSCP. Whilst progress has been made and 'green shoots' are now evident, more time is needed until frameworks that support practice to flourish are thoroughly embedded. Moving forward the service will continue to:

- Prioritise recruitment, retention and workforce development.
- Focus on improving compliance and quality of practice.
- Embed the QA framework and use audit findings to improve practice.
- Further develop the Performance Framework.
- Utilise modern technologies to reduce duplication and streamline practice.
- Develop a collaborative culture with effective support and challenge at its core.
- Collaborate with partners to effectively help and protect children and young people.

## Strategic priorities

This year's strategic priorities were identified at three BSCP leadership development sessions between February and June 2022: Child Neglect, Service Development, Bullying Harassment & Online Harms and Child Exploitation. We originally planned to have a subgroup to lead on each priority, however capacity limited us to three. Service Development is a cross-cutting priority and is taken forward into the JTAI action plan, the Development Board plan, and is a lead theme in all partnership work.

### Child Neglect

**Why:** Neglect is a consistent and frequent reason for referrals to Barnsley's Integrated Front Door. Local Child Practice Reviews have themes of child neglect and there has been a rise in reporting post-pandemic lockdown. We recognise a clear distinction between poverty and neglect and recognise that both are major adverse childhood experiences in young people's lives that can affect their futures.

We recognise that the impact of the pandemic and cost of living crisis on families, and the turnover of staff, had meant that our neglect strategies (and significant investment in training 2 years ago) needed to be refreshed.

**Our aims** are to reduce child neglect and harm at an early stage, so that there are fewer Child Protection referrals. We aim for the partnership to be assured that our approach to child neglect is effective, and for children (and their families) to tell us that they feel safer, and that life has improved, due to receiving the right care at the right time.

### Activities/Deliverables/ What worked Well

- Development of the refreshed Child Neglect strategy.
- Learning from multiagency audits evidenced that early intervention work in child neglect is key to good outcomes for children and families. There is multiagency agreement that the Graded Care Profile 2 is the preferred tool in neglect work. Our multiagency training has offered 100 places this year. The number of courses and one-hour refreshers have been increased.
- NSPCC Child Matters training is delivered to all new police staff. Police reviewed their safeguarding referral form to ensure it aligns with the Graded Care Profile and the police SHARRD neglect tool.
- Launch of the refreshed thresholds for intervention, based on the i-THRIVE framework: a person-centred and needs-led approach to delivering services to children, young people and their families. *View the refreshed thresholds document [here](#).*
- A deep dive and learning review of the severe neglect of a child has been conducted. Learning has been included in BSCP's multiagency training programme. We have produced a 7-minute briefing for frontline teams to share learning across the partnership. *View the 7-minute briefing [here](#).*
- The removal of the 'multiple' category clarified the prevalence of neglect in referrals for children and young people, giving clearer insight of children's lived experiences.



### Our Next Steps

- Implement a five-point check system in the IFD so that plans are specific and transparent, are reflective, measure the quality of the care given to children and measure that change is taking place and can be sustained.
- Develop a joint Children's and Adult's protocol to ensure coordinated multiagency working with a 'Think Family' approach. To include Social Care, children's and adult's mental health services, CAMHS, SWYFT and domestic abuse services.
- Complete the Child Neglect Strategy action plan.
- Expand multiagency training for Graded Care Profile and ensure it is embedded in early intervention work.
- Develop our domestic abuse response as a partnership priority.
- Develop the neglect element of our partnership performance scorecard.

### Bullying, Harassment and Online Harms (BHOH)

**Why:** Barnsley Youth Forum and BSCP s.175 school's self-assessment audit told us that Bullying and Online Harm are consistently high areas of activity and concern. Online Harms reporting has escalated as a post-pandemic safeguarding area.

**Our aims** are to ensure that children and young people feel safer, are confident that bullying is addressed and know how to keep themselves safe online.

#### Activities/ Deliverables/ What worked well:

- Sign-off of the Anti-bullying Strategy 2022 – 25.
- Refresh of the Anti-bullying Commitment and roll-out to schools.
- Collaborative work with the DSL forum and Schools' Alliance.
- Collaborative work with Barnsley Youth Council, Care4Us and Inclusive Youth Voice Barnsley on the Anti-bullying Strategy and Anti-bullying Commitment.
- Creation of self-audit questionnaire video by youth groups to help schools launch their involvement in the commitment.
- An increase in our multiagency training offer relating to BHOH, including bullying and links to trauma, online harms and harassment.
- Promotion of support services such as Compass Be and Spectrum in schools.
- Mapping of related resources for professionals, parents and carers to empower them to support children.
- Informed and shaped questions for the s.175 self-assessment audit.
- Linked with services to address Hate Crime and promote diversity and inclusion.

#### Our Next Steps:

- Continued implementation of the Anti-bullying Strategy 2022 – 25.
- Roll-out of the Anti-bullying Commitment.
- Youth voices: arranged for school student groups to join all BHOH meetings from June 2023, to lead a discussion on working together on their chosen safeguarding themes.
- Provide definitions of incident descriptors for the s.175 audit around bullying and online harms to ensure that data collected from schools is consistent and accurate.

- Support schools to tackle bullying and online harms through the creation of Anti-bullying and Online Harms 'toolkits' for staff, parents and students. This includes promotion of accredited programmes such as the Diana Award.

## Child Exploitation

**Why:** National and local reports inform us of a significant increase in all areas of Child Exploitation as communities emerged from the pandemic lockdown. We identified risk of harm outside of home as a priority in Barnsley, based on local findings.

**Our aim** is to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation and harm outside of home. We aim for the partnership to be assured that we have clear governance and strategies in place, and that children and their families tell us they feel safer outside of the home. This commitment is reinforced through the additional investment this year from Childrens Services and SY police to fund specialist posts in a vulnerable adolescents Hub which will focus on risk in relation to contextual safeguarding.

The subgroup is aligned with the Development Board contextual safeguarding workstream to ensure co-ordinated multiagency working across all areas including child exploitation. As it develops, our remit will include the wider contextual safeguarding agenda.

