



Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2023 - 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) is to support and enable organisations and agencies across Derby and Derbyshire to work together so that:

- there is a clear, shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally across all levels of need and all types of harm
- when a child is identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a prompt, appropriate and effective response to ensure the protection and support of the child
- organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, effectively holding one another to account
- the voice of children and families combined with the knowledge of experienced practitioners and insights from data, provides a greater understanding of the areas of strength and/or improvement within arrangements and practice
- information is sought, analysed, shared, and broken down by protected characteristics to facilitate more accurate and timely decision-making for children and families, and to understand outcomes for different communities of children
- effective collection, sharing and analysis of data, enables early identification of new safeguarding risks, issues, emerging threats, and joined-up responses across relevant agencies
- senior leaders promote and embed a learning culture which supports local services to become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding about the quality of local practice and its impact on children and families

1.2 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership statutory partners are

- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board
- Derbyshire Constabulary

1.3 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership delivers its work through the following groups:

- Chief Officer Group
- Executive Board
- Core Business Group
- Quality Assurance subgroup
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review subgroup

- Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People subgroup
- Education subgroups
- District Safeguarding subgroup
- Policies and Procedures subgroup
- Learning and Organisational Development subgroup

1.4 Our governance and terms of reference setting out the roles and responsibilities of each subgroup and its membership is available on the [DDSCP website](#).

1.5 This annual report covers the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

2 Independent Scrutiny of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

2.1 As the Independent Chair and Scrutineer during the year 2023 – 2024, I was able to observe the governance arrangements and activities of the Partnership without the distractions and conflicts of being a member of any of the statutory of relevant agencies involved.

2.2 There is much to commend in what is described in this Annual Report, not least the genuine commitment of all partners and relevant agencies at all levels to protect, develop and safeguard vulnerable children and young people, evidenced by the progress made against the priorities for the year, the speed with which the statutory partners have reacted to the structural changes required by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the joint working on the publication of a high profile child safeguarding practice review in late March.

2.3 In terms of governance, the Partnership has retained and consolidated the foundations which statutory partners agreed and implemented in September 2019. These have worked effectively insofar as they have brought partners together at strategic and operational levels, but adopting a genuine ‘partnership’ approach to the resolution of some important issues remains a challenge. The main example is in relation to thresholds and Public Protection Notice (PPN) referrals of domestic abuse by the Police, where children were indirectly involved. A lengthy series of discussions on this issue failed to reach a resolution, with partners retreating into their silos. Happily, there were signs emerging towards the end of the period (very much strengthened in the early part of 2024 – 2025) of a positive change in approach, which should reach conclusion in the present year. A further example is the need to achieve the sharing of external inspection findings as they relate to safeguarding arrangements at an early stage in confidence. This has not always been achieved, preventing collaborative partnership action to improve local arrangements at the earliest opportunity. I am pleased to see evidence of improvements to this situation in the early part of 2024 – 2025.

2.4 The Partnership took steps to include the Education sector in its deliberations at the most strategic level – the Chief Officer Group – by involving the Chairs of the two Education Subgroups. Already they have made meaningful contributions.

However, given the significance of the sector, I suggest that a fuller representation might be considered during what remains of 2024, involving contributors from the two Local Authority Directors of Education and Headteachers from different schools, if the Partnership is to capture the rich picture it needs. This should be part of the wider review of subgroup arrangements, which Partners at all levels are agreed should focus on a thematic, rather than a service-based approach.

2.5 The anticipated reviews of Early Help arrangements by the two Strategic Early Help Partnerships will be completed during 2024/25, and the outcomes and effects of which will be significant for the safeguarding and development of young people in Derby and Derbyshire. It is important that any inevitable resource reductions do not reduce the quality and impact of these services, which are a primary point of contact, by putting collaboration at the heart of future arrangements (see below).

2.6 Moreover, it is generally accepted that more needs to be done to capture and make effective use of the voices of children and their families in reviewing and developing service priorities and responses. The means of capturing and focused use of this information must be a priority for 2024/25, as an integral element of improved data analysis, priority-setting and effective intervention (see below).

2.7 On the positive side also, it has been encouraging to witness and participate in the start of a more challenging approach to the governance arrangements, with an emphasis on the impact of the Partnership on children and more efficient Partnership activity – number, length and content of meetings. The acceptance of and transition to the roles of LSP and DSP is being undertaken with commendable speed and smoothness.

2.8 In addition, the intention to make more effective use of the wealth of data and its analysis in determining and managing responses to priorities will be a major step forward; identifying what is happening and why. Having evidence that children are (more) safe in the Partnership area is fundamental to the real success of the Partnership, against the purposes set out at the head of this Report.

2.9 These and other initiatives bode well for a more effective response to the expectations of Working Together 2023. Alongside the review of subgroups, there is much to do, but much to gain from what the Partnership is beginning to challenge and consider.

2.10 This will be important, as partners address the increasing pressures they are facing on resources – financial and personnel. The development of more collaborative working arrangements at all levels, led by strategic leaders, will be critical to the delivery of the priorities agreed by the Partnership for 2024 and beyond. The ongoing independent scrutiny of the functioning and impact of the work of the Partnership will be a fundamental contribution to its effect now and in the future.

***Steve Atkinson MA (Oxon), MBA, FIOD, FRSA
Independent Chair and Scrutineer***

3 Children in Derby and Derbyshire

3.1 Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership supports and enables organisations and agencies to work together to safeguard children living in Derby and in Derbyshire. This section sets out what is known about children living in both areas.

What do we know about the experiences of children and young people living in Derby?

3.2 There are 59,411 aged 0-17 living in Derby¹. Approximately 32.5%² of children living in Derby live in deprived households. This has increased from 21.8% living in deprived households in the previous year.

