

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022/2023





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1 Introduction

As the three statutory partners of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, we present our report covering the period 2022/2023. The report provides information about the work and effectiveness of our local safeguarding children arrangements during this period. In it we aim to demonstrate how we function and provide assurance that our safeguarding arrangements are effective in keeping children safe.

The last 12 months within the DSCP have seen the launch of a brand-new approach to the way we support children and families in County Durham. We have developed a learning cycle model which will allow us to focus more clearly on the DSCP priorities in order to strengthen partnership working in service delivery. Within the model we've developed our practice to enable us to listen to what children, young people, families, and practitioners have told us and we have been working across the Partnership to coproduce this approach. We're really excited about the vision it offers, where we work towards offering families the help they need, at the earliest opportunity and we build upon the strengths and resources available to practitioners and community networks. Within the DSCP we recognise a well-functioning child safeguarding partnership will have the right support available, at the right time – something we believe passionately we can achieve here in County Durham.

Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership have so much to be proud of in County Durham. This report recognises the progress that the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership has made throughout the year and sets out our commitment to continue to address the challenges that will remain in 2023/24. We want to thank all those colleagues that are working across the Partnership in a variety of roles, to support children, young people, and families every day. We are immensely grateful for all that you, our workforce, do across the county, on a daily basis - thank you!

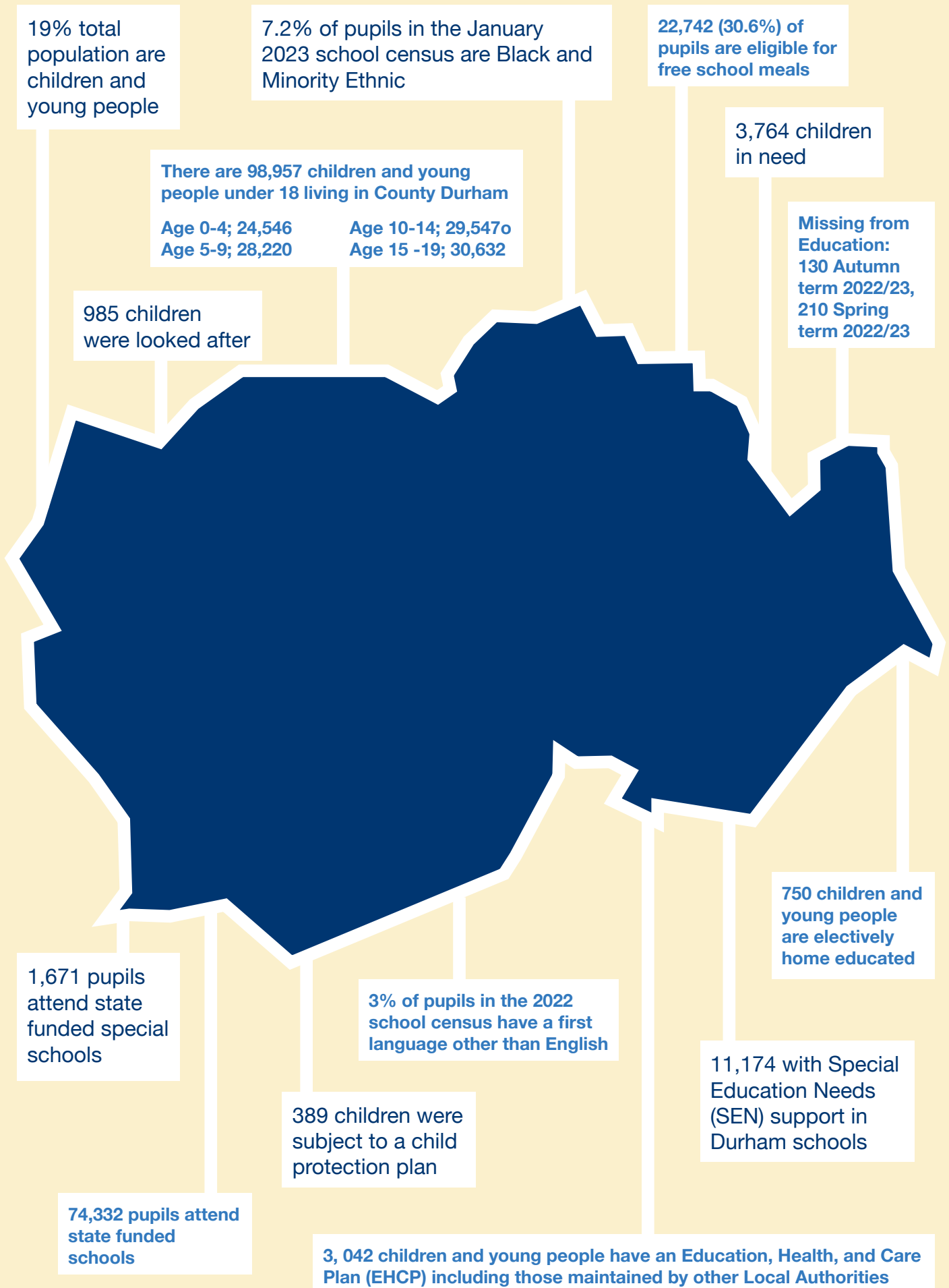
John Pearce
*Director of Children and
Young People's Services,
Durham County Council*

David Ashton
*Detective Chief
Superintendent, Head of
Crime and Safeguarding,
Durham Constabulary*

Annie Topping
*Director of Nursing,
North East and North
Cumbria ICB (Central
locality)*



