



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2025 – March 2026

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the lead safeguarding partners and delegated safeguarding partners for the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Partnership, we are pleased to present the Annual Report for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

In January 2025, what had been a joint partnership across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough became two: Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This annual report is the first to outline the activity of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Partnership and serves to highlight those place specific achievements and challenges which were the driving force behind that separation. The partnership agreed the priority areas for 2025-2027 with some areas specific to Peterborough and some commonalities with the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, offering continued opportunities for collaboration. There remains a commitment to shared learning across the partnerships and for this reason the subgroups of the partnership have remained joint. There have been however, opportunities for place specific learning activities from rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews to ensure that where improvements are needed in practice, they are driven by those who know the needs of the children and families in Peterborough best.

We have continued our work this year to respond to National changes including the Families First Partnership Programme, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report on Race, racism and safeguarding and most recently, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

We owe our thanks to the practitioners and managers throughout the partnership who continue to work tirelessly in their efforts to support children and families in our area, in the face of ongoing pressures and challenges. There will always be more to do in the area of safeguarding but it is the continued hard work, professionalism and commitment of frontline staff and managers that can make a positive difference to the population we serve.

John Gregg
Executive Director for Children
Services



Pol Toner
Director of Safeguarding



John Massey
Assistant Chief Constable



SCRUTINY

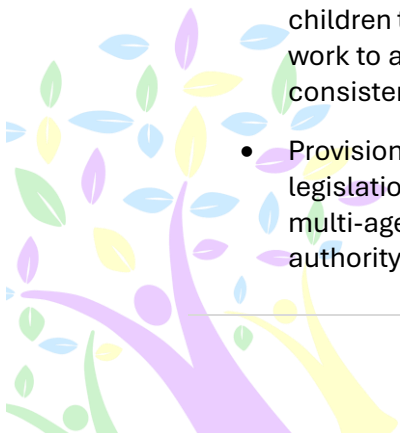
Reflections from the Independent Scrutineer

My role as Independent Scrutineer in Peterborough has remained unchanged since last year. I am commissioned to provide independent scrutiny to the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership each financial year.

The aims of the Scrutineer role are to support and challenge statutory partner safeguarding agencies and other bodies concerned with safeguarding children in Peterborough. The functions of the Independent Scrutineer are set out in Government guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children. These functions did not change when the latest version of that guidance was issued in March 2026 although there is likely to be consideration of defining the role more precisely in further revisions for consultation in 2026-27 to achieve greater consistency in how Scrutineers function across the country.

In Peterborough in 2025-26, I implemented the agreed independent scrutiny plan. The main focus of my activities has been:

- Regular attendance in several multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership sub-groups including the Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) group which comprises the three senior partners from the local authority, ICB and Police who are responsible for safeguarding arrangements in Peterborough.
- I have also attended all meetings of the full Safeguarding Children Partnership, which is chaired by the Director of Children's Services in Peterborough City Council. I have provided support and challenge to this group to enable it to become a meeting in which critical safeguarding operational and strategic issues are considered and debated and to meet on a face-to-face basis.
- Advice and challenge provided to the Review Advisory Group and to DSPs about cases requiring reviews and proceeding in respect of type of review and recommendations further to the learning identified. The number of reviews has grown in 2025-26 (see below) and this activity has therefore taken up more of my time this year. The overall quality of review reports has improved, agencies are able to reach key points of learning more quickly following Rapid Reviews and have used the learning to inform other work in the Partnership.
- Leadership of the early phase of the Partnership's consideration of key learning and formulation of a need for a multi-agency Neglect Project group to work in 2027 to improve multi-agency learning and understand and respond to systems pressures and issues causing focus on children to drift in the many of the small number of cases considered in case review processes. I have been able to transition leadership of this work to a senior officer in the local authority and ensure that Families First reform planning has taken account of the need to achieve greater consistency in respect of responses to child neglect.
- Provision of advice to the DSPs about the key opportunities and risks arising from the Government's Families First reforms now enshrined in legislation in the Children's Well Being and Schools Act 2026. I was also able to provide clarity on the issues which required agreement of the multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership given the establishment of a specific governance function around this development led by the local authority. The Partnership needs to agree changes to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and these are published by the Partnership.