Early Help

3.3 Wherever possible the needs of children, young people and families are met by universal services. Early help services are focused on vulnerable families where there is a need for coordinated support from agencies to prevent issues escalating to the point where families may require statutory services from children's social care. In both Derby and Derbyshire, agencies who identify the emerging needs of a child and their family complete an Early Help Assessment.

3.4 At the end of March 2024, there were 946 Early Help cases open to Derby City Council, with many more supported through Early Help Assessments in universal services.

Children in Need of Help and Protection

3.5 At the end of March 2024, **for every 10,000 children living in Derby** there were:

- 159.2 being supported through targeted Early Help Services, down from 201.5 in 2023.
- 108.2 being supported as a *child in need*, up from 105.1 the previous year (2023 national average 90, statistical neighbours 96). The most prevalent category for child in need plans is 'abuse or neglect', 73% of plans.
- 38.4 children with a *child protection plan*, down from 47 the previous year (2023 national average 43, statistical neighbours 44). The most prevalent categories for child protection plans are neglect (70%) and emotional abuse (24%).
- 100.7 *children in the care of the local authority* down from 104 the previous year (2023 national average 71, statistical neighbours 82). The most prevalent categories for looked after children are neglect (67%) and absent parenting (11%).

¹ ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates: Derbyshire Observatory

² The Children in low-income families' local area statistics (CiLIF),

3.6 In addition to children and families receiving support through Early Help or Children's social care, there were 6,375 children receiving Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support in schools (increasing from the previous two annual figures 6225 (22/23) and 5483 (21/22)). There were 2,435 children with an Education Health and Care Plan (increasing from the previous two annual figures 2199 (22/23) and 2013 (21/22)).

What do we know about the experiences of children and young people living in Derbyshire?

3.7 There are approximately 153,116¹ children and young people aged 0-17 living in Derbyshire. 21.8%² of children in Derbyshire live in deprived households, increased from 13.4% living in deprived households in the previous year.

Early Help

3.8 Similar to Derby, wherever possible the needs of children, young people and families are met by universal services. Where needs are emerging or low level, individual services and universal services may be able to meet these needs, take swift action and prevent those needs escalating. Where a more targeted service is required, the targeted early help offer is available to vulnerable children and families as well as targeted early help teams for family and youth support.

3.9 At the end of March 2024, there were 707 Early Help cases open to Derbyshire County Council, with many more supported through Early Help Assessments in universal services.

3.10 The Early Help Service has recently undergone a review in response to budgetary pressures with the redesigned service to be implemented in summer 2024. The new service offers a combination of responses to statutory expectations combined with some practical family support but will mean fewer staff within the service.

3.11 The new Family Help Service fulfils statutory requirements through the delivery of parenting assessments and Family Time, and supports 16 -17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.

3.12 Working with partners, the new service offers practical support to children and families with emerging needs and provides a rolling programme of evidenced based parenting interventions, as well as a core offer of support to children aged 0-5 focussed on child development, school readiness and parenting.

Children in Need of Help and Protection

3.13 At the end of March 2024, for every 10,000 children living in Derbyshire there were:

- 46 being supported through targeted Early Help Services, down from 69 in 2023.

- 102 being supported as a *child in need*, down from 116 the previous year (2023 national average 90, statistical neighbours 81). The most prevalent category for child in need plans is ‘abuse or neglect’, 50% of plans.
- 53 children with a *child protection plan*, up from 52 the previous year (2023 national average 43, statistical neighbours 43). The most prevalent categories for child protection plans are neglect (68%) and emotional abuse (20%).
- 69 *children in the care of the local authority* up from 65 the previous year (2023 national average 71, statistical neighbours 61). The most prevalent category for looked after children is ‘abuse or neglect’ (55%).

3.14 In addition to children and families receiving support through Early Help or Children’s social care, there were 17227 children receiving SEND Support in schools³ (increasing from the previous two annual figures 15,636 (22/23) and 14,387 (21/22)), as well as 4695 with an Education Health and Care Plan (increasing from the previous two annual figures 3157 (22/23) and 2929 (21/22)).

Demographic trends

Overall, and common to both areas, there has been a significant increase of children living in deprivation. Alongside this, over the last three years, there has consistently been an increase in the numbers of children who have special education needs and disabilities and those requiring Education, Health and Care Plans. Meeting the increasingly complex needs arising from children’s lived experience in our area remains a challenge for commissioners and providers of services for children.

4 Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies on outcomes for children and families

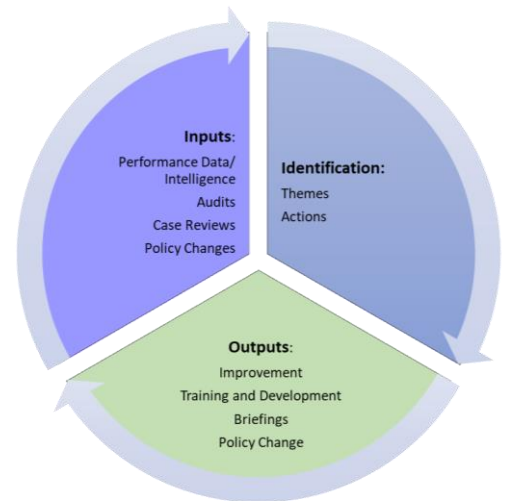
4.1 The DDSCP Performance Framework gathers a variety of multi-agency data to support priority setting, including an audit schedule, and to highlight key trends and emerging issues, for example: The partnership identified that there were low numbers of child protection medicals being completed and therefore obtained assurance that children who require a child protection medical are able to access one. It was also identified that support was needed in some cases to help strengthen the quality of judgements and has resulted in an improved process for seeking support from the Designated Doctor for safeguarding. We received reports from each local authority on the multi-agency work carried out by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Derby) and Starting Point (Derbyshire). We know that our “front door” door services are experiencing significant increases in requests for services. The effectiveness of requests and how the quality of the responses are monitored by the MASH and Starting Point Boards. This includes multi-agency participation in strategy meetings and that the voice of the child is included in decision making in response to concerns.

