

Annual Report of the Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (2021/22)

Introduction

Welcome to the annual report covering the work of the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) in 2021/22. The report provides an overview of multi-agency safeguarding activity during the year and reflects the hard work and dedication of all our partner agencies as they've safeguarded and promoted 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.

On the backdrop of the pandemic, front line colleagues across the borough showed remarkable ability in adapting their responses to meet the challenges created by the pandemic, and for this we will be forever grateful. We want to thank everyone who continues to go above and beyond to make Barnsley a safer place for children.

Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership demonstrated its ability to respond and to be creative in providing leadership through this difficult time. Our ability to safeguard children and support vulnerable families continued and, moreover, we were able to progress our priorities and strengthen the coordination and efficacy of services.

This year has seen big changes as we've said goodbye to Mel John-Ross, the Executive Director of Children's Services, and to Bob Dyson, the Independent Partnership Chair, and we thank them for their drive, ambition, and hard work on behalf of BSCP and the children and families of Barnsley.

We're in process of reviewing our strategic priorities with wider partners and colleagues, and our governance arrangements to strengthen accountability and oversight of BSCPs activities, and to test the effectiveness of future arrangements. Big changes will also be made following the establishment of Integrated Care Systems within the NHS.

Jean Imray joined BSCP in a new role of Independent Scrutineer in November 2021. The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to act

objectively, as a constructive and critical friend who promotes reflection to drives continuous improvement.

We remain grateful to all partners and their dedicated front-line staff for their support and steadfast commitment to safeguarding all of our children.

Carly Speechley - Executive Director for Children's Services, Barnsley Council

Jayne Sivakumar - Chief Nurse (Barnsley), NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Chief Superintendent James Abdy - Barnsley District Commander

Statement from the Independent Scrutineer

Working Together 2018 advises that the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, but safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is 'objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement'. The independent scrutineer should 'consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.'

The role of the independent scrutineer is primarily focussed on how well the three safeguarding partners are working together and with any relevant agencies and organisations, to ensure that local children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

I took up the post of independent scrutineer in November 2021. The BSCP and I agreed that no one person could or should be the only source of scrutiny for an entire safeguarding system and so during the first six months of my tenure, as well as the work I have undertaken directly myself, I have drawn upon a variety of sources of external and internal inspections and reviews as well as audit and scrutiny that has been undertaken across the partnership. [Read my six month report.](#)

Without exception I have found the BSCP executive both open to and welcoming constructive challenge and support. As a result of changes in key personnel, the executive is in many ways still in its infancy and it recognises there is work to do to ensure it matures into a powerful and influential force that facilitates and drives change and improvement across usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries.

The ambition and commitment of the BSCP to improve the experiences of children and families in Barnsley is impressive, and I am confident it will be matched by a shared determination to accelerate the pace of change so that the positive impact of its work becomes even more evident.

Jean Imray - Independent Scrutineer

Role of the Partnership

The Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) brings together the three lead partners (local authority, police and South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board) to plan and to work together with other partners to protect and safeguard children in the local area.

The BSCP was established in 2019 following the Wood Review and the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

This report describes some of the work undertaken in April 2021 to March 2022 and considers the effectiveness of the arrangements in a period of tremendous change, as local communities adapt to living with COVID-19. 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.

Partnership Governance Arrangements and Structure

The partnership has strategic leadership in place, initiates effective joint working practices, and gains assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements through the structure and the activities of subgroups and partnership bodies, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. It links in with the important work of other partnerships across Barnsley, including those that bring the voices of children and young people.

A review of our governance arrangements is underway. With the support of the Independent Scrutineer, a structured executive group is now in place. Meetings have increased in number and duration. A new strategic multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) group reports directly to the executive. Subgroups are being restructured to deliver on our strategic priorities. The full set of changes come into place in October 2022.

Independent Scrutiny

As well as the challenge and oversight brought through the new independent scrutineer role in November 2021, elected members attend the BSCP, as representatives of the local community. This annual report will be considered by the BMBC Scrutiny and Oversight Committee.

The partnership is committed to involving young people in having an active role in local arrangements. BSCP works closely with youth networks, whose activity this year has focussed on transitions into adulthood, mental health and wellbeing.

Our Partners

- Barnardo's
- Barnsley College
- Barnsley Council
- Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board
- Berneslai Homes
- Cafcass
- Compass
- Healthwatch Barnsley
- Humankind
- IDAS
- National Probation Service
- NHS Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England
- Safer Barnsley Partnership
- South West Yorkshire NHS Foundation Trust Partnership
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Police
- Spectrum Community Health CIC
- Stronger Communities Partnership

The Impact of Covid-19

The impact of COVID-19, as with the rest of the country, was devastating. Barnsley's death rate was one of the worst in the country with 454.3 per

100,000 residents. The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Barnsley Child Health Profile 2021 suggests that the rate of self-harm (10 to 24 years) in Barnsley stood at 807.4 per 100,000, significantly higher than regional and national rates. There is long lasting impact on employment, mental health and substance misuse affecting families' economic circumstances, exacerbated by increased cost of living crisis and fuel poverty.

Practitioners faced enormous challenges in terms of service delivery and their own exhaustion. Safeguarding for both adults and children remained an absolute priority for all partner agencies. Many appointments had to move to a virtual format but all essential functions were maintained. Visiting all vulnerable children to ensure their welfare was prioritised. Social workers led the safeguarding effort throughout the pandemic at great risk to themselves in the early days. 0-19 nurses and schoolteachers knocked on doors and visiting plans were devised to ensure frequent and persistent contact with children.

Services have adapted as COVID broke down barriers, including swifter information sharing and hybrid working. It has left a legacy of challenges as the impact of the pandemic continues. In such a shifting environment, the Children's Safeguarding Partnership is evolving.

New Strategic Priorities For 2022-25

Based on what our data tells us, the outcomes of Child Practice Reviews and conversations with partnering agencies, children, young people and

their families, the partnership has identified its four strategic priorities for 2022–25.

Child neglect - improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of neglect and harm

- In Barnsley, child neglect is a consistent and frequent concern for referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub.
- Recent reviews include themes of child neglect and parental mental health.
- Child neglect is a major adverse childhood experience in young lives.
- The impact of the pandemic has masked an increase in child neglect, which is coming into view post-lockdown.

Child exploitation - improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation and harm outside of home

- Significant increase in child exploitation in national and regional reports in the past year.
- The impact of the pandemic has masked an increase in child exploitation which is coming into view post-lockdown.
- Increase in local numbers of children and young people with missing episodes and school absence. We recognise the link between missing episodes, absence and the risk of exploitation and harm outside of home.
- We recognise that child exploitation is part of the wider contextual safeguarding agenda.

Bullying, online harm, stalking and harassment

- Barnsley young people and schools tell us that bullying and online harm are consistently high areas of activity and concern.
- An increase in online harm, coming to into view post-lockdown, evidenced in national reports (NSPCC, Internet Watch Foundation).
- The impact of social media is that children and young people now experience bullying through online harm in their places of safety.

Service development and improvement

- We're a learning organisation. We value and support a continuous learning and improvement culture in the partnership.