These changes will relate to future development of new family help services and the future Multi-Agency Child Protection Team. Given the significance to the structural and process changes relating to provision of family help and safeguarding children, it has been extremely helpful to be able to provide support and challenge in my role to thinking in Peterborough where I have been included as a full member of the Families First Board.

- I have enabled safeguarding partners to consider other key messages arising from national reviews following the tragic deaths of Sara Sharif in Surrey and Victoria Marten in Sussex and those arising from National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel summaries of key issues in case reviews relating to intra-familial child sexual abuse and race and racism in Safeguarding. I also met with members of the Child Exploitation sub-group to consider the implications of the national report by Baroness Casey into child exploitation. As a result, the Partnership's Child Exploitation officer led work with agencies to undertake a small multi-agency audit of child sexual exploitation cases given that the recorded number of assessments of sexual exploitation has fallen in Peterborough as it has elsewhere albeit this is almost certainly to do with wider recognition that sexual exploitation is one form of exploitation faced by children who also experience criminal and financial exploitation.

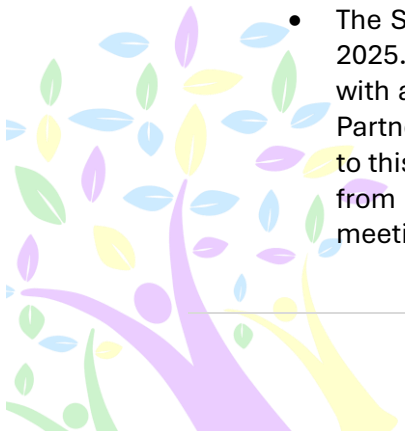
Partnership Achievements

The Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership has matured and improved its ways of working and made notable achievements in 2025-26 although the latter half of this year has been more challenging for all agencies because of changes in organisational functions and leadership in the ICB and police. The Safeguarding Children Partnership has however weathered these changes and continued to make progress.

The work of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and agencies in relation to Families First reform design, child neglect, multi-agency assurance and the development of the DSP regular meetings in the Partnership structure all fulfil priority areas set out in the previous Annual Report. The Local Government Review (LGR) process is awaited to reconsider the question of what the Safeguarding Partnership does for its jurisdiction and what activities can usefully be shared across the area and there is more work to do to develop means of ensuring that children's views inform Partnership priorities.

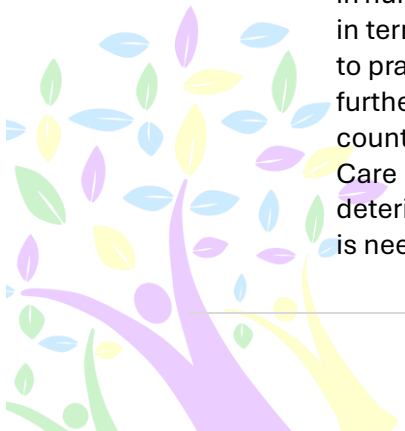
The most significant achievements in my view have been:

- The Safeguarding Partnership agreed to adopt a relational approach to management, practice and multi-agency working in November 2025. This is highly significant as this move will support the changes required in the Families First programme and is known to be associated with achieving best outcomes for vulnerable children. It is a long-term commitment and the work to provide training and to ensure that Partnership meetings follow a relational approach is only just beginning albeit each of the statutory partner agencies has undertaken work to this effect on a single agency basis already. The aim for the future is to help multi-agency case discussions and planning to move away from 'threshold-based' ones to those which understand better and act on children's lived experience. The Safeguarding Partnership meetings are now taking place on a face-to-face basis and this has been a challenge for agencies which had organised their resources and



time around an assumption that activity would all be undertaken online. However, the early evidence indicates an improvement in relationship and trust between agency representatives allowing for greater challenge and support to one another.