### Activities/Deliverables/ What worked Well:

- A multiagency stakeholder workshop was held in December 2022 to agree a shared vision and commitment in Barnsley and to scope and shape future contextual safeguarding arrangements.
- Plans are now in place for a stronger multiagency response, including the Vulnerability Hub, to support to children and young people at risk of harm outside the home.
- Existing resource within Childrens Social Care, Youth Justice Service and Early Help have been realigned to form the basis of the Vulnerability Hub and other specialist roles have been developed and recruitment is underway.
- The police introduced the Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG), a multiagency operational group that tackles the threat, risks and harm around Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation, including County Lines. It takes an intelligence led approach, focusing on the highest risk victims, suspects and locations to share information, challenge colleagues and generate actions. The group has been operational from January 2023 and has evidenced positive results, with an 130% increase in intelligence reporting in comparison with the previous period. Disruption activities include risk reduction of 4 suspects who pose a risk to children and the issue of 20 child abduction notices.
- The role of SYP's Child Exploitation link officer (SPOC) has been highly effective and linked across BCSP subgroups and DSLs.
- South Yorkshire Police launched a regional Child Exploitation Public Awareness Campaign in March 2023, which will be evaluated later this year.
- Multiagency Brook Traffic Light Tool training, which helps professionals to identify and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours in young people, was launched in June 2022 with two well attended courses, and continues in 2023.

- We carried out three audits which reviewed the effectiveness of the MACE process, the effectiveness of the Return Home Interview process (for children who go missing), and the effectiveness of our multiagency response in keeping children safe who are on CP plans due to harm outside of home. For more details, see the Quality Assurance section on page 27.
- A governance review of meetings that report into the strategic CE subgroup showed areas of duplication and a gap in escalation routes. A review of operational meetings and reporting routes is underway to ensure children at risk of contextual harm receive the right support at the earliest opportunity.
- We reviewed the findings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to inform future data capture, to make sure that it is specific and includes geographical and protected characteristics. The basis for a CE data scorecard was mapped, and is to be triangulated between Children’s Services, health and police with specialist information being provided by other services, such as Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS) and Young Peoples Substance Misuse Service (YPSMS).

#### **Our Next Steps:**

- Realisation of the Vulnerability Hub. Specialist posts will be in place in summer 2023, including a team manager and advanced practitioners, specialists in Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation and serious youth violence
- Launch of SYP’s Child Exploitation team, in place from September 2023, to be co-located with the IFD team and led by a subject matter expert in MACE, County Lines and CE. It will allow us to improve engagement with victims/potential victims, focus upon problem solving, targeting perpetrators and more holistic protective/prevention work, such as education/diversion work in schools. A positive impact of this will be closer working with the contextual safeguarding team, focusing on our most high-risk victims. The team will drive the work that comes out of CETG/MACE.
- Commerce House to be launched as a child friendly delivery space for Youth Justice, Care Leavers and Future Directions in August 2023.
- Develop the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and Harmful Sexual Behaviours Pathway.
- Develop a contextual safeguarding multiagency scorecard.
- Finalise MACE guidance, contextual safeguarding screening tools and a referral pathway.

A development session is planned for summer 2023 to review and build upon the results of our strategic priorities work this year.

## **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

### **What we do:**

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) helps the Safeguarding Children Partnership to develop a better understanding of how and why children die and informs our prevention work. It is the role of the CDOP to look at all deaths of children and young people in Barnsley, to identify learning from them and anything that might help us avoid such deaths happening in the future.

Between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 2 Barnsley CDOP meetings were held, and 6 cases were reviewed where 4 cases were identified as having at least one modifiable factor.

Age at time of death ranged from <32weeks to 17 years. Most deaths reviewed were infants aged under one year. Two of these occurred at or under the 32 weeks gestation period and one at 4 months of age. All ethnicities were recorded as White British. Most deaths occurred in hospital: one on the hospital ward, three in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and one in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit. One death occurred at home.

What worked well and outcomes for children and families:

- A review of the multi-agency pathway to equip staff to deliver support for mothers and babies.
- A Standard Operating Procedure has been developed for women and babies in care proceedings, to provide staff with guidance of expected care.
- A training plan to give all community midwives read-only access to SystmOne GP records.
- Agreement for Compass to provide bereavement services in Barnsley for a second year.
- Yorkshire Mentoring delivers sessions to young people in primary and secondary schools and trains school staff in knife crime prevention, with the 'Wrong Look, Wrong Time, Wrong Place' (WLWTWP) programme.

**Next steps:**

- Alignment of the Perinatal Mortality Review Tool (PMRT) and CDOP processes and procedures.

## **Education**

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum**

The Barnsley Schools Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum is an informal, well-attended meeting of school DSL representatives held every term. The purpose is to support Leads with information, advice and guidance and strengthen networks to ensure effective safeguarding practice in schools and colleges. It takes place after school to maximise participation.

Recent key topics include:

- The BSCP Escalation Process: Progressing Professional Disagreements.
- South Yorkshire Police: Reporting Child Concern incidents guidance.
- Compass UK: Healthy Peer Relationships introduction and programme offer.
- Spectrum: RESPECT Programme, a Child Sexual Exploitation early intervention offer.
- 'My Body is My Body': introduction and programme offer.
- Reducing Parental Conflict: Council training offer & toolkit.
- New thresholds for intervention consultation.
- Education Welfare Service: role of the service and new attendance guidance.
- Additional meeting to discuss the findings of the Section 175 safeguarding audit.
- Introduction to the new Education Link Officer at the Integrated Front Door.

## Feedback from DSL forum:

*"I wanted to thank you and the wider team for the content that you are covering within the DSL forums. The 2 hours fly by and the information you share is very relevant and contextual to our schools. Barnsley have developed a really good model for DSL support - I have taken so much from today's session which I will be sure to share with our Safeguarding Leaders."*

## School's s.175 self-assessment audits

Safeguarding partnerships have a statutory duty to prepare a self-assessment safeguarding audit for schools and colleges, governed by the Education Act (2002). It assures schools and the partnership there is a good standard of compliance, a safeguarding culture and that they are alert to emerging themes. This year's audit achieved a 100% return from all settings.

The audit told us:

- There is a high level of compliance. Schools and colleges update their safeguarding policy annually, follow safer recruitment guidelines for staff and have procedures in place to report safeguarding concerns.
- Use of the Escalations Policy to resolve professional disagreements has increased.
- Early Help Assessments have increased.
- Whilst schools train staff in safeguarding, there is scope for more detailed training in key areas, such as online harms. The partnership has created a training action plan to address these gaps.

