

# North Somerset Council

## Report to the Children & Young People Policy & Scrutiny Panel

**Date of Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Subject of Report: Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report**

**Town or Parish: North Somerset**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Carolyn Fair**

**Key Decision: No**

**Reason: It is not a key decision because it does not result in incurring expenditure or making savings of £500K+**

**It is not a key decision because of the effects of two or more wards within the local authority.**

### **Recommendations**

For the CYPs Panel to receive and comment on the Children's Safeguarding Board annual report.

#### **1. Summary of Report**

Key Strategic Business Priorities

Leadership - To provide strong governance to an effective strategic framework.

Learning – To ensure that practitioners have the knowledge and skills to be effective in their safeguarding children's roles.

Neglect - To identify and support the prevention of neglect by improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in North Somerset through the effective early identification and effective support.

Contextual Child Exploitation - To ensure child exploitation is recognised and responded to effectively, including when young people transition into adulthood.

Recent challenges include the ongoing task of recruiting to key roles of business manager and business support officers who provide such vital leadership and safeguarding direction. We've shown resilience and commitment to improve following recent Ofsted Inspection findings in March 2023 and reflect on national guidance including the Wood Review. During our development day in March 2023, we focused on making our work evidence-based and agreed the areas of focus for the coming year. We are also working to emphasise independent scrutiny and oversight now more than ever.

Statutory partners have worked together to embed our core principals and move closer to our Partnership's goals. All subgroups working groups are fully operational, with clear work objectives against the new three-year Safeguarding Business Plan, clear chairing arrangements, and robust membership. The Communications and Engagement subgroup is

currently being reviewed and consideration is now being given to join this subgroup with the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Safeguarding Activity has accelerated considerably with a greater emphasis on audit and embedding learning from local reviews into professional practice and cascading this learning at multi-agency training events.

Independent Scrutiny is undertaken by our Independent Chair. We have adopted several context-appropriate methods to achieve the scrutiny function. We also use multi-agency audit tools (for neglect cases and child sexual exploitation) as well as the development of action log trackers for recording safeguarding business activity.

Section 11 requirements as outlined in the children Act, 2004, were completed by the University Hospital Bristol and Western (UHBW) as well as the 2 Fostering Agencies Compass and Capstone.

The Child Exploitation Working Group conducted a preparatory JTAI in January 2023 examining multi-agency arrangements for dealing with criminal and sexual exploitation. We have begun considerations for the partnership to undertake a LGA peer review is planned for the coming financial year.

Following the national review of the murders of Arthur and Star, this partnership also held a learning event for practitioners from across all organisations which was supported by the Interim Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children across the system.

Our Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2023- 2026 has been finalised, and as a result our multi-agency responses to children at risk of criminal & sexual exploitation has been strengthened.

## **2. Policy**

There are no changes to policy as a result of this report.

## **3. Details**

### Our Vision

We want children and young people who reside in North Somerset grow up in a safe environment, free from abuse and neglect. Children, young people, and their families will receive the right level of support & intervention, at the right time, by skilled professionals to ensure that children and young people have the best start to life.

### Our Values

- Transparency and Respect – we will foster a culture of openness, respect and transparency. NSSCP partners are required to work openly together, to learn from collective and individual experience, and to seek and receive assurance on the overall effectiveness of work to safeguard and protect children in North Somerset.
- Integrity and Honesty – we will be honest and open with each other on areas of challenge, transformation and system change to inform decisions on future initiatives and collaborative working.

Challenge and Innovation - we will respectfully and constructively challenge each other to drive continuous improvement and deliver the best outcomes for North Somerset's children.

- Collaboration and Partnership – The three safeguarding partners and all relevant agencies will work proactively, effectively, and collaboratively together. We will value differences to help drive improvements for children and young people.

- Care and Listening to the voice and lived experience of the child - Everything we do will benefit children and young people in North Somerset. We will ensure that our work is child-centred, and we continually seek to care for, engage and involve our children and young people and their families.

## Achievements

1. We have completed our 3-year Business Plan and agreed our 4 strategic priorities. The voice of the child is a key thread throughout our business priorities.
  2. We continue to embed neglect as a key area of learning throughout respective partnership training requirements and develop learning briefings.
  3. We have promoted learning opportunities from national and locally driven developments, case reviews, and audits and assisted in the development of effective and appropriate multi-agency courses.
  4. Our Family Strengths and Needs Toolkit and documentation is now complete. We have commenced multiagency audits in Neglect, making sure plans cover the area identified as a concern – this will continue on a 3-monthly basis.
  5. We have Improved the sharing of data relating to all our vulnerable children including those vulnerable to exploitation across the Partnership and with other Local Authorities.
  6. Following local case reviews or serious incidents relating to children. We continue to quality assure NSSCP multi-agency training and professional development activities and evaluate of the impact of this training.
- Updates, achievements and future priorities are detailed from all subgroups and working groups, ICB, Avon and Somerset Police and Children and Families Services. Learning from CSPRs is outlined using case studies and the voice of the child is reported on.

## **Author:**

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## **Appendices:**

North Somerset Safeguarding  
Children Annual Report  
January 2022 to March 2023

## **Background Papers:**

None.