- The Families First reforms are linking well with the Safeguarding Partnership. This is important as the reforms are multi-agency reforms and need agreement and commitment from all statutory partners and others. There is a clear and direct link to the proposed future role of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) as a mechanism to exercise greater quality control over child protection investigations and other difficult cases involving neglect cases where most agency disagreements happen. This is a significant opportunity assuming that the MACPT is resourced sufficiently to achieve this end.
- The monthly DSP meetings have enabled more regular, senior multi-agency consideration and agreement and the building of relationships between those partner lead officers which are crucial to effective safeguarding across the piece. These meetings were introduced in the latter part of the previous financial year but are achieving what they should achieve to ensure effective senior multi-agency leadership with support and challenge provided by my role as Independent Scrutineer.
- This launch of the multi-agency Neglect Project in December 2025 deserves credit as it is an ambitious attempt to look to unlock difficulties in practice around neglect that have dogged the safeguarding system throughout the country for fifty or more years. This project grew out of concerns about cumulative harm not being identified as safeguarding risks consistently in the limited number of cases subject to Rapid Reviews or Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews. The project aims to understand what it is that enables good practice, what are the key obstacles and to consider recent research and practice elsewhere to formulate recommendations for Peterborough. The project seeks to go beyond the more standard approach of agreeing a multi-agency strategy in the knowledge that such strategies have not avoided continued difficulties in this area.
- The processes involved in case reviews have been improved and written guidance produced by the sub-group. The initial meeting of statutory partner agencies to consider whether a case should be subject to a Rapid Review is now more formalised and involves the Independent Scrutineer and this has resulted in improved transparency for agencies of this process being a multi-agency one. Because of this and the improved mechanisms for review learning to be shared more quickly and more effectively across agencies, there was an increase in rapid reviews undertaken from two in 2024-25 to four in 2025-26. This should be viewed as a sign of the Partnership maturing and being able to ask tough questions of one another and learn lessons. It is noteworthy that the National Panel annual report for 2024-25 expressed concern that there had been a 21% reduction in the number of reviews conducted across the country and therefore this increase in number is a positive move to improve learning from reviews. National Panel feedback on the quality of reviews in Peterborough is positive in terms of the quality of analysis undertaken in reviews and my experience is that all agencies bring a high level of honesty and reflection to practice in cases under review. It is positive that the Partnership readily agreed the need for multi-agency development work on neglect further to the evidence of learning from local case reviews and in the knowledge that there is similar learning in case reviews across the country. Additionally, the Safeguarding Partnership has continued to support the work of the local authority in developing use of the Graded Care Profile 2, a tool licensed by the NSPCC to improve specificity of recording of neglect concerns and tracking improvements or deterioration over time. This is an evidence-based tool albeit the licensing arrangements do take a considerable time to launch and effort is needed to ensure that social workers use the tool and other practitioners feed their information into the multi-agency use of the tool.



- The Partnership's Quality and Effectiveness sub-group has overseen multi-agency audits around child sexual exploitation and the operation of Child Protection Conferences and its plan for the forthcoming year involves review of other aspects of the child protection system. This sub-group has also worked hard to consider how best to present a multi-agency analysis of key performance data in order that that analysis can inform further action across agencies where needed. The local authority holds and reports on much of the data relating to multi-agency safeguarding and this data will therefore now be considered in this sub-group to ensure a multi-agency lens and independent scrutiny is applied to that data.
- A new Policies, Practice and Procedures sub-group was set up in view of a gap and I provided advice on this issue. This group very quickly identified a need for an improved system of procedure development and review and this enabled the partners to agree use of Partnership funds to commission an external body to provide new multi-agency procedures and annual review in future. The Partnership has also agreed use of funding to engage a short-term post to make this happen and that process is in place at the time of writing.