- We learn from national and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and will maximise learning opportunities from other serious incidents.
- Scrutiny of relevant performance data and business intelligence supports a continuous learning and improvement culture.
- The role of Independent Scrutineer brings appropriate quality assurance.
- Procedures will be in place for data collection, audit and information sharing, as part of the six steps for independent scrutiny (Uni of Bedford SCP arrangements).

The Barnsley Safeguarding Landscape

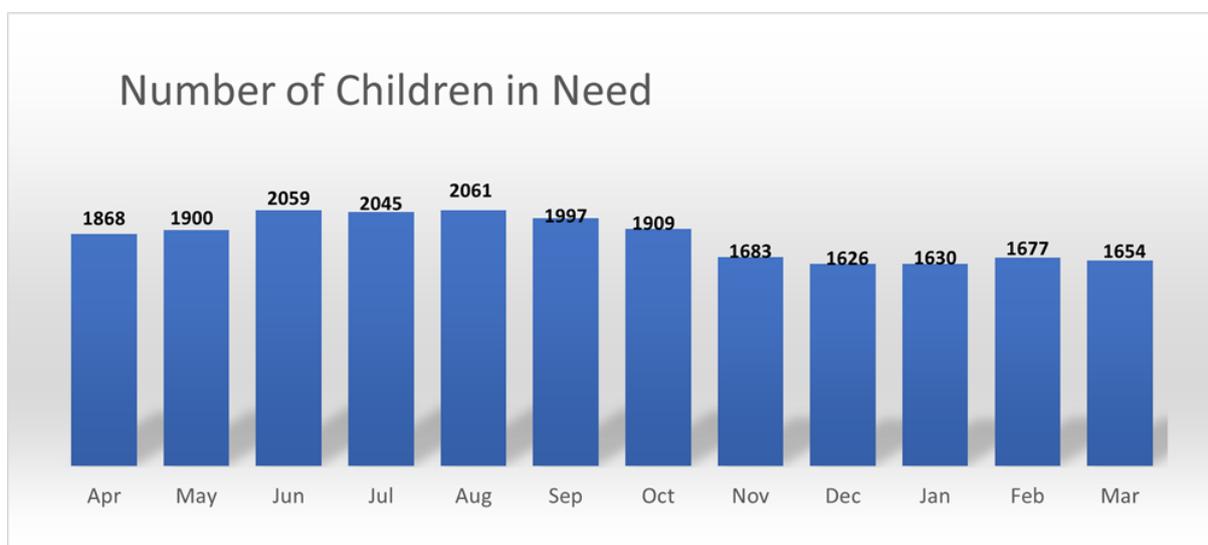
Safeguarding referrals

The Barnsley borough profile 2019 has approximately 52,000 young people aged 0-18 years living in Barnsley. In 2021–22 there were 2815 referrals received into front door services - the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Referrals came from several sources with over 60% from the police (821), schools (480), families (256) and hospital (191).

Children on a child in need plan

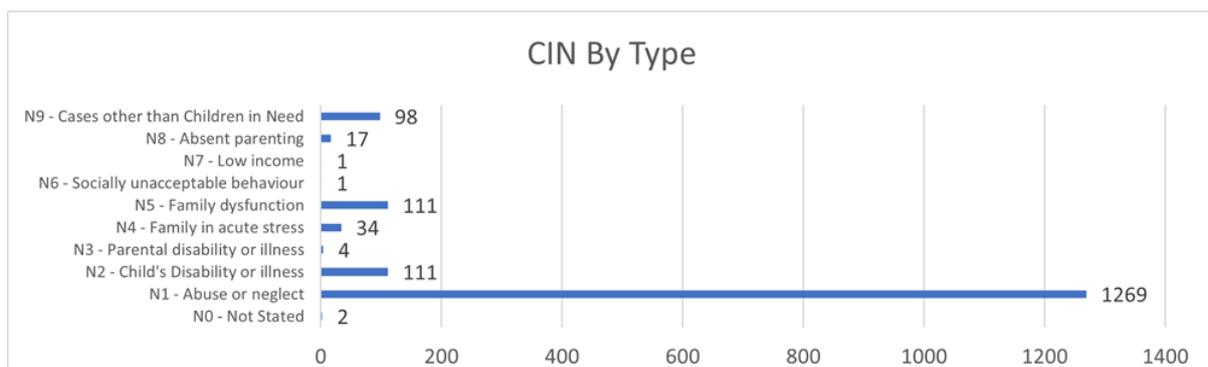
The numbers of children on a child in need plan has a 20% range where seasonal factors are at play and show a slight increase on last years' numbers.

Abuse or neglect was the reason for over 60% of child in need plans and is broad description type covering a range of concerns for children in need.



Month	Number of children in need
April	1868
May	1900
June	2059
July	2045
August	2061
September	1997
October	1909
November	1683
December	1626
January	1630
February	1677
March	1654

Children in need by type

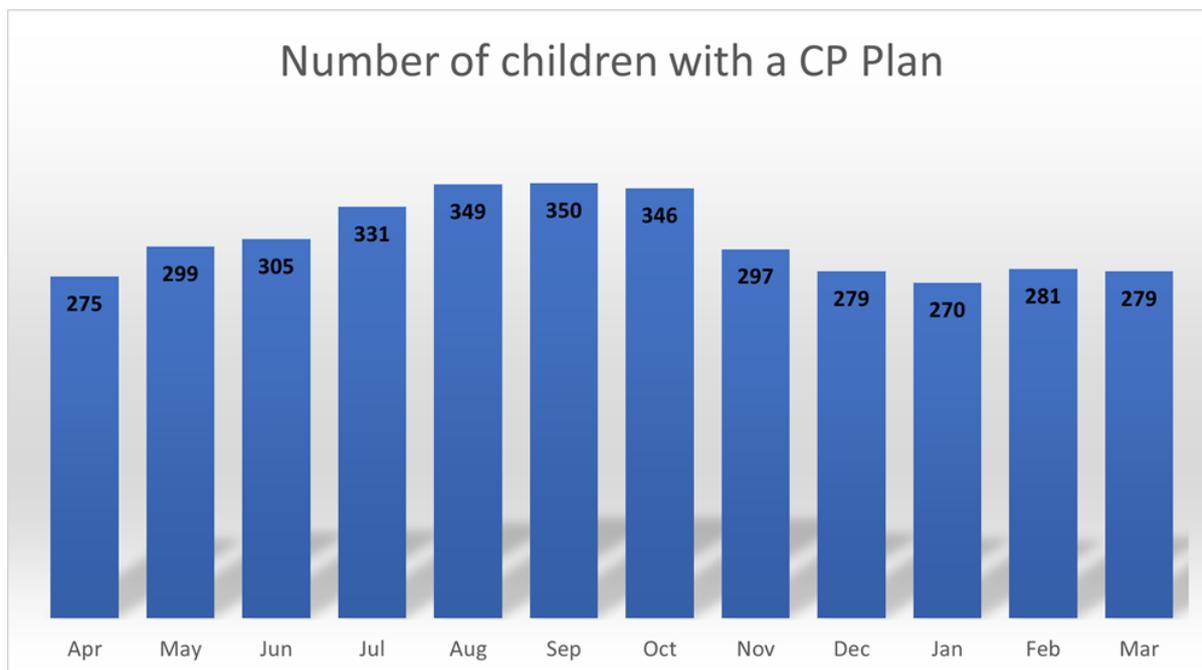


Type	Number of children in need
N0 - not stated	2
N1 - abuse or neglect	1269
N2 - child's disability or illness	111
N3 - parental disability or illness	4
N4 - family in acute stress	34
N5 - family dysfunction	111
N6 - socially unacceptable behaviour	1
N7 - low income	1
N8 - absent parenting	17
N9 - cases other than children in need	98

Children on a child protection plan

During 2021/2022 children subject to a child protection plan has fluctuated between 275 and 350. Overall it represents a slight decrease compared to the previous 12 months and is an area of work that receives a high level of

scrutiny to ensure the right help is given to children at the right time for their needs.