³ Jan 2024 census

4.2 Throughout the coming year we will be working to further streamline and improve the performance framework in line with agreed DDSCP priorities. This is intended to limit duplication between different governance forums as well as ensure that the performance framework adds value to existing processes.

4.3 In 2021 we published our *Quality Assurance Strategy* which uses a range of data and qualitative information to understand the effectiveness and impact of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The strategy is due for review this coming year in line with the updated arrangements in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and aligned to an independent scrutiny strategy.

4.4 In addition to activity linked to our priorities, the Quality Assurance subgroup carried out further assurance to establish whether there had been sustained improvement arising from previous audits and this included:



- Keeping Babies Safe protocols continue to be well embedded across the partnership including attention to baby safety, routine enquiry about domestic abuse and communication of key messages to new parents. In June we published the outcome of an [Evaluation by the Keeping Babies Strategy Group](#) of its impact on practice and improvement in the safety of babies. This demonstrated an improvement of the practice skills and knowledge across the partnership alongside evidence of the positive impact on mothers, their families and the safety of their babies.
- A report that demonstrated improved consideration of the child’s voice by police officers attending a domestic abuse incidents with further training and development planned.
- The use of chronologies is well embedded in children’s services in both areas. We still need to improve the use of the graded care profile (for neglect) more generally by other services and this will continue to be a focus for development.

4.5 The Quality Assurance subgroup also received routine updates from partner agencies on key themes so that we can monitor trends and draw out further action as needed to improve our arrangements. We received reports on:

- Child protection conference processes in both areas, demonstrating compliance with our procedures.
- Multi-agency responses to female genital mutilation identified in the history of pregnant women. We found that there was compliance with the reporting requirements.
- Arrangements for our responses to allegations against staff and volunteers across the children’s sector. Individual agencies, such as health providers and the police, provided specific updates alongside the two local authorities. We have found that there is insufficient data to help us know analyse a low

number of referrals in comparison with similar sized organisations in other parts of the country. Whilst we are unable to determine whether low numbers of referrals are of significance, we were reassured that the local authority designated officer (LADO) arrangements were effective and compliant.

4.6 Learning from our quality assurance activity, rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews has continued to inform the work of the policy and procedures subgroup. We have completed a programme of updates and developments of the suite of policies, procedures, and guidance. These updates are informed and prioritised by the need to ensure that learning from local case reviews drives forward the guidance provided to practitioners and their managers such as:

- Vulnerability of children not in school.
- Sharing information about adults who are a risk to children with GPs.

4.7 Updates completed during the year (and [published on our website](#)) include the following: Forced Marriage; Allegations against staff and volunteers; Guidance on Child Protection Medicals; Referral processes to Prevent (concerning radicalization and extremism); Guidance on managing babies with suspected birth marks; Dissent process following a Child Protection Conference; Child Protection Conferences and implementing Child Protection Plans; the Abuse of Disabled Children; Bruising in non-mobile babies; and the Management of non-recent abuse.

Assurance arising from Section 11 audits

4.8 The DDSCP requests the evidence from self-assessments from partnership member agencies on the safeguarding arrangements in line with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. We received 100% compliance from all agencies and District and Borough Councils.

4.9 A summary report will be considered by the Quality Assurance subgroup in September 2024. Based on the section 11 self-assessment standards, there is good evidence of safeguarding arrangements. Partner agencies demonstrate that they have good structures that promote accountability internally and improvements that are impacting on children and families such as:

- Learning from reviews was explained as having helped a paramedic prevent the death of a baby.
- Agencies have arrangements to capture the voice of children and use this to implement changes within their services.
- Learning from child safeguarding practice reviews has been implemented in practice.
- Access to health appointments for children in care has increased due to a strengthened partnership corporate parenting response.
- There were no significant issues raised by any of the agencies and there were plans in place for improvement. In most cases, due to the retrospective nature of the Section 11 reports, actions were well underway or completed.

4.10 Areas for development for individual agencies and for our safeguarding arrangements will be monitored and progress reported on in the coming year.

Assurance arising from Section 175

4.11 Schools were asked to confirm completion of their annual safeguarding audit for 2022-2023 under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the analysis of the responses were reported to the Education subgroups in January 2024.

- In Derby 82% schools used the DDSCP safeguarding audit tool. A further 9% schools used the DDSCP audit in conjunction with another safeguarding audit.
- In Derbyshire 80% schools used the DDSCP safeguarding audit tool. A further 5% schools used the DDSCP audit in conjunction with another safeguarding audit.

4.12 In addition to confirmation that schools had completed their review of their safeguarding arrangements, the Executive Board received feedback about steps taken by schools to:

- Help reassure children about raising concerns about online harms.
- Help parents understand how to support their children when they have raised concerns about online harms.
- Identify any areas that children may be concerned about and steps taken to make these areas safer, such as improving safety in corridors and provide staff supervision in some areas.

Assurance arising from inspection

4.13 Derby City Council Early Help and Children's Social Care experienced a [Focused Visit inspection by Ofsted in October 2023](#) (this type of inspection is not graded). The main findings highlight that since the last inspection in 2022:

- the stable senior leadership team has remained committed to responding proactively to meet the needs of children and families living in Derby.
- for children who are subject to child-in-need or child protection plans, senior leaders analyse emerging trends effectively and develop their services accordingly. These children therefore benefit from a strong and effective service that manages and reduces risk.
- the workforce currently consists entirely of permanently employed social workers. Children are consequently benefiting from consistency of workers, which supports effective relationship-building and progress with their plans.
- strong partnership-working is seen across all levels of the service. Robust governance arrangements ensure that the chief executive and lead member are well informed and hold senior leaders to account.
- the inspection noted that the consistency of recording in children's case records was an area for improvement.

