



Annual Report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people

2024/25

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This Annual Report, alongside our North East Lincolnshire (NEL) Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) Local Arrangements, other key documents, as well as policies, procedures and other resources referenced in this document are published on the [North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership | NELC](#)

1) Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the SCP Annual Report of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people 2024 / 25.

Children, young people and families are first, centre and last in all we do, and we want NEL to be a place our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We are ambitious for a child's future with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can be.

By being 'stronger together', we can achieve our vision of 'Our Children, Our Future'.

Our Local Arrangements places children, young people, families and communities at the heart of our early help, family help and safeguarding system. The Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in NEL Threshold Document (Threshold Document) sets out our arrangements, underpinned by our Practice Approach, to ensure children, young people and families receive the right support, at the right time by the right person. This is being achieved through services which support children, young people, and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, to be resilient, stay safe and independent.

Data analysis and practice wisdom confirms the Threshold Document is being used more consistently by partner agencies which has been supported by our Practice Approach, the Risk Analysis Framework and associated training. Set in the context of system wide transformation, there is growing evidence that the Early Help Strategy is having an impact on the increase of families who have been supported to achieve successful outcomes, through a key focus on targeted family help and support. There has been a continued safe reduction in numbers of children supported as children in need, those subject to child protection plans and becoming a child in our care.

As a partnership we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families through the least and best interventions, leading to whole family turnaround. As delegated safeguarding partners, we are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the positive outcomes achieved and the strength of partnership working, and we continue to be ambitious in our approach and are committed to partnership action to improve practice leading to better outcomes.

The last year has been characterised by working collaboratively as a partnership to reconfigure and embed our partnership and governance structure, and in building upon the infrastructure, capacity and core functions to deliver our Local Arrangements and priorities aligned to Working Together 2023. Through our culture of listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, underpinned by high challenge and high support, we have continued to build on and further strengthen existing arrangements which support our families at the earliest opportunity to prevent the need for statutory intervention, empower our families to build on their own strengths and promote resilience to improve outcomes.

There have been fantastic collaborations with national bodies and experts in supporting the delivery of the four SCP priorities and in informing practice. This has included the Centre of Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse, Jane Wiffin a national expert in neglect and practice review author, Mark Finnis on relational practice and building relationships and Gavin McKenna Reach Every Generation in respect of child exploitation and child centred practice.

In 2024/25, we have continued to:

- ✓ fulfil all functions across our Local Arrangements, and through strengthened partnership and governance arrangements, to respond to need, including prioritising the most in need, to help, support and protect children, young people and families
- ✓ ensured that learning from assurance activity, including rapid reviews, actively informs practice across the partnership and to ensure that everyone recognises their responsibilities

This report fulfils our statutory responsibility to publish a report once in every twelve-month period and sets out what we have done as a result of our Local Arrangements, including rapid reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

In addition, the report also includes:

- evidence that national reforms are being taken into account and implemented, including key decisions and actions taken by delegated safeguarding partners in response to reforms
- evidence of the impact of the work of the delegated safeguarding partners, their respective organisations and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children, young people and families from early help to children in our care and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- an analysis of key learning from serious incidents, a record / decisions and actions taken by the delegated safeguarding partners in the reporting period to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children, young and families to inform their work and influence service provision

Over the last year we have continued to embed policy directions and guidance, including Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework. We have started to consider the local response to Keeping Children Safe Helping Families Thrive National Safeguarding Reforms as outlined within the NEL SCP Local Arrangements 2025/26. We remain committed to a culture of listening, learning reviewing and adapting. which is demonstrated through our republished arrangements and through the partnerships commitment to supporting continual practice improvement through learning and innovation to improve outcomes for children.



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2) Partnerships and Governance

The three delegated safeguarding partners have worked collaboratively with relevant agencies over the last year in delivering the four SCP priorities and statutory functions through the partnership and governance structure. There has continued to be open and honest discussions, and the further strengthening of the Local Arrangements has created a more robust operating environment, enabling high support and high challenge. Key processes and functions have been further developed over the last year in achieving successful delivery of the Local Arrangements including:

- building on available multi agency data within the SCP dashboard and data analysis into meaning for practice
- embedding of the Threshold Document supported by the introduction of our refreshed Practice Approach (strengths based, solution focused, relational) in providing a framework for how practitioners should work with children and families, and with each other
- development and roll out of the Risk Analysis Framework across the partnership in providing a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk
- publication on a Local Protocol for Assessment and Support, which alongside the SCP safeguarding procedures and Threshold Document, clearly sets out arrangements for case management following the referral of a child into NEL Children's Services
- the review and revision of the SCP education and training arrangements aligned to the SCP priorities in equipping practitioners to responding to abuse and neglect
- the creation and launch of a dedicated standalone SCP website, specifically designed to deliver the SCP functions and priorities and to support practice

The key roles and functions of the SCP Board (SCPBoard), are detailed in the terms of reference and the responsibilities are detailed in the Local Arrangements and underpinning <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2025/06/Final-SCP-MOU.pdf> Further information about our partnership and governance structures and lead safeguarding partners and delegated safeguarding partners can be found in the Local Arrangements 2025/26 which have been updated to reflect the changes in our partnership and governance arrangements.

One of the key decisions and actions taken by the three delegated safeguarding partners was negotiating increased financial contributions from the safeguarding partner organisations which resulted in being able to recruit to a further fixed term SCP Coordinator to ensure sufficient capacity to support the continued momentum of developments and the delivery of our Local Arrangements.

The SCP is meeting the expectations of Working Together 2023 and the four SCP priorities in the following ways:

- The contribution of each safeguarding partner to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is explicit within the terms of reference and memorandum of understanding. The SCP subgroups are chaired by representatives of each of the three safeguarding partner agencies and the remit of each agency is explicit within the strategic priority action plans

- The four SCP priorities are being actively delivered through the partnership and governance arrangements. The delivery of the neglect and the child sexual abuse strategic plans are overseen by the SCP Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group. The delivery of the Early Help Strategy is overseen by the Early Help Strategic Group and the Child Exploitation Strategy is overseen by the Child Exploitation Strategic Group. The delivery of the strategies is supported by performance analysis, associated practice guidance, tools and training
- The representation of education across the partnership at both an operational and strategic level was reviewed following the publication of Working Together 2023. Education, including schools and colleges and Children's Services Education Inclusion and Integration are now consistently represented on the SCP subgroups across the SCP partnership and governance structure
- The revision of the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework and the introduction of the Independent Scrutiny Officers has enabled a strengthened oversight of the implementation and impact across the scope of our Local Arrangements

SCP NEL performance dashboard

The SCP dashboard, which was revised in full consultation with partner agencies, and which was launched in June 2024, is aligned to the SCP priority areas of focus and incorporates key statutory data and partner agency data. A multi-agency SCP data review group was established and is progressing areas of identified data development, including the availability and analysis of Elective Home Education and Education Health Care Plan data. The police vulnerability tracker, when finalised, will be aligned to the SCP dashboard and will be central to the further development of local Child Exploitation Profile.

The SCP dashboard supports the SCPB to understand the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, provides clarity and assurance of our populations and demand, and enables board members to challenge and support developments across the system.

Use of data analysis in informing learning

Data analysis was used in identifying the current four SCP priority areas of focus. The low number of referrals in respect of child sexual abuse and the low number of children subject to child protection plans (as a result of child sexual abuse) in this area has informed the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and strategic delivery plan. This included the decision to commission child sexual abuse training as a priority and the need to develop practice guidance and Child Sexual Abuse Toolkit for practitioners. Current data analysis evidences that assessments of child sexual abuse have increased as has the number of children subject to a child protection plan for child sexual abuse which was directly informed by the delivery of child sexual abuse training and through the child sexual abuse strategic delivery plan.

The analysis of local data on neglect and the learning from local line of sight learning events, rapid reviews and practice reviews in respect of neglect, led to the independent report being commissioned and undertaken by Jane Wiffin, an expert in neglect, in March 2024. This led to the development and delivery of local neglect training to over 600 practitioners and the development and roll out of the Neglect Toolkit, which is supporting practitioners to fully understand the nature of neglect and how to respond to improve outcomes for children.

The SCP dashboard is actively informing the delivery of the SCP priorities and key functions in providing assurance to the delegated safeguarding partners of both progress and impact against the priorities made by the SCP strategic delivery groups. The Safeguarding Practice Performance Practice Assurance Group uses the data in driving practice standards and commissioning audits from the Learning Audit and Development Group where further understanding and assessment is required. The Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group utilises the dashboard to assess the impact of safeguarding education and training and on quality assurance and independent scrutiny activity. It is intended that the strategic priority subgroups Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group (Neglect, Child Sexual Abuse), the Early Help Strategic Group and the Child Exploitation Strategic Group will all use the dashboard to measure the impact of identified outcomes within the respective strategic delivery plans.

How information sharing has improved practice

Information sharing requirements are reflected within all of the SCP safeguarding procedures and practice guidance, including the Threshold Document, the Practice Approach and the Local Protocol for Assessment and Support which is an essential element of safeguarding children at both an operational and strategic level. Information sharing practice guidance is published on the SCP website and is consistent with Department for Education information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers. SCP quality assurance and independent scrutiny activity has evidenced that information sharing between agencies is positive. Locally, information sharing has been used when undertaking line of sight learning events. Rapid reviews and has enabled a holistic understanding of specific themes relating to safeguarding, what works well and areas for development. An example is the development of the Risk Analysis Framework and practice guidance which multi agency working and information sharing is a key element of and which has impacted positively on the consistency of agency reports to child protection conferences.

Oversight of children in our care and care leavers

We have continued to have oversight of the outcomes for children in our care and care leavers, from a safeguarding perspective, through performance reporting, and going forward through the Safeguarding Performance Practice Assurance Group. System leaders and managers who attend the SCPB, are also represented through the Corporate and Community Parenting Board governance arrangements, and as such, there is a robust interface and a strong focus on helping, supporting and protecting children in our care and care leavers.

Children in our care

438 children were in our care as at 31 March 2025, which is 31 children less and a 7% reduction on 469 children in our care as at 31 March 2024. Despite this decrease, NEL's rate of 132 per 10,000 remains higher than comparators (England average 70 and statistical neighbour 100). 97 children entered care during 2024/25 which is a 5% decrease on 102 children who entered care the previous year. This is a second year where NEL have seen a reduced number of children entering our care and shows the stabilisation of our children in care cohort.

This stabilisation is also further evident through a second year of reduced numbers of children having 3 or more placement moves in year. In 2024/25 7% of children in our care at year end had had 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months. This is a further improvement on last year's 8%. This remains better than the last published comparator data (England average 10% and statistical neighbour 10%).

We continue to see a reduction in new placements made during the year with 290 new placements made in 2024/25 compared to 330 the previous year and 425 in 2022/23.

The number of children in our care who are placed in agency placements has dropped from 154 children at end of 2023/24 to 135 children at 31 March 2025. The proportion of children placed out of area at end of 2024/25 does still remain high, though there is an ongoing focus on developing local sufficiency, through more local foster carers and children's homes, to enable children and young people to return to the area to live in their local community and networks.

Care leavers

In 2024/25, 97% of care leavers aged 17-18 were in suitable accommodation which is in line with last year. 92% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation which is an increase from 90% reported last year. NEL are performing better than the national average for care leavers in suitable accommodation (England average 91% for 17-18 yrs and 88% for 19-21yrs). There is an amplified focus on further developing the housing offer to our care leavers.