2 Children and Young People in County Durham





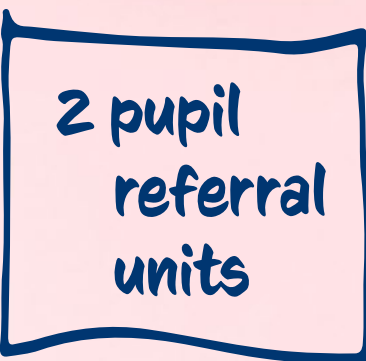
Schools in
County Durham



213 primary
schools



33 secondary
schools



2 pupil
referral
units



10 special
schools



11 nursery
schools



9 independent
schools



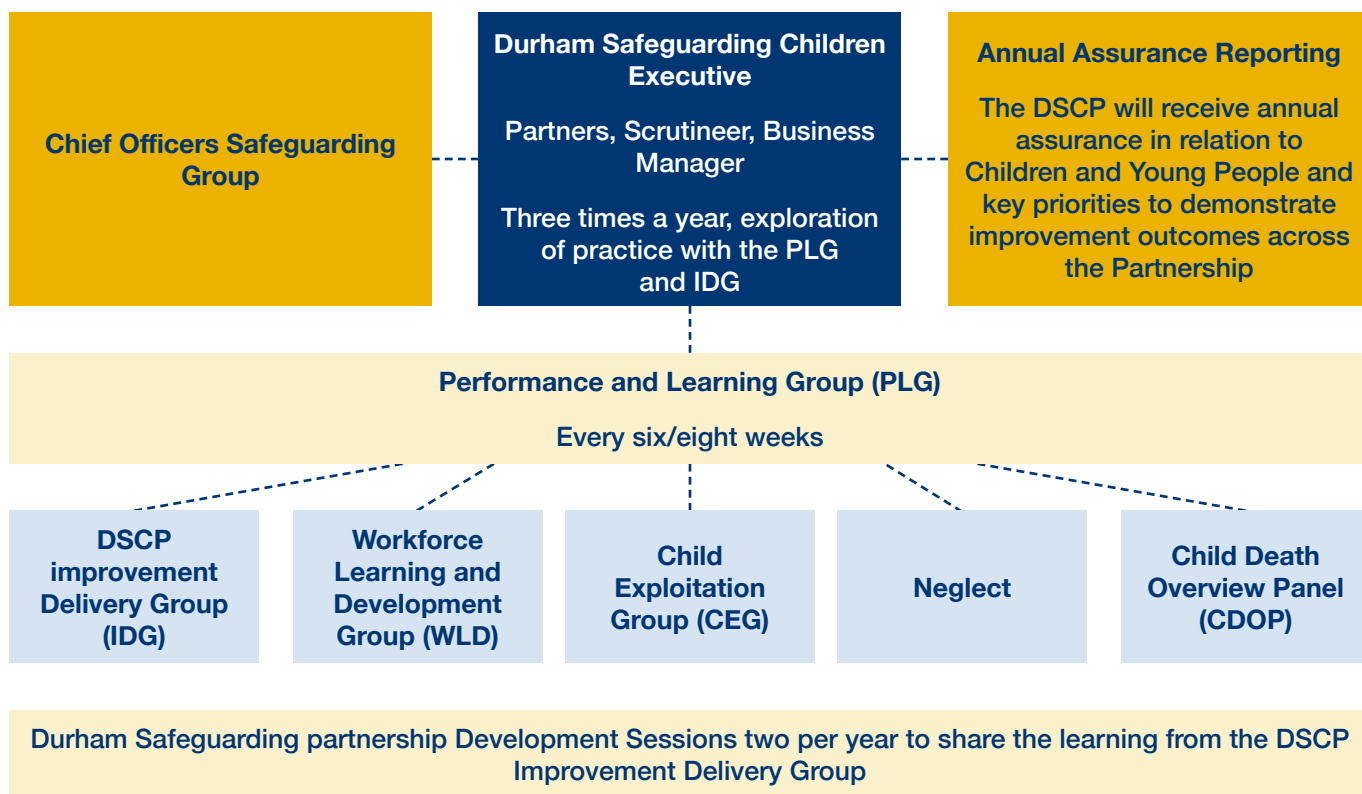
Total
278
schools



3 About Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Durham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (DSCP) is a statutory, multi-organisation partnership coordinated by a business unit, which oversees and leads children’s safeguarding across the Durham Council area. The main objective of the DSCP is to gain assurance that local safeguarding arrangements, comprised of partner organisations, are working effectively, individually, and together, to support and safeguard children in its area who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

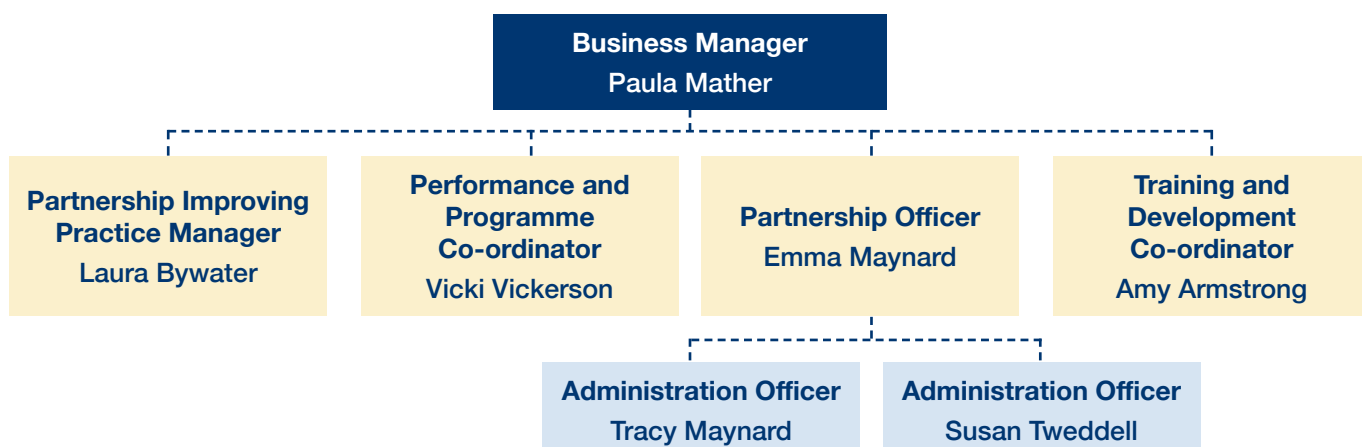
How the DSCP is Structured



The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership has made several changes over the past twelve months to their team and the structure of meetings and subgroups. The changes were made to support improvements to how we collaborate, scrutinise, assure, and drive the coordination of safeguarding activity. Within the partnership each sub-group has a clear term of reference and an annual workplan will align with the strategic priorities for the partnership. Within the updates structure each work plan demonstrates golden threads to priority areas and impact on the lives of children and young people. Agendas and facilitative discussions at all meetings focus on safeguarding practice, impact and improvement.

The Partnership Business Support Unit undertake the management and support function of the partnership, their structure and staffing has also had several changes.

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Team Structure



Alongside these changes within our partnership, we are grateful for all the efforts across the multi agency arena to continue to drive activity to ensure that we have met or worked towards the key priorities (2022/2023).

The business unit continues to plan and move forward with joint strategic work, making best use of some of the working practices which have now become business as usual.

4 Safeguarding Partnership Subgroups

The DSCP has six principal subgroups:

- Performance and Learning Group (PLG)
- Improvement Delivery Group (IDG)
- Neglect Group
- Child Exploitation Group (CEG)
- Workforce Learning and Development (WLD)
- Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

Performance and Learning Group

The purpose of the Performance and Learning Group is to monitor the impact and outcomes of partner activity on behalf of the DSCP, as required by Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The group considers the performance of all agencies involved in safeguarding children using the vision of the DSCP as a basis from which to assess good practice and concerns, reporting such to the Safeguarding Executive Group, by using data and intelligence. The purpose of the Durham Performance and Learning Group is to take forward key actions and improvements identified by the Safeguarding Partnership Executive. The Durham Performance and Learning Group will plan and coordinate learning activities. This will include learning from Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews and learning from national best practice.

Key Achievements

- Multi agency action plans have been reviewed, the recommendations made at rapid reviews, within multi agency audits and improvement work is then discussed at six months and/or twelve months, looking at the impact this makes to children and young people in County Durham
- Scoped and planned the MASH deep dive, they then managed, agreed and reviewed the learning from this practice improvement piece of work
- They have Identified and ensured the dissemination of good practice, to celebrate and learn (chapter 6)
- They have analysed national learning and considered local learning themes. 7 point briefings or learning briefings have been completed and shared through the partnership from the PLG
- Coordinated and overseen an annual programme of multi agency audits, this has enabled them to provide assurance about improvement and impact, receive findings and ensure that learning is disseminated to front line staff (chapter 5)
- Sought assurance that the subgroups alongside the PLG have a function and clear process of work and terms of reference.