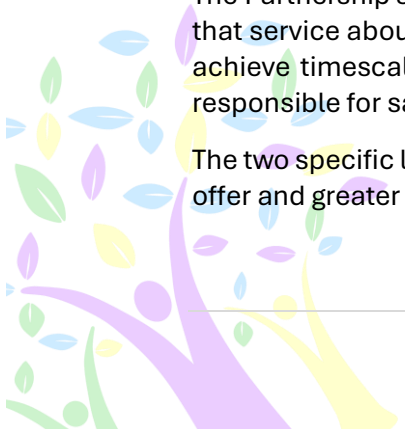
Partnership Challenges

There was a loss of Delegated Safeguarding Partners from the ICB and Police at the same time in December 2025. The reasons related to the structural changes in the ICB as part of the national NHS reforms and to an internal promotion for the DSP in the police. The ICB ensured that the DSP function was filled but this was initially with a temporary arrangement before a more permanent one was established in Spring 2026. The Police DSP arrangement remains temporary with a permanent appointee due later in 2026 although the current DSP in police plays a full and active part in the work of the Safeguarding Partnership and has ensured that the police's new strategic and operational lead officer for safeguarding children is well embedded in the multi-agency work of the Partnership. Nevertheless, these changes did create a need for new relationships to be formed and trust gained between the statutory partners. This change has been well handled and the DSP meeting is effective in leadership of the Partnership. There were no DSP or Partnership meetings missed and the sub-groups continued as normal. There is a question as to whether and how the three statutory agencies can avoid risk of loss of more than one DSP at a time in future albeit this might not be achievable when change is driven by national processes.

The other key challenge to the effectiveness of the Partnership going forward is that of capacity in agencies to support the Partnership's sub-groups and workstreams where the bulk of the detailed work needed takes place. This is not a new challenge but one which requires continual monitoring by the DSPs to ensure that single agency or operational responsibilities do not always take priority over multi-agency partnership requirements.

The Partnership's own Business Unit has been subject to review throughout 2025-26 and there is now a formal consultation in place with the staff in that service about proposed changes. I have provided advice that the Business Unit has not had sufficient capacity to undertake the work needed or achieve timescales required when it has been working across both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and across both authorities' Partnerships responsible for safeguarding children and safeguarding adults.

The two specific local areas which need continued priority attention are the development of a comprehensive multi-agency learning and development offer and greater attention to the voice of children.



There has been a start made in respect of learning and development through the Neglect Project providing face-to-face multi-agency learning events but these are as yet too few to make a significant impact and similar attention is required for other areas of learning. A senior member of local authority staff is helpfully now leading this work.

The Safeguarding Partnership has not been able to date to consider how it wishes to hear children's voices and how the Partnership can develop and sustain a process of regular engagement with a group or groups of children. This is important and the Government is also now consulting on strengthening the requirement in this area for all Safeguarding Partnerships as part of the consultation on revisions to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Opportunities for the Safeguarding Partnership 2026-27

The year ahead contains more change still and it is right to acknowledge that all public sector agencies engaged in safeguarding children are doing so with insufficient levels of Government funding and with challenges about workforce recruitment and retention given the stress and risks associated with the roles. In 2026-27, those same public sector agencies will be asked to make significant changes to how family help and safeguarding systems operate and to do so without further workforce retention difficulties arising and without increasing risk to children during change.

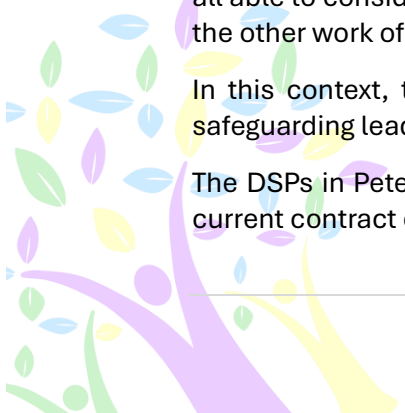
The local authority anticipates a further full inspection of services by Ofsted at some point in 2026-27 and the Partnership agencies continue to collaborate with the local authority on the journey of improvement following the previous Ofsted full inspection of children's services. The inspection process will as always be an additional demand but will in Peterborough be an opportunity to use stronger multi-agency working as evidence of improvements made in leadership and safeguarding.