During 2024/25, 56% of care leavers aged 17-18 were in education, training or employment, (EET) down from 61% in 2023/24. NEL remain below comparators (England average 66% and statistical neighbour 64%). 50.6% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in EET, up from 49%. NEL are also below comparators for this age group (England average 54% and statistical neighbour 54%). Significant progress has been made during 2024/25 to improve the outcomes for care leavers, including significant investment in the local offer for care leavers to support educational outcomes, and the launch of the Corporate and Community Parenting Strategic Plan and the Employability Strategy, all of which provide the strategic direction to support progressive practice and outcomes in this area. Furthermore, quality assurance and oversight mechanisms have been introduced to complement, including a NEET progress panel established to review the planning around young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Seven care leavers aged 19-21 were in higher education at year end, up from four the previous year. This account for 5% of the 19-21 care leaver cohort and NEL are nearing the England average of 6%. We also have a further 10 care leavers aged 22-25 who are in higher education.

3) SCP dashboard: Headlines and summary of performance and populations

Headlines which indicate our system is working and making a difference to children, young people and families include:

- **Early help assessments:** The number of Local Authority Early Help assessments in 2024/25 at 712 is in line with 2023/24 at 718. Partner agencies continue to lead early help assessments, which reflects the partnership commitment to meeting need early and preventing escalation. The largest contributing agencies are still pre-schools / schools / further education which account for 81% of all external Teams Around the Family. During 2024/25 we have also seen a growing number being held by healthcare providers and a small number by the voluntary sector

- **The number of referrals has decreased for a second year.** 2004 referrals to children's social care were received in 2024/25 which is a 12% decrease on the 2279 referrals received during 2023/24. This gives an end of year rate of 607 per 10,000 which although still high, it is nearing comparators (England average 518 and statistical neighbour 562). A few different factors have enabled this reduction. The launch of the new Threshold Document launch has supported partnership understanding of children and family's needs; the re-introduction of co-located partners means timely information sharing and gathering for better informed decisions within the Integrated Front Door and clarity of support/advice and guidance against safeguarding; a stronger family help offer, and expectations of prevention have also supported a reduction in referrals; and better case management has also resulted in less repeat referrals
- **The number of repeat contacts and referrals have reduced.** Referrals to children's social care within 12 months of a previous referral during 2024/25 have reduced to 21% compared with 27% in 2023/24. This is the lowest re-referral rate seen in NEL for several years and is in line with comparators. (England 22% and statistical neighbour 21%). This, combined with a drop in repeat safeguarding contacts at the Integrated Front Door, shows improved decision making and more effective case working
- **Assessment timeliness increased again during 2024/25** to 93%, a further improvement from 90% in 2023/24, demonstrating there is less drift in children progressing through the system
- **The overall number of open cases has decreased by 7%** to 1768 as at 31 March 2025 compared with 1900 the previous year. Changes in process mean that previously cases kept open at a Staying Connected level have been closed but these cases remain carefully monitored and at least annual contact where possible
- **Children in need numbers have increased during the year** from 596 in 2023/24 to 641 in 2024/25 as more cases are managed as children in need rather than child protection or in our care (this correlates with reducing numbers of children in need of protection and children in our care)
- **The number of section 47 enquiries has increased.** 1024 Section 47 enquiries were initiated during 2024/25 which is an 18% increase from 868 initiated the previous year. NEL's rate of 307 per 10,000 is now well above statistical neighbour rate of 239 and England average rate of 187 per 10,000. Reviews and case sampling have identified section 47 enquiries are being initiated appropriately and aligned to significant harm
- **Numbers of children subject to child protection have reduced.** 147 children were the subject of an initial child protection conference during 2024/25 which is a 43% reduction on the 258 children who were the subject of an initial child protection conference in the previous year. NEL's rate of 45 per 10,000 is now below comparators (England average 52, statistical neighbour 73). The number of children on a child protection plan has reduced by 38% at the end 2024/25 to 148 at 31 March 2025 from 237 at 31 March 2024. This evidences our continued commitment to supporting children and families to reduce risk and meet need at a lower level
- **The timeliness of initial child protection conferences has improved.** 89% of ICPCs held in 2024/25 were in timescales, up from 79% in 2023/24, again showing less drift in the system

- **Most child protection review conferences were held within timescales.** 98% of child protection review conferences happened in timescales during 2024/25 maintaining the high performance seen each year in this area
- **Continued increase in the proportion of children placed for adoption.** 25 children were adopted during 2024/25 which accounted for 20% of all children leaving care. This is a decrease in numbers from 203/24, but higher than in previous years, and the proportion of children adopted has actually increased from 17% in 2023/24
- **There has been a 21% decrease in the number of children going missing and a 16% decrease in the number of episodes of children missing:** 221 children had one or more missing episodes during 2024/25 compared with 279 children the previous year. In total there were 604 episodes of missing during 2024/25 compared with 719 in 2023/24. The number of missing episodes for children in our care has also reduced. 43 children in our care had one or more missing episodes during 2024/25 accounting for a total of 195 missing episodes during the year. This has reduced from 54 children with a total of 264 missing episodes in the previous year, which accounts for a 20% reduction in children in our care with missing episodes and a 26% reduction in the number of missing episodes from 2023/24
- **Better identification of children at risk of sexual harm:** 356 referrals had sexual harm as the presenting issue during 2024/25, up 24% from 287 in 2023/24. Children on a child protection plan with a category of sexual harm has increased from 2% in 2023/24 to 5% in 2024/25. 290 assessments had factors of sexual harm identified after assessment up 32% on the 219 the previous year. The increase has been informed by the delivery of child sexual abuse training across the partnership through the delivery of the CSA strategic plan. The number of crimes recorded for child sexual offences against children has increased from 245 in 2023/24 to 261 in 2024/25
- **Management of children at risk of neglect:** The number of children with an assessment factor of neglect has decreased, 425 assessments were completed in 2024/25 which identified a factor of neglect after assessment. This is a 15% reduction on the 501 assessments in 2023/24, which is likely accounted for by the drop in referrals received and assessments completed in year. The number of child offences in respect of neglect has increased from 26 in 2023/4 to 37 in 2024/5 (23 of which were actually committed in 2023). The delivery of neglect training to over 600 practitioners has raised awareness of neglect across the partnership
- **Better identification of children at risk of child exploitation:** Children assessed to be at risk of / experiencing child sexual exploitation whilst increasing more recently remains lower than 2023/24 at 49 and 28 in 2024/25. Children assessed to be at risk of / experiencing child criminal exploitation are much lower than 2023/34 at 116 and in 2024/25 at 34. The further development of the local child exploitation profile will support with the identification of children at risk of and experiencing child exploitation. The continued planned delivery of child exploitation training and training for hoteliers and taxi drivers will lead to increased awareness
- **Local Authority Designated Officer Referrals:** The number of referrals has increased from 207 in 2023/24 to 242 in 2024/25 which is a 17% increase and has been informed by managing allegations against people who work with children workshop being held over the year leading to an increase in awareness

- **We are keeping in touch with more care leavers.** During 2024/25 NEL were in touch with 100% of 17 to 18-year-olds and 96.5% of 19 to 21 year olds, which is a second yearly increase across both age ranges. NEL are now performing above comparators for both age groups
- **NEL has continued to experience a rise in children being electively home educated.** This is similar to the national picture and is an area of continued oversight via the SCPB. An Inclusion Officer with the remit of monitoring the electively home educated cohort has continued to provide information, advice and guidance to both families and schools settings surrounding elective home education; and a specific member of the Education Inclusion and Integration senior leadership team has been allocated the responsibility of oversight of elective home education in the Borough to strengthen oversight

4) Key developments and successes

Responding to Working Together 2023

Following the publication of Working Together 2023, in December 2023, a SCP Development Group consisting of the three delegated safeguarding partners and SCP Team was established in order to understand the expectations and establish a plan to share and embed the expectations locally. Development session meetings have continued quarterly to drive forward the ongoing development and implementation of our Local Arrangements, and to take account of and consider the impact of the national reforms in supporting the SCP

Delivering multi agency safeguarding arrangements

It was endorsed that the Chief Officer of Police, Local Authority Head of Paid Service and ICB's Chief Executive undertake the role of the local safeguarding partners, and that the Director of Children's Services, North East Lincolnshire Council, the Place Nurse Director, North and North East Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership and the Temporary Chief Superintendent, Humberside Police undertake the role of delegated safeguarding partners on their behalf.

Following this, the three delegated safeguarding partners developed a document outlining the responsibilities of the lead safeguarding partners and the delegated safeguarding partners and a proposal of how they would work together in delivering the Local Arrangements which was shared in January 2024 with the three lead safeguarding partners. It was agreed the delegated safeguarding partners should have oversight of the quality and compliance of the delivery of agreed shared priorities, and processes in place to provide assurance that multi-agency practice is reviewed and operating well.

The 2023/24 Annual Report of progress and impact against the Local Arrangements and the 2024/25 Local Arrangements Plan were shared with lead safeguarding partners, alongside quarterly progress reports. One meeting has taken place and there has been ongoing dialogue. All three of the lead safeguarding partners have currently changed, and meetings are planned to agree the delivery of the Local Arrangements 2025/26. Local safeguarding partners also have the option to 'call in' the delegated safeguarding partners for additional meetings in year as required, and individual delegated safeguarding partners are accountable to their lead safeguarding partner through their respective organisational assurance functions.

A new partnership and governance structure was developed to deliver the SCP priority areas of focus (neglect, child sexual abuse and early help) and the expectations of Working Together 2023.

Strategic leadership and accountability

A decision was made by the three delegated safeguarding partners that the Director of Children's Services would undertake the function of the partnership chair for the first period of two years which commenced in December 2023. The three delegated safeguarding partners have provided strong joined up leadership and clear accountability over the last year, in delivering multi agency safeguarding arrangements and the effective delivery of the following functions:

- The delivery and monitoring of the four SCP priorities and procedures to protect and safeguard children locally, in compliance with published arrangements and our Threshold Document achieved through the embedding of the revised partnership and governance structure
- The provision of clear and appropriate challenge in ensuring partner agencies are accountable and Local Arrangements operate effectively (see record of key decisions)
- Supported effective engagement with relevant agencies in ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities, the strengthening of the input from education providers at operational and strategic level decision making
- Strengthened data analysis and independent scrutiny arrangements in gaining an accurate local picture of effective local services are being delivered
- Delivery of high quality timely rapid reviews, reflection and analysis where improvements need to be made and implementation of learning into practice
- Strengthened the system conditions for effective multi-agency child protection work overseeing the quality of practice and local outcomes for children, young people and families
- Seeking and responding to, feedback from children / families about their experiences of services across the scope of the children's social care system to ensure children can access the help and protection they need
- Reviewed and promoted consistent understanding and application of referral and intervention thresholds across agencies so that the right children receive the right support at the right time

Delivery of Local Arrangements through partnership and governance structure / arrangements

The local partnership and governance structure and reporting functions are now well embedded and are actively delivering the SCP functions and four priorities. The strategic groups meet quarterly and the chairs provide a quarterly report to the SCPB on progress and impact against the priority delivery plans which is also monitored through the SCP Local Arrangements strategic delivery plan.

In addition to the SCPB and the strategic delivery groups, there are a number of other functions which support the delivery of Local Arrangements. These include budget monitoring, communication and stakeholder engagement, policies and procedures and the delivery of quality assurance and impact of safeguarding through the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework.

There are also a number of underpinning and associated groups and meetings aligned to the SCP arrangements i.e. Multi Agency Child Exploitation Group (MACE) / Pre MACE, Safeguarding Performance Practice Assurance Group / Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group bespoke sessions to respond to national and local policy drivers and developments, other forums i.e. Child Protection Coordinators forum, GP Forum and Health Forum and other task and finish groups.