What difference has it made?

- The PLG model has developed to be structured around an active learning approach, making links with a range of activity to support the priority areas of work including performance, local cases, local practice themes, national practice themes assurance visits, work of the scrutiny group and views from practitioners, children, and their families
- The PLG have supported the multi agency team to have a clear model to share and communicate learning and practice across the partnership.

Next Steps

- The PLG have developed a ‘think tank’ approach to the gathering, sharing and evaluating of data, both qualitative and quantitative across the partnership. This will be developed further in 2023-2024
- Embed the new model of practice across the partnership, identifying more positive practice examples and sharing this
- To disseminate the learning from the current Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- To support the completion of the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment pilot.

Neglect Group

The Neglect Group recently revised their plan and partnership vision and key priorities.

Vision

‘To reduce neglect; to reduce the impact of neglect by providing effective help and support at the earliest opportunity’.

Although Neglect continues to be a key challenge in Durham the number of children requiring a child protection plan because of neglect has fallen from 70% to 65%.

Key Achievements

- Revised and developed an updated HEAT tool
- Raised practitioners’ awareness of the Signs of Safety Harm Matrix
- Developed and supported the implementation of the neglect tool kit
- Over the past twelve months the neglect group as implementation and reviewed the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 tool
- Developed and launched training around Dental Neglect.

What difference has this made

To date we have trained two hundred and seventy six practitioners and managers across the partnership to use the Graded Care Profile. Initial evidence of the tools’ impact includes practitioners reporting they are better able to evidence neglect and the harm to the child. Practitioners also report the tool helps to recognise what parents are doing well as well as where change is required. They report the tool also helps to break down priority actions into small achievable tasks for parents, subsequently supporting engagement of the family. A more detailed evaluation of the impact of the tool is planned in 2023.



What next

- The Neglect Group recently revised the 'Neglect Plan on a Page' (2023/24). The plan sets out our partnership vision and key priorities. We aim to do this through three key objectives: -
 - **Understand Neglect:** To understand the prevalence of neglect across County Durham in order to effectively target resources which helps to prevent and mitigate impact of neglect on children and young people
 - **Early Identification:** to improve the recognition and assessment of neglect and
 - **Effective Interventions:** practitioners across County Durham deliver effective interventions that reduce neglect before the need for statutory interventions.



Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The County Durham and Darlington Child Death Overview Panel is a joint sub-group of Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Darlington Safeguarding Partnership. This allows for sharing of good practice and development of safeguarding opportunities towards improving outcomes for all children and young people across County Durham and Darlington and considers the learning across the county.

Key Achievements

- The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is committed to reviewing every child death in order to identify whether there is any learning to influence better outcomes for children and young people at both local and national level
- The CDOP also influence actions that can be taken to reduce the number of child deaths in the future, as well as improving services to families and carers.

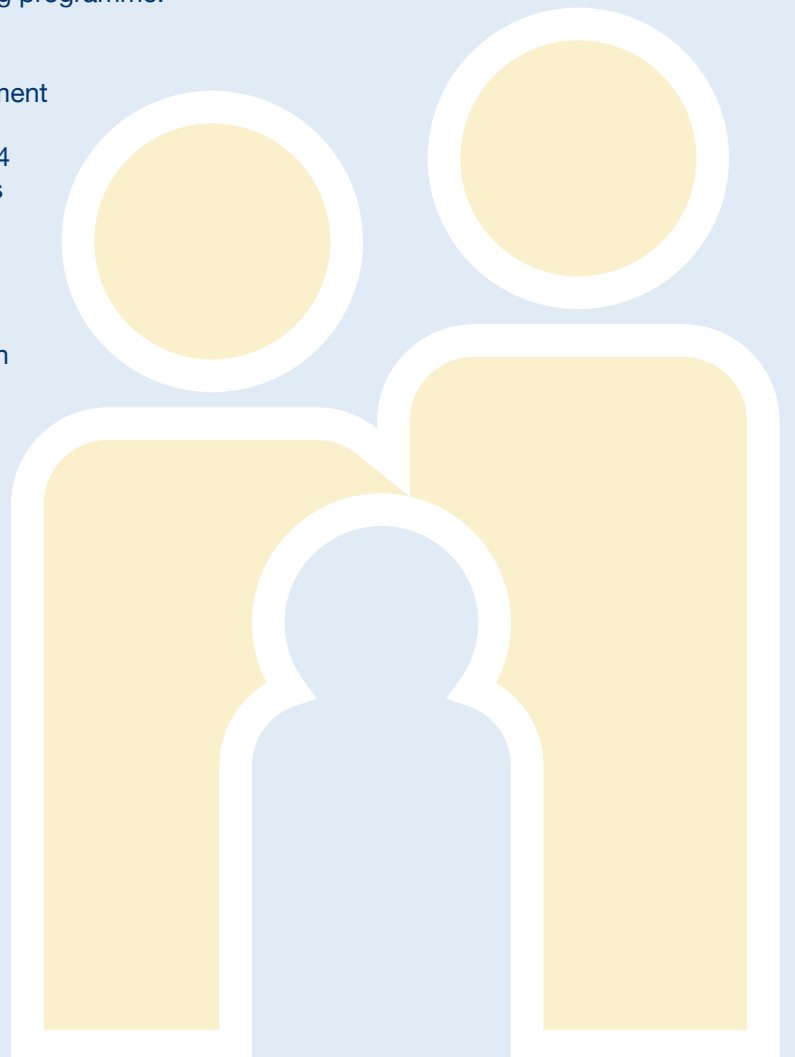
What difference has this made

In February 2022, with funding from the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) for North-East and North Cumbria (NENC) the local authority including public health and NHS partners, began working in partnership with Durham University to design and implement a multi agency SUDI (sudden unexpected deaths in infancy)-prevention programme for County Durham to further reduce these tragic deaths in infants. Free online training packages have been developed and piloted for County Durham staff and partner services who encounter vulnerable families. This graded training offer is reflective of the specific roles and responsibilities. We are now working with key partners to firmly embed the multi agency 'Eyes on the Baby' SUDI training programme.

What next

The Child Death Overview Panel held a Development Session in November 2022 to review the current CDOP arrangements and a work plan for 2023-24 has been developed to build on the effectiveness of the Child Death Review process in County Durham and Darlington. Developments include:

- A revised escalation processes
- A new Thematic Review framework in line with the national guidance
- Measuring the impact of the work of the CDOP
- Standardising family engagement in the Child Death Review process.





Workforce Learning and Development

Key Achievements

Over the past year the Workforce Learning and Development has ensured that safeguarding children training needs are identified, training is delivered to a consistently high standard and that there is a process in place for the partnership to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training. The Workforce Learning and Development is accountable to the Performance and Learning Sub-Group (PLG) who has the responsibility to integrate the learning from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and significant events into training.

What difference has this made

We have developed and embedded three different training options, e Learning, training programme with sessions delivered by an expert in the course subject either on Teams/Zoom or face to face Bespoke training delivered as single agency to individual organisations by the DSCP Training and Development Coordinator.