The scale of changes is some of the greatest since the introduction of the Children Act 1989. Nonetheless these changes are both challenges and opportunities for the Safeguarding Partnership.

There also likely implications of further change arising from the national Local Government Review with an announcement expected in the Summer of 2026 about the nature of the geographical footprint in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas. This is likely to mean further change for some local authority staff as they move to new local authority areas and there will be implications for other agencies, whose current work and staffing faces the two current local authorities. The future of local government in the region will also require further discussion about what is shared and what is not shared in respect of Safeguarding Partnerships. It will be important in my view to ensure that future Safeguarding Children Partnerships in the area are all able to consider performance and needs in their respective areas and to learn from their own case reviews and audits. There is scope for some of the other work of sub-groups to be undertaken on a more regionalised basis to achieve economies of scale and avoid duplication.

In this context, the greatest priority for the Safeguarding Partnership is to maintain stability in leadership and ensure that the wider group of safeguarding leads in agencies is engaged through an effective Partnership and sub-groups.

The DSPs in Peterborough have also committed to decide in September 2026 how they wish to engage future independent scrutiny given that the current contract expires in December 2026.



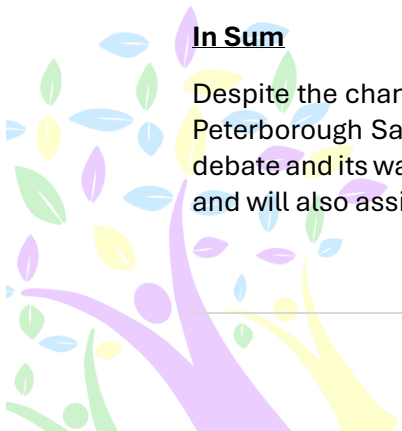
The key opportunities for the Safeguarding Partnership in addition to the overriding factors set out above are:

- Implementation of Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) in line with the requirements of the Children's Well Being and Schools Act 2026. This needs to be in place by the end of March 2027 and will need to be the single greatest priority for the Safeguarding Partnership to influence design and lead implementation. The DSP group is already considering progress at each of its monthly meetings and the statutory partners are represented at senior levels on the Families First Board. It is important too to recognise that the MACPT is a potential positive solution to improving consistency of good practice as the MACPT role is to oversee all child protection activity and ensure that safeguarding issues being dealt with in Family Help services are quality controlled.
- Parliament has also now agreed the Crime and Policing Act in 2026. This legislation includes among other things the introduction of the legal requirement to report concerns about child sexual abuse as recommended by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The Government will issue statutory guidance on how this system will operate for implementation in 2026-27 and the Partnership will need to ensure effective communication of this change.
- The Government has also been clear that it intends in 2026-27 to launch the existing Information Commissioner guidance on information sharing and safeguarding children and place the need to follow this guidance on a statutory footing given the frequency with which case reviews across the country indicate problems in agencies sharing information. This will need clear communication to practitioners and especially the ICO guidance on sharing information without consent where not provided whether there are safeguarding concerns or a need to promote a child's welfare.
- While the Government issued the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 guidance in March 2026, it was clear that there would be consultation in 2026-27 on a raft of further changes. These are likely to be extensive and will relate to future reporting of Safeguarding Partnerships being undertaken in a standardised fashion across the country and there will be greater expectation to demonstrate effectiveness and outcomes and to show how planning has taken account of the views of children, how children are consulted with on a regular basis and the impact of changes made further to children expressing views.

In addition to responding to national change initiatives, legislation and guidance, the Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership will also need to pay attention in 2026-27 to ensuring that there is a conclusion of the Neglect Project. There might be further work to do after 2026-27 but the key things to change and consider in terms of improving working with neglect concerns need to be reflected by January 2027 and included within planning for the Families First implementation of Family Help and MACPTs.