Month	Number of children with a child protection plan
April	275
May	299
June	305
July	331
August	349
September	350
October	346
November	297
December	279
January	270
February	281
March	279

Children on a plan by type

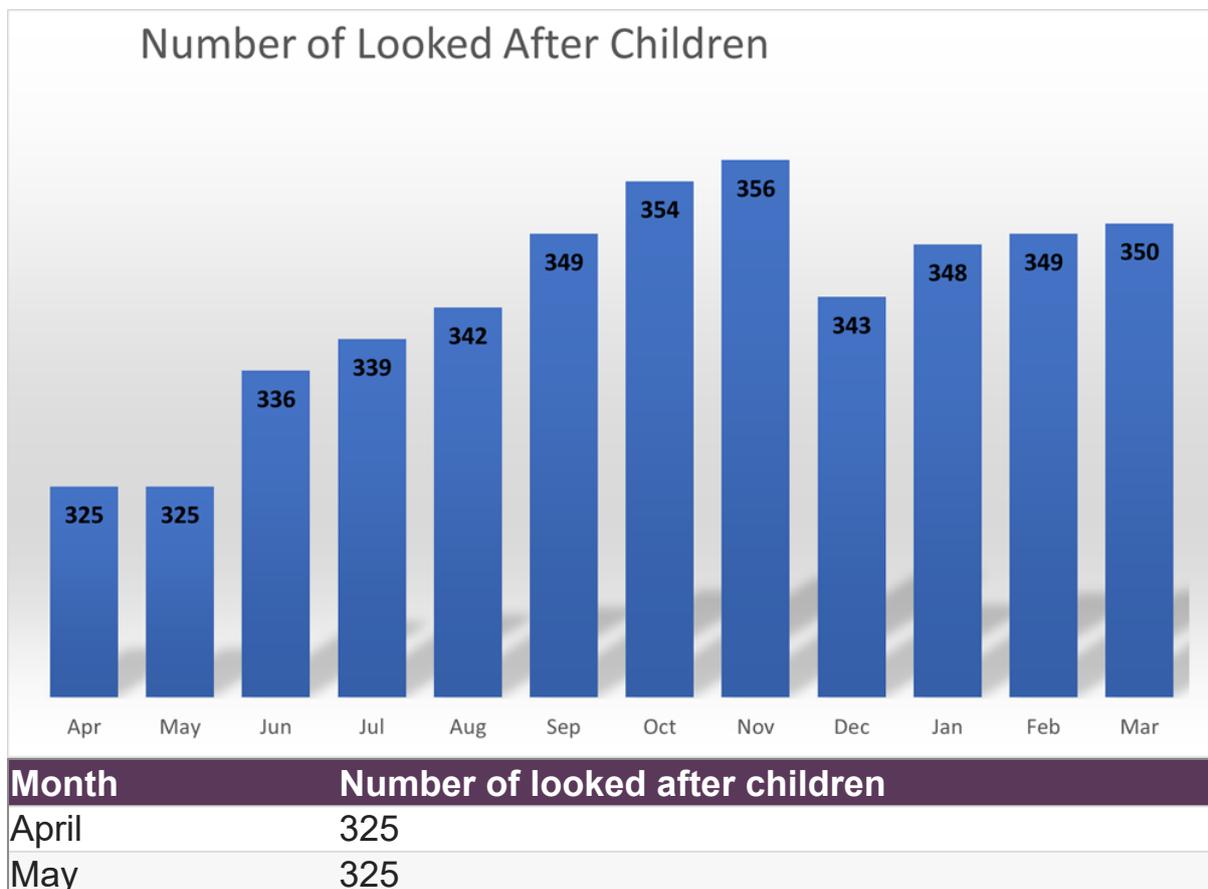
The largest category, emotional abuse or psychological abuse, involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It can include humiliation and constant criticism, persistently ignoring them and failing to promote a child's social development. It includes exposing a child to upsetting incidents such as domestic abuse and substance misuse. The 'multiple' category is being revised so we are clear about the lead category of abuse in future.

Latest category	Count at 31 March 2022
Emotional	105
Multiple	69
Neglect	77
Physical	9
Sexual	19
Total	279

Children in care

The rate of looked after children (LAC) in Barnsley at the end of 2021/22 was marginally higher at the end of 2020/21 (3%). The rate of looked after children in Barnsley is well below our statistical neighbours' average and broadly in line with the national average for 2020/21. This provides us with confidence that our approach to accommodating children is proportionate and balanced.

In 2021/22 our rate of children leaving care due to a permanence order is strong (59%), 20% of whom were adopted. It is recognised that a detailed report for children in care and care leavers should be included here in and will be addressed next years' annual report.



Month	Number of looked after children
June	336
July	339
August	342
September	349
October	354
November	356
December	343
January	348
February	349
March	350

Child exploitation

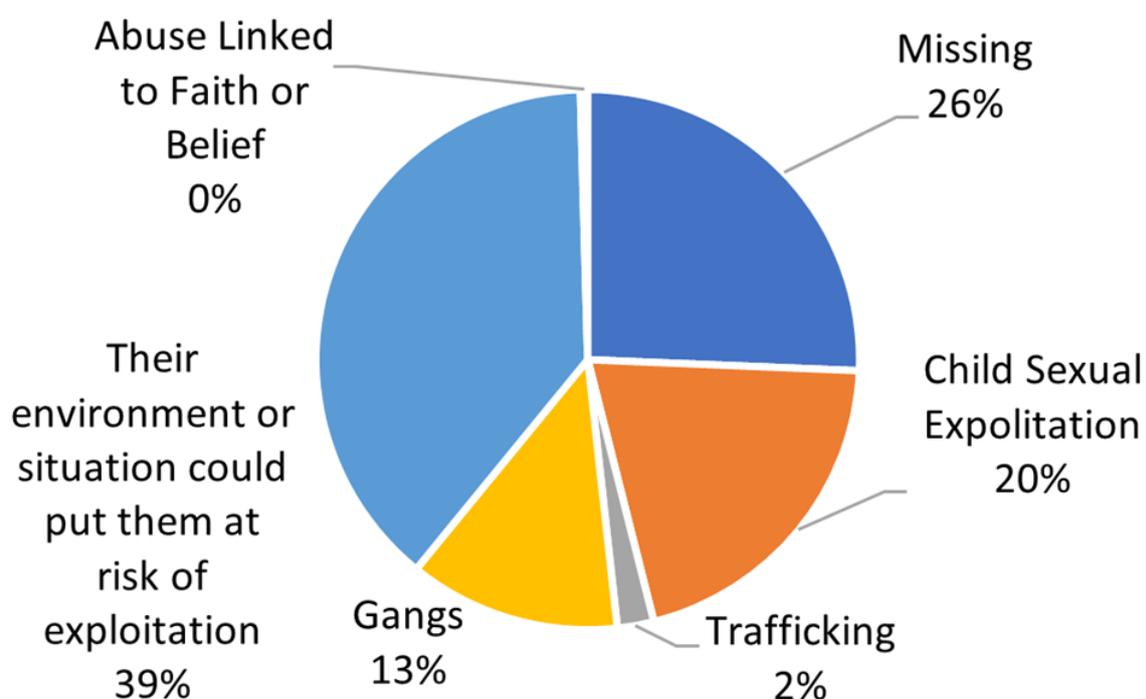
Child protection (S47) assessments where child exploitation was a risk factor