All training available is multi agency and topics which are the findings in national and local learning reviews. The three training options were developed to meet the increasing demand from a flexible training offer. One where partners can all learn and develop from no matter what barrier or limitations they may have upon time and availability.

We delivered two very successful safeguarding weeks which in April, twenty sessions offered and themed around:

- Safeguarding back to basics
- Report writing
- Neglect
- Child sexual abuse.

Safeguarding week in November was topics from recent reviews such as Arthur and Star Story and recognition of:

- Physical abuse
- Engaging Dads and unseen males
- A wonderful session delivered by young people 'what it means to feel safe to me'.

We have developed a thorough evaluation, feedback and impact process which allows practitioners to reflect on training through our training evaluation and practitioner impact forum. This is an opportunity to explore together how training has impacted on their practice with children, young people and families, whether it meets their needs and how we can develop any future learning. There is no 100% return rate on all training evaluation.

Next Steps

A continuous program of training and learning to be developed, with some key focus on training around:

- Dietary Neglect
- Nourish to Thrive
- Reducing Parental Conflict
- Multi agency child protection conference template
- SUDI Eyes on the Baby training
- Safer Recruitment Training.

Improvement Delivery Group

The Improvement Delivery Group is a new subgroup to the DSCP, it was launched in September 2022, its role is to consider and reflect a range of information from a variety of sources relating to a multi agency practice issue and complete work around the safeguarding partnership's priorities.

The Improvement Delivery Group (IDG) considers these frontline challenges and successes and makes suggestions and recommendations to improve multi agency working which are presented into the Executive Group by the Performance and Learning Group (PLG). The Improvement Delivery Group has been established by Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership to improve the effectiveness of Durham's safeguarding and child protection practice across partnership agencies.

The aim of the Improvement Delivery Group is to ensure a clear line of sight into practice across the landscape of provision for County Durham's most vulnerable children including those in receipt of Early Help services. The Improvement Delivery Group should bring together the views of children, their families, and professionals to inform the continuous development of services and approaches aimed at protecting children from harm and making positive differences to their lives. The Improvement Delivery Group will receive direction from the Safeguarding Executive, Performance and Learning Group to direct the focused areas.

Key Achievements

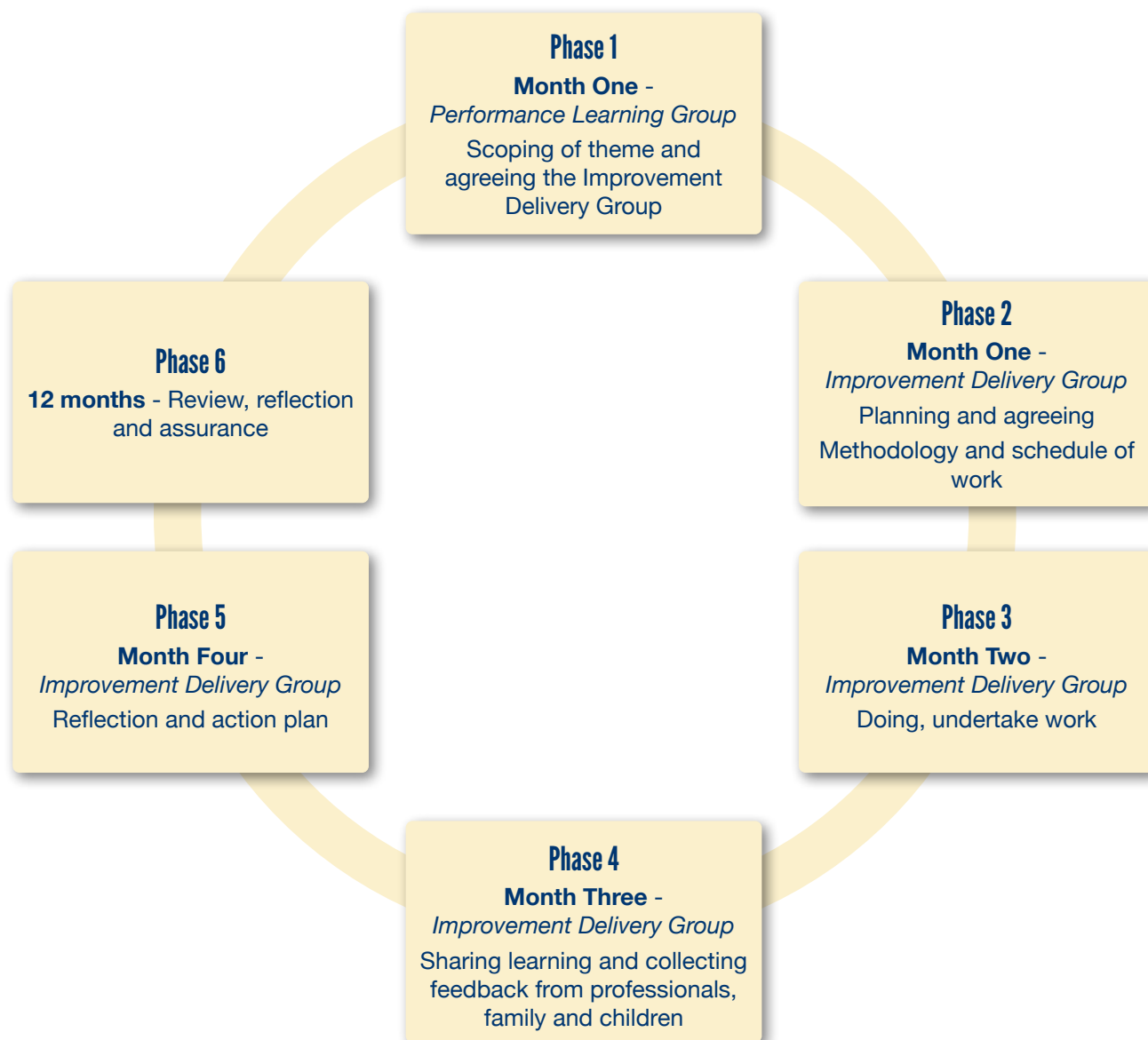
Since the launch of the Improvement Delivery Group, they have completed one piece of work which entailed a Deep Dive into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This entailed an audit of fifteen multi agency cases and a two day assurance visit to the first contact team where the MASH is situated.

What difference has this made

Examination has provided good assurance on the co-located multi agency team of social workers, police, and safeguarding nurses. Good evidence that robust multi agency discussions and decisions around risk were taking place and were well recorded; most partners had a voice in the process and strong evidence a Signs of Safety (SOS) approach was being used. Following this piece of work the IDG offered a number of recommendations to the Performance and Learning group, these involved improving communication with partners around the input and output of work within the MASH and increasing the use of safeguarding leads into discussion around threshold. This has been taken up by the MASH board where an action plan has been developed and delivered.

Next steps

The IDG have aligned themselves to the DSCP priority plan, each priority will be looked at within the next sixteen months. A four month learning cycle will be used when looking at each priority work stream.