Findings were published in a booklet format for ease of use and went to DSLs for consultation before being finalised. Schools had individual feedback from the partnership to develop their own action plans, with progress being tracked to ensure every school follows best practice guidelines.

## Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Independent Review of Children's Services identified the Local Authority Designated Officer service as an area for increased development. Additional investment has seen capacity quadruple from January 2023, enabling a more proactive service for managing allegations against adults who work with children. There are strong relationships between the LADO and schools, where greater capacity has led to increased face-to-face visits.

There has been a 34% increase in requests for advice in the past year due to increasing awareness and reach of the LADO provision. Regular themes are physical contact, children who struggle to settle in educational settings, and advice to foster carers.

The training offer to those working with children has been extended and includes prospective taxi drivers, school transport assistants and Early Years settings.

## Barnsley Schools' Alliance

This year, the Schools' Alliance has sourced safeguarding governors training with a high uptake and has worked with the Partnership to track and monitor schools' safeguarding action plans. It offers a new secure online platform, GovernorHub, which is available to schools who subscribe to support services. Impact will be measured through responses to this year's section 175 audit.

An Alliance priority is attendance, Elective Home Education and school exclusions. The Alliance and the Education Welfare Service are working together with schools to identify students that require additional support - a new Early Intervention Panel is being established to wrap services around pupils with high levels of suspension, which should lower figures in future.

### **Elective home education (EHE)**

The Education Welfare Service works in partnership with schools, families, and agencies to understand why parents chose to electively home educate and records reasons in line with DfE guidance. They strive to ensure that all children receive a suitable education through attendance at school or otherwise, and strongly believe that engagement in education provides the best possible outcomes for young people, significantly reducing their risk of harm.

Resources are focused on working with families who have chosen EHE because they feel dissatisfied with the school system, and those that have additional vulnerabilities which may be identified by the need for a social worker. Our focus is the welfare of pupils and ensuring EHE is chosen in the best interests of the child. Investment in staffing and resources enables us to effectively track these pupils and understand the needs of the family; this includes focused work with families to remove barriers to returning to school-based education, capturing the views of the pupils and building positive relationships. This work had resulted in 66 pupils returning to school-based education between April 22 and March 23.

### **SEND Improvement Service**

The Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improvement service has undergone significant development in the past year, increasing capacity by recruiting a team of 6 SEND Improvement Officers and 2 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist teachers. This will ensure that every school in Barnsley will be allocated an officer to be the designated contact in joining up partnership services to better support young people with SEND. 85% of schools have had a baseline meeting so far, and over the next 12 months every school will have a whole school SEND audit to improve provision. It is predicted that these developments will have a significant impact in reducing the number of suspensions, exclusions and partial timetables, as well as increasing the attendance of pupils with SEND.

## **3. Are we making progress on protecting children?**

### **Safeguarding Data: What does it tell us about Barnsley C&YP's safety?**

#### **Referrals**

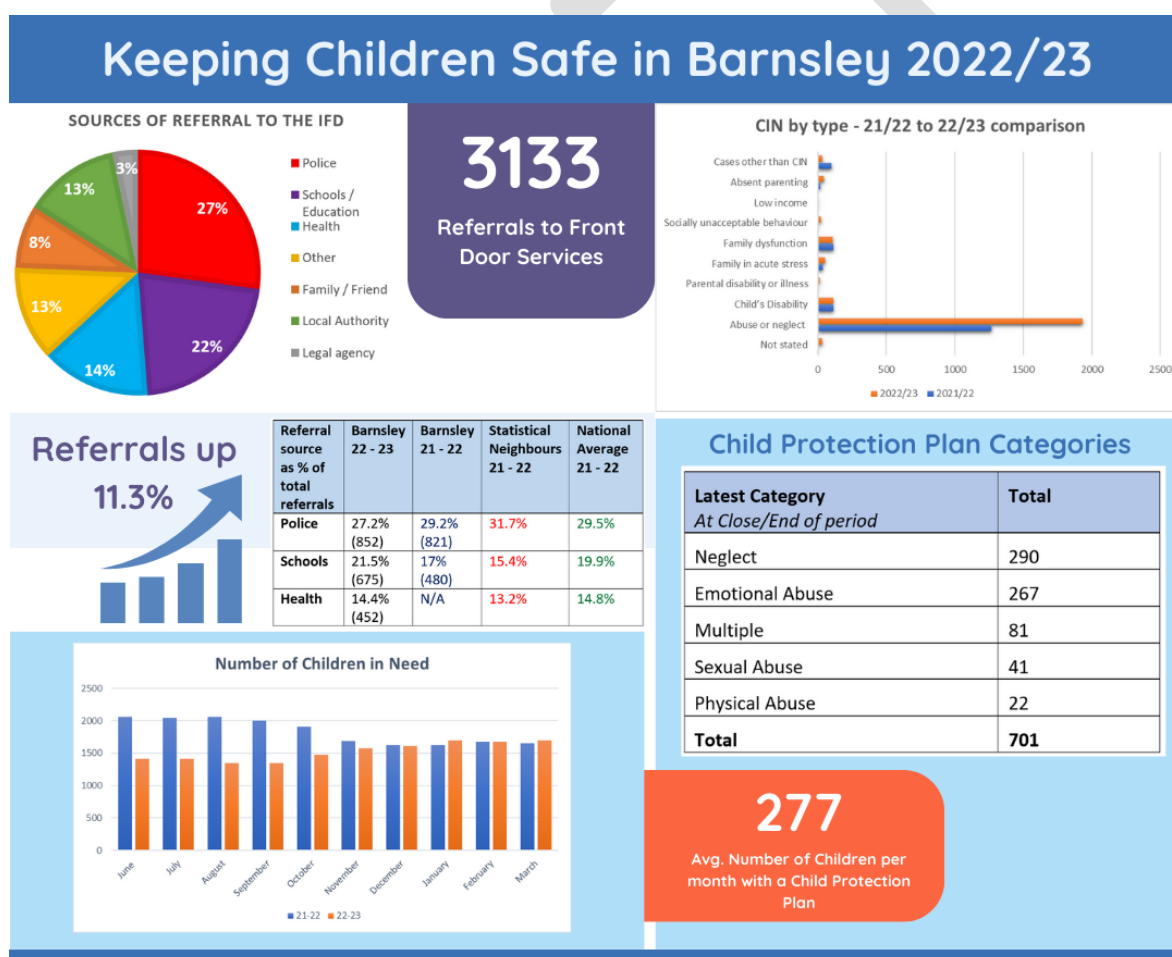
The Barnsley Borough profile 2019 has approximately 52,000 young people aged 0 – 18 years living in Barnsley. In 2022/23, 3133 referrals were received into the IFD - an increase of 11.3% from 2021/22 (2815 referrals), which is explained in part by changes in recording.