In Sum

Despite the changes made in the leadership of two of the three statutory partners in the short period of time from December 2025 to April 2026, the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership continued to make progress and has matured in its relationships, its promotion of challenge and debate and its ways of working in the last year. This is significant in enabling effective multi-agency leadership of safeguarding children in Peterborough and will also assist the local authority and its partners to present evidence of improvement in the Ofsted inspection likely in 2026-27.



The ease with which it was possible to link the themes from case reviews with the inspection finding to develop an ambitious multi-agency project focused on neglect is noteworthy. This project has a lot of multi-agency support and involvement.

The increase in number of case reviews and identification of learning is evidence of a mature Partnership in which agencies can analyse complex matters together and challenge one another and understand that safeguarding and case review decision making is genuinely a multi-agency one.

I will finish my section of the Annual Report 2026 with a positive reminder that Peterborough is not alone in facing many of these challenges but that in my contacts with leaders, managers and staff in all agencies in Peterborough, there continues to be a determination to do what is right for children and what can be achieved with families wherever possible and there is a welcome and improving openness to challenge and scrutiny that will be supported further by the relational approach now adopted as a Partnership way of working for the future and which lies at the heart of the Families First reforms and is the continuous methodology to guide future challenge, future learning and future improvement for all agencies working together to safeguard children.

David Derbyshire

Independent Scrutineer

Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

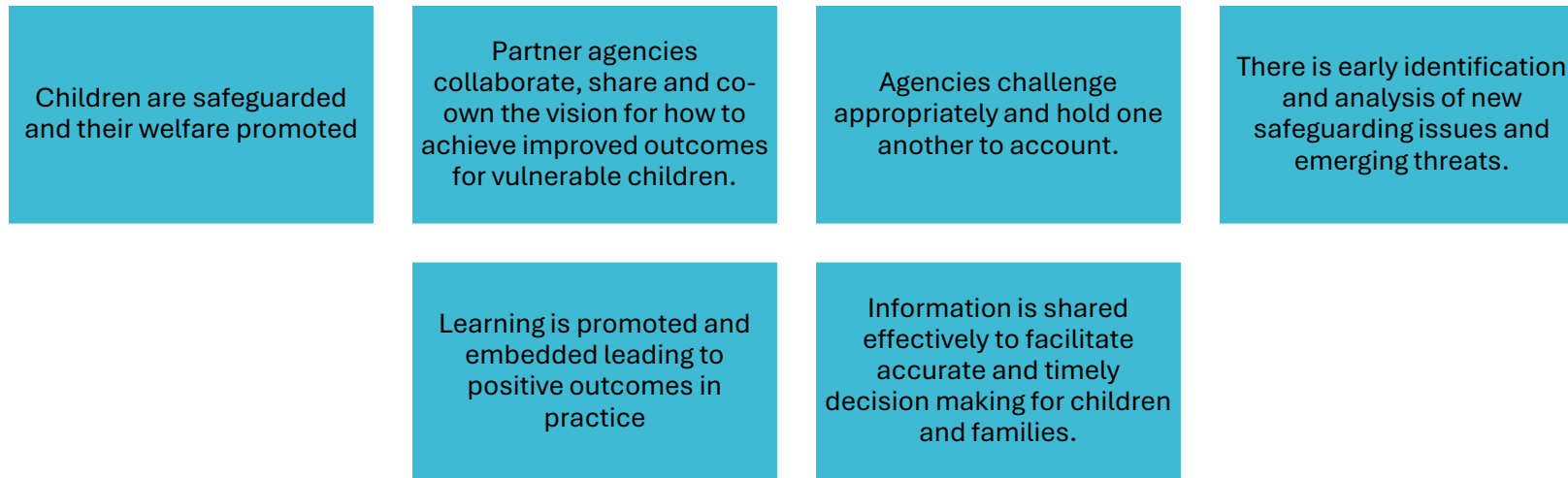
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, set in statutory guidance that the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Chief Officer of Police and Integrated Care Board) must work together with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in Peterborough.