Child Exploitation Group

The Child Exploitation group is a group that has a joint governance with Darlington Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The primary purpose of the Child Exploitation Group is to monitor, improve and evaluate the strategic response of partner agencies in tackling children missing from home, care and education and the reduction of child exploitation across Durham and Darlington.

Key Achievements

- A joined-up approach to raising awareness of online harm, child exploitation, risks to missing children, county lines and modern slavery to enable practitioners to spot the signs to prevent further harm.
- Formal strategies and procedures, (including clear thresholds and time frames) are in place for Children Missing from Home, Care and Education and Child Exploitation

- Where issues of concern are not resolved at a local level they are escalated to the Child Exploited Group and if required to the Executive/Statutory Safeguarding Partners
- To understand the local picture of missing children, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation
- Understand the contextualised safeguarding model
- Understand what the gaps and barriers are to work together through audits and quality assurance processes to identify learning and provide appropriate responses, solutions and tool kits
- To monitor an agree joint partnership performance scorecard relating to missing children, child exploitation, child exploitation vulnerability tracker (CEVT) and education data to gain an understanding of changing trends, needs and risk factors.

What difference has it made

- A key achievement over the past twelve months has been the improvements that have been made in the way data is captured and analysed. A dashboard has been created to better understand the number of missing episodes and the children concerned.
- In terms of impact, the timeliness of Return to Home Interviews despite some challenges with staffing issues, has improved from 29% to 68%. This continues to follow an upward trajectory.
- The scope of the Return to Home Interviews has been extended to review the quality of the Return to Home Interviews completed. The findings received so far are positive in terms of quality and the effectiveness of staff in engaging with young people and gathering information.
- Further work is underway to look at how the performance data can be used to inform planning within the CEG, the aim of which is to identify opportunity to reduce the number of missing episodes and improve the safety of young people. The findings from a review of young people with frequent missing episodes indicated that there was a need to raise awareness regarding the difference between a missing episode and an absent episode and how these are recorded on systems to ensure the accuracy of the performance information, this work is currently being completed and a more detailed evaluation of the impact of the above changes will be completed in 2023.

What next

Durham and Darlington Safeguarding Partners have developed the three objectives when completing any work over the next twelve months.

- **Child/Children or Young Person(s) focus:** partners are committed to the identification, risk assessment and risk management of those children identified as being at risk of missing and child exploitation Children are at the centre of what we do
- **Context focus:** partners are committed to targeting spaces and places and people of concern who pose a risk to exploiting children and young people
- **Early Identification Focused:** Partners are committed and equipped to educate children to recognise the risks of Harm outside the Home. Partners will support parents, carers, and practitioners to understand the signs of harm outside the home.

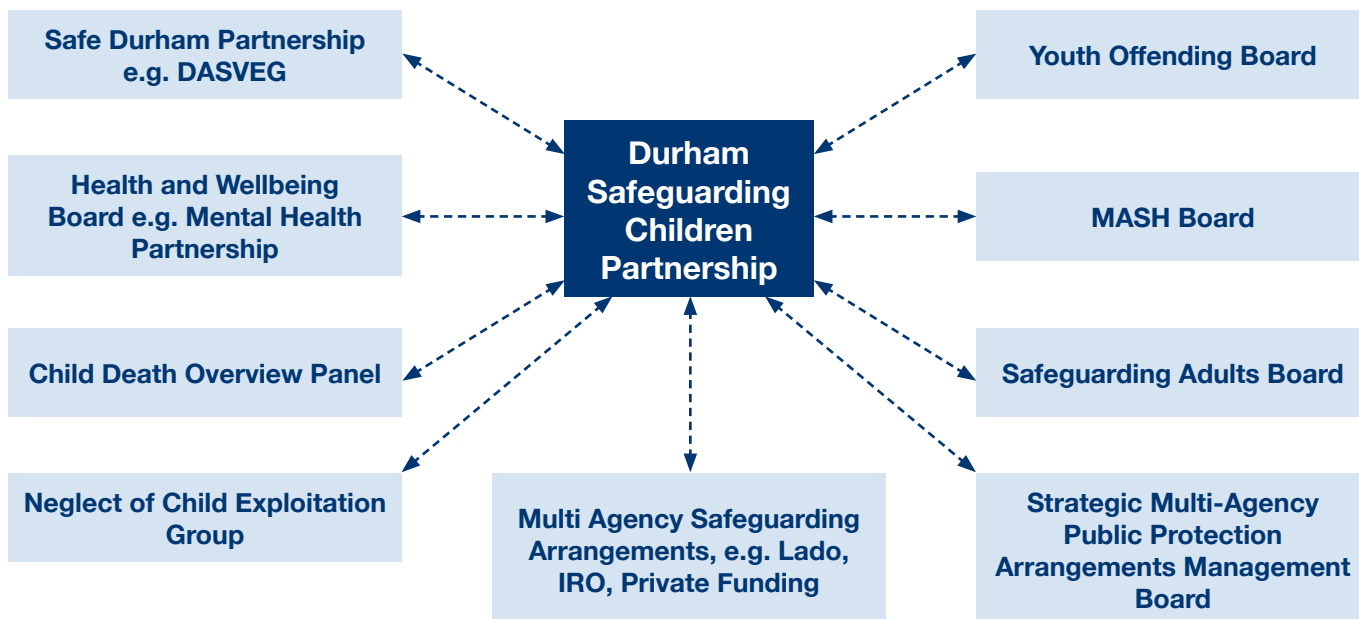
What we do within Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership

- Pro actively identify and respond to new and emerging safeguarding issues and develop multi agency policies, procedures, and work streams
- Communicate widely to persons and bodies of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so
- Raise awareness and train the multi agency workforce to promote a common, shared understanding of local need in order to and provide children with the help they need
- Coordinate a response to serious safeguarding incidents, unexpected child deaths and dialogue with the National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
- Oversee, evaluate, and seek assurance on the effectiveness single/ multi agency safeguarding practice in order to drive improvement
- Make recommendations in the planning of services for children in County Durham that is driven by analysis of multi-agency data, intelligence, and learning
- Quality assurance remains our key driver across all the subgroups, using frameworks that will measure the impact of subgroup activities and challenge those working in the safeguarding arena. Partners provide either a written or verbal report to the exec and three additional exec meetings are held per year which will seek assurance from partner agencies and relevant agencies in relation to safeguarding children in practice and responsibilities.

How do we achieve it

- Manage the strategic business plan which has four priority areas over three years
- Challenging and learn from practice through the learning cycle process
- Quality assurance framework meetings
- Performance Framework
- Oversee Complex and Organised abuse process
- Support subgroups; Missing and Exploited Group (MEG), Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), Neglect Group, Workforce Learning and Development Group (WFD), Performance and Learning Group (PLG), Improvement and Delivery Group (IDG)
- Management of serious incident and child death notifications and processes
- Management and oversight of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Learning from – near misses, poor and good practice
- Multi agency website, newsletter and twitter
- Supporting and developing the multi agency procedures
- Multi agency training programme

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Reporting and Assurance Structure



The Partnership has an Independent Scrutineer and Chair who provides leadership, vision and support and who is responsible for ensuring that all organisations contribute effectively to the work of the DSCP. The Independent Scrutineer and Chair provides accountability for the work undertaken by the DSCP by way of reports to relevant strategic committees and boards. Effective communication between the Business Manager and Independent Scrutineer and Chair ensures that there is a clear link between the subgroups and executive group, enabling risks, themes, and opportunities to be highlighted at an executive level, and challenge, direction and opportunities to be shared into subgroups. This is supported by meetings for subgroup Chairs to provide clarity about the role of each subgroup in the priority areas and to raise any process or participation issues with the Independent Scrutineer and Chair.