Re-referrals within 12 months have risen slightly from 18.2% in 21-22 to 20.6% in 22-23 and remain below a national average of 21.5%.

Referrals from schools have increased by 28% and reflects the increased uptake in schools of our multiagency training offer. Referrals for contextual safeguarding have doubled in secondary settings which was noted in the section 175 audit findings report.

## Early Help

Children’s services has changed its system for recording and reporting social care data to Mosaic. The previous TED system did not track Early Help cases, which is recorded on EISI (Synergy). As of March 2023, we will be able to gather data relating to the number of contacts who request Targeted Early Help support. This will allow us to address trends in next year’s report and make meaningful comparisons between Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection data. However, more broadly accurate recording of the volume of partner led early help intervention is reliant on partners proactively notifying of instigation and closures.



## Children in Need

Child in Need numbers have dropped this year from 1834 to 1525. Some variation must be allowed due to data migration, however the overall reduction fits with a picture where higher numbers of children and young people in the borough are supported at an earlier stage through Early Help

measures. The variation in results for abuse or neglect is due in part to recording changes, as we now capture all cases that are live, rather than completed, in the period.

## **Child Protection**

The average number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has fallen from 308 to 277 per month in 22-23. Overall, this represents a decrease compared to the previous 12 months and is an area of work that receives a high level of scrutiny to ensure that the right help is given to children at the right time for their needs. As with Child in Need results, we have taken a more inclusive approach to data capture, to include those that have been live to service at any point. The 'multiple' category has been discontinued as it does not help us to understand the lived experience of children. Emotional abuse remains extremely prevalent in 22-23 and was the leading factor in CP Plans in 21-22. Emotional or psychological abuse describes the continual emotional mistreatment of a child including exposure to domestic abuse and substance misuse.

## **Children in Care and Care Leavers**

Numbers of children in care have risen by 15.8% during 2022-23, this year-on-year rise bringing challenges in identifying suitable care arrangements. Whilst every effort is given to identify wider family and friends as carers, demand remains for placements predominantly for older children and sibling groups.

Children in care and care leavers need strong, stable relationships with their allocated workers. A workforce review has increased the numbers of team managers, social workers and permanent personal advisors, so care leavers can be allocated a personal advisor much earlier and reliance on agencies is reduced.

An Ofsted Focused Visit in January 2023, on the progress and experience of young people leaving care, acknowledged the commitment of the Council's leadership and management to continually improve its care leavers 'offer', finding no serious weaknesses or urgent recommendations.

A multi-agency 'Operational Group' was formed in November 2022, to deliver the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-2025, focussed on health, education, participation, and sufficiency. The group has:

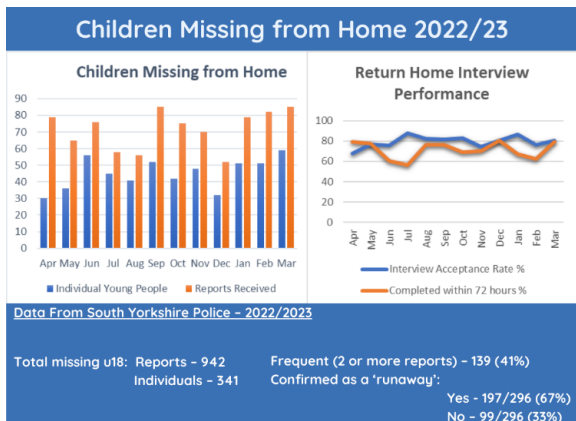
- Launched children's participation in Bright Spots' surveys *Your Life Your Care* and *Your Life Beyond Care*. Results are published in summer 2023.
- Introduced monthly Emotional Wellbeing Intervention Meetings, bringing together specialists from partners to coordinate early intervention for children in care.
- Secured bespoke multiagency training on low-level emotional wellbeing techniques that support children and carers.
- Revised the care leavers health offer to include health passports, emotional support, CAMHS Pilot until 25 years, and support for young parents.
- Changed the Personal Education Plan system, enabling the Virtual School to engage directly with school data and collaboratively monitor at risk pupils.
- Introduced the 'Motional assessment' package to support mental health - available to all children in care and those with a social worker in Barnsley schools.

Fostering and Special Guardianship Order assessments for children placed with connected family carers have increased over 2022/23, but only 11 mainstream fostering households were approved.



A full review is underway to improve foster carer recruitment and retention and deliver service improvements to strengthen the fostering panel.

BMBC is part of One Adoption South Yorkshire. The numbers of children in Barnsley adopted in 2022/23 reduced from 31 to 16 children compared with 2021/22. However, as of 31st March 2023 there were 8 children placed for adoption, 4 children who were matched to prospective adopters pending transition, and 7 children placed with Early Permanence Foster Carers who could adopt the child in future.



## Children Missing from Home

The number of individual young people reported missing remains relatively consistent with some seasonal variation and numbers are small enough to be affected by circumstances behind individual missing episodes.

As is shown in the data from SYP (where 1/3 of cases are not 'runaways'), some young people do not regard themselves as missing and absence may be due breakdown in

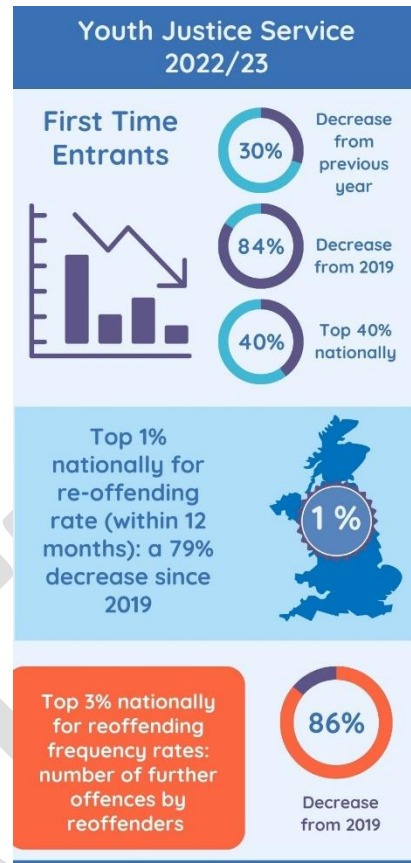
communication or conflict at home. 41% of missing reports reflect a small number of young people are repeatedly reported missing and are potentially at high risk.