167 children and young people had authorised assessments with risk factors that relate to child exploitation. The most prevalent factors identified were:

- their environment or situation could put them at risk of exploitation (53.3%)
- missing episodes (35.3%)
- child sexual exploitation (28.1%)

Based on these findings the contextual safeguarding team will complete neighbourhood mapping exercises to identify areas where children and young people are most at risk of types of child exploitation to prioritise future work.

Risk Factors Identified on Assessments



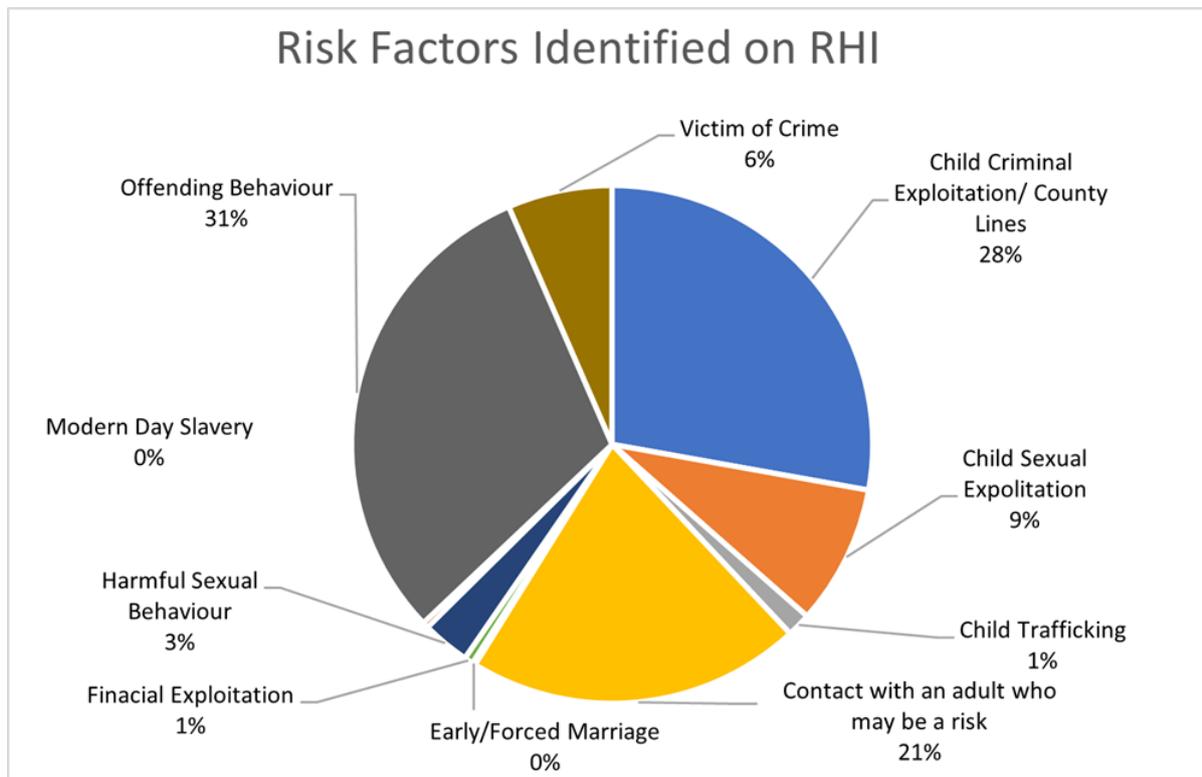
Risk factor	Percentage identified on assessment
Missing	26%
Child sexual exploitation	20%
Trafficking	2%
Gangs	13%
Their environment or situation could put them at risk of exploitation	39%
Abuse linked to faith or belief	0%

Child exploitation risks and return home interviews

These results capture the risks of exploitation for children and young people that go missing from home. They're based on the findings of the return home interview team for 115 young people supported in the 12 month period.

Child exploitation, offending behaviour and contact with adults who present a risk to them cover 80% of results. There can be several factors in play

with one individual, emphasising the multiple risks associated with contextual safeguarding.



Risk factor	Percentage identified on return home interview
Child criminal exploitation/county lines	28%
Child sexual exploitation	9%
Child trafficking	1%
Contact with an adult who may be a risk	21%
Early/forced marriage	0%
Financial exploitation	1%
Harmful sexual behaviour	3%
Modern day slavery	0%
Offending behaviour	31%
Victim of crime	6%

Priorities (2021/22)

Last year the partnership set seven strategic priorities. Here is a summary of what we did.

1. Reducing the numbers of children harmed by overlay

In 2020 Barnsley families suffered five infant deaths due to overlay, a higher rate than statistical neighbours where the rate is three. One of our main priorities was to prevent and reduce the numbers of overlay deaths. Barnsley is a local authority with strong community and family support. Health partners led on this priority. It included development of the multi-agency safe sleep guidelines, tool kit, training and a public health awareness campaign that has included social media, TV and radio campaigns, to inform and educate intergenerational family support. A multiagency approach across social care, hospital's mental health, police, housing, fire and rescue means that all agencies offer the same advice and assessments and recruit safe sleep champions who promote awareness and share best practice in their teams.

Safe sleep is promoted in pre-birth assessments. Multi-agency pregnancy liaison meetings support early identification of those where there is increased risk due to known factors such as alcohol or substance misuse or domestic abuse. There is a co-ordinated and agreed plan between agencies following babies' births and hospital discharge.

South Yorkshire police officers and frontline staff are adding unsafe sleeping conditions to their referral checks. Increased public awareness of safe sleep messages means that families have greater knowledge and confidence of safe sleeping arrangements. From 2021 to date there have been no infant deaths through overlay and whilst an absolute correlation cannot be drawn, impact measures and outcomes have been very positive.

2. Applying learning from local and national Child Practice Reviews (CPRs) to practice

Learning from Child Practice Reviews starts with the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review subgroup and is taken through the Policy and Learning subgroup for training and development. The BSCP publishes newsletters and 7-minute briefings. Single agency routes include the Social Work Forum and Trust Lite lunchtime sessions. It also informs our social media messaging and website. Assurance that learning impacts practice change is tested through supervision, multiagency audits, results and what children and families tell us.