Group	Function
Safeguarding Children Partnership Board	Oversight of quality, compliance, shared priorities, systems and processes across the scope of the arrangements to provide assurance of effective practice and outcomes
Safeguarding Performance Practice Assurance Group	Analysis of dashboard, and practice across the safeguarding system, agency intelligence, agency reports
Partnership Assurance Group	To seek assurance of multi-agency working across safeguarding, the group reports to the Safeguarding Performance Practice Assurance Group
Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Oversight and delivery of scrutiny and assurance framework, oversees quality practice, audit activity, dashboard, agency intelligence, benchmarking, overseeing training
Learning Audit Development Group	To undertake multiagency operational audits of practice, the group report to the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group
Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group	Undertakes rapid reviews / practice reviews, develops action plans
Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group	Undertake work at a strategic level and oversee the implementation and impact through delivery of strategic plans for of key safeguarding themes / priorities into practice (which are currently neglect and child sexual abuse)
Child Exploitation Strategic Group	The group is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the impact of the Child Exploitation Strategy on practice and children's outcomes
Early Help Strategic Group	The group is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Early Help Strategy to ensure the right level of support at the right time by the right person

Strengthening the consistency of practice through the Threshold Document, Practice Approach and Risk Analysis Framework

Under the auspices of Working Together 2023 there is a requirement:

- that delegated safeguarding partners should agree, publish and deliver a local Threshold Document across agencies so that the right children receive the right support at the right time
- to ensure a systematic approach to the delivery of a comprehensive assessment of all children
- that the Local Authority, with delegated safeguarding partners and relevant agencies should develop, agree and public a local Protocol for Assessment and Support which reflects the local practice framework

The Helping Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in NEL Threshold Document was reviewed and, revised in full consultation with partner agencies and relaunched in June 2024.

It sets out the aim for all children to be safe from harm and enjoy growing up in loving homes, have the best start in life and a happy, healthy, fun childhood. We want them to, start school ready to learn, do well at all levels of learning and have the skills and opportunities they need to enjoy a bright future. We want children be part of an inclusive, compassionate, and thriving community, be listened to, involved in the decisions on their future and respected.

In the context of the Children's Social Care National Framework 2023, we are also committed to ensuring that:

- Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
- Children and young people are supported by their family network
- Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes
- Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

The document is now embedded across partner agencies and has led to more consistent application of thresholds and has led to an increased in the number of children supported earlier and a safe reduction in the number of children in need, children in need of protection and children in our care.

The Practice Approach was introduced at the same time as the Threshold Document. The Practice Approach provides the framework for how every practitioner should work with children, young people, and families, and with each other, across the Borough. It is based on our NEL culture, values and beliefs, and our vision 'our children, our future' which is aimed at focusing us to achieve our ambition for children to grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. At the heart of the approach is our commitment to being:

- **Relational** - to have strong, positive, trusting relationships across the partnership that builds co-operation and constructive challenge, that everyone engages constructively to deliver effective support to children, young people and families
- **Strength based** - to work with children, young people, parents and carers to find and amplify their strengths to effect positive change and achieve the best possible outcomes

- **Solution focused** - to help people explore their strengths and resources and drawing up a plan about what needs to be achieved to overcome concerns

The Practice Approach is integral to and has supported the embedding of the Threshold Document. The Practice Approach alongside the Risk Analysis Framework replaced the Signs of Safety Practice model. It has been well received and is becoming embedded across the partnership workforce as a way of working with our children, young people and families, but also with each other.

Assessment Framework: The Practice Approach sits alongside the Assessment Framework which enables a systematic approach to undertaking enquires and in achieving a comprehensive assessment for children. It investigates three domains:

- The child's developmental needs
- The capacity of parents or carers (resident and non-resident) and any other adults living in the household to respond to those needs
- The impact and influence of the family network and any other adults living in the household as well as community and environmental circumstances

The Threshold Document clearly sets out the process for early help assessments, and the type and level of early help and targeted early help services to be provided under section 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004. (Requests for targeted Family Help will need to be directed to Familyhelprequests@nelincs.gov.uk)

The Risk Analysis Framework was introduced in July 2024 and provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk across the partnership. Any assessment and / or intervention undertaken across the partnership by NEL Children's Services and partner agencies due to concern about a child's welfare, or that a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so is underpinned by the Risk Analysis Framework.

It is acknowledged that it is impossible to remove all risk from a child's life. The assessment, analysis and management of risk takes place within the three domains of the national Assessment Framework:

- The child's developmental needs - and the risks that they are experiencing
- Parenting capacity - and ability and willingness to meet the child's needs
- Family and environmental factors - including extra-familial contexts and the family network

The use of the Risk Analysis Framework into practice is now established, supported by the delivery of partnership training. Feedback from partners agencies has been very positive on the impact of its use within Child Protection Conferences. The framework is used by social workers and health, schools and wider partner agencies in informing reports to Child Protection Conference. This has led to consistent assessment of risk/ need and an increased understanding of risk by families.

The Local Protocol for Assessment and Support reflects the Practice Approach for working with children and families and sits alongside the SCP safeguarding procedures and Threshold Document. The protocol responds to the requirements for Local Authorities, with their delegated safeguarding partners and any relevant agencies, to develop, agree, and publish local protocols for assessments and support.

The protocol reflects the Practice Approach contained within our Threshold Document, [Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in North East Lincolnshire](#). It sets out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed once a child is referred into North East Lincolnshire (NEL) Children's Services. The protocol is an overarching document and is aligned to NEL Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance including the NEL Early Help Strategy and early help pathway. [Using this Manual](#)

5) Voice and stakeholder engagement

Through the Children, Young People and Families 'Stronger Together' Strategy, there is a commitment to listening to and taking account of the views and experiences of our children, young people and families at an individual, service and strategic level across the partnership.

Through the SCPB, there is a focus on ensuring that children, young people and families are captured in the scope of the board partnership and governance arrangements, and that system leaders understand their views and lived experiences, and how they have shaped and influenced services and decision making that affects their lives.

Working collaboratively, from a children's services perspective, the response to this commitment is articulated through the Voice and Influence Strategy, for which we have developed an annual report to articulate key aspects of voice and engagement activity, and associated impacts and outcomes. This takes account of voice and engagement activity, impact and outcomes, including but not limited to family hub community activity and engagement events and children in need / children in need of protection engagement sessions.

Key headlines:

Voice and Influence Strategy

The revised strategy, which was co-produced with children, young people and families, now includes a family-inclusive pledge and interactive tools, ensuring all voices are heard at all levels.

✅ So what? Core questions are going to be piloted across services to strengthen our understanding of the wishes and feelings of children, young people and families to whom we help, support and protect; and we have strengthened how feedback is gathered and used to shape practice.

Youth Engagement

Over 6,000 young people participated in the Adolescent Lifestyle Survey in 2024, the outcomes of which have been shared with schools, and are being disseminated across the partnership. "Your Voice Your Vote" which was a feature of the Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, identified top concerns: knife crime, bullying, mental health, and safe spaces.

✅ So what? Young people's views are being taken into account to shape and influence partnership action; youth priorities directly influenced the creation of a youth council in Immingham and shaped regeneration plans in Cleethorpes; feedback from the ALS associated with healthy relationships formed the basis of a creative conversation with care leavers about healthy relationships and domestic abuse

Children in need and children in need of protection

We have established engagement sessions with children in need and children in need of protection, and the parents/carers, as a means of gathering their views and experiences.

✔ So what? Children and young people have actively engaged in the sessions, with positive feedback, and one child saying 'it was the best day of their lives'. The feedback from the sessions, which was fed into the SCPB, demonstrated some positive relational practice, and opportunities to further enhance communications and practice have been fed back into teams and services

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Collaborative work has been undertaken to co-produce videos to demystify mental health services for young people.

"Nothing About Us Without Us" events led to service improvements, especially around waiting list support.

✔ So what? Young people's recommendations are now embedded in commissioning decisions, improving access and experience

Safety and Community

Youth voice shaped campaigns on violence against women and girls.

✔ So what? Over 1,500 students trained in bystander intervention; 200+ participated in "Reclaim the Streets," raising awareness and changing attitudes

Children in Care and Care Leavers

"Our Voice Listen Up" expanded into themed groups, increasing participation and engagement in a range of ways that are comfortable for them; and children and young people were involved in the design and voting for the new Safeguarding Children Partnership Logo and the Corporate and Community Parenting Logo.

✔ Impact: YOUNique Awards doubled nominations and received national recognition at which members of the SCPB were in attendance; co-produced guides are now used across children's services to enhance practice; care leavers local offer was shaped by and includes part written by a care leaver themselves; young people are engaging in project work with officers to further strengthen practice across the children's system

SEND and Inclusion

Young People's Action Group influenced regeneration plans and the Voice and Influence Strategy.

✔ So what? SEND Awards are judged by young people; inclusive design features in Cleethorpes regeneration (e.g., wheelchair-accessible skate areas) added to plans for public spaces

Family and Early Years

Start for Life programme reached 56,749 individuals, with a 45% increase in Q4 attendance. Parent carer panels are embedded in Family Hubs as a mechanism for listening to and taking account of the views of families who link into the start for life offer.

✔ So what? Parent feedback led to the launch of “Ready, Set, Baby!” antenatal programme and new SEND-focused sessions; parents and carers views helped to shape the revised Voice and Influence Strategy, and the refresh of our wishes and feelings survey, which will be rolled out as a means of gathering views at key points across the children’s services system

Advocacy and Independent Support

There has been a focus on enhancing our advocacy offer, and our independent visitors ‘Buddies’ programme. We have strengthened our capacity and oversight of the current advocacy offer, which is through National Youth Advocacy Service, which champions children’s views through their looked after reviews, child protection conferences and issue based advocacy. We have also held a recruitment campaign to increase our pool of Buddies, to provide support to children in our care and care leavers

✔ So what? We are targeting the advocacy offer to encourage and support children and young people to take up the support, and as a result of the recruitment campaign and relaunch, we have attached 9 new Buddies who are being matched to our children and young people

Strategic Development

Developed core questions to unify feedback across services throughout children, young people and families journey through our services and influence service developments. We have also established the premise of children first, last and centre and make use of this to challenge ourselves that children’s views and experiences directly and/or indirectly feature in all key boards and partnerships, and through our day to day interactions at all levels, across the partnership workforce.

✔ So what? Planned improvements will increase consistency in capturing lived experiences, enabling better service planning and responsiveness; children and young people’s views and lived experiences will continue to shape and influence at all levels, including through our Local Arrangements

6) Priority areas of focus

Early Help

What have we done?