4.14 Children's Services in Derbyshire County Council experienced an [Inspection of Local Authority Children Services \(ILACS\) by Ofsted in November 2023](#). The inspection judged the authority to be 'Good' across all domains. Since the last inspection it was found that strong progress has been made in many areas requiring improvement including:

- Identification of privately fostered children and improved quality of practice
- Effective arrangements in the Starting Point service are seeing the prompt progression of new referrals
- Strategy meetings are held quickly and are both well attended and recorded.
- Personal education plans (PEPs) are routinely reviewed, and most children receive a timely initial health assessment when they enter care.
- Individual children at risk of exploitation or who go missing are appropriately assessed by the multi-agency partnership, at strategic and locality levels.
- Strong partnership working with the police and effective use of legal measures and disruption activity are ensuring that criminally exploited children are not criminalised themselves.
- Partnership working with health colleagues and the quality of pre-birth assessments and plans are ensuring that babies' needs are well understood, and appropriate and timely responses made when risks are identified.
- The 'keeping babies safe' partnership strategy, built on learning from practice reviews, has led to the development of positive initiatives with health partners to ensure strong oversight of vulnerable parents during pregnancy and post-birth.

4.15 The inspection noted that areas for improvement included:

- Effectiveness of management oversight and supervision in driving practice improvement.
- Increasing the ambition and achievements for older care leavers not in education, training and employment.
- Increasing sufficiency to avoid the use of unregistered children's homes or supported accommodation.
- Effective and consistent provision of life-story work.

4.16 Derbyshire Constabulary received a *Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy* (PEEL) inspection by HMICFRS and the [PEEL Inspection report](#) was published in May 2024.

4.17 The main findings highlighted that since the last inspection in 2022, the force had addressed many of the areas from improvement. The Inspectorate recognised the scale of change needed and that some improvements will need more time to achieve, however was assured that the force can make such improvements. It also acknowledged that the force has established a stable chief officer team.

4.18 The constabulary has significantly improved its response to missing persons, and children. The Inspectorate highlighted the constabularies use of problem-solving methods to reduce incidents of children missing from home as innovative, which has recently highlighted as good practice by the College of Policing.

4.19 An area the force needs to improve is its domestic abuse risk assessment process to ensure consideration is given to the full range of risk and harm to identify cumulative risk. The inspection found that in some cases high risk cases were inappropriately downgraded, meaning these would be investigated outside of specialist units and missed opportunities for increased levels of support.

4.20 The force took immediate action to review and respond to these findings, and since inspection has worked closely with external organisations recognised as leading in this area to improve the consistency of risk assessments.

4.21 The force also needs to consider victims experiences to inform and improve its services based on feedback. The constabulary has made progress in this area and is committed to working in partnership to further strengthen its approach.

Learning and Organisational Development: driving forward local practice

4.22 The DDSCP has an effective and far-reaching [suite of learning and development courses and activities](#) in place. There are currently 15,371 users registered with the DDSCP to access our learning and development programmes. During the last year we have offered 16 training courses on different safeguarding themes and delivered 65 courses on these topics. The number of courses delivered was slightly reduced from last year to enable us to begin reviewing and updating them following the introduction of the suite of new national guidance and responding to requests for development of new multi-agency courses from partner agencies.

4.23 A total of 2,096 places were available for training with 1,815 bookings made. The attendance rate has remained relatively consistent at 84%, with 1,529 delegates attending training. No shows, where delegates have not cancelled their places, has reduced overall to 16%, down from 20% on the previous year.

4.24 Demand for e-learning courses has increased significantly from 3,427 to 5,531 (that were completed), and this trend is anticipated to continue with both increased use and evidence of effective impact. Delegates have commented about the positive impact, demonstrating how e-learning has equipped them with confidence, knowledge and skills to attend higher level and complex courses. We have also received feedback about the impact of the accessibility of courses. Delegates who have specific learning needs have demonstrated how the good quality courses have helped them engage with the learning along with comments indicating improved access to learning outside usual office hours.

4.25 We have continued to use an evaluation system is based on the Kilpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation Model to capture the effectiveness and impact of the training. Stage 2 evaluations are designed to gather data from delegates to reflect the impact of training on practice and demonstrate any increase in confidence knowledge and skills. We report back on the impact of our training on practice routinely to the multi-agency subgroup and ensure that we capture feedback to show the *impact of training on practice* linked to the key priorities for the partnership such as the examples below:

'I was able to reassure Mum, by showing her the graph that her baby's crying was normal and would pass in a few weeks. I had a chronic disease management case recently and I could be assured I had followed the correct and up to date procedure' (Intensive Health Visitor).

'(I) ensured that a baby within a family I was working with had a safe space to sleep and parents were informed on what made up a safe sleep space' (Family Support Worker).

'It has made me more aware of hazards in the home when visiting families and also when training new volunteers, I have improved the training (I provide) in this area' (Family Support Coordinator).

'(I) was able to speak to a parent about how domestic abuse affected her relationship with her child. I was better able to understand mum's situation and considered the impact of domestic abuse on the child's behaviour, when giving advice on dealing with the children's behaviour' (Community Nursery Nurse)

'I have worked with a family, home was cluttered and mum was victim of domestic abuse. I was able to complete an Early Help Assessment, which was accepted and a plan made to offer support to this family. This training has helped me to identify neglect early and make the necessary referrals' (Early Help Practitioner)

'One child has been reduced to a low risk (of exploitation) due to information and sharing of resources to support the family. Information shared with others i.e school to safeguard child in and on journeys to school' (Social Worker).

4.26 Work has been ongoing throughout the year to create training materials which allow practitioners to work at their own pace, revisit materials, and work with greater time efficiency to support engagement, staff development, and meet varied learning styles and accessibility requirements.