Learning from local CPRs in 2021-22 inspired BSCP's prioritisation of safe sleep and ICON (coping with crying babies) campaigns. The refreshed 'injuries to non-mobile babies protocol' is now in place across the BSCP and will be tested through a second audit in autumn 2022. Increased referrals by BHNFT evidences the impact of training delivery which saw an average monthly increase in referrals from 30 in 2020-21 to 70 in 2021-22, following the launch of the training strategy.

Two Child Practice Reviews, [Child X](#) and [Child W](#), were completed in 2021 following the tragic deaths of two babies. The group also compared our practice against the recommendations of the National Safeguarding Panel's third thematic review, 'The Myth of Invisible Men' (September 2021). The review looks at the circumstances of babies under one-year-old who have been harmed or killed by their fathers or other males in a caring role. We contributed findings from two Barnsley Child Practice Reviews in 2018-20, to the review. Focus on learning and practice change was delivered through:

- Presentations across BSCP, the Best Start Partnership and the Children's Trust Executive Group, through single agency forums
- BSCP newsletters and social media messaging
- Training content informed by review themes, including 'Safeguarding Infants in the First Year of Life'.
- Themes of preparing for parenthood for young parents. Focus on both parents in ante and postnatal health checks, parental mental health and the impact of cannabis use are priorities in BSCP service development. Young parents have been invited to help shape future service planning in the 0-19 PHNS and mental health (South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust).
- Local safeguarding children partnerships across South Yorkshire will hold a joint 'Myth of Invisible Men' conference during Safeguarding Awareness Week in November 2022.

The BSCP executive will be more actively engaged in ensuring that the practice reviews it commissions fulfil the requirements set out in Working Together 2018 particularly and ensure that recommendations focus on improving outcomes for children. We also accept that we must better evidence the impact of changes made, as a result of the learning from what are often tragic events.

3. A multiagency focus on child neglect and poverty proofing, which recognises the impact of COVID-19 on Barnsley communities and effects of neglect on children. Promote the use of the graded care profile, a neglect assessment tool, by all colleagues.

Over 90% of police colleagues completed 'Every Child Matters' training to improve understanding and identification of safeguarding concerns of children and have also completed a service-tailored 'Graded Care Profile' training, which enables colleagues to recognise the signs of neglect and to understand the causes behind it. Operational teams are better equipped to respond to safeguarding concerns, suggested by an increase in referrals in Barnsley from the previous 12 months, from 1599 to 2346 (46%). After some initial concerns about proportionate response, the application of

learning was successfully tested in the recent JTAI audit of 15 child neglect cases in the use of emergency protection powers to assure that police responses were not overly interventionist.

Understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on mental health has been brought by mapping increased mental health incidents in children against pre-COVID levels. Barnsley hospitals have carried out audits during and following COVID, furthering on from reports of reduced resilience in children. Multi-agency contagion plans and risk assessments have helped ensure appropriate provision is in place. This activity has brought insights into the impact of COVID-19, to better support children with the right services, for example in multiagency health work with Compass (bereavement services).

Distribution of Aldi and Rose vouchers have continued to be delivered throughout 2021-22 to support families who are struggling financially so that access to food, fresh fruit and vegetables does not impact disproportionately on neglect assessments.

The results of an impact testing audit tell us we have more to do to ensure that the 'Graded Care Profile' is more consistently used across partner agencies.

4. Increase the take-up and effectiveness of early help and support to families, especially those experiencing poverty through social disadvantage as we recover from the pandemic.

The aim of early intervention is to reduce the numbers of children who experience adverse childhood experiences as a result of neglect and poverty. This has been supported through:

- Early help (EH) colleagues now being part of the multiagency safeguarding hub.
- Early help activity being reviewed through multiagency audits.
- Investment in a EH schools development officer to support schools to drive the uptake of early help assessments (EHAs).
- An Early Help Navigator employed at Barnsley Hospital. The team expanded to include two outreach workers.

Volumes of Early Help Assessments have increased and the number of requests for targeted EH support has doubled in the 12 month period. Schools have dedicated support and access to training, which received positive feedback from schools in this years' peer review and JTAI. Early help needs are identified by the Early Help Navigator when families and

children present at hospital. Needs are identified and appropriate support is put in place to enable children and families to achieve better outcomes.

5. Implement the recommendations and learning from the Ofsted May 2021 report into sexual abuse in schools and include an additional question in our S175 safeguarding audit in schools.

The Schools Alliance held schools cluster meetings to discuss the response. The Ofsted report was used to design a reflective audit tool, shared with all LA maintained schools and academies. Leaders welcomed this and used it to underpin their self-evaluation and action plans. Initial responses formed part of the LA risk assessment criteria in September 2021 and was discussed with school and trust leaders. As a result of the audit, school leaders reported several changes. These include peer on peer abuse as part of annual training, sharpening of recording processes, awareness work with parents to enable them to talk to children about worrying incidents that schools may not be aware of. Follow up risk assessment work is planned in September 2022, to test the outcomes of the implementation of Ofsted's recommendations. A smart survey asked schools about the impact of the Ofsted findings. Whilst there was a low participation rate of 25%, some reported that children felt school was a safer place and that it was easier to talk about incidents of peer-on-peer abuse.

The latest S175 self-assessment audit covered the period to July 2021, which was just three months into Ofsted recommendations and included a question about peer-on-peer sexual abuse. The S175 results have been shared with schools through the Designated Safeguarding Leads forum. The findings underline we have more to do to support schools, to improve areas of contextual safeguarding and in particular, safeguarding awareness and support around issues of harmful sexual behaviour in the year ahead.

6. Implement the revised Anti-Bullying Strategy and action plan with schools and partners to respond positively to the voice of young people to provide more safety and freedom from bullying and harassment in their daily lives.

The Anti-Bullying Strategy was finalised earlier this year and a meeting with the Youth Council and SEND Forum in February 2022 started to shape the action plan. The signed [commitment to tackling bullying and harassment of young people](#) was put in place last year. The next steps will be to co-develop the peer inspector's check and challenge initiative. Young inspectors will gather feedback directly from students about their experiences and the impact of the BSCP anti-bullying commitment in their schools.

This year's S175 safeguarding audit in schools evidenced that bullying continues to be a live issue. Anti-bullying was a lead item in BSCPs Safeguarding Awareness Week 2021 and many Barnsley schools and students took to social media to show how they were taking anti-bullying messages into schools with the 'One Kind Word' and 'Odd Socks Day' national campaigns led by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

We have more to do to ensure we respond more actively across the partnership to the things that children and young people tell us about their experiences of bullying. Because young people told us that online abuse and bullying is important to them, BSCPs refreshed strategic priorities have bullying, harassment and online harms as one of the four main priorities with a dedicated work plan.

7. Strengthen our engagement with young people and their voice in development and co-production of safeguarding strategies and the work of the partnership.

BSCPs S11 audit reported in March 2022. Several partners gave examples of their work to strengthen engagement with young people and capture youth voices in co-production and shaping services. Examples include:

- Tenants First is Berneslai Homes' family support service. It's junior wardens scheme engages children and young people in local areas and works in partnership with schools.
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's youth engagement practice group offers specialist courses to 16 – 25s at Barnsley College. A youth-focused approach is used with cadets and there is a new code of conduct for staff recruitment for those working with young people. A new Youth Engagement and Interventions role in 2022 will develop a youth panel for service and a youth participation group.
- South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (mental health services) involve young people in interview questions and recruitment panels. Joint working with Chilypep is underway in shaping youth mental health services. Care programme approaches (CPAs) are co-written, complaints and language are child-friendly.