Our Vision and Values

Our vision and values are simple, it's about 'Keeping Children Safe' on the premise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It acts as an umbrella covering all that we do and underpinned through our three Core Values - Tenacity; Curiosity; Openness.

The DSCP has had a number of significant changes over the past twelve months, this has included a number of staffing changes and a change to our structure and how we deliver work. The biggest motivation for this change has been to consider how the partnership can understand practice and make improvements in a timely manner.



5 Achieving against Priorities

The local priorities for the DSCP during the reporting period of 2022/23 were:

- Management Understanding and Decision Making
- Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
- Cumulative Harm
- Harmful Sexual Abuse.

Each priority area was discussed within the Performance and Learning Group where a dedicated subgroup, with membership from across the partnership was identified. The subgroup activity focuses specifically upon what we want to improve for children and young people within each specific themed priority area. Each subgroup has a bespoke work plan, which has clear impact statements and outcome measures, so that we can track progress and evidence the impact of our multi agency activity. Strategic leads are required to submit an annual spotlight report to the partnership, to evidence how their work has contributed to improving outcomes for children and young people. The multi agency subgroups pro actively horizon scan for emerging risks and themes in safeguarding practice, so that we can respond to the needs of children, young people, and their families in a timely manner. This annual report will summarise the key achievements, challenges, and areas of focus for each of our subgroups, linked to our local priorities for 2022/23.

Management Understanding and Decision Making

Key Achievements 2022/2023

- Quarterly multi agency auditing processes have been developed. Within each audit activity there was a focus on Management Understanding and Decision Making. Within these audits there has been a recognition that management oversight, understanding and decision making has been evident on children's files, if it was not evidenced then action plans have been drawn up to support this to take place
- Multi agency training has been delivered throughout the year, Risk Assessment/Cumulative Harm embedded into Safeguarding Managers training
- There are improved systems to monitor Supervision across the partnership
- Capping caseloads for less experienced staff are evidenced in the partnership
- Buddy support is offered to less experienced staff in the partnership
- Early Help offers fortnightly discussions to the partnership on any cases that are stuck or difficult to manage
- Challenge process has been developed within the DSCP to support multi agency challenge on difficult cases
- Awareness/training to professionals has been well attended with positive feedback.

What Difference has it made

- All of the above work has contributed to there being an increase in the level of management oversight and decision making on all cases where children require support from services
- Regular evidence appears of strong supervision and management oversight in a high percentage of cases
- Process have been developed to allow managers to refer multi agency cases to the DSCP for independent oversight and scrutiny
- Practitioners have a pathway and protocol to follow when they are struggling with a case.

Next Steps

- DSCP to support the development of a multi-agency supervision process
- A challenge event will be held in 2024 along with strategic managers to look at what we have done, what we have achieved and further steps to be taken.

Voice and Lived Experience of the Child

Key Achievements 2022/2023

- Quarterly multi agency auditing processes have been developed. Within each audit activity there was a focus on voice and lived experience of the child. The results are presented at the Performance and Learning group to provide assurance to key stakeholders
- Within these audits there has been a recognition that developing practice is becoming more evidence that the child's words, experiences, and voice is evident on children's files
- This is a common theme in all training on the DSCP training programme and great emphasis and information is shared on this
- Safeguarding week topic, within the week there was a session designed, facilitated, and delivered by children
- The DSCP have sought or included the voice and feedback of children within their work and priorities, this has included focus groups, surveys, and appreciative enquiry work
- DSCP have supported and promoted key practice principles across the partnership, language that cares have been shared
- A Professional Pledge has been developed with a commitment that children are central to all we do, and we hold each other to account
- DSCP training offer designed so that lived experience of children is consistent in all courses
- Impact Forums introduced to assess real difference on practice multi agency training has
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities representation is evident within the partnership, to support an understanding of individual needs
- Safeguarding video have been produced by young people to help others understand different service levels and which agencies support families.



What Difference has it made

- The DSCP now has a clear process and vision to include the voice and lived experience of the child within all work and all subgroups. At this stage, impact and outcomes are yet to be determined. This will be a focus of the Performance and Learning Group for the next three years initially focussing on the next twelve months
- Agencies understand the expected standards when considering lived experience/voice of children
- Robust processes are in place in each agency to monitor and report on compliance and impact.

What Next

- Young people will be able to view the work completed within DSCP and have a greater understanding of the changes to the DSCP and the levels and stages of support and which services sit under these at each level
- Young people to contribute to the DSCP Website
- Young people's views inform the strategic direction of the work within the DSCP.

Cumulative Harm

Key Achievements 2022/2023

- Cumulative Harm guidance developed and cascaded across communication channels looking at key areas like Harm Matrix and Chronologies
- Quarterly multi agency auditing processes have been developed. Within each audit activity there was a focus on cumulative harm and the tools practitioners use to understand the history of the child. The results are presented at the Performance and Learning group to provide assurance to key stakeholders. Within these audits there has been a recognition that developing practice is becoming more evidence that the child's world, experiences, and history is evident on children's files.
- Access into Signs of Safety briefings enhanced and woven into all DSCP training provision
- ICPC reports have been developed alongside the SOS structure which supports practitioners to identify cumulative harm.

What Difference has it made

- Through appropriate levels of scrutiny and health check, multi agency meetings are well facilitated to enable the continued assessment of risk and progress for children and families
- There is a robust analysis of family history, capacity to change and the impact on the child
- There has been improvement as to how professionals use plain language that children and families understand.

What Next

- Child Protection assurance visits will be completed by the DSCP in October 2023
- DSCP Banners to be shared with the partnership to support information sharing.

Harmful Sexual Abuse

Key Achievements 2022/2023

- A Sexual Harm Consultation group has been established in Durham which is a multi-agency group that offers oversight and support on cases where sexual harm is assessed
- Cases are now flagged on multi agency systems when Sexual Harm is assessed
- Family network meetings have been promoted and developed across the partnership
- Training now uses the Sexual Harm Framework, Assessment Intervention and Moving on (AIM'S) training and capacity to protect training is offered to social work professionals. Supervising cases of sexual harm training was offered to all team managers and practice leads that supervise social work staff
- Sexual Harm Champions have been trained and developed across the partnership
- Sexual harm tool kits are available to the partnership.

What Difference has it made

- The use of Sexual Harm Champions in the partnership has led to an increased awareness
- Cases are triaged for advice when Sexual Harm is categorised by management and experiences practitioners
- Family network meetings are being utilised within the partnership to help to manage risk
- Safeguarding Children Sexual Abuse, four hundred+ briefing sessions have been offered to the partnership.