5 An analysis of evidence of progress on agreed priorities

5.1 In our last annual report, we set out our three priorities for the year. They are:

Early Help

Domestic Abuse

Exploitation of Young People

Promote and obtain assurance of Early Help arrangements (including responding to neglect) and response to requests for services

5.2 We agreed to continue to obtain assurance of how local services are responding to challenges and sustaining our arrangements to promote early help

arrangements. We were successful in obtaining some assurance of the quality of early help assessments completed by partner agencies (not including the local authorities). We found challenges across the areas in relation to reporting data for early help where it does not involve the local authorities as there is currently no central mechanism to achieve this available.

5.3 During the year the quality assurance subgroup carried out a multi-agency audit to review the quality and impact of early help assessments that are written and led by practitioners in Universal Services. The cases for review were sourced from schools and 0-19 health services across both Derby and Derbyshire.

5.4 We found that in most cases there was a clear purpose for commencing assessment and the threshold document was appropriately applied. Practitioners made detailed observations of the presenting issues, and through these observations presenting needs were clear throughout the assessments. In addition, key safety information was covered in the majority of assessments and in all assessments where a baby was present, the key safety information around infants were completed. Appropriate onward referrals and signposting were evident in many of the assessments, and in most cases there were appropriate outcomes which matched the observed needs.

5.5 As a result of the audit, we have shared the learning to promote best practice and improve:

- the involvement of fathers and other significant adults in the co-production of early help assessments
- the inclusion of the voice of the child and the language used in assessments that most helpfully describes the young person and their current difficulties
- the linking together of information in the assessment, often completed by one practitioner and one parent, with the child's voice, input from other professionals, other children within the household or the wider family network and community
- analysis of the factors that may underly the presenting issue and consideration of therapeutic and other interventions that may help improve outcomes for the children and family

5.6 An early help practice briefing was widely shared and we are aiming to bring the quality of early help assessments in line with the quality seen in single assessments to ensure that children and families receive appropriate and effective support at the earliest opportunity.

5.7 Both local authority areas reported a reduction in their involvement in the number of early help cases during the year arising from changes to their service provision. Currently we do not have the ability to capture data on the number of early help assessments completed by services that do not include local authority involvement. The Children's Delivery Board (Derbyshire) will monitor the impact of the changes that have been agreed in their area. Therefore during the coming year

the DDSCP will draw on emerging data from local [Early Help Partnerships](#) to understand the effectiveness of early help arrangements and any potential impact on requests for services from local authorities. This shared approach to analysing the effectiveness of early help arrangements will help us ensure that we are alert to any trends that may emerge.

Reduce the adverse impact of Domestic Abuse and family conflict

5.8 We agreed that we needed to obtain assurance of the sustained impact of local changes to our arrangements to reduce the adverse impact of Domestic Abuse and family conflict.

5.9 During the year data and feedback from the two local authorities and the police identified that we were not yet achieving the most effective shared approach to following up concerns about domestic abuse where children lived in the household. Action was taken to consider best practice processes used in other partnership areas to manage the large volume of Police Protection Notices arising from incidents of domestic abuse, where a child was living in the household. There has been progress to establish local triage processes to strengthen multi-agency responses and these will be embedded locally during 2024. The independent chair and scrutineer maintained oversight of progress to improve arrangements by maintaining focus on this at the Executive Board and Chief Officer Group.

5.10 Additional training and a review of our local processes against other successful practice in other partnership areas has enabled the development of agreed updated processes. These are being implemented during summer 2024 and will be included in our local revision of our threshold guidance. We will also be assuring ourselves on our progress against the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel [multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse paper](#) in the coming year.

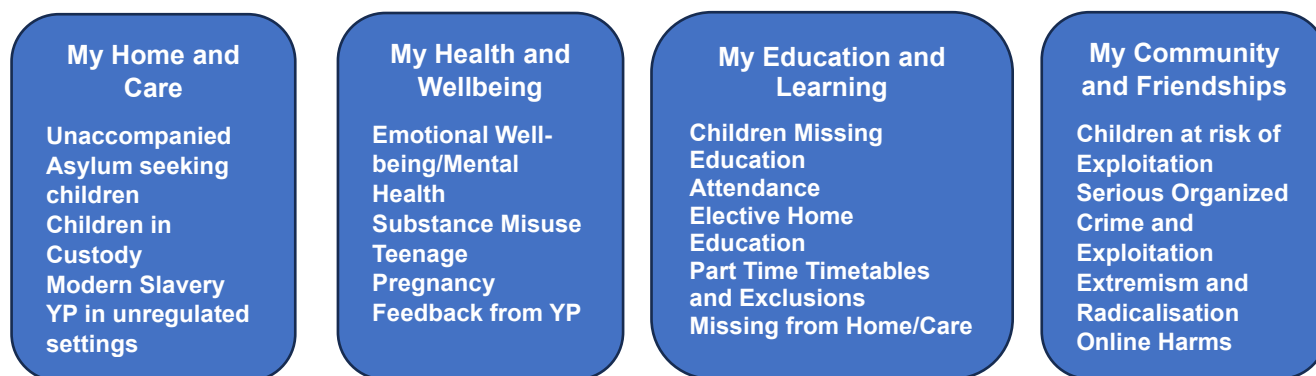
5.11 During the year it was identified that the notification processes used by the police to inform schools that an incident of domestic abuse had occurred were not wholly effective. This was because across the school sector, a variety of different notification emails were not always directing the information to the correct person and at times there was confusion between settings who had similar names.

5.12 Working with the schools, we successfully implemented a specific *safeguarding email* for each setting that enabled the correct people to receive the information. The police updated their system to differentiate between schools with similar names and introduced a method for alerting the two local authorities if a child was electively home educated (rather than having a school to notify). The guidance for the *Stopping Domestic Abuse Together* process was subsequently updated and promoted across the sector. Overall, this has helped us have greater confidence that schools are better able to know when an incident of domestic abuse has occurred, and children are safer with better monitoring of their welfare.