We also have areas where we want to improve engagement. The local safeguarding children's practice review into Child W gave a very powerful example of a situation where a child's voice was not properly heard or given the weight it warranted. We know we must do better in our assessments and direct work to ensure we use the lived experiences of children and young people to drive improvement in terms of practice and strategic development.

Young people told us that we have more to do to improve the experience of transition to adult services and adulthood. We recognise that if we seek the views of children and young people, we have an obligation to respond to those views with positive action or to report back honestly to them why their ideas cannot be taken forward.

As part of the ongoing mental health campaign youth councillors along with fellow youth voice groups combined their joint working efforts to develop the Engagement and Mental Health Charter. 115 individuals in youth organisations and in the community collaborated to look at what youth voice is, the founding principles of youth engagement, core skills of effective co-production and what services offer young people in relation to mental health. The Engagement Charter is an excellent guide for services who want to engage effectively with young people. Read the [Young People's Engagement Charter](#).

Engaging Children and Young People's Voices

We take an inclusive approach to children and young people and try to give good opportunities for their voices to be heard. Before the pandemic, the partnership meeting was held once or twice a year in a school, so that afterwards young people had chance to talk to BSCP members about what life is like for them living in Barnsley.

Young people led the session on transitions into adulthood with a powerful presentation of their experiences at the annual joint BSCP and Trust Executive Group (TEG - Children's Trust) meeting in December 2021. All youth voice groups contributed their personal experiences of the different transitions young people encounter. Their presentation explained how transitions impact upon young people and how services can support the various transition processes. There were several positive experiences but not all and the message to the room was that when the right support is not given at the right time, there are long lasting impacts, affecting journeys into adult life. All stakeholders attending found the presentation to be insightful and have taken its' key messages into their agencies.

A youth panel participates in all partnership recruitment. Greenacre School hosted the Children with Disabilities subgroup in January 2022 and met students afterwards. There was a question and answer session ranging from help with transitions, using sensory rooms and access to dog parks. Barnsley has a very active youth voice network including the Youth Council, SEND Forum, Care4Us Council and Chilypep - the youth empowerment project which promotes young peoples' wellbeing and mental health. This year they led key activities during Safeguarding

Awareness Week 2021 including the safer places, safe spaces filmed walk in the town centre and launched several social media clips:

- zero tolerance to hate crime
- no to harassment on public transport
- experiences of leaving care

(A selection of young people's stories is available in the HTML version of the Annual Report)

Education

Designated Safeguarding Leads Forum

The Barnsley Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Forum is an informal, well-attended meeting of school DSL representatives held every term. The purpose of the forum is to support leads with information and skills to ensure effective safeguarding practice in schools and colleges. It's also a great information-sharing and contact network. It takes place after school to help maximise participation.

Recent key safeguarding topics include:

- how to raise concerns about a child
- private fostering arrangements
- Operation Encompass
- children missing in education
- early help assessments
- emotional health and wellbeing in schools
- recruitment of e-safety champions in schools
- contextual safeguarding

At the latest forum the Early Start and Families Strategy/Service Manager led a discussion on the early help assessments process to update DSLs of recent changes and to strengthen links between schools and BSCP services.

As well as guest presenters at the forum, there are regular agenda items. These include the multi-agency safeguarding children partnership training offer presented by the partnership trainer, the safeguarding children landscape presented by the Local Authority Designated Officer, and live escalations which covers cases of professional disagreements between practitioners and services led by the Strategic Safeguarding Partnership

Manager, who ensures that any concerns are dealt with effectively and expeditiously.

We have developed a new education section on the BSCP website with new guidance and resources to support safeguarding work in schools and colleges.

Going forward, an actions and impact tracker will monitor the process and ensure the satisfactory conclusion of actions generated at the forum.

The forum is also a valuable platform for services as it provides a direct link to schools and informs service improvement.

Here are some comments from the forum:

- "Thank you for all presenters input - always very helpful."
- "Thank you, great information this evening."
- "As a newbie, this has been enlightening and very useful. Thank you."

Barnsley Schools Alliance

Following the Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges, the alliance met with school clusters to discuss implementation of its recommendations and assurance of steps taken to review policy and practice.

Ofsted recommendations provided the basis for a reflective audit tool, circulated to all LA maintained schools and academies. Leaders welcomed this and used it to underpin their self-evaluation and action plans. The initial response informed the LA risk assessment criteria in September 2021 and was discussed with schools, trust leaders and governors. As a result of the audit, school leaders report the following changes have been made:

- Review of safeguarding policy and practice.
- Annual staff training, and ongoing updates for staff include peer-on-peer abuse.
- Staff awareness has been raised to be alert to incidents which could suggest inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Leaders have tightened up recording and reporting procedures by including a specific tag code for concerns of a sexual nature to improve tracking and early intervention.
- Communication between parents and school has been strengthened, to encourage information-sharing between parents and school, about

worrying incidents that children may talk about at home but not school.

- When we receive complaints about schools from Ofsted, we look for indicators that staff may not have identified, helped, and managed incidents appropriately through the investigation process. We make recommendations and check leaders' follow-up actions. This contributes to the strengthening of school systems and procedures helping to ensure pupils are safe from harm.

The Barnsley Schools Alliance also brokered Development webinar sessions to raise awareness across the sector for school leaders, governors and DSLs.

In September 2022 we will review the number and nature of reported incidents, and school responses. The review will include the results of latest S175 self-assessment audit. Further support and training will be provided where required.

When we have safeguarding concerns about a school, we undertake an individual safeguarding review. The framework has been shared with LA maintained primary schools to support the peer review process. There is now a requirement in the risk assessment criteria to have safeguarding externally checked. Many schools haven booked an external safeguarding review and arranged to undertake peer reviews in their clusters. In addition, aspects of the safeguarding are tested through safer recruitment and disqualification checks. Further guidance was circulated to all leaders to remind them of their duties under the Childcare Act 2006. This action has further strengthened safeguarding practice in schools and the skills of leaders within the system to check each other's practice.

Elective home education

The Education Welfare service works in partnership with schools, families, and agencies to ensure that children who are not registered on a school roll are tracked through our children missing education (CME) or our elective home education (EHE) procedures. The purpose of our work is to safeguard pupils by ensuring they receive a suitable education in a safe environment.

The pandemic has seen a significant increase in children being electively home educated, both nationally and in Barnsley. Our partnership approach has a focus on safeguarding and work with families to understand their needs. The aim is that when parents choose EHE they do so in the best interests of their child. We support families to return to school-based education. Between March 21 and April 22, 83 pupils (approximately 18%)

left the EHE register to return to school-based learning. Those that remain EHE are contacted annually by the EHE advisor who provides advice and guidance on providing a suitable education.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Training Programme

Since the pandemic, training has been offered virtually and uptake of training has increased significantly. The Policy Procedures and Workforce Development subgroup has continued to evaluate training in this format and concluded that virtual training offers several benefits and promotes better attendance. Some training, however, benefits from being held in person and will return to classroom delivery in 2022-23.