- The Early Help Strategy was revised and the Early Help priorities reviewed, after which the strategy was relaunched at a SCP Celebration Event in December 2024
- The revised priorities included, improved health and wellbeing, early years, supporting children through education, whole family working, work to support parents understanding of parental conflict, domestic abuse hidden harm and harm outside of the home. Each of the priority areas has a workstream and a lead

- We strengthened partnership and governance arrangements through the Early Help Strategic Group in delivering the Early Help strategic plan and providing quarterly reports on progress and impact to the SCPB
- A Data and Early Help System Guide is used to understand local need to inform early help offer and ensure right priorities for NEL
- We developed our Partnership Pledge underpinned by the Practice Approach and shared responsibility across the partnership for improved outcomes
- There has been an increased focus on strengthening our professional relationships and integration to ensure safe systems are in place for children and families at all levels. This has included developing our systemic approach to leadership across Children's Services creating a shared vision and increased collaboration across the system
- We actively consulted and listened to partner agencies in informing the review and revision of the early help assessment, the move from the Signs of Safety Approach to a simplified, more fit for purpose, Practice Approach and Risk Analysis Framework and the streamlining of the referral pathway
- We have developed a comprehensive Start for Life offer focusing on conception to 2 years old understanding that the first 1001 days are critical, this includes advice, guidance, support and services in four family hubs This includes universal and accessible support for families
- We have seen an increase in performance for our payment by results supporting families claims and have trained the workforce to ensure they understand the programme and their role in evidencing the impact they are making through whole family working. The revised 10 headlines have been embedded into the Family Help recording system and relevant documents to support reporting via Sentinel. This will be the final year due to the supporting families programme ending on 31 March 2025 and we will make the necessary amendments to the recording system in line with new guidance
- We have continued to work with partners at a regional and local level to cascade multi agency training, develop a web-based resource for professionals and families and developed a 'Reducing Parental Conflict' offer which aims to provide help and resources to parents to enable them to manage family conflict
- Following the publication of Working Together 2023, we have strengthened our approach to 'harm outside the home' inclusive of integrating our exploitation and missing teams within our targeted family help offer
- Family Help policies and procedures were reviewed alongside updated quality practice standards and are being embedded
- We have strengthened our quality assurance processes, aligned to the Children's Services assurance framework
- We have developed our data and performance introducing a new Power BI dashboard to support robust oversight of the family help populations, quality practice standards and identification of themes and trends
- Within the hubs we now have Health staff co-located across all seven family hubs of which is supporting partnership working.
- From April 2024 to March 2025 inclusive we held 2091 activity sessions across our seven family hubs for children aged 0-4 years. These sessions deliver positive messages to families around parent-infant relationships, infant feeding, parenting, early language skills and providing your children with a rich home learning environment, collectively aiming to get children ready for school in their reception year

- We are setting up Teen Pregnancy and Family Hubs meetings which are to take place between key officers across the hubs, and including public health, to ensure that the messages families are receiving are the right messages in terms of the support available for teenage pregnancy across Start for Life and Targeted Family Help. This will continue to be developed over the coming months

Impact and Outcomes

The number of children and families accessing family hubs continues to increase.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we have registered 725 children and 723 parents / carers to the Start for Life programme. This programme supports parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children and ensure they have the best start in life leading to improved health and education outcomes.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were 573 Teams Around the Family being led by external partners. 93% of all TAF's were held by education. This is a slight decrease from last year however we have moved to a model where family help practitioners that become involved in a Team Around the Family then become lead professional for the family and these are not included in these figures given. We are developing our dashboard to be able to accurately record the number of step across to Team Around the Family from family help and Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service which demonstrates the changing culture across the partnership to ensure children and families are receiving the right support, by the right person at the right time.

There has been a reduction in the number of children stepping up to children's social care

As of 31 March 2025, 180 children stepped up to children's social care in the previous 12 months. This accounts for (12%) of the 1466 of cases closing to targeted family help in the 12 month period (taken from family help dashboard).

Children in North East Lincolnshire are less likely, when compared to the England average, to become involved in the criminal justice system with our consistently low first time entrants:

The number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System remains at a low level. The Youth Justice Board measures first time entrants as a rate per 100,000 of 10 to 17 years olds in our area.

The latest published data is from the period January to December 2024 which saw 28 first time entrants and a rate of 178. This is below our family average and England rate. However, this is an increase in the last year which has been impacted by the Crown Prosecution's Service who no longer recognise informal out of court disposals when charging decisions are made and NEL not being part of any Outcome 22 Deferred Prosecution Scheme.

In 2024/25 there were 284 programmes started, 248 were for diversion or out of court, equating to 87% of all programmes starting.

While it is recognised that significant progress has been made in respect of early help arrangements, there continues to be a focus on ensuring help and support at the earliest point and as such, it has been agreed that early help will continue to be a priority area of focus for the coming year, and therefore, it will continue to be reported through the partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.

Child Sexual Abuse

What have we done?

- Child sexual abuse was identified as a priority by the SCPB in 2023, a task and finish group was established which developed a local Child Sexual Abuse Strategy in full consultation with relevant agencies
- The strategy was published in December 2023 and revised and relaunched alongside the relaunch of the Threshold Document in June 2024
- A Child Sexual Abuse group was in place up to August 2024 when it was replaced by the SCP Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group which has a focus on child sexual abuse and neglect
- The Child Sexual Abuse Strategy was further reviewed in May 2025 in ensuring it is fully aligned to, but not a duplication of, the SCP Child Exploitation Strategy
- A Child Sexual Abuse Strategic Delivery Plan was developed which is being monitored within the Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group and focuses on awareness raising, assessment of risk and Local Arrangements in responding to child sexual abuse and support for children and young people affected
- There was a focus on child sexual abuse and the delivery of the strategy at the SCP celebration event in December 2024, which included the impact of local learning in child sexual abuse and progress made against the strategic delivery plan
- The child sexual abuse practice guidance, practice briefing and the child sexual abuse health pathway have been revised and strengthened are now embedded
- Local child sexual abuse training was developed and delivered to 185 practitioners during the year. In addition, a further 51 practitioners from across partner agencies received an introduction to intra familial child sexual abuse by The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. Training for trainers on intra familial child sexual abuse will be delivered to partner agencies in September 2025 who will deliver the training across the partnership as part of the SCP training pool
- The Harmful Sexual Behaviour practice guidance and process has been revised and further strengthened. Awareness raising sessions have been delivered to 23 practitioners so far in the year
- A child sexual abuse toolkit for practitioners in identifying child sexual abuse was developed and published
- A dedicated SCP website was developed and launched on the 6 May 2025, it was designed to support the delivery of the SCP priorities and has a dedicated page for child sexual abuse which contains the CSA strategy, practice guidance and toolkit

Impact and Outcomes

- The Child Sexual Abuse Practice Guidance and briefing and delivery of training have raised awareness amongst practitioners how to recognise and respond to child sexual abuse
- The link between child sexual abuse and neglect has been identified through findings from some local reviews and has been a core element of the Jane Wiffin neglect training
- All partner agencies are aware of and have signed up to embedding the child sexual abuse pathway. Child sexual abuse data is part of the SCP performance dashboard quarterly reporting
- Children on a child protection plan with a category of sexual harm has increased from 2% in 2023/24 to 5% in 2024/25, in addition 290 assessments had factors of sexual harm identified after assessment which is an increase of 32% on the 219 the previous year. The increase has been informed by the delivery of child sexual abuse training across the partnership

Examples of feedback and evaluation from our courses:

- *Encouraging parents to support their child when disclosures have been made*

It is recognised that there has been progress made in year to develop the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and to create the conditions to drive forward partnership action through the partnership and governance arrangements. That said, there remains a need for an ongoing amplified focus to ensure that the strategy is implemented and that we better understand the impact for our children and young people. As such, it has been agreed that child sexual abuse will continue to be a priority area of focus for the coming year, and therefore it will continue to be reported through the partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.

Neglect

What have we done?

- The Neglect Strategy and practice guidance were revised and republished in December 2023, though both were relaunched alongside the relaunch of the Threshold Document in June 2024
- A neglect strategic subgroup was in place up to August 2024 when it was replaced by the SCP Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group which has a focus on neglect and child sexual abuse
- The SCP identified and commissioned Jane Wiffin, a leading expert in neglect, to complete a thematic analysis of 11 local reviews. The subsequent guidelines and toolkit were amended to reflect the themes drawn from the audit
- The recommendations of the neglect safeguarding thematic audit undertaken by Jane Wiffin on behalf of the SCP in March 2024 have been delivered through the neglect strategic delivery plan. The recommendations centred around understanding of neglect by agencies, the identification and multi-agency assessment and neglect training
- The SCP worked with Jane Wiffin to adapt a neglect screening tool for use across the partnership. The tool and practice guidance has been published and disseminated across the partnership. The effectiveness of the implementation of the tool is being monitored by the SCP Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group
- The toolkit and guidance recognises the multifaceted nature of neglect and the intergenerational barriers to change. There remains a focus on impact and the relationship between love and meeting the care needs for a child
- Multi agency neglect training delivered by Jane Wiffin aligned to the findings from the thematic review was delivered to over 600 practitioners across agencies over since 2023 when the training commenced. The feedback is that it has greatly increased practitioners' knowledge and understanding of neglect and the impact on children's needs and that it will further strengthen agencies assessment of neglect.
- A dedicated SCP website was developed and launched on the 6 May 2025, it was designed to support the delivery of the SCP priorities and has a dedicated page for neglect which contains the neglect strategy, practice guidance and toolkits

Impact and Outcomes

- The development of the neglect screening tool has provided a way to assess factors of neglect in the context of the relationship between the care giver and child. The SCP are developing a championing approach whereby all practitioners champion neglect and use the neglect screening tool within practice

- Through assurance / audit activity, there is evidence of the identification of neglect in the presentation of home / risk factors and reference to recommendations to undertake the neglect checklist to aid partnership practice
- The SCP neglect training has been delivered to all partner agencies across the partnership and has greatly increased the local understanding of neglect and of the local response and agencies responsibilities within this
- The child protection plan format has been revised and strengthened, and the Risk Analysis Framework has been embedded and is used within the child protection conference process which has alongside the Threshold Document supported assessment of risk and need in respect of neglect
- The successful implementation of the Early Help Strategy has provided the system structure that the Neglect Strategy required in order to springboard to a successful embedment. This has provided confidence that implementation journey ahead is in a strong position for success
- Updated neglect guidance has been published on the SCP website. Throughout this reporting period neglect awareness and strategy updates have been incorporated to SCP safeguarding training and regularly reported to senior leaders via SCP sub groups to allow two-way communication and feedback streams

Examples of feedback as to how the training informed understanding of neglect

“As a foster carer, we care for the children that have been removed from neglect. Although this course is designed for professionals who work with children and parents, it gives a good insight to what happens before children come to us”

“How to address neglect in practice, how to 'make the abstract concrete' for children and families so I can use this when supporting practitioners, think about the terminology we're using and the expectations we have as professionals and how that is realistic or not for who we are working with”

“Consider language I use and realise that some families need more detailed information, as basic as possible, to ensure comprehension”

“How to address neglect in practice, how to 'make the abstract concrete' for children and families so I can use this when supporting practitioners, think about the terminology we're using and the expectations we have as professionals and how that is realistic or not for who we are working with”

It is recognised that there has been progress made in year to relaunch and embed the Neglect Strategy and to create the conditions to drive forward partnership action through the partnership and governance arrangements. That said, there remains a need for an ongoing amplified focus to ensure that the strategy is implemented and that we better understand the impact for our children and young people. As such, it has been agreed that neglect will continue to be a priority area of focus for the coming year, and therefore it will continue to be reported through the partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.

Child Exploitation

What have we done?