Safeguard children at risk of exploitation reflecting additional features such as placed based risk (contextual safeguarding) and our understanding of emerging vulnerabilities

5.13 We continue to be alert to the complex nature of some of the interconnected vulnerabilities affecting young people in their communities and the risks to them of exploitation. There has been additional national research drawing our attention to the continued vulnerability of young people who are not in school. We have continued to make sure we understand our local risks and that they are being addressed effectively.

5.14 During the year the Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People Subgroup received updates on trends and key issues impacting on young people in the following areas:



5.15 We learnt, for example, of activity taken to prevent extreme misogyny and the evidence of the successful response to providing sessions for pupils in schools. Initial concerns about the adverse impact reduced over time and we will continue to promote access to resources to maintain this positive progress. We have shared a learning briefing from a local review about [Neurodiversity and the Channel Programme](#) (supporting children away from extremism).

5.16 We considered a variety of feedback from different organisations who work with children and young people to understand their views of their lived experience including online harms and specifically in relation to their relationships and sex education. We are aiming to obtain updates as to how their feedback has shaped and influenced services in the coming year. For example, during the year feedback from children, young people and their parents continued to be received from the online safety initiative [i-vengers](#) for primary and special schools. This informed local promotion on online safety messages from schools to “their” parents, pupils and staff.

Operation Unity

5.17 Operation Unity has been a promising partnership **Clear, Hold, Build** initiative that has targeted county lines and exploitation from organised crime within the north of the county. The initiative was identified and informed through partnership data which identified that children and young people were explicitly at risk of being recruited to supply controlled drugs. Contextual safeguarding was at the center of its strategy. The Police, working in partnership, have undertaken an extensive period of tackling the criminality and the partnership now move into the build phase, to ensure the community remain resilient against such issues.

5.18 We have begun to review the effectiveness of our Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People subgroup. We have reflected that the wealth and depth of information that is valued by partner agencies in attendance at meetings should be extended to a much wider audience. We will be exploring this further in the July meeting with the ambition that we can improve awareness of the lived experiences of young people, and what action all practitioners can take to address some of the complex issues that lead to vulnerability and harm.

Priorities for the coming year

5.19 As part of our annual review of the priorities for the coming year, we consulted with the chairs of our subgroups to reflect on how we have made effective systemic improvements and areas where we might strengthen our joint work.

5.20 It is evident that the joined up thematic approach to the development and implementation of the Keeping Babies Safe strategy led to a whole system focus on improving outcomes for very vulnerable children under one. [Local evaluation](#) of the strategy illustrated strengths-based approaches to addressing system wide improvement that had a positive and demonstrable impact. The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, in partnership with Foundations and the What Works Centre for Children and Families, published [Working with male carers to reduce non-accidental injury to infants under 1 year old](#). The action taken by the local DDSCP partners to safeguard vulnerable young infants is included as a case study illustrating good practice.

5.21 We have therefore commenced an in-depth review of the priorities for the partnership that will be completed over the summer in order to consider whether specific priorities would benefit from a thematic approach.

6 A record of decisions and actions taken by the partners to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews

6.1 During 2023/2024 the DDSCP completed two rapid reviews and published two [child safeguarding practice reviews](#).

6.2 The rapid reviews identified opportunities to strengthen system wide practice by producing best practice guides focussing on the areas of child in need, special guardianship orders and personal health budgets.

6.3 Practitioner groups have been held with front line staff and senior managers to help draw out good practice principles that cover the key issues arising from the reviews. We will be working to finalise the best practice guides with the inclusion of the voices of children and their carers.

6.4 The following persistent themes have emerged from reviews and are promoted now routinely through our activities:

- Coordinated early help for families involving the relevant agencies makes a positive difference.

- Effective management oversight and support for practitioners improves the quality of assessments, decision making, planning and outcomes for children.
- Professional curiosity that follows up emerging concerns and the effectiveness of agencies to collaborate and stay alert to emerging risks is essential.
- Children who are visible to professionals who see them in the home or at school are safer children.

6.5 Alongside the publication of the two child safeguarding practice reviews, we published [a summary of progress and impact of changes](#) made as a result of the individual review. A third child safeguarding practice review will be published in the summer of 2024.

6.6 One of the reviews published emphasised the vulnerabilities of two different young people who were not in school and we have taken action to publish guidance to raise awareness and promote early assessment. We are in the process of publishing a review concerning a child who was electively home educated and will be reviewing our arrangements against the research [Safeguarding children in elective home education](#) published by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. Overall, we consider the vulnerabilities of school age children not attending school a key theme that we will continue to promote across all sectors.

6.7 We published a review following the death of a baby and we are continuing to keep a close focus on our arrangements and the *Keep Babies Safe Strategy*. We have worked with practitioners to review and keep our guidance and training up to date, continuing to receive feedback on the positive impact this is having on practice.

6.8 We continue to seek the involvement of children and family members in reviews wherever possible. Family members felt able to be involved throughout the process of one review and their reflections helped to form the recommendations. Specific points that family members raised to improve practice have been incorporated into a practice briefing document to support professionals in improving their work with families.

6.9 The action plans arising from reviews are monitored through the Child Safeguarding Practice Review subgroup. We have made good progress during the year ensuring that actions are completed and to plan future assurance activity to check that improvements are making a positive difference and are being sustained.

6.10 In April 2023, the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published [Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings - Phase 2 report](#) . Each local authority reported to the Executive Board of progress against this review (following similar reporting during the previous year on Phase 1). The Executive Board welcomed the thorough and detailed evidence of arrangements with good assurance and the inclusion of the voice of the child.

7 Ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

7.1 Two lay members continue to represent local communities and participate within the work of the partnership by attending the Executive Board and one is able to support the work of the Education and Policies and Procedure subgroups.