What Next

- Review of the Sexual Harm consultation group. Review to include processes, referrals in. Consideration to whether this could it be offered to the wider partnership?
- Data work on the children coming through the sexual harm consultation group, have we got the 'right' children coming through, can do some assurance work with this.



Audits 2022/2023

The DSCP seeks to challenge partners to continuously improve safeguarding for children and young people in County Durham. Multi agency, collaborative and practitioner led auditing have been completed throughout 2022-2023. These audits were identified by partners at Embedded Learning Group (now the Performance and Learning Group) following review of wider service intelligence and learning from LCSPR'S. Four audits were completed focusing on:

- Multi agency assessments and recognition of cumulative harm
- Recognising and responding to risk factors in sexual abuse
- How and when Strategy Meetings are convened, focussing on children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Whole family assessments, considering cumulative harm, frequent house moves and consideration of all adults significant in the life of the child.

Key Achievements

- Within each audit activity the partnership identified areas of positive practice around:
 - Quick application of safeguarding protocols by referring practitioners.
 - Good communication and coordination of safeguarding protocols implementation between partner practitioners
 - Appropriate service responses to referrals and disclosures.
 - Good recording of information within most partner agency systems
 - Evidence of direct work with the child and the child understood risk
 - Evidence of safeguarding supervision taking place and being recorded on the child's files
 - Positive relationships between professionals, family and child seen on the case files.

Auditors found areas for improvement included

- Assuring the sharing of information to inform decision making and risk assessment, between and within agencies
- Communication, both between agencies and with service users
- Wider safeguarding needs, such as cumulative harm, were not always consistently considered
- Maintaining effective communication between partners after initial strategy meeting
- Assuring the sharing of information to inform decision making and risk assessment, between and within agencies
- Consideration for effective support during and after protocol including consideration of Early Help and supported participation in interventions/programmes.

What Difference has it made

Recommendation for learning has been developed from each audit, the audit activity has been cross referenced with wider DSCP learning activity to understand consistent themes and focus improvement activity linked with this. Themes for improvement have included:

- The partnership approach to group supervision
- Maintaining effective communication between partners after initial meetings
- Cross boundary working and information sharing
- The consistent use of tools (Harm Matrix, Heat tool).

6 Learning and Improvement Work

The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to working together to protect children and young people from the risk of serious harm and abuse. The DSCP seek to review and update our local pathways, policies and procedures so that they are responsive to current levels of need and risk in the local area. The DSCP, and its associated subgroups pro actively work together to horizon scan for emerging risks and threats across the partnership to make sure that we are in a position to respond effectively. Within the Performance and Learning Group (PLG) the multi agency group (including all statutory partners) oversees all multi agency review activity. The PLG coordinates the outcomes of all case reviews and thematic audits and provides scrutiny of action plans where learning has identified that frontline practice could be strengthened.

During 2022-23 the PLG developed and launched a new pathway and referral process for cases where learning can be sought from cases, both good practice examples and learning examples. In 2022 one notification for learning was received by the PLG, this resulted in a learning event being conducted and a case review and briefing to be developed.



Case Study

K was 18 years 3 weeks when he was found unresponsive, K sadly died from a cardiac arrest owing to drug and alcohol use. Whilst K was not a child at the time of his death he had been accommodated by children's services and open to a multi agency team from the age of 14 years old. The review completed by the DSCP identified a number of examples of key learning for the partnership. A systems learning approach was taken to the review of K's story, partners were invited to consider how they work together to safeguard children. The following themes were identified:

- Recognising the importance of engaging with families at the earliest opportunity
- Multi agency approach to providing necessary help and support to all family members, particularly at times when children are no longer living with adults who they love and want to protect
- Professionals' curiosity about a child's lived experience and the dynamics within the family and wider support networks
- Professionals have the right resources at the right time and when a young person has very complex needs, we need to ensure that the right things are in place to find a solution that meets these needs
- Utilising tools like multi agency chronologies to help us understand the lived experience of children and young people and the cumulative harm they may have suffered.

What has the impact been

Since the learning event in November 2022 a learning briefing was developed and shared with the partnership. So far, the briefing has been watched by over five hundred and fifty practitioners in the partnership. The PLG also agreed six actions from the review, and they have kept oversight of actions arising from the recommendations.

Feedback

Briefing was rated 4.4 out of 5 stars on Me Learning.

I supported K for two years your delivery of his story was accurate and very sensitive. Thank you I know he would be very grateful (practitioner after watching briefing).

Between April 2022 and March 2023 there has been four children referred to the PLG for consideration of a statutory review. All four hit the criteria for a statutory Rapid Review, three of which warranted deeper exploration to understand learning, via a statutory Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR). The case that did not hit the criteria for a deeper exploration, single agency learning was identified within the Rapid Review process. This was shared within the PLG, actions agreed, and the case was reviewed at six months to seek assurance around the learning dissemination and changes made.

We also undertake horizon scanning of regional and national learning to identify what, outside of County Durham, may impact on what we do and the outcomes that we collectively achieve. During 2022-23 a learning briefing was created and distributed in response to the National Review into the deaths of Arthur Labinjo- Hughes and Star Hobson. Learning from these cases was also shared in Safeguarding Week (November 2022) where practitioners across the partnership attend a one-hour briefing.

One way we share learning within the DSCP is to create and develop a range of learning briefing or 7 point briefings which are available as part of a repository on the DSCP website to inform practitioners and public.

7 Use of Restraints

Use of Restraint In conjunction with Durham County Council, the DSCP monitors the use of restraint at Aycliffe Secure Services Centre.

The Centre houses a changing population of young people (aged 10-17) with complex needs.

The home regularly reports information regarding the use of restraint to the Youth Custody Service and Ofsted.

Injuries due to restraint are categorised on the level of medical intervention required with one being minor injury (no medical treatment required) and three being serious injury (requiring hospital treatment).

Of the two hundred and forty two incidents of restraint recorded for the year, 83% caused no injury at all, and whilst forty one resulted in injury, it is notable that 96% were at level one, with only one being recorded in the highest level three category.

Scrutiny involves review of the home's CCTV where randomly selected incidents are reviewed with a manager from the home about the use of restraint, the circumstances leading up to the incident and what happened afterwards. This scrutiny provides assurance to the Partnership that the use of restraint is being monitored in terms of legality and proportionality in cooperation with the centre. The Aycliffe Centre has been judged as good in its most recent Ofsted inspection, with children's health being judged as outstanding.