- Developed a Child Exploitation Strategy in full consultation with partner agencies in Autumn 2024 which was published at the SCP celebration event in December 2024
- Established a multi-agency Child Exploitation Strategic Group and developed and agreed the terms of reference and clear role and remit of partner agencies
- Developed and implemented a child exploitation strategic delivery plan based on the four Ps Prepare, Protect, Pursue and Prevent
- Revised and updated the local SCP child exploitation training delivered by police, children's social care and health.
- The development and delivery of child exploitation training to taxi drivers and hoteliers in raising awareness of child exploitation
- Revised, updated and republished the child exploitation risk assessment tool
- Developed multi agency child exploitation data within the SCP data dashboard which is reported on the SCPB quarterly. The Child Exploitation Strategic Group requested and now receive missing data, and the police and children's social care data is informing the delivery plan. The development of a local Child Exploitation profile which will inform the understanding of the local picture and direct interventions and resources
- Strengthened the membership of the Pre MACE and MACE which has ensured all relevant partners agencies are represented and are involved in the delivery of the child exploitation strategy
- Three child exploitation training courses have been held in the past year, and in addition there has been a local focus on the Child Exploitation Strategy and partner agency responsibilities at the SCP celebration event in November 2024. In addition, there has been a rolling delivery of exploitation workshops within children's services and bespoke exploitation training to agencies across the area
- There was a further focus at the SCP website launch in April 2025 on the local child exploitation profile and clear expectations on agencies responsibilities in responding to child exploitation. Gavin McKenna, a national speaker on child exploitation, shared his own experiences of exploitation and what supports practitioners in working with children and young people affected

Impact and Outcomes

- Training and the SCP focus on child exploitation has increased the awareness of the signs and agencies responsibilities in responding following the local child exploitation arrangements
- Disruption by the partnership includes training and community awareness raising, visits to speak with children in schools, visits to local businesses, applications for Civil Orders / warning notices and also arrests of those posing a risk to our children
- We have undertaken partnership National Referral Mechanism discussions for 16 children, resulting in 12 positive reasonable or conclusive grounds decisions.
- Since the launch of Operation Kinetic there have been custodial sentences totalling 45 years and 2 months and multiple arrests

Voice of children vulnerable to exploitation

As a result of the targeted family help interventions with children, young people and families to prevent and reduce the harm from child exploitation, examples of feedback are:

- *"I feel confident about the risks and dangers and know what to do if I am being groomed." 12 year old boy, Grimsby*
- *"It's been an eye opener for [my son], it give him more insight and exploitation isn't just sexual. [My son] knows now how to be safe and he is doing well." Mother of 12 year old boy, Grimsby*
- *"Everything is good... it's like it used to be." 15 year old boy, Cleethorpes*
- *"I loved seeing you every week and I will miss our sessions so much, you made me feel listened to and help me understand some of my feelings and why I do things. I am loads more confident in myself now." 15 year old girl, Grimsby*
- *"I go to school every day and I like it. I like going to College to do motor vehicles. I have a girlfriend this is the first healthy relationship I have been in." 15 year old boy, Grimsby*
- *"I am grateful for the support you have given me. You really listened to me and didn't judge me. I'm grateful for you me supporting me to access the NEET services so I can get into employment." 17 year old boy, Immingham*
- *"[My son] is coping with attending School at lot better. [His aunt] is a good support. "Mother of 14 year old boy, Grimsby*
- *"You helped me get into College. I always knew you were there and did not judge me." 16 year old boy, Grimsby*
- *"You're like part of the family. You've turned her life around." Mother of 17 year old girl, Grimsby*

It is recognised that there has been progress made in year to develop, launch and embed the Child Exploitation Strategy and to create the conditions to drive forward partnership action through the partnership and governance arrangements. That said, there remains a need for an ongoing amplified focus to ensure that the strategy is implemented and that we better understand the impact for our children and young people. As such, it has been agreed that child exploitation will continue to be a priority area of focus for the coming year, and therefore it will continue to be reported through the partnership and governance arrangements as appropriate.

7) Multi-agency education and training

Development and impact of safeguarding education and training

The SCP education and training arrangements have been reviewed and revised in order to be fully aligned to the delivery of the four SCP priorities and key areas of focus. This has involved the review and revision of all existing education and training packages and the delivery of child sexual abuse, neglect child exploitation and early help training in addition to the core introduction and intermediate safeguarding training.

The delivery of training on the local Risk Analysis Framework which is closely aligned to the Threshold Document alongside our Practice Approach has greatly supported with the implementation of the framework into practice which is leading to more consistent assessment of risk and need. In addition a number of interactive resources have been developed through Page Tiger to support practice in key areas for example professional curiosity.

The face-to-face SCP training is delivered by practitioners from Children's Services, the Police and Health all of which are experts in their own field and provide a true multiagency perspective. The decision by the delegated safeguarding partners to remove the charge for training for the voluntary and community sector in November 2024, and more recently for all agencies in April 2025, has removed any potential barriers in accessing the training due to any financial constraints.

The delivery of multi-agency training is having a clear impact on agencies understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the delivery of the SCP priorities and in responding to abuse and neglect. The impact is also reflected within the training feedback and within the data analysis. The development of the SCP education and training brochure and the launch of the dedicated SCP website, and the dedicated page, has made training for accessible and easy to navigate.

Education and training undertaken in 2024/25 in informing safeguarding practice

A comprehensive programme of SCP education and training has been delivered again this year, both face to face and virtually. Demand continued to be high for the core safeguarding children training, with 25 events held in to total for the Introduction to Safeguarding Children and the Intermediate Safeguarding Children training.

122 courses were held during the year, an increase of 49 courses from last year, which reflects the significant focus on the SCP priority areas of neglect and child sexual abuse and the introduction of the Risk Analysis Framework during the year. There have been 2018 training completions by learners attending face to face or virtual training events and 1453 completions of e-learning, totalling 3471 training completions over the year; a 37% increase on last year.

In addition to the formal education and training opportunities listed below, a professional curiosity resource has been produced, to support professionals in their work with children, young people and families, aligned with learning from assurance activity and practice.

The data below shows courses delivered and attendance by agencies:

Course Name	Number Trained	Number of Courses Held
Introduction to Safeguarding Children	238	15
Intermediate Safeguarding Children	212	10
Neglect Training	531	27
Child Exploitation	58	3
Domestic Abuse Awareness – Part 1 – What is Domestic Abuse?	36	2
Domestic Abuse Awareness – Part 2 – Practitioner Updates	38	2
Coercive Control Workshop	45	3
DASH and How to Assess Risk	19	2
Domestic Abuse from a Child's Perspective	40	3
Domestic Abuse and Online Safety	14	1
Harmful Sexualised Behaviour Workshop	23	2
Sharing the Science	42	4
Relationship Matters (Reducing Parental Conflict)	51	6
Strategy Discussions	39	3

Course Name	Number Trained	Number of Courses Held
Training for Trainers	6	1
Training for Trainers Presentation Session	6	2
LADO Workshop – Managing Allegations Against People who Work with Children	167	11
Risk Analysis Framework Workshop	188	15
Child Sexual Abuse Sessions	185	6
Introduction to Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse – Taking a Multi-Agency Approach	51	1
Independent Reviewing Officer Workshop	14	2
Total Face to Face/Virtual Training Completed	2018	122
E-Learning Training Completions	1453	N/A
Total Training Completions	3471	122

The data below shows attendance by agency and across all face to face and e-learning events:

Organisation/Department	Number of Training Completions
Schools/Academies and Other Learning Providers	605
Voluntary/Community Organisations and Charities	405
North East Lincolnshire Council:	
• Children's Social Care (including Foster Carers)	1132
• Family Help	194
• Resources and Governance (Business Support)	37
• Information, Advice and Guidance	10
• Education Services/Skills	205
• Children's Public Health	158
• Strengthening Families and Young and Safe	61
• Environment, Economy and Housing	19
• Safer and Stronger/Community Safety	10
• Other Services	24
Police	25
We Are With You	21
Integrated Care Board	15
Public Health	11
Northern Lincolnshire & Goole Hospitals NHS Trust	22
NAVIGO	47
Primary Care (Medical Centres etc)	11
Nursery Providers and Childminders	432
Fire Service	1
Housing Providers	25
East Midlands Ambulance Service	1
Probation	0
CAFCASS	0
Total Training Completions by Agency (Face to Face and E-Learning)	3471

Evidence of Impact

Examples of feedback and evaluation from our courses:

How to address neglect in practice, how to 'make the abstract concrete' for children and families so I can use this when supporting practitioners, think about the terminology we're using and the expectations we have as professionals and how that is realistic or not for who we are working with.' (Neglect training)

*Ensure children have trusted adult to speak to and provide opportunities for disclosure
Encouraging parents to support their child when disclosures have been made.* (Child Sexual Abuse Session)

Identifying risks and identifying protective factors; Identifying the likely outcomes; Identifying what needs to change; Being clear on identifying the developmental needs and risks associated to these. (Risk Analysis Framework)

Attending the course alongside other services and professionals, I felt this enabled me to gain insight into working together for better safeguarding practices. (Intermediate Safeguarding Children).

Learned about the many different challenges and barriers children may face in life with real scenarios and how to deal with these barriers. Have an open mind and always be able to make a stand for what you believe to be abuse' (Introduction to Safeguarding Children)

How we can adapt our report writing and make changes within our own service. More knowledge of the scale of child exploitation in my local area and the different categories of this (Child Exploitation)

How much DA a child experienced even when you think they haven't, how much trauma a child carries (Domestic Abuse from a Child's Perspective Workshop).

8) Communications

There is a commitment to effective communication across safeguarding partner organisations in the delivery of the Local Arrangements and the requirements of Working Together 2023. Arrangements for the delivery of communication as part of the SCP Communication Strategy has been strengthened over the last year.

The partnership and governance structure is an integral part of element of ensuring effective communication across the partnership. Any new developments in practice and procedure are communicated through the SCP strategic groups and communicated through the SCP Newsletter as appropriate.

The planned move away from and development and launch of the SCP dedicated website in May 2025 is central to our communications strategy and the delivery of the four SCP priorities and core statutory functions and is regularly refreshed to include a variety of resources, tools and learning from local and national reviews for professionals to access.

SCP news updates are published quarterly and are used to communicate information and messages relating to the Local Arrangements to key stakeholders. The newsletters provide key details of the delivery of the SCP priorities and key areas of focus and make explicit the responsibilities and expectations of partner agencies in delivering these. The learning and impact of any rapid reviews, case specific line of sight learning and scrutiny and assurance activity is also routinely communicated.

Regular email communications related to changes in local / national policy are communicated across the partnership through the SCP communications list alert. This has been an important mechanism to increase the reach of key messages across the partnership and there continues to be high levels of engagement with the information circulated. The communication list includes all relevant and local partner agencies across t all sectors including the statutory and community sector and two local Diocese.

Examples of communication activity include:

- Delivery of a practice lite bite session on the revised Bruising in Non Mobile Baby Policy in April 2024
- The revision to the SCP procedures in line with Working Together 2023 was communicated in June 2024
- The launch of the revised Threshold Document and revised neglect and child sexual abuse strategies and practice guidance in June 2024
- An SCP celebration event held in December 2024 to celebrate the publication and achievements within the SCP Annual Report 2023/24 and the Local Arrangements 2024/25
- The December event also had a focus on local arrangements and developments in Early Help and Child Sexual Abuse, the event was also used to launch the SCP Child Exploitation Strategy
- In the March 2025 newsletter, there was a particular focus on Anti Racist Practice where available resources were shared across the partnership. The SCP Education and training brochure was shared it communicated that there would no longer to be charges to partner agencies for training
- A joint SCP agency networking event was held on the 8 April 2025 with the voluntary and community sector and Adult Services, with 30 agency stalls and over a hundred practitioners attending. The feedback was great and felt to be a good opportunity to connect with partner agencies and learn more about their role and remit
- The new dedicated SCP website was launched on the 6 May 2025, the event also provided a focus on the SCP achievements in delivering the Local Arrangements so far. In addition, there was a focus on the changes to the local Harmful Sexual Behaviour procedures and process and a presentation on the local Child Exploitation profile and a national guest speaker on their own experiences of exploitation and what works in supporting arrangement in working with children and young people affected
- The website launch also launched the new SCP logo which was developed by local children and young people and which represented, family, being cared for and safe
- Regular communications in respect of safeguarding training and practice lite bite sessions
- Seven-minute briefings from line-of-sight learning events and any rapid reviews have continued to be published on the SCP website

9) Funding

Safeguarding partners have a shared ownership of funding responsibilities and have agreed equitable and proportionate contributions to ensure the implementation of the Local Arrangements. These consist of actual funding and in-kind resources, for example representatives from safeguarding partner organisations contribute to the development and delivery of the education and training programme. In addition, each of the safeguarding partners have identified relevant system leaders from their organisations to chair the SCP subgroups, in order to deliver and embed the Local Arrangements, the key areas of focus, associated strategies and delivery plans.