7.2 Partner agencies continue to use feedback from children and young people to ensure that a meaningful difference is being made to improve our collective arrangements. Examples of arrangements are set out below:

7.3 Derby City Council has a [partnership participation strategy](#), to embed co-production both with the individual and collective voice of children and young people in decision, so that co-production and consultation become part of everyday practice in all aspects from policies and strategies, recruitment, service development, evaluation through to supporting individual children and young people.

7.4 There are a number of regular forums that support participation and engagement, including:

- Voices in Action, Voices in Action (ViA) a youth council for young people aged 11 to 19 years old representing their school, support group or youth project chaired by the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor,
- Our Voice, Our Success is for all children and young people (aged 10 to 17) with care experience; members influence the delivery and design of services to improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. There is also a standing agenda item at the Corporate Parenting Committee which young people are encouraged to attend if they wish.

7.5 Some examples of participation are shown below:

Consultation Area / Topic	What were the key questions you asked CYP? What did they say?	Summary of any planned actions or any actions already taken
YOS Youth Justice Plan 2023-24 - what activities did children value most?	Q: What was the best thing you did with YOS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reparation activities in which they learned new skills. • Support with ETE placement and advocacy where needed. • Art Therapy through which children enjoyed better emotional health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOS have gone out to public tender for the Restorative Justice Services Contract that covers the supervision of children on reparation, with the priorities that the children have highlighted listed as key criteria for successful bidders. • Support with ETE will be enhanced • Art Therapy has been sourced for provision
Care leavers	Q: What support would you like once you're settled in your new home? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrating having to wait a long time for 'simple' jobs to be done, because we 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derby Homes team has offered to come along to the next Forum to talk to the young people in more detail about the

Home Improvement and Life Skills	<p>don't feel confident doing them ourselves... these jobs are 'DIY' and in other households, people would do these things for themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we could have some help with DIY, either classes or information to look at, we could do more jobs ourselves and then we would only need to call Derby Homes for bigger jobs 	<p>type of help they need - they will then put together some films and guides showing them how to carry out a number of tasks, something that can be built on over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The forum were really pleased that someone is willing to come along to talk to them.
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7.6 In addition to direct consultation, 'voice of the child' is now embedded within the Single Assessment. This means not only is the child's voice evident in their own case but this is also collated to inform service design. This year's annual participation report summarises the categories where children and young people requested support within the single assessment with the top three reasons being 'relationships with family' (13%), 'family life' (11%) and 'home life' (10%). The responses indicate that individual needs and values are recognised and change approaches to practices as well as the way services are delivered.

7.7 Derbyshire County Council consult with young people through a variety of methods. In 2023 the *My Life My View* survey was completed by 3147 young people across 13 different schools and some young people who are home educated, aged 8-11 years old. These survey findings have been discussed with partners to shape future service delivery. Some of the highlights from the report include:

- 52% of young people agreed that they feel safe at school, while 29% said the same of being out in their local area at night. 38% disagreed that they feel safe when out in their local area at night.
- 33% of pupils responded that feeling worried, sad or upset sometimes stops them doing or enjoying things. An additional 16% of pupils responded that feeling worried, sad or upset often makes it hard to do or enjoy anything.
- 8% of pupils said they have been approached to support extremist activity while 17% of pupils said they 'don't know' if they have been.
- 27% of pupils said someone has shared private information about them and 15% of pupils said someone they have only met online has asked to meet with them.
- 21% of Year 10 pupils said they have been approached by an adult online who wants a sexual encounter or relationship and 12% of Year 10 of pupils said they have sent undressed/sexual images of themselves.

7.8 This year in Derbyshire, a digital app "*Mind of my own*" has been introduced to give children and young people who are receiving children's services support an opportunity to share their wishes and feelings at a time and place that is convenient for them. Children and young people have given positive feedback about the app

and explained it gives them a direct way of participating in their reviews and to share their views.

7.9 The Derbyshire Youth Network has expanded during the year to now include colleges such as Chesterfield College along with increased numbers of community groups such as the Belper LGBTQ+ group. This has helped the Derbyshire Youth Network identify young people who are able to offer a particular perspective and / or insight around a specific topics where their views help inform the development of services such as:

- the annual consultation project which focuses on planning and council spending included pupils from 7 secondary schools who attended a series of workshops which allow their views to be considered
- consultation activity for the Police and Crime Commissioner involving the need to obtain the views of females aged 16+ about violence against women and girls and the support they felt is needed for them to feel safe.

7.10 The Derbyshire County Council Children's Services participation team designed a children's services survey for young people, parent/ carers (and professionals) to give feedback on services that they have received. This survey is available on the website as well as via QR codes that have been widely promoted. The survey has been completed by 182 people with 81% of responses highlighting that staff had listened to them and understand the help and support that was needed by the young person to make a difference.

7.11 Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (DHCFT) seeks feedback from children and families following contact with 0-19 services. Parents have reported how they have found the speed and easy access of the Chat Health (a text messaging service where young people and parents and carers living in Derby city can get confidential health advice and support) very helpful and reassuring. DHCFT have also taken the opportunity to raise concerns about waiting times, availability of the Single Point of Access service and services such Paediatrician or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

7.12 The *Children in Care Nursing Service* similarly seeks and receives feedback for example illustrating the impact on welfare of young people: "Since your session with a young person on sexual health we have seen a huge improvement! They are responding well and clearly listened and took your information on board because they share what they learnt with staff members." Deputy Homes Manager

7.13 The Designated Nurse (for Children in Care) has developed with the assistance of young people some animated videos on initial and review health assessments. [What will happen at my NHS Health Assessment?](#) is available for teenagers and [Children in Care Health Assessment](#) is available for younger children in care.

7.14 The DHCFT CAMHS Service line has developed a CAMHS Advisory Board (CAB) chaired by the *Expert by Experience* young person. The advisory board

includes the participation team to hold managers to account for decisions that are being made, and to ensure the voice of young people is heard.