Locally, we have established multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which span two local authority boundaries. The membership of the partnership is made up of the following organisations/agencies:

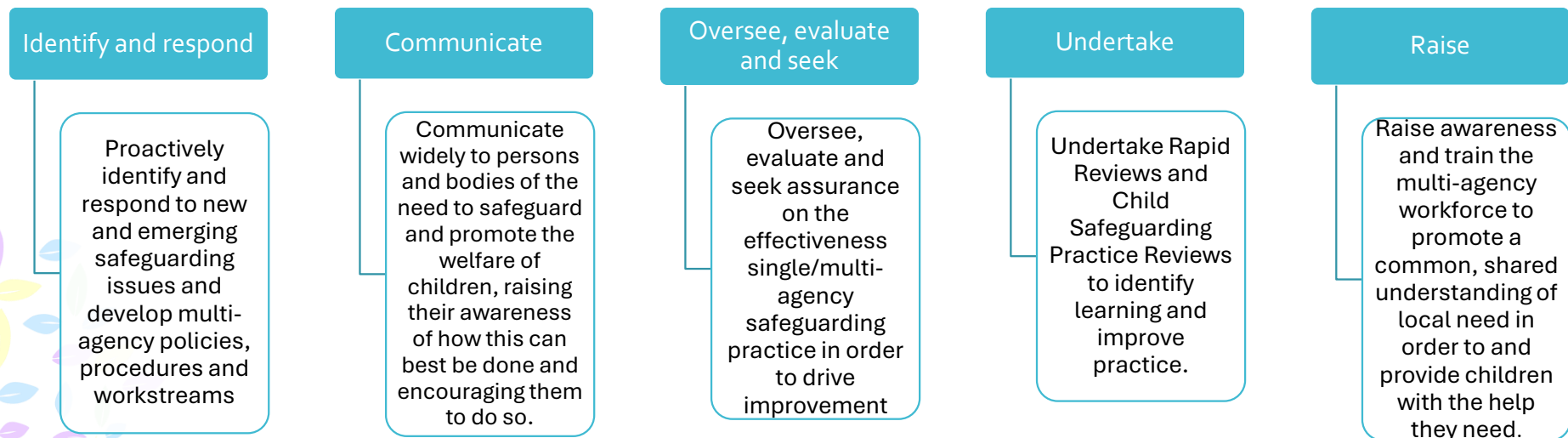


What we do

The purpose of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:



How we do this:



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The diagram below illustrates how the various boards and groups detailed in the following paragraphs align. The structure is designed to support the lead safeguarding partners (LSPs) and delegate safeguarding partners (DSPs) to fulfil their statutory duties as set out within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Safeguarding Children Partnership

Since 1st January 2025 there have been separate Children's Safeguarding Partnerships agreeing the safeguarding strategies for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These partnerships are accountable to the single Chief Executive Safeguarding Partnership.

The Safeguarding Children's Partnership is responsible for progressing the Chief Executive Safeguarding Partnership's business priorities through its subgroups and a range of workplans and action plans. Some of the activity is undertaken jointly on behalf of both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough partnerships and this will be revisited when the details of local government reorganisation (LGR) are considered.

Subgroups

The work to progress the partnership priorities as well as its statutory responsibilities is undertaken by a range of subgroups, work streams and task and finish groups. These groups are responsible for progressing case review activity, policies, the priority areas, training and quality assurance. All sub-groups of the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have remained joint across the county. The aim is to ensure alignment of working, to benefit from efficiencies of scale and avoid over-commitment of partner agencies. Similarly, the structure retains one multi-agency set of safeguarding policies and procedures, being implemented across the county and hosted on a single website with the aim of ensuring consistency for practitioners and service users. However, safeguarding partners fully acknowledge and adhere to the sovereignty that the Councils for each of the two local authority has for the children and families that reside within their area.