The SCP have utilised the Ear Marked Reserve and the underspend from 2023/24 which was added to it to employ a fixed term SCP Coordinator for a period of two years to support with the delivery of the Local Arrangements. The three delegated partners are seeking to increase their contributions in ensuring the delivery of the outcomes set out within the Local Arrangements Plan 2025 to 26.

In the event of a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, it has been agreed that funding will be met by the three safeguarding partner organisations and where necessary, each partner organisation will contribute equitable and proportionate funding over and above the normal allocation in order to fulfil the costs of any review.

	2024/2025
Income	Actual
Police & Crime Commissioner	-24,382
CCG/ICB	-31,400
NELC	-60,615
NPS	-2,184
Combined Total	-118,581
Expenditure	2024/2025
	Actual
Salaries (SCP Manager & Coordinator post from 25.26	64,265
Independent Scrutiny/Chair & Independent Review	9,131
Payments Private contractors assurance	6,000
Travel & Other expenses inc staff training & subscriptions	2,441
Support Services Recharges	22,300
Combined Total	104,137
Underspend back to EMR	14,444
Balance	0

10) Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews / Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel / National Reviews

Rapid reviews / practice reviews

The process and procedure for undertaking rapid reviews and consideration of practice reviews following identification of cases meeting the serious harm criteria is embedded and effective.

The Safeguarding Practice Review Group, (reconfigured to become the Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Group from April 2024) has been responsible for overseeing the undertaking of rapid reviews where the serious harm criteria is met, and for overseeing practice reviews on behalf of the SCPB, and for the implementation and embedding of learning. Learning from all reviews undertaken is shared within the multi-agency arena to develop and inform working practices and improve services to children, young people and their families who need support.

The CSPR Group has continued to undertake its responsibilities for overseeing the rapid review process, and CSPR process (as and when required). The Safeguarding Practice Learning and Assurance Group Has undertaken the responsibility for monitoring progress against all rapid review and practice review action plans and for the overseeing the implementation and embedding of learning.

There was one serious incident notification to the then safeguarding partners and to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel during the year. A rapid review was undertaken on 12 June 2024, and a decision made that sufficient learning had been identified to enable an action plan to be developed and progressed in order to inform practice. An action plan was developed and delivery and impact on practice overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group. The action plan is now complete and will was off by the SCPB in June 2025.

Key learning from the rapid review included

- The child's lived experience to be consistently assessed across agencies and shared within key forums to ensure a full understanding of the impact of parenting on meeting the needs of the child
- Domestic abuse to be considered as an enabler for neglect and staff need to understand, recognise, and name neglect for children with numerous vulnerability factors
- Missed health appointments and/or ongoing failure to thrive should be considered together across families and across different services in the context of indicators of neglect: where a service is concerned, they should share information and seek further support or advice
- Staff should utilise the Neglect toolkit to inform their assessment when they identify any neglect indicators and staff should access the Neglect training
- Parental engagement with the child's plan must be evidenced, to include an assessment of the impact of this on the child needs being met

The impact of the learning and actions from the rapid review

- The Early Help Strategy has been revised and launched and is being embedded into practice, the revision and relaunch of the Threshold Document has led to more consistent application of the thresholds in ensuring children receive the right level of support at the right time by the right person
- The learning was disseminated to partner agencies through a seven-minute briefing
- The local neglect strategy was revised and relaunched and a neglect practice briefing has been shared with all relevant and partner agencies
- Neglect training delivered by Jane Wiffin has raised awareness and led to a better understanding of neglect and the impact on children as evidenced by feedback from practitioners

Implementation of previous Rapid Review Action Plan

The action plan from a rapid review undertaken on the 18 December 2023, following a serious incident notification, has been delivered and the impact on practice overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group. The action plan was signed off by the SCPB in March 2025 and demonstrated the significant partnership action that has been undertaken.

Key learning from the rapid review included

- Interpreters to be used for all contacts when English is not a person's first language – children and family members not to be used as interpreters
- All staff to consider dental neglect and signpost / refer families to dental services when children present with decay. Information will be provided to agencies relating to the appropriate pathways
- Agencies to review there did not attend/was not brought policies to ensure children with emerging neglect concerns are captured

The impact of the learning and actions from the rapid review

- The learning was disseminated to partner agencies through a seven-minute briefing
- The local neglect strategy was revised and relaunched and a neglect practice briefing has been shared with all relevant and partner agencies
- Neglect training delivered by Jane Wiffin has raised awareness and led to a better understanding of neglect and the impact on children as evidenced by feedback from practitioners

Key learning from the local practice review

A local practice review was undertaken in 2021, following a rapid review being undertaken in July 2020. A practice review action plan was developed and delivered and progress overseen by the SCPB Safeguarding Review Group and learning shared across the partnership in informing practice.

Following the conclusion of criminal proceedings, a practice briefing was published in August 2024 in agreement with the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

The key learning included:

- The need for the police and social workers to have the right knowledge and skills to respond confidently to intra-familial child sexual abuse

- SCP Professional Resolution and Escalation Procedure to effectively raise and seek resolution of identified issues and areas of disagreement
- Effectiveness of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, now Integrated Front Door in identifying concerns, evaluation of the sources of information and the nature of risk, planning and agreeing the response
- It is crucial for practitioners to understand and assess neglect in the context of the relationship with the care giver and the impact of neglect on the child's health and development
- The use of chronologies and multi-agency assessments are integral to understanding patterns of concern and in ensuring that all relevant agency information is available for and considered in strategy discussions where there is the identification of actual or likely significant harm of children

The impact of the learning and actions from the practice review

- The Integrated Front Door was established in 2022 and replaced the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The development of the Integrated Front Door was fully informed by the learning from this review, though there was some delay in it becoming truly integrated. However, in the last year, partner agencies are integrated into the Integrated Front Door which ensures timely and holistic information gathering and sharing and decision making for children
- Since the end of 2023, when a new Director of Children's Services started, there has been the recruitment of a full senior leadership and management team across children's social care within Children's Services, and more social workers have also been recruited to (reducing the number of agency workers, and vacancies). This has improved the quality and consistency of practice, including direct work with children and families
- Child sexual abuse training sessions were delivered by a local trainer to 185 practitioners and training by The Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse to 53 practitioners, leading to increased awareness/ understanding of child sexual abuse
- The SCP Professional Resolution and Escalation Procedure was reviewed, revised and simplified and has been widely disseminated across the partnership to raise awareness and understanding of the process and their responsibilities. As part of the Child Protection Process Thematic Event, the Independent Scrutiny Officers found evidence of collaborative multi-agency relationships and positive challenge alongside the use of formal escalation in a few cases
- The SCP worked with a national expert Jane Wiffin who undertook a review of the findings from local reviews in respect of neglect in March 2023. The recommendations have informed the development of the local arrangements to respond to neglect. This included the development of and roll out of a neglect training and a neglect screening tool across the partnership which supports early identification of the factors of neglect. Awareness training and the understanding of the impact of neglect on children's outcomes has increased greatly across the partnership

11) Scrutiny and assurance (including independent scrutiny)

The SCP Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was published alongside the Local Arrangements. Scrutiny and assurance have been undertaken in relation to multi-agency case audit practice learning line of sight learning events, rapid reviews as evidenced above, independent review of learning from local reviews, challenge and support from the Independent Chair, Section 11 audit and annual education establishment safeguarding audit, leading to local learning, partnership action, changes in practice and outcomes.

Following the publication of Working Together 2023, a decision was made by the SCPB to develop independent scrutiny arrangements and to cease the role of the Independent Chair and for one of the delegated safeguarding partners to chair the SCPB. A job description was developed for the independent scrutineers, and four Independent Scrutiny Officers were commissioned / recruited to, who are representative from across the three statutory safeguarding partner organisations. They have undertaken assurance activity aligned to the scrutiny and assurance framework and SCP priority areas of focus (for 2024/25 and beyond).

Line of sight learning events process

The line of sight process is a key element of the SCP Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, in order to identify specific safeguarding themes and potential practice issues and good practice. Cases are identified where there were specific themes, two case specific line of sight learning event were undertaken during 2024/25. Action plans were developed from the reviews and are being delivered overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group. Seven-minute briefings are developed and shared with partner agencies in order to embed the wider learning and improve practice. Findings from the line of sights include.

Annual Safeguarding in Education Audit

Themes	Findings
Trauma informed Practice	The Independent Scrutineer highlighted that in recent years, the significant impact of trauma has become widely acknowledged. Trauma-informed approaches are strengths-based and require practitioners to understand the causes and effects of trauma on child development and parenting capacity and to work therapeutically through the lens of trauma ¹ .
Family networks	The importance of the exploration of family networks in identifying support around the family
Parental Vulnerability	Parental vulnerability was an identified factor and the need to understand parental history, which is a key element of the Risk Analysis Framework
Partnership working	Agencies worked well individually, and communicated well with each other and demonstrated tenacity in undertaking visits, Information sharing was quite positive
Relational Practice	The importance of relational practice was demonstrated in sustaining positive relationships with the young person and the strength of the voice of the young person

¹ <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/topics/trauma/>

The 2024 annual Safeguarding in Education Audit was undertaken in the summer term of 2024, with responses from Primary, Secondary and Specialist settings. Academy Trusts commission their own internal audits in line with DfE guidance, but many settings did return the local authority's audit. Analysis demonstrated assurances were provided by in excess of 90% of establishments for every area covered in the audit, with some areas providing 100% compliance. The audit provided valuable feedback including a number of positive points around interactions with NELC Education teams and Children's Social Care and Family Help.

The Child Protection Co-ordinators forum, which meets half-termly, is the best attended regular forum of school staff in North East Lincolnshire. There has been a focus on evolving the quality of input which now includes detailed updates and micro-CPD from the Integrated Front Door, Team Around The Family, and external providers. There is also representation from Health, Children's Workforce Development, and guest speakers. Education, as a result, have been one of the single largest groups accessing the SCP training offer in the last year. In May 2025, a representative for Education joined the local authority to work in the Integrated Front Door.

This allows education information to be included at the earliest stage of safeguarding procedures and contextualised appropriately to reflect risk. The remit of this role will evolve over time and will include the evaluation of education participation in safeguarding discussions, identification of settings where thematic training needs may exist, and working directly with partners to promote the importance of education as a protective factor for children.

Child Protection Process Thematic

The purpose of the independent scrutiny event was to seek assurance as to the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency working in relation to the child protection practice, process and how partner agencies fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The findings of the safeguarding thematic event in respect of children subject to a child protection plan was presented to the SCPB on the 9 October 2024, at which Board members accepted the findings of the report.