8 Training

Training Delivery Model

- 4 delivery and learning options
- 7172 people accessed training
- 54% increase (4108 people) in 2021/22

Me Learning

15 e Learning Courses
5681 completions

Training Programme

10 virtual multi agency courses
891 completions

Safeguarding Week

40 bitesize courses
509 completions

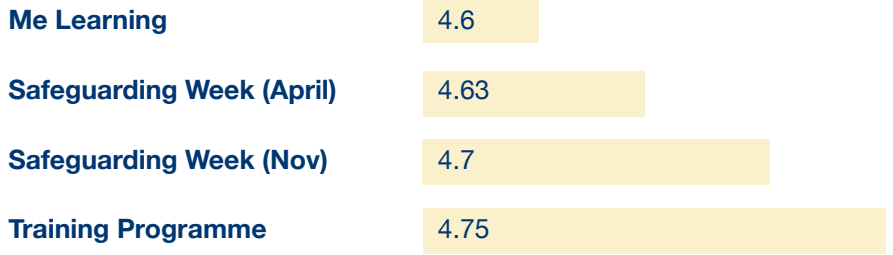
Bespoke

Single Agency Training 90 completions



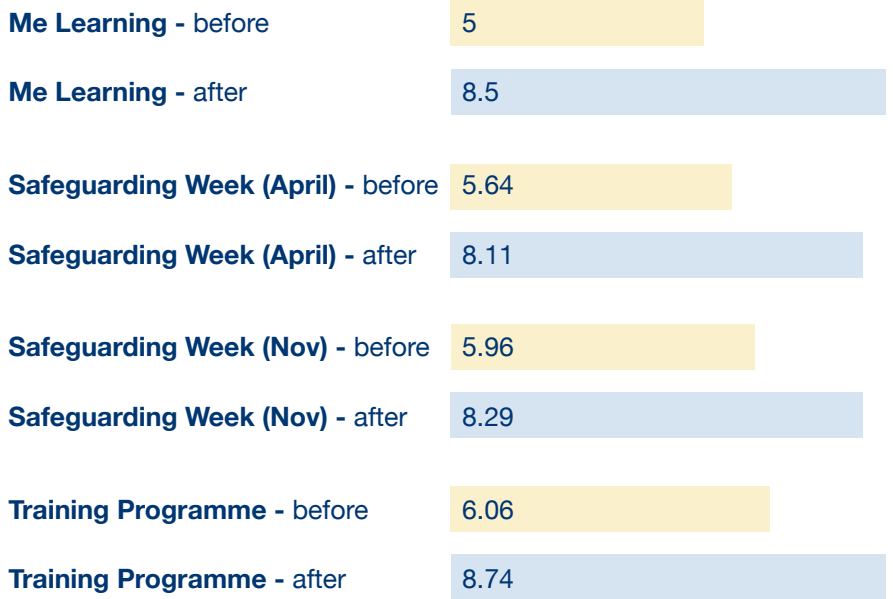
Course Content

Average rating 4.67 out of 5



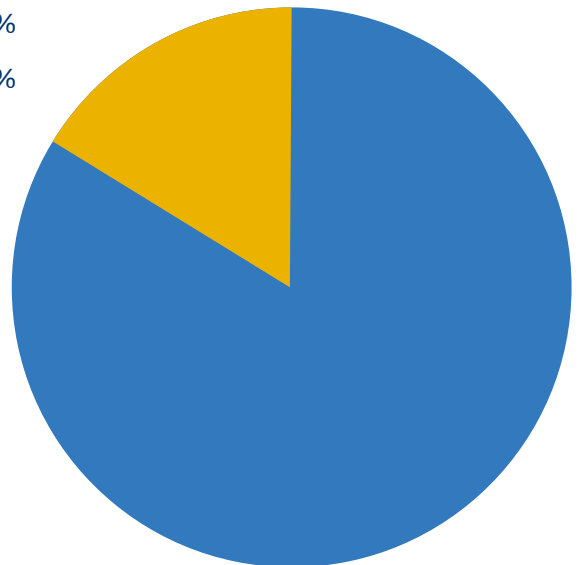
Level of knowledge on this subject prior and on completion to training

(1 being limited knowledge and 10 being in depth knowledge).



Do you think this training will have an impact on your practice with children, young people and families?

Moderately impact	16%
Significantly impact	84%
No impact at all	0%



9 What's Next for the DSCP

Priorities

The DSCP have developed a three year business plan (2023-2026) which outlines a clear set of priority areas and golden threads which will influence the work of the DSCP in the coming months/years.

- **Priority One** - Domestic Abuse
- **Priority Two** - Harm outside the home
- **Priority Three** - First 1001 days
- **Priority Four** - Mental health and wellbeing
- **Golden Threads** - these weave through everything we do:
 - Child's voice and lived experience
 - Working together across partners
 - Whole family approach recognising networks
 - Fathers roles and hidden males
 - Cultural competence
 - Reflective practice
 - Signs of safety.

These priorities will form the work completed within the Performance and Learning Group which meets every six to eight weeks. Within their groups there is a consideration of local and national learning, audit findings, learning cycle activity, good practice and areas for further exploration. Members of this group involved in a focussed area for consideration will meet with the Safeguarding Executive and members of the Improvement Delivery group to scope out the topic for examination for delivery by the Improvement delivery Group based on the four priority areas.

Learning Cycle

Within 2023/24, each priority will be explored within the DSCP Learning Cycle. In summary, the learning cycle is completed within the Improvement Delivery Group (IDG). The IDG is made up of practitioners and managers from each agency within the DSCP, meetings are held on a monthly basis where it is split into six phases, phases one to five are carried out over a four month period, with phase six, review, reflection, and assurance, taking place in month twelve.

Other new developments in the DSCP

DSCP have planned to relaunch their monthly Newsletter and Twitter page to increase their ability to communicate with the wider partnership.

The DSCP website will continue to be built upon and changed to meet the developing needs of the partnership.

Continue to embed the Signs of Safety Practice Framework across partner agencies.

Improve effectiveness of Partnership scrutiny and the assessment of impact Progress the DSCP website.

Maintain the Child Protection procedure updates.

The financial contributions from the strategic partners are as follows.

Partner	Contribution 2022-23 (£)
Durham County Council	191,604
Integrated Care Board (ICB)	105,135
Durham Constabulary	39,285*
Probation	4,873
HDFT	2,680
CDDFT	2,680
Total	347,060

*In addition to the financial contribution Durham Constabulary contribute a Partnership Analyst as a full time resource shared between the Children and Adults Partnership.

Overview by the Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the progress made by the DSCP 2022/2023

I am delighted to respond, as the Independent Chair and scrutineer, to the publication of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership's (DSCP) 2022-23 Annual Report.

The report clearly sets out what has largely been a transition year, moving from the previous model of working to one more focused on a learning cycle delivering practitioner engagement and learning, resulting in better outcomes for children, young people, their families and carers. This has been supplemented by the introduction of an interactive assurance model and improved performance management framework.

The report clearly details the structural changes that have been undertaken to achieve the new way of working introduced in December 2022 both in working sub-groups and the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Business unit. It has been a credit to all partners and staff across the partnership how they have embraced these changes, recognising the positive impact it will have on practitioner development. This means that agencies in County Durham continue to improve safeguarding of all children in their area and those on out of area placements.

The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership successfully finalised their previous priorities:

- Management Understanding and Decision Making
- Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
- Cumulative Harm
- Harmful Sexual Abuse.

There is detail contained in the report highlighting the key achievements and impact against each of these priorities.

Moving forward the following priorities have been agreed from April 2023:

- Domestic Abuse
- Harm outside of the Home
- First 1001 days
- Mental Health and Well-being.

These priorities will be delivered by utilising the new operating model for example, the learning cycle has completed two areas of examination, the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). This has allowed the new way of working processes to be tested and refined as well as practitioner learning identified to be delivered by the Performance and Learning Group and overseen by the Executive.