7.15 The Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People subgroup also receives reports from voluntary and independent sector organisations working with young people, such as Safe and Sound, and Catch 22. We receive good information about the direct work and influence young people are able to make in the way that they receive direct services.

8 Our Governance, updates to the published arrangements and progress implementing reforms

8.1 The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership extends beyond the four key statutory partners and welcomes partnership working, contributions and challenge from a wide range of agencies and providers from all sectors. Partners contribute to active work plans across all the subgroups and the effectiveness of our arrangements is overseen by the Executive Board and Chief Officer Group.

8.2 The DDSCP has an inter-agency agreement that sets out the detail of our arrangements between the four statutory safeguarding partners. Each partner contributes an equal share of the funding for the partnership and financial reports are provided on a quarterly basis to ensure there is scrutiny of financial arrangements.

Partner	Contribution
Derby City Council	£129,575
Derbyshire County Council	£129,575
Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board	£129,575
Derbyshire Constabulary	£129,575
Derbyshire Probation	£7,476

8.3 The DDSCP is supported by a business team to enhance our work with partner agencies. In addition to the partnership manager there are the following posts:

- a child safeguarding practice review manager and business services officer drive forward activity in respect of rapid reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews, the CSPR subgroup and partnership working linked to domestic homicide reviews
- a policy, procedure and regulation officer drives forward the work of the policy and procedures subgroup and the completion of section 11 audits
- a vulnerable children and young people development officer drives forward the work of the exploitation and vulnerable young people subgroup and the work of the two education subgroups
- a strategic performance and quality assurance officer drives forward the work of the quality assurance subgroup
- a senior learning and organisational development officer, learning and organisational development officer and business services officer drive forward activity in respect of the development and delivery of multi-agency

safeguarding learning and development courses, conferences and the subgroup

- a business services officer who is the minute taker for most of our meetings and works with fellow team members on projects linked to subgroup workplans

8.4 Across our area there are 569 schools from all sectors. There are two education subgroups covering each area of Derby and Derbyshire. The Chairs of each subgroup or their deputies attend all Executive Board meetings and report twice per year on the work of the subgroups. They report annually on pressures and progress across the sector following consultation with subgroups.

8.4 In October 2023 Chief Officers agreed that the chairs of the Education subgroups be invited to participate at the Chief Officer Group to strengthen education sector representation and this has been implemented.

8.5 We have made progress facilitating representation from the Education sector at various strategic groups within other partnership arrangements such as the Online Harms Board, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Board and Serious Violence Board. Achieving representation on behalf of a diverse sector continues to be challenging and we are committed to continuing to promote engagement wherever possible.

8.6 Operationally we have:

- Provided Safeguarding Updates to every education setting that included 610 articles on safeguarding related updates or resources. Of these:
 - 77 were linked to emotional wellbeing and mental health
 - 109 were linked to online safety related issues
 - 20 were linked to parental conflict and domestic abuse
 - 34 were linked to school attendance and vulnerability
 - 15 were key local DDSCP arrangement updates
 - 126 were from local partner agencies for the education sector (some of which covered the topics listed above)
- Provided routine input on key local updates and outcomes from our reviews into the Designated Safeguarding Leads Network for schools in Derby led by the local authority. We have made representation to obtain ongoing updates on developments in Derbyshire where the local authority has been developing school clusters and the Designated Safeguarding Leads Network for schools has been temporarily suspended (these valuable meetings are due to resume in Autumn).
- Continued to ensure that key issues impacting on school aged children are understood and awareness promoted across partner agencies. For example, working in partnership with health partners, we formally wrote to all schools and local authorities to alert them to the national ADHD Medication shortages and provided advice as to steps that should be considered.
- Achieved successful engagement from individual schools where we have needed to consider serious incidents and where participation is needed in child safeguarding practice reviews.

- Worked with education partners to provide a template safeguarding policy to all schools along with a S175 self-assessment safeguarding assurance tool.
- Written formally to all schools about a range of issues that have relevance to our community such as: Domestic abuse; Female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called honour-based abuse; and the inappropriate use of “shock tactics” by external education providers.

8.7 When we established the DDSCP in 2019, we commissioned a post to both chair the Chief Officer Group, Executive Board and Core Business Group and to provide independent scrutiny systemically across the work of the partnership.

8.8 This arrangement has enabled effective oversight and join up across different workstreams and scrutiny of the work of the subgroups reported to the Executive Board, such as the measures that have been taken to improve referral processes for children living in households where there have been domestic abuse incidents.

8.9 Following publication of the revised [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) in December, we have taken steps to update our arrangements. We have agreed arrangements for the Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Safeguarding Partners to take on their defined responsibilities including the chairing of our local meetings which are being implemented from September 2024.

8.10 We are developing an interim scrutiny strategy to help us during the period of change to new arrangements that will be in place in December 2024 and an updated scrutiny strategy will be in place from April 2025.

8.11 The Learning and Development subgroup has begun the process of ensuring partners review practice standards and individual agencies have begun to put in place arrangements for reviewing practice against the Children’s Social Care National Framework. The Policy and Procedures subgroup has begun the process of ensuring the Threshold Document and Protocol for Assessment and Support are reviewed and updated in line with the requirements of the national guidance.

8.12 Parallel with the completion of our review of our priorities, we are considering whether thematic subgroups might drive forward effective responses to our priorities and how any changes might impact on our existing subgroup arrangements.

8.13 The DDSCP is committed to ensuring that there is strong strategic join up with other partnership boards in our area so that our partnership arrangements can be as effective as possible. The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) provides an annual report to ensure that learning and emerging themes are taken forward across our partnership. We have regular liaison with the local safeguarding adult boards and community safety partnerships. We have written to 14 additional partnership boards in our area to ensure that our workstream priorities and strategic needs assessments are shared to keep children safe.

8.14 Our annual report for the coming year will report on how we have achieved compliance with the new reforms and reflect any changes to our partnership arrangements.