The key findings included:

- Evidence of positive multi-agency relationships built on consistency and stability of practitioners
- Evidence of clear and consistent communications between social workers and the core group
- Good evidence of multi-agency working and the involvement of targeted and specialist services
- From the evaluation of the multi-agency records and the conversations with practitioners there was evidence of robust practice and multi-agency working.
- There was good evidence of whole family working, and family networking
In most cases there was evidence the child's needs and their lived experience being considered
- Good evidence of management oversight and of appropriate interventions being provided based on assessed need
- Good evidence of direct work with children and the child's and parents views being considered

There were a number of considerations and action taken as part of the delivery of the action plan which is overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development group:

- Consideration of the review the process for the police sharing information at child protection conference. This is currently being reviewed as part of the delivery of the action plan
- For children's services to review the effectiveness of the process for invites to initial child protection conference. A review was undertaken and the process revised.
- Children's social care to reinforce the importance of the quality of child protection plan and need for SMART actions. The child protection conference record was revised and incorporated the Risk Analysis Framework which has supported SMART action planning

Scrutiny and assurance undertaken by the SCP

In addition to the independent scrutiny undertaken as part of the SCP Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, scrutiny and assurance has been undertaken in a number of areas in assessing the effectiveness of the Local Arrangements. This has included:

- The SCPB requested and received an assurance report from Children's Public Health in response to rapid review action plan, which provided assurance on action taken to further strengthen processes in monitoring child growth and faltering growth
- A Child Criminal Exploitation Screening Report was reported to the SCPB and provided the local picture on child exploitation in NEL. There was a reduced number of children for discussion at MACE, and as a result an action for all agencies to ensure exploitation is high on the agenda. There has been further partnership action in relation to preventing and responding to exploitation in NEL, which has included the strengthening of the process for assessing and analysing vulnerability, including the replacement of the Operational Vulnerability Meeting with Pre-MACE to focus discussions relating to those individual children assessed as requiring consideration for MACE
- A benchmarking exercise was undertaken against the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel recommendations and the Governments response to develop a local position statement in response to the National Review of children with disabilities and complex health needs living in residential settings. A practice briefing and 7-minute briefing were developed and shared with partner agencies in informing practice, and there has been, and will be continued assurance reporting through the SCPB, which demonstrated the robustness of monitoring and oversight.
- The SCPB received an overview of local policy and practice, data, management of Elective Home Education, in which the emphasis was on agencies intervening at an early stage. There are a number of developments locally that will support the process including the introduction of an education welfare officer to support the full time Elective Home Education Coordinator role
- The SCPB requested and received a report on the safe reduction of children subject to child protection plans: Assurance was provided that there has been a further reduction of children subject to a child protection plan, in a safe way, as a result of needs being met at an earlier point and through partnership intervention

- The Director of Public Health provided an assurance report to the SCP in providing clarification on changes to the local offer provided by Public Health Nursing provision. It was confirmed there had been no change to the mandated Healthy Child Offer which provides intensive support to those most in need, rather a pilot element of a proactive offer had been paused. Need is responded to through the universal and universal plus provision
- The SCPB requested and received an assurance report from the Head Of North and North East Lincolnshire Probation Delivery Unit following a recent inspection by Her Majesties Prison and Probation Service where issues were raised in respect of effectiveness of arrangements to respond to safeguarding children. The assurance provided to the delegated safeguarding partners by the probation service evidenced that infrastructures, training, management oversight and reporting process have been strengthened in response to the inspection findings
- The Director of Children's Services observed a local child protection case conference in order see firsthand the effectiveness of the process. Key findings included:
 - Practitioners were well prepared for the conference and knew the child/ family well
 - Reports pre the meeting clearly identified the concerns and what work had been taken place
 - Clear Risk analysis in social work report which was strengthened in the conference by mother directly identifying risks and co-producing the plan
 - The child's lived experience and wishes and feelings were brought to life well by practitioners within the conference.
 - Good partnership contribution and good understanding and application of thresholds with family networks considered throughout
 - Evidence of excellent direct work impacting on mothers understanding of domestic abuse and reducing risks
 - Sharing of reports with Mum before the meeting, offering Mum a drink, giving Mum the opportunity to meet people before the mtg that she had not met before
 - There was strong management oversight of the report to conference, the consistency of social worker, family help worker was having a clear impact on achieving a relational approach impact
 - Setting the child in need meeting before people left the conference
 - Areas for further development included assuring the consistency of core groups and consistent application of the Risk Analysis Framework

Independent Scrutiny of the Local Arrangements

One of the three SCP independent scrutineers was commissioned in March 2024 to undertake a review of the leadership provided by the three delegated safeguarding partners and effectiveness of Local Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The work involved a desk top exercise to scrutinise the multi-agency working arrangements that have taken place throughout the reporting period of 2024 to 2025. This involved the provision and consideration of key documents, frameworks and SCP strategic group minutes in evidencing the work of the SCP and impact in delivering the Local Arrangements. The areas identified for consideration of further development have actively informed the SCP Local Arrangements Plan 2025/26.

Independent Scrutineer overall findings

Based on the information available, I feel that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within NEL appear to be strong. I feel that there have been significant developments in striving to improve outcomes for children and young people in this area. This feels predominantly positive in working towards the vision outlined in the 2023/2024 annual report of 'our children our future'.

There appears to be strong commitment to safeguarding children that is demonstrable through senior level leadership across all agencies. There also appears to be passion and drive from the statutory partners and other agencies in striving to improve the quality of the service(s) delivered.

What is overwhelming evident within the documents that I have viewed, is that there is a high level of professional respect and regard for each other demonstrated at senior level. This level of respect is also conveyed to the workforce via the quality of the newsletters that are produced and published for the workforce to access. There is warmth and a genuine celebration of all successes achieved. This is to be commended and will undoubtedly help to generate a reputation of NEL being a good 'place to work'.

What is working well

Agreeing safeguarding arrangements in a timely manner, by September 2024, three months earlier than the national deadline, thus being compliant with recommendations outlined within Working Together 2023.

- Communicating the arrangements was clearly visible in all relevant subgroup meeting minutes
- Robust model outlined within the assurance framework, with what can be described as a visionary approach to independent scrutiny
- The collaborative decision making of the three statutory partners appears to be strong, with wide-ranging issues being tabled on the agenda and robust challenge evident in the meeting minutes. Examples being:
 - The decision to offer free training places across the voluntary and community sector
 - strengthening the SCP Team staffing complement
 - highlighting the notion of the younger the child the greater the risk in the context of potential service offer reductions
- Robust format and execution of the SCPB captures the work being achieved
- The development of standalone Neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation strategies, with associated workplans
- Associated with the above strategies, extensive investment across the workforce with the levels of training specific to these areas being delivered by key experts within these fields
- Disseminating learning through the extensive training offer that is available, but also through the '7 minute briefings' and the newsletter that is produced
- Evident that positive collaboration and constructive challenge taking place within the statutory reviews results in proactive service improvements being driven by those representing provider organisations
- 'Voice' is being strengthened across all meeting fora, with the use of case study feedback as well as inclusion in service developments. There is, however, always room for further inclusion for those with lived experience across the multiagency arena

Consideration for areas of further development/ improvement

Future independent scrutiny of the Local Arrangements would be further strengthened if they included the opportunity for the Independent Scrutineer to meet with practitioners in hearing first-hand the voice of the workforce and the communities being served. The independent scrutineer who undertook the scrutiny of the Local Arrangements took part in the Child Protection Process Thematic in July 2024 where they met numerous members of the multi-agency workforce and can (therefore) comment that those staff were positive, and enthusiastic; they showed a commitment to improving systems and processes, and to improving outcomes for children and young people.

There is an opportunity to seek further assurance from partner agencies as part of the Section 11 audit of how they have embedded the communication and practice learning from the quarterly SCP Newsletter into practice, in addition to the agency assurance reports already provided to the Safeguarding Performance Practice and Assurance Group through quarterly agency reports on the impact of safeguarding

An area for ongoing oversight and consideration is identifying vice chairs for the strategic delivery groups from partner agencies, and in ensuring the right level of representation at meetings in delivering the SCP strategic priority plans. Overall, though, the minutes from all of the subgroup meetings reviewed were found to be of a good standard and actions are completed and followed up. It was identified there is an opportunity to further strengthen the quality of the SCP group minutes.

12) Record of key decisions and actions taken by delegated safeguarding partners and impact

The delegated safeguarding partners have made a number of key decisions and taken actions relating to the expectations of Working Together 2023, in delivering the Local Arrangements, including the priority areas of focus and in implementing recommendations from local and National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which are demonstrated throughout the report. Key strategic decisions include:

Date	Decision	Actions Taken	Impact
30.4.2024	The three Delegated Partners endorsed the final draft of the Threshold Document following full consultation with relevant agencies.	The Threshold Document was launched on the 5 June alongside the re launch of the SCP Neglect Strategy and Child Sexual Abuse Strategy.	The use of the Threshold Document supported by the Practice Approach and Risk Analysis Framework is now embedded into practice and has led to more consistent application of the Threshold and the earlier identification of risk and need
	Approval of the revised SCP dashboard which was developed by a multiagency task and finish group of the SCP	The SCP data dashboard was revised and includes partner agency data aligned to the SCP priorities	The use of the dashboard has actively informed decision making by the SCP and the activity of the strategic delivery groups in delivering the SCP priorities

Date	Decision	Actions Taken	Impact
	To revise the current Scrutiny and Assurance (SAF) Framework to reflect the requirements of working together 2023.	The Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was revised to reflect and to deliver the expectations of Working Together 2023 and the SCP priorities	A programme of independent scrutiny and assurance has been delivered over the last year which has informed practice, decision making and provided assurance on the effectiveness of the Local Arrangements
6.6.2024	An assurance framework to be developed in respect of children with disabilities and complex needs and all children living away from home, to include police, education, health and children's services	A baseline audit of the recommendations from the national panel was completed. An SCP briefing on the key principles when working with children placed out of area was developed and shared across the partnership	Assurance and oversight provided to the SCP of local arrangements for supporting children with complex health needs and disabilities places out of area. Increase in awareness of closed cultures across the partnership
31.5.2024	Decision by the three Partners to undertake a rapid review following a serious incident notification by Children's Services	Rapid review undertaken and key learning identified, recommendation not to undertake a local practice review endorsed by the National Practice Review Panel	The rapid review action plan was embedded and has informed practice in respect of the response to neglect, through the delivery of training and development and launch of a neglect toolkit
1.7.2024	Decision to develop a local child exploitation strategy and strategic group	A child exploitation strategic group was developed and a local child exploitation strategy and delivery plan developed in full consultation with partner agencies	The child exploitation strategy was launched in December 2024. Local awareness raising and training has led to a better understanding of child exploitation locally. Local MACE arrangements have been strengthened, and data has informed decision making
9.9.2024	The delegated partners and relevant agencies endorsed the SCP Annual Report 2023/24 and the Local arrangements 2024/5	The Annual Report and Local Arrangements were published in early September 2024 and were communicated to partner agencies through the SCP newsletter. A celebration event was held in December 2023	The Annual Report and Local Arrangements evidenced the leadership by the three delegated safeguarding partners and the effectiveness of the delivery of local arrangements and impact on practice