Despite the continued significant difficulties of this year and the pressures on staff, high demand has continued and an extensive programme of virtual training events was offered and attended by a total of 2837 practitioners from across partner agencies. The BSCPs range of courses is above those offered by many local safeguarding children's boards and receives very positive feedback from learners and from the recent JTAI inspection.

In August 2021 a contextual safeguarding specialist trainer was employed to design and deliver a number of brand-new courses. These include:

- a 45 minute 'understanding contextual safeguarding' e-learning course, which has had over 100 uptakes
- a webinar on contextual safeguarding, available on the BSCP website
- three new multi-agency online 'lite bites' seminars:
 - Awareness raising of contextual safeguarding
 - Young people and online harms
 - Child sexual exploitation

The courses are popular with full bookings and a waiting list. Feedback is very positive and to date 168 professionals have participated in the new online courses, with bookings confirmed for a further 266. We have confirmed training for the Brook traffic light tool which will equip four practitioner trainers to deliver child exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour risk assessment training to 400 later this year.

We know we have more to do to be able to evidence the impact of training and learning in terms of how it translates into frontline practice and ultimately improves the experiences of children and families. Delivering training is just the first part of a process and we recognise that similar themes arise from reviews where outcomes have been poor, to be complacent in this regard.

Despite pressures of home working, staff absence due to COVID-19 and additional demand placed on services, attendance at training has been prioritised by agencies and practitioners and is an excellent example of commitment to safeguarding children, partnership working and learning together. [See our full training programme.](#)

Section 11 and Section 175 Self-assessment Audits

- **Section 11 self-assessments**
Partnerships have a legal duty to prepare a self-assessment audit for agencies to assure themselves and the partnership that standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people are met and is part of the duty to 'assess whether LSCP partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations' (*chapter 2, Working Together 2018*).
- **Section 175 self-assessments**
These reflect the same partnership duty in relation to 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 are alert to emerging themes.

The S11 self-assessment audit 2021-22 was the first in three years and gave agencies the opportunity to review the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements. Read the full [S11 self-assessment audit 2021 report](#).

Ten agencies took part, across Children's Services, health, police, housing, fire and rescue, probation and education support services. The results of the audit told us:

- Agencies worked well together to adapt to the challenges of the COVID pandemic, to ensure that work with children and families continued through lockdowns.
- Compliance with safeguarding responsibilities was of a good standard across agencies.
- Training is well established and the multiagency training programme offered by BSCP is valued for its content, range and effectiveness.

- A safeguarding culture was evidenced across all participating agencies along with a shared drive for continuous improvement.

Areas for development include:

- Increase the capture of the voices of children and young people, increase capture of impact and outcomes in partnership activities and interventions and how life improved for families as a result.
- Build upon the successful initiatives for safe sleep and coping with crying babies.
- Greater visibility of impact of safeguarding activities outside of home (contextual safeguarding).
- Ensure that all agencies are aware of and implement private fostering processes.
- Increase use of escalations policy for resolving professional disagreements.

Agencies will provide brief assurances in 2022 to measure their progress.

Early Help

Early Start and Families Service provides targeted early help intervention and prevention and gives an overview of current activity in relation to early help assessments across the borough in respect of the children and young people's workforce. We support and contribute to the Early Help Steering Group and associated Early Help Delivery Plan.

The past year has seen an increase in the numbers of children receiving early help support, evidenced by a rise in assessments completed. This is in line with BSCPs priority of increasing the availability and take up of early help by families so that fewer problems are escalated to a level of risk that requires statutory intervention. Enabling families to be stronger and more resilient to support their children.

We are working with our partners in children and adolescents mental health service and Compass bereavement service to understand the prevalence of emotional health and wellbeing and mental health needs as reason for support and to better align our services. Work with colleagues in the youth justice service is in hand to strengthen a joined up early help approach for children and their families in the youth justice service.

Safeguarding Awareness Week – November 2021

Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW) is a shared event across South Yorkshire safeguarding children's partnerships and adults boards. Family

centres, schools and colleges joined Safeguarding Awareness Week 2021, raising awareness, sharing skills and taking key safeguarding messages to families and local communities. The launch event at Northern College had themes of neglect, transitions and exploitation. Positive anti-bullying themes of 'One Kind Word' and 'Odd Socks Day' celebrations were taken up in several schools including Queen's Road and Every Child Matters Academies, Kirk Balk, Shawlands, Milefield and Jump primaries, Springwell Special School and Springwell Alternative Academy.

Barnsley Youth Council and SEND Youth Forum ran three successful social media campaigns on safeguarding themes of zero tolerance of hate crime, with focus on racism and sexual abuse on public transport; Safer Places, which linked with the safe walk on 15 November where the Youth Council live-streamed their walk to show safer places available to young people in the town centre; and thirdly, hidden disabilities.

Some 434 participants from local communities and services took part in a week long BSCP training programme. We launched BSCP's Twitter account at the start of SAW21 which attracted a 5.3k reach during the week. The partnership's Twitter campaign promoted our safeguarding priorities of safe sleep, ICON's coping with crying babies campaign, private fostering, and neglect. These messages were shared in leaflets, publicity and training.

Family centres, schools and colleges joined Safeguarding Awareness Week 2021, raising awareness, sharing guidance and skills and taking key safeguarding messages to families and local communities. A wealth of [online resources](#) were promoted.

Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership: Sub-groups

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Helps the partnership to develop a better understanding of how and why children die and informs prevention work. It is CDOP's role to look at all deaths of children and young people in Barnsley, whatever the reason, to see if there is anything we can learn from them and anything that might help us avoid such deaths happening in the future.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- Additional CDOP meetings were set up to address the backlog of cases (January 2022) and support complex case work.
- 'Panel debrief gives scope for reflection and support.

- A new learning and development item helps identify areas for improvement.
- A Healthwatch Barnsley representative has joined and makes valuable contributions to the panel.
- Training to schools to provide support for eating disorders and self-harm.
- Update of the Barnsley suicide contagion plan.
- A complex care team at Barnsley maternity services.
- Additional equipment for the neonatal unit.
- Best practice learning from Birmingham Hospitals to support improvements at Barnsley Hospital maternity service.

We will improve by

- Ensuring robust information gathering about the pregnancy, following a neonatal death. This will provide CDOP with the 'bigger picture' and enable identification of wider modifiable factors.
- Restructuring future meetings to ensure richness of data and more in-depth discussion.

Children with Disabilities (CwD) and Complex Health Needs subgroup

Its role is to ensure we work together to support the needs of vulnerable children and young people. Collaboration with the adult safeguarding board ensures effective arrangements are in place for these young peoples' transition into adulthood.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- We built on previous work to include the voice of children and young people, access to early help and support to parents and carers.
- We continued work with young people to tackle bullying, loneliness and exclusions.
- Developing a transitions to adulthood handbook for young people and their families to help them to navigate their journeys to adulthood.
- Support to families to enable them to be involved and plan for transition at an early point.
- Quarterly audits to assure the partnership that children with disabilities and/or complex health needs are assessed appropriately to receive the right support at the right time to keep them safe.