Barnsley's Return Home Interview (RHI) Team are part of the wider Targeted Youth Support Service who work together with mental health, schools, police and specialist services to prevent and reduce missing episodes. Most young people who go missing accept a return home interview and the majority are conducted within the statutory 72 hours timeframe. The RHI Team work closely with SYP in multi-agency daily briefings, MACE and contextual safeguarding forums to identify broader themes around missing children and to support tactical responses based on intelligence and information.

## Youth Justice Service (YJS)

The 2022-23 period focused on driving continuous service improvement through our strategic priorities. These included:

- Working to reduce youth violence.
- Improving educational outcomes and reducing the disproportionate number of children entering the criminal justice system with SEND.
- Improving the group and drop-in offer for service users, underpinned by the launch of the new core delivery location at Commerce House.
- Locally, we have used Turnaround funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to develop a prevention delivery model with practitioners for an evidence-based 'whole family' approach. This pilot will run until March 2025.



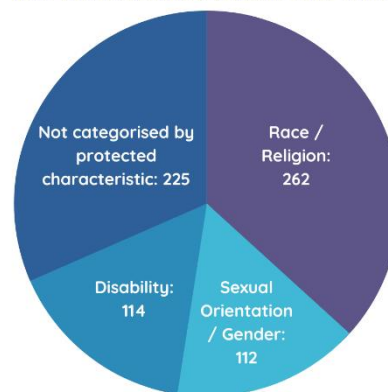
In March, the YJS were notified of HMIP inspection and the report will be published on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Recommendations and learning from this will be embedded into this year's YJ Plan and wider service improvement.

## Hate Crime

Race or religion is the most prevalent form of Hate Crime in the borough, with sexuality, gender and disability being notable occurrences. 65% of the 713 incidents recorded had multiple categories or descriptors. 74 incidents were flagged as having an online factor or being cyber enabled.

Hate Crime Incidents 22/23 with Child Victims



## Online Harms

In all Barnsley crimes where victims were under 18 years old, 492 took place online, with a **month-on-month increase from 28 to 71 victims from April 2022 to March 2023**. Whilst this is a wide crime range, protecting children and young people from Online Harms continues to be a priority.

It is recognised that figures may rise as the partnership continues to raise awareness of online harms with practitioners or families and services support more young people to disclose incidents of online exploitation or abuse.

## Domestic Abuse

SYP recorded 7,527 incidents of domestic abuse in 2022/23 where 40% had a child or young person under 18 years old in the household. The exposure to domestic abuse incidents is a clear factor when investigating trauma in children and young people.

[Safelives](#) state that “exposure to abuse has an effect on children of all ages... Children’s Insights data reveals that over half (52%) of children exposed to abuse said they found it difficult to sleep, and almost a third (30%) felt the abuse was their fault. The same children exhibit higher rates of behavioural problems than their peers, and engage in more risk-taking behaviour, making them vulnerable to other forms of abuse, exploitation and harm”. SYP recorded 312 survivors of domestic abuse aged 16 – 18 years old in Barnsley. Partnership representatives attend the Safer Barnsley Partnerships’ newly formed Domestic Abuse Board. Early Help services are currently undertaking a needs assessment as part of the Family Hubs development, which includes mapping domestic abuse services across Barnsley, and we are part of commissioning discussions for development of services who work with children where domestic abuse is present in their lives.



## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is provided through single and multiagency audits including biannual section 11 partner agency audits and yearly s.175 self-assessments in education. This year we have added new partnership and joint boards risk registers to our quality assurance work. We have worked together with the Development Board quality assurance workstream since its launch in February 2023, to ensure a coordinated approach.

We take a proactive approach and review our audit schedule throughout the year, to reflect areas where we’ve identified risk from Barnsley case reviews, outcomes of national reviews or to assure that processes are well embedded and working effectively. Using this criteria, we have carried out 5 audits and a deep dive review.

### Themes were:

- Impact of parental mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse on children and young people was an audit recommendation of BSCP’s Child E rapid review.

- A Missing Episodes and Return Home Interviews audit was agreed as assurance to an earlier audit, which evidenced improvements in practice.
- An audit of the Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) process was conducted by the Child Exploitation subgroup.
- An Elective Home education (EHE) audit was completed in response to the increased numbers of children being electively home educated in Barnsley, in line with the national post-pandemic trend.
- The new Bruising in Non-Mobile babies' protocol was audited 6 months after implementation to assure it was embedded.
- A deep dive review of a case of severe neglect identified recommendations for 11 agencies. Multiagency learning themes were professional curiosity, information-sharing to include siblings and family, capture of children's lived experiences and greater use of the Graded Care Profile 2.

#### **What did we learn?**

- Improvements in accuracy and timeliness of information-sharing and closer joint working in areas of Hidden Harm is required to ensure effective working with families and to keep children safe.
- Attendance of all relevant teams at conferences and reviews supports a Think Family approach.
- Interventions in MACE process are not always effective in keeping children safe and would benefit from further consideration as part of broader contextual safeguarding.
- BSCP to have EHE cited as an area of vulnerability, due to increased numbers in Barnsley and the limits of the legislation regarding EHE oversight.
- Where the Bruising protocol is applied, babies were safer and their lived experiences were recorded and understood.
- There is scope for further multiagency learning in professional curiosity, information-sharing to include siblings and family, capture of children's lived experiences and greater use of the Graded Care Profile 2.

#### **What did we do?**

- Plans for a joint Children's and Adult's protocol to ensure coordinated multiagency working with a 'Think Family' approach. To include Social Care, children's and adult's mental health services, CAMHS, SWYFT and domestic abuse services, to be developed in 2023 – 2024.
- Revised the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership and Integrated Front Door Information-Sharing Agreement, signed by 33 agencies.
- Schools, mental health and Return Home Interview teams invited to conferences and strategy meetings to ensure richness of information and children's lived experience.
- MACE audit findings led to independent scrutiny of existing processes and have informed the development of the Contextual Safeguarding Response and Vulnerability Hub.
- Creation of Electively Home Educated practice guidance, to ensure all services are sighted upon the potential additional vulnerabilities for children who are EHE and their role in identifying and responding to them.

- An additional post to support families where children are electively home educated.
- Barnsley Hospital to conduct a single agency audit of the Bruising protocol and a follow-up multiagency audit to take place in 2023.
- Learning from the Deep Dive informed the refreshed Child Neglect Strategy and the requirement that Graded Care Profile 2 be used by all agencies as an early intervention tool.
- Professional Curiosity training resources were shared in team meetings.
- A New process is in development for schools to share sibling concerns.
- Produced and circulated a 7-minute briefing of the Child K deep dive review.

The impact of these actions will support coordinated, multiagency working and consistent practice that supports good outcomes for children and their families.

## Children and Young People's Voices

### Youth Voice Groups

Barnsley has several well-established youth voice groups that help to keep the voices of children and young people at the heart of partnership work. Barnsley Youth Council, Care4Us and Inclusive Youth Voice (IYV) groups consult with their peers in schools, college and the community to bring their voices to the Partnership.

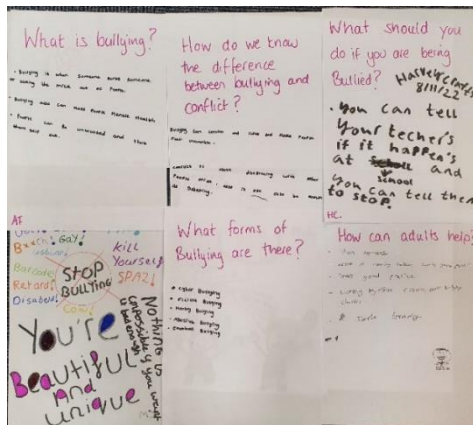
In Safeguarding Awareness Week, the IYV created questionnaires for schools to provide check and challenge to the Anti-Bullying commitment and a video to help launch in schools. They promoted the 'Safeguarding and Safe Places' consultation in December and raised awareness for #CEADay23 (Child exploitation) in March.



Groups informed the Engagement Charter with Chilypep, the re-design of CAMHS services for what an ideal mental health service would look like and promoted the #NoPlaceForHate campaign.

Youth Councillors also ran a joint Relationship Health Sexual Education consultation with Barnsley Council's Public Health Team; it uncovered key concerns, such as there not being enough information around sexual health and wellbeing in lessons. Learning will be used to inform future work.





You can hear about their activities and safeguarding working their annual reports videos here:

- [Barnsley Youth Council](#)
- [Annual Report 22/23](#)
- [Care4Us Annual Report 22/23](#)
- [Inclusive Youth Voice 22/23](#)



## Supporting Young People

Barnsley Public Health hosted the Healthier Futures 'Let's hear your voice' survey in 2022. This is health and lifestyle survey for pupils in years 4, 6, 8, 10 and post-16s. It will help shape future services and school curriculums, to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Barnsley.

The Partnership brings together commissioned services to support children and young people.

Chilypep (the Children and Young People's Empowerment Project) provides support through H.O.M.E (Helping Our Mental 'Ealth), an early support mental health hub for young people aged 11 – 25. It runs a weekly wellbeing programme and Talk@HOME, a 1:1 counselling service.

In a survey earlier this year, 80% of young people said that H.O.M.E had helped them to build and maintain relationships and support systems, and 91% said that they feel their voice is heard at the service. 74% said that H.O.M.E had helped them at a critical point or when they were in crisis.

*"HOME has given me almost family-like support".*

*"Being part of HOME helps my confidence and I feel able to deal with things more".*

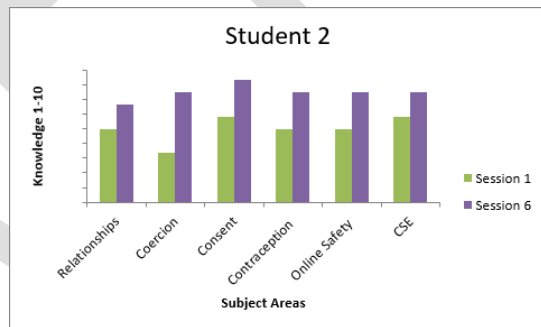
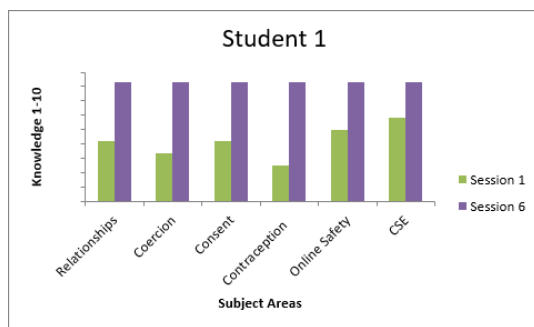
This year, they have created the 'Open Up Interactive Map' which lists wellbeing and youthwork organisations, working alongside Branching Minds Barnsley - a single point of contact for Compass Be and CAMHS.

Compass Be offer workshops to parents, assemblies to pupils, and 1:1 sessions around a range of topics, at both primary and secondary schools. They measure impact through the feedback they receive.

*“The lessons about group chats were good and how to leave groups - it has helped - there are now less arguments”.*

*“The workshop was very useful in preparing Y6 children for potential peer pressure issues as they transition into secondary school”.*

Spectrum Community Health delivers Relationship and Sex Education to secondary-age pupils in schools across the borough, and an educational programme (RESPECT) designed to support young people (on a referral basis) who are at potential risk of child sexual exploitation.



To measure impact, students are asked to assess their knowledge at the beginning and end of the programme, with positive results.

### Feedback from a Residential Children’s home in 2022/23:

*“The programme has been amazing for X; they have learned so much about sexual health and other important topics such as consent and coercion. After each session they have passed on their knowledge to staff; very eager to share this and saying each time they learned things they had not previously thought about. The whole staff team believe that X now has the skills to keep themselves safe and minimise their risk of CSE as much as possible”.*

From April 2023, Kooth will offer a digital mental health support service for Barnsley children aged 11+

### Barnardo’s Young Carers and Sibling Support Service

Barnsley Young Carers Service is provided by Barnardo’s. The following is an account given by a young carer, aged 13, who recently used their Advocacy service when going through Child Protection measures.

## Young Carers

*“When I did Young Carers, it was good because K came to school to see me and help me and I also went to the group where we played lots of games and did nice creative things. We could talk about things that we were worried about. After that I got to go to Young Carers Council. It’s really good fun, there’s always something to do, you’re not just sat there. Everyone’s in the same situation as me, they understand what I’m going through – it makes it easier to talk to them.*

*Because I am a member of the YCC now I always have something to look forward to even if it is a month away. It gives me something to focus on, especially if you don’t go anywhere much and have got a really boring life. I have friends I didn’t have before.”*

*“When it all happened, I thought I was going to be taken away from my Mum. It felt very scary sometimes. I wanted it to go away.*

*Not being involved in the meeting [was good] when everyone would have been talking about me but I’d said how I feel to D (advocacy worker).*

*Me and my Mum are getting better [now] and back to normal, it’s not like it was when it happened. It’s better.”*

## Advocacy

**Children and Young People stories.** Hear their experiences of services in these short films:



## 4. Implementing Learning and Raising Awareness

### Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR)

The purpose of LCSPR subgroup is to carry out arrangements for Rapid and Child Practice Reviews, in line with requirements of Working Together 2018, in order to identify learning from themes in local and national findings. It reviews action plans from completed reviews to ensure that all learning points are implemented, to improve our approach to safeguarding children in Barnsley and achieve better outcomes.

In May 2022, the National Panel published its report into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. We considered the strengths and challenges of our own safeguarding arrangements



in relation to the findings and recommendations of the report. A key theme was how we respond to concerns about children's safety, raised by families and through anonymous referrals.

The Performance & Quality Assurance (PAQA) subgroup completed an audit of family and anonymous referrals in spring 2022 and were assured that the response in the cases audited, is as thorough as it is to those referrals made by practitioners and agencies.

The JTAI findings in May 2022 observed that whilst our partnership is 'proactive responding to local and national issues . . . . that the commissioning of child safeguarding practice reviews does not always provide partners with all the information they need to provide learning from serious incidents.'

In response, we reviewed recommendations of two earlier child practice reviews to ensure recommendations had been implemented and to identify any additional learning to improve practice not captured in the original review.

Our review of Child W and Child X recommendations identified that specialist training was required to support better assessment around substance misuse and a conversation with commissioned services to assure they are sufficient to support risk assessment and planning. An ambition of the subgroup is to develop a joint protocol with adult social care, mental health, GPs and substance abuse services, for a co-ordinated 'Think Family' approach.

No new practice reviews have been undertaken. Child E, which began in 2022, was finalised, with recommendations focused on specific practice shifts that will lead to improved outcomes. Its action plan is agreed and in progress. We identified that two completed local Child Practice Reviews in 2021 had not been shared with the National Panel, which has been remedied. We have updated and shared BSCP's Serious Incident Notifications to the National Safeguarding Panel for a Rapid Review process.

A National Safeguarding Practice Review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex needs in residential settings was published in October 2022. The National Panel asked all Directors of Children's Services to undertake their own internal safety and quality reviews of Children Looked After placed in residential school settings. The group considered the Child Safeguarding Review of Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities placed in residential settings in Barnsley, which identified no safeguarding issues for the children subject to Barnsley's review.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel held a Yorkshire and Humber round table event to consider their recent review of bruising in non-mobile infants. The themes linked with our refreshed bruising policy, and a multiagency audit by the PAQA subgroup in December 2022, assured us that where the policy was embedded, it was effective in reducing risk of harm in non-mobile babies and that their lived experience was recorded by practitioners.

The subgroup considered the NSPCC report on Education and Child Practice Reviews and presented the recommendations to the Schools' Alliance and Designated Safeguarding Leads forums. The National Panel's Multiagency and Safeguarding Domestic Abuse briefing paper prompted a discussion about partnership work in relation to domestic abuse and improvements in development across Barnsley. There is mapping work taking place to ensure best understanding of services and support.

The annual report of the National Panel summary was discussed and reminded the subgroup of the breadth of work undertaken by the panel in the last 12 months. The group has shared the learning from National Panel events and publications with the partnership.

## **First Year of Life**

### **Safe Sleep**

Sadly in 2020, 5 babies died in Barnsley from sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI). This figure was statistically high and one as a partnership we were determined to reduce. It is therefore extremely pleasing to report we have had no SUDI deaths since 2020.

The partnership has taken a pro-active and multi-agency approach to prevention. Drawing on learning from local and national reviews, agencies have worked collectively to look at how they assess risk and work with families to promote safe sleep. This has been supported by the development of multi-agency guidance, and training. Taking the approach that 'every contact counts', whether this be detailed information/support provided by a health visitor or contact with a substance misuse worker. We have also run several public health awareness campaigns.

In the last year we have shared our work with other areas and the radio campaign has been shared in several parts of the country including the Northeast, Yorkshire and Humber. We are also leading work across the ICB to promote safe sleep and our work is being adopted across the region. For more information on safe sleep visit [The Lullaby Trust - Safer sleep for babies, Support for families](#)

### **ICON**

We have taken the same multiagency approach with roll-out of the ICON programme. The aim of which is to reduce deaths and significant disabilities caused by abusive head trauma.

We have rolled out the programme to core partners and trained and promoted the programme to all those in contact with families. We have also run several media campaigns, which again have been adopted around the country and a new digital media campaign is currently being developed. As with SUDI we have had no deaths relating to abusive head trauma since the work began in 2020.

It is hard to show a direct correlation between the reduction in infant deaths and that our ICON and safe sleep campaigns made the difference. We are not complacent in the work we have done. Consequently, we have champions identified in partner agencies that are supported to keep the momentum going and training and awareness raising continues. [Home - ICON Cope](#)

In the next 12 months we plan to develop a new campaign to support Drymester, the aim of which is to stop drinking in pregnancy and reduce the prevalence of foetal alcohol syndrome. All three issues – Safe sleep, ICON and Drymester, are being progressed collectively under the banner 'Safeguarding the first year of life'.

[Helping Parents-to-be Go Alcohol Free – #DRYMESTER | Helping Parents-To-Be Go Alcohol Free](#)

## **Multi-Agency Training Programme**

Barnsley continue to promote and offer a comprehensive and varied training programme *which is free to all partner agencies and the voluntary sector*. We want to thank all the fantastic trainers and organisations who support the Partnership's wide ranging training offer. The training is informed

by partners, local and national reviews, audits and inspections, and is responsive to emerging safeguarding issues. New courses introduced this year include:

- Motivational Interviewing.
- Young People and Sexuality.
- Safeguarding Elected Home Educated Children.
- Introduction to Migration and Working with Migrant Children.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour and the use of the Brook Traffic Light Tool.

We monitor effectiveness of training through course evaluation and feedback from participants and their service leads.

#### **From Working Together To Safeguard Children and Young People:**

*"Best safeguarding training I've ever been on".*

*"Engaging and very knowledgeable trainer. Thank you"*

#### **From Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2):**

*"I now understand the tool and I am confident to use it".*

*"This will make a difference with how I work with families in the future".*

The policy and workforce development subgroup oversee the content and the quality of the programme, ensuring it remains up-to-date and relevant; ultimately supporting practitioners to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing.

Moving into the next 12 months we will support the roll-out of Signs of Safety training, Safe and Together Training and increasing the numbers of Graded Care Profile 2 sessions.

[View our full training programme here](#)

This year has seen a focus on fathers and partners, with a regional conference, Ey Up Dad! as part of Safeguarding Awareness Week. The line-up included prominent speakers from national organisations and was attended by over 600 colleagues.

Another highlight was organising an in-person multiagency training event, led by Zoe Loderick, to 80 practitioners from over 20 organisations on domestic abuse and the impact of trauma on children and young people.

The voice of the child is a theme in all our courses, ensuring all workers are striving to listen, capture and act on children's views, wishes and feelings.

Partners also headlined multiagency learning: SWYPFT hosted a well-attended Safeguarding and Trauma Informed Practice conference in September, which covered Fabricated or Induced Illness, the Burnt Bridges Report and Trauma Informed Practice. 45 external agencies took part.

As many agencies continue to struggle with system pressures, we have inevitably seen a reduction in training attendance. Despite this, we remain in a good position with 2,106 staff accessing 45 courses. This is in addition to a comprehensive multi-agency e-learning offer and agencies own training programmes. We are acutely aware, however, of the role training plays in supporting staff to safeguard children. Consequently, attendance continues to be monitored, analysed and discussed.

We recognise training is only one part of the process and evidencing the impact in terms of how it translates into frontline practice (and ultimately improves the experiences of children and families) remains a challenge. We strive to do this by triangulating findings from audits, data analysis, inspections and learning from reviews, and continue to shape and improve our offer, supporting practitioners to provide the best service possible and ultimately improve the lives of children.

### **Safeguarding Awareness Week 2022 (SAW)**

Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW) is a yearly event organised by Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Adult's Boards across South Yorkshire. This year the theme was looking out for each other, helping families and communities to keep themselves safe and well.

We delivered a packed training programme for practitioners and families. Schools offered Online Harms awareness to parents and children celebrated 'One Kind Word' activities. Barnsley Hospital led an ambitious public awareness programme throughout the week. Police ran Child Exploitation awareness webinars, partner agencies and youth groups ran stalls all week in Barnsley Market, promoting their service. Our social media campaign promoted headline messages that safeguarding is everyone's business; how to report concerns and how we work together to keep children and young people safe. We highlighted the wide range of local support, including dads' mental health, digital safety and private fostering. A partner campaign toolkit was produced for agencies to promote their activities on social media #SAW22. Barnsley Chronicle ran two stories and we were interviewed by two local radio stations to publicise activities and promote our message that safeguarding is everyone's business.

### Events included:

- South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue led training for Safer South Yorkshire referrals and raised awareness of risks with hoarding, emollients and airflow products.
- Barnardo's hosted an Open Day Event.
- Our Family Centres provided information sessions to parents about parental controls to restrict unsuitable content on a child's devices, and on sessions on CPR.
- IDAS hosted a Safeguarding Children and Domestic Abuse session.
- Spectrum held a Child Sexual Exploitation & coercion refresher and RESPECT programme.

Our highest attended event with 630 participants, was the 'Ey' Up Dad' regional conference, organised by Partnership trainers in Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and North

Yorkshire, which focused on the role of men in children's lives. Speakers addressed men's mental health, experiences of dads and male carers and the 'Myth of Invisible Men'. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants agreeing to take inspiration and learning into their services and communities.



## 5. Strategic Priorities 2023 – 2024

- We will continue to develop and build on the four strategic priorities begun this year, of service development, child exploitation, child neglect and bullying and online harms.
- A development session is planned for August 2023 to inform and update our strategic plan. We will build on our joint work this year, in response to inspections, reviews and learning, with focus on evidence, impact, assurance and learning.
- Continue to improve the availability and quality of data available to the Partnership.
- Continue to develop a Quality Assurance framework that measures the impact of our performance through data, audits, feedback from practitioners and the lived experiences of children and their families, to assure that children and young people are protected and safe from harm.
- Tailor our multiagency training programme and evaluate results, to support our strategic priorities.
- Learn from national and local reviews and best practice. Encourage positive challenge so that commissioned child safeguarding practice reviews provide partners with the information required to provide learning from serious incidents.

## 6. Accounts

### Safeguarding Children Partnership

#### Income & Expenditure Statement as of 31st March 2023

##### Income

South Yorkshire ICB (Barnsley)	49,000
Police & Crime Commissioner	19,441
National Probation Service	2,907
CAFCASS	- 550
BMBC's Contribution	102,092
2021/22 Underspend	39,351
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>212,241</b>

Employee Pay Costs	108,779
Computers	7,160
General Expenses	9,032
Professional Fees/Consultancy	27,550
Business Support	13,710
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>166,231</b>

Underspend	46,010	Earmarking request has been completed to request carry forward to 2023/24
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## 7. Our Partners

Our sincere thanks go out to all of our partners who work tirelessly to protect and keep children and young people safe in Barnsley

Boards, Alliances & Partnerships		Statutory Partners	
Youth Groups			
Partner Agencies			

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