Date	Decision	Actions Taken	Impact
5.11.2024	Decision by the three delegated safeguarding partners to use the SCP ear marked reserves to appoint a fixed term SCP Coordinator for 2 years to increase capacity and to support with the delivery of the Local Arrangements	Role profile developed and post advertised in March 2024 and successful recruitment to the post in April 2024. Agreement to seek to increase the police and ICB delegated safeguarding partner contributions to the SCP budget in ensuring finance arrangements are sustainable	The decision by the delegated safeguarding partners demonstrates effective leadership in ensuring there are sufficient resources to deliver the Local Arrangements. The post will impact on the speed at which the Local Arrangements are delivered
4.12.2024	Decision by the three delegated safeguarding partners write to the Director of Public Health re the requirement for Public Health to attend MACE	Escalation by the child exploitation group of the need for Children's Public Nursing to be represented on the MACE group	Agreement by the Director of Public Health to prioritise the attendance of Children's Public Nursing on the MACE panel in informing assessment of risk and need and the local response to child exploitation
18.2.2025	Decision by the three delegated safeguarding partners to seek assurance from the National Probation Services following an inspection by her majesty's prison and probation service	The probation service was invited to the SCPB and provided an assurance report in action taken to address the identified issues in respect of safeguarding children	The assurance provided to the delegated safeguarding partners by the probation service evidence that infrastructures, training, management oversight and reporting process have been strengthened in response to the inspection findings
	Decision to seek assurance from the director public health re the changes to the delivery of service provision within children's public nursing	Director of Public health attended the March SCPB and provided detail and assurance of the impact of changes to the service	The report provided assurance that the delivery of the mandated Healthy Child Programme had not been affected and the change was related to a pilot. A further assurance report following the review of Public Nursing will be presented to the October 2025 SCPB
5.3.2025	Decision to sign of a rapid review action plan following completion of all actions	The delivery of the action plan was overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development group	The rapid review action plan was embedded and has informed practice in respect of the response to neglect, through the delivery of training and development and launch of a neglect toolkit

Date	Decision	Actions Taken	Impact
	Agreed revised education and training strategy and brochure	The development of the brochure was based on a detailed review and revision of the SCP education and training arrangements overseen by the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Demonstration of effective decision making by the delegated safeguarding partners in commissioning the review and redevelopment of the education and training arrangements. Clear impact of education and training on practice and in the delivery of the SCP priorities

13) Priority areas of focus for 2025 / 26

The priority areas of focus have been identified through performance analysis, local practice, learning from local reviews including the children's lived experiences, the experiences of practitioners and on national research. The priority areas of focus remain the same as 2024 to 2025, in order to build on the progress and impact made by further developing our Local Arrangements and the quality of practice in these areas.

Priority areas of focus			
Priority area of focus	Lead partnership	Governance	Anticipated action and system change
Embed the SCP Neglect Strategy to respond to children at risk of and experiencing neglect, with a focus on the impact of the neglect training and tool	Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group	SCPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and oversee the impact and effectiveness of the Neglect Strategy delivery plan The use of neglect screening tool and wider neglect toolkit to be embedded and used consistently across NEL. This will be through clear pathways to improve uniformity in neglect cases across the partnership The introduction of a local championing approach to support a culture of consistency in cases where there are indicators of neglect Multi-agency neglect training to continue to be delivered across partner agencies on indicators of neglect, the impact on children, roles and responsibilities of agencies Hold a multi-agency thematic assurance event, led by an Independent Scrutiny Officer, to include case audit/review of child neglect cases

Priority areas of focus			
Priority area of focus	Lead partnership	Governance	Anticipated action and system change
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise community awareness and engagement, underpinned by the creation of a communications plan to develop and deliver internal and external communications on neglect
Embed the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy to respond to children at risk of and experiencing child sexual abuse, with a focus on awareness raising and assessment of risk and need	Safeguarding Practice Thematic Strategic Group	SCPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and oversee the impact and effectiveness of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy delivery plan • Multi-agency child sexual abuse training to continue to be delivered across partner agencies on indicators of CSA the impact on children, roles and responsibilities of agencies • The use of Child Sexual Abuse Risk Assessment tool to be embedded and used consistently • Hold a multi-agency thematic assurance event, led by an Independent Scrutiny Officer, to include case audit/review of child sexual abuse cases • Further development of data in understanding the local prevalence of child sexual abuse and in informing the local response • Raise community awareness and engagement, underpinned by the creation of a communications plan to develop and deliver internal and external communications on child sexual abuse
Embed the Early Help Strategy to further embed the focus on helping and supporting children and families at the earliest point, and to reduce the need for statutory intervention	Early Help Strategic Group	SCPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and oversee the impact and effectiveness of the revised Early Help Strategy delivery plan • Further training and support to partner agencies to identify the needs of children and families at the earliest opportunity • Further enhance the early help training offer, including (but not exhaustive) the development of early help training and working with resistant families also the impact of domestic abuse and neglect on families

Priority areas of focus			
Priority area of focus	Lead partnership	Governance	Anticipated action and system change
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reintroduce the fed-up programme of support to families to reduce the impact of parental substance use
Further develop the multi-agency approach to Child Exploitation, including Sexual Exploitation with a focus on transitions	Child Exploitation Strategic Group	SCPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and oversee the impact and effectiveness of Child Exploitation Strategy and delivery plan to maximise opportunities to prepare, prevent, protect and pursue leading to better experiences and outcomes Review the current child exploitation practice guidance Develop a local child exploitation profile Hold a multi-agency thematic assurance event, led by an Independent Scrutiny Officer, to include case audit/review of child criminal and sexual exploitation cases focused on transition to adulthood, observation of a MACE meeting/MACE triage and a desktop review on the impact of MACE/MACE triage A SCP Child Exploitation risk assessment toolkit to be developed to include online exploitation Develop a further understanding of the local youth offer in providing safe spaces for children and young people

14) Local Arrangements delivery plan 2025 / 26

As delegated safeguarding partners and their respective safeguarding partner organisations, and with relevant agencies, we will continue to listen, learn, review and adapt in order to ensure our Local Arrangements best meet the needs of the children, young people and families in NEL, so they grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them

As well as the priority areas of focus and associated actions, our Local Arrangements are underpinned by a delivery plan, which is built around the following areas:

- Actions carried forward from the previous development plan, where progress has been made, but where a further focus is required
- Recommendations from independent scrutiny of the Local Arrangements
- Actions associated with key policy drivers

Development Plan		
Priority Area Focus	Lead Partnership	Anticipated Action and System Change
Governance	SCPB	Review and refresh the partnership and governance structure, including sub groups and membership Develop operational standards to further enhance the quality of governance and reporting arrangements
Scrutiny and Assurance (including independent scrutiny)	Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Develop and implement our scrutiny and assurance programme which will contribute to improved practice and outcomes for children In addition to the independent scrutiny in association with the priority areas of focus, as a minimum, there will also be independent scrutiny in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Section 11 Annual Audit • an audit of the effectiveness of the Local Arrangements • Family network family led approach We will also explore developing the involvement of children, young people and families in our scrutiny and assurance processes
Data Intelligence and Performance	SCPB	Further develop the quality of the data analysis of the performance dashboard and framework in evidencing the impact of the delivery of the four SCP priorities and key functions understanding across the partnership to underpin our Local Arrangements
Child and Family Engagement	Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Further develop ways in which the partners seek and use feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence decision making Commit to ensuring that each partner agency share work undertaken and impact of voice and engagement as part of the standing agenda item at SCPB meetings
Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Review and build on the annual independent scrutiny of the identification and notification process for serious child safeguarding cases to seek assurance of our local decision making and partnership processes
Education and Training	Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	Deliver the revised education and training offer across the partnership aligned to the SCP priorities Continue the development of eLearning safeguarding introduction to safeguarding Develop a survey to be disseminated across the partnership to generate understanding regarding the impact of training

Development Plan		
Priority Area Focus	Lead Partnership	Anticipated Action and System Change
Safeguarding practice standards	Safeguarding Practice Learning and Development Group	The development and implementation of a local championing approach to specific safeguarding themes based on practice standards, practice guidance and tools aligned to the four SCP priorities
Funding	SCPb	Continue to review and increase the safeguarding partners contributions to the SCP, and continue to be creative in the way in which we deploy the funding, and available capacity, to ensure we continue to develop and deliver our Local Arrangements
Communication and Stakeholder engagement	SCPb	<p>Review and revise the SCP Communication Strategy in supporting the delivery of communication / awareness raising in delivering the Local Arrangements</p> <p>Hold an event to share the key messages from the SCP Annual Report 2024/25 and to celebrate the partnership contributions to the Local Arrangements</p> <p>Further develop the new SCP dedicated website in ensuring it fully supports the partnership in the delivery of the Local Arrangements and provides practitioners with resources, procedures and training in supporting effective practice</p>
Responding to National Reforms	SCPb	<p>Review of Local Arrangements and associated partnership and governance arrangements in response to Keeping Children Safe Helping Families Thrive national reforms</p> <p>Focus on data development, and opportunities to further explore alignment with National Children's Social Care Framework</p>

15) Glossary

Annual Safeguarding in Education Audit: The purpose of the audit is to both assist establishments in ensuring they remain up to date with legislation, guidance and good practice and assure the SCP that safeguarding procedures are in place and are effective. The audit comprises of 14 'yes' or 'no' questions which gives clear criteria on the procedures required by establishments in order to answer 'yes'. There was also an opportunity to make any extra comments relating to the Integrated Front Door, Early Help, Channel referrals, areas of achievement in relation to safeguarding, inter-agency working, suggestions for future audits and any training providers which are used.

Child Criminal Exploitation: As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines)

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 230 Serious Violence Strategy 155 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

[Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners)

Early Help: Early Help is not an individual service, but a wider system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners, who, by sharing resources and taking a collective responsibility, we can use the knowledge, skills and expertise of all our partners to ensure the right help is available at the right time. This collaborative model that is underpinned by the Working Together 2023 enhances the quality and effectiveness of services by ensuring that early conversations, interventions and support drawn from our universal provision afford children the right to support at the earliest opportunity which is tailored to their specific circumstances

Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in NEL Threshold Document 2024 / 28: The Threshold Document sets out how services support children, young people, and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, to be resilient, stay safe and independent. It is set in the context of our SCP that includes the three statutory safeguarding partner organisations, the Police, Integrated Care Board and Council, and other relevant partners. Specifically, it sets out the levels of need and the local criteria for action.

Integrated Front Door: The Integrated Front Door is our initial point of contact for professionals and the public if they are worried or concerned that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm in NEL. The Integrated Front Door is a multi-agency team consisting of Children's Services, Police, Health and Education, and including interfaces with others i.e. education and domestic abuse services, who share information to consider next steps on all contacts and referrals. Where it is assessed that a child is in need, in need of protection or becomes a child in our care, children and families are supported through a statutory plan.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education

Practice Review: The purpose of serious child safeguarding case reviews, at local and national level, is to identify improvements that can be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Learning is relevant locally but has a wider importance for all practitioners working with children and families and for the government and policymakers. Understanding whether there are systemic issues, and whether and how policy and practice need to change, is critical to the system being dynamic and self-improving.

Rapid Review: When a serious incident becomes known to safeguarding partners, they must consider whether the case meets the criteria and guidance for a local review. If the safeguarding partners determine that the criteria are met to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review, then a serious incident notification and rapid review must take place. The aim of this review is to enable them to:

- gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established
- discuss whether any immediate action is needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately
- consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- decide what steps they should take next, including whether to undertake a child safeguarding practice review

Scrutiny and Assurance Framework: The SCPB arrangements have been developed to create an arena conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge that aims to improve outcomes and experience for children and families, support staff to strive for excellence in practice, and to hold a mirror up to ourselves through a lens of transparency. The arrangements include opportunities to proactively support local agencies and organisations to grow and improve, as well as a partnership approach to learning and multi-agency safeguarding system growth and development.

Section 11: Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging its functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that the services they contact out to others are also having regard to need. The main objective of the NEL Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is to ensure that in line with the Care Act 2014, local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in NEL who have care or support needs and are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect *and* are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect as a result of their care needs.

16) Contact us

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