Next steps

- It became clear during 2021–22 that the issues being developed and addressed in this group were also discussed in other forums across the partnership (for example, the SEND Board and Early Help Steering Group). After a review and discussion it was felt that the CwD subgroup could be retired with the specific work streams being continued in other subgroups and with better links to the SEND board and young peoples' SEND forum.
- To assure that the voice of children with complex needs and disabilities is not lost, it is now a required item in all subgroups. The SEND Board has recently allocated representatives to all subgroups.

Policy, Procedures and Workforce Practice and Development (PPWPD) subgroup

Oversees and manages all aspects of our multi-agency safeguarding children training. It ensures that all multiagency training creates an ethos of collaborative working, respects diversity, upholds equality, is child centred and promotes participation of children and families in safeguarding processes. It considers learning from national and local emerging themes. The overall aim is to support the children's workforce to effectively safeguard children and to have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- Monitoring of evaluations and attendances shows the value of courses and provides quality assurance.
- As a result of the above there have been very few course cancellations.
- Rolling review of policies and procedures to ensure they are relevant and current and promoted to colleagues.
- Tracking of escalations and single and multiagency audits help to identify impact on practice and any gaps.
- Developed new procedures or radically refreshed existing ones: bruising in non-mobile babies, safe sleep guidance and supervision.
- Two surveys have been sent to practitioners several months after attending training that aimed to assess impact. Both had positive results. Delivered a highly regarded multiagency training programme led by our excellent multiagency trainer and supported by partner agencies.

We will improve by

- The addition of youth mental health first aid training which will be co-produced with young people through Chilypep.

- Continuing to find effective ways to measure the impact of our training offer and delivery on practice and on keeping children safe.

Child Exploitation (CE) Strategic subgroup

The purpose of the Child Exploitation Strategic subgroup is to improve the partnership response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) including county lines. We recognise that children can be at risk from a number of other contextual factors from outside the home – many of which can increase the risk of exploitation. Children with access or exposure to weapons, who are 'looked after' by the local authority, who go missing, who have older friends, who have substance misuse and mental health issues, or are outside mainstream education are all potentially at increased risk.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- We have strengthened local processes for identifying, assessing, and protecting children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, to improve the response when referrals are received, to ensure that children and families get the right help and support quickly.
- A daily briefing of multi-agency partners with front door services improves real time information gathering and information sharing in relation to young people at risk of contextual safeguarding and incidents, including missing episodes overnight to provide a quick and timely response to safeguard young people more effectively from harm.
- The processes for return home interviews for children who go missing from home or care have been strengthened to ensure a timelier response. Auditing has evidenced improvements both in timeliness and quality of work undertaken to interview young people and to understand and prevent further missing episodes
- Training has been undertaken with foster carers, residential homes, and private providers for the South Yorkshire missing protocol and the Philomena project to better protect young people at risk of harm through missing episodes.
- Impact of the contextual safeguarding specialist trainer in Children's Services in extending knowledge and skills of practitioners has been positive.
- Case mapping – social care work closely with police to map organised crime groups, contextual safeguarding concerns and young people linked to certain areas.
- Made submission to Commission on Young Lives national call for evidence for young people at risk of exploitation and exclusion.

We will improve by

- Reaffirming our commitment to tackling all forms of exploitation of children, both sexual and criminal, with tackling CSE, CCE and county lines remaining as a shared strategic priorities for delivery through the CE Strategy group.
- Continue to conduct regular audits of cases where children and young people have been exposed to or at risk of CE.
- We will continue to ensure that those children stepped down to early help have effective plans in place to support that transition.
- We will also continue to build upon current relationships with education to support effective safety planning for children.
- Seeking a growth in staff amongst partners to better support our response to children at risk.
- The partnership is working towards using partnership data to understand what cohorts of children are most at risk in our community and targeting bespoke responses to them.
- Many concerns are addressed through broader pieces of work under other sub-groups or through the Community Safety Partnership. As a board, we need to work towards creating stronger links with those workstreams and ensuring that they specifically consider those concerns and the relevance to risks of exploitation.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) subgroup

Its purpose is drawn from the requirements of Working Together (2018) to carry out arrangements for rapid and Child Practice Reviews in order to identify learning from themes in local and national findings.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- Between April 2021–March 2022 the LCSPR subgroup notified the National Panel of two local Child Practice Reviews, [Child X](#) and [Child W](#). Both cases of Child X and Child W were concerned with the deaths of babies under a year old. Alcohol and substance abuse were factors and domestic abuse was a feature in one case. Both reviews have been published and are available on the BSCP and NSPCC websites.
- The group considered the findings of the National Panel's third thematic review, The Myth of Invisible Men (September 2021) and have established where we meet its key recommendations and where there are gaps.
- Presentations across BSCP, the Best Start Partnership and the Children's Trust Executive Group; through single agency forums, all with a focus on practice change.

- South Yorkshire local safeguarding children partnerships will hold a joint Myth of Invisible Men Conference during Safeguarding Awareness Week in November 2022.

We will improve by

- We recognise that the review recommendations need to be improved and there needs to be sharper way of ensuring that those recommendations turn into actions that have a measurable impact on improving practice.

Performance Audit and Quality Assurance subgroup

The subgroup's focus is assurance and performance across the partnership, evaluating headline performance indicators across agencies. We quality assure practice through single and multiagency audits and share findings to improve practice across the partnership.

Activities, deliverables and what worked well

- Carried out five audits based on emerging safeguarding trends out of the COVID-19 pandemic/concerns based on local and national reviews.
- Themes covered were elective home education, timely sharing of birth plans between agencies, child neglect and use of the Graded Care Profile (an assessment tool used by practitioners to identify levels of risk in child neglect), appropriate referrals to Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Service for children who experience sexual abuse at home and arising from the tragic deaths of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, a question of how well we respond to calls from families and anonymous sources, of concerns about abuse of children.
- The audits gave assurance of things we do well together and where we hear what children and young people tell us and areas where improvement is needed.

We will improve by

- Changes to risk in the lives of children and families in a post-pandemic lockdown world.
- Communications and information-sharing between agencies.

- Timeliness of interventions and appropriate step up and step down between services.
- Life experiences of young people are heard and shape our future priorities.

This group will change in the new partnership structure. The areas we want to improve in will go forward into the new structure and priorities.

Accounts

Safeguarding Children Partnership income and expenditure statement as at 31 March 2022.

Income*

Income	Amount
NHS Barnsley CCG	£56,500
Police and Crime Commissioner	£19,441
National Probation Service	£1036
SY other LA	£2250
CAFCAS	£550
BMBC	£99,616
Total income	£179,393

Expenditure*

Expenditure	Amount
Employee pay costs	£74,454
Computers	£9142
General expenses	£7559
Professional fees/consultancy	£26,515
Business support	£22,373
Total expenditure	£140,042

Underspend due to vacancy (carry forward to 2022-23) - £39,351

* Training revenue activity not included. Accounted for separately by BMBC.

Summary

The year 2021–22 has brought many changes in terms of the economic and safeguarding environment as we emerge from the pandemic and its impact on Barnsley communities. There have been changes to all executive partners and the addition of a new Independent Scrutineer. The recent peer review and JTAI inspection have pushed us to new challenges and revitalised ideas. We have agreed our new key priorities as we look forward to 2022–23. We are ambitious for children and improving their lived experiences.

We would like to thank everyone in the partnership for their commitment and collaboration during the past year as we move ahead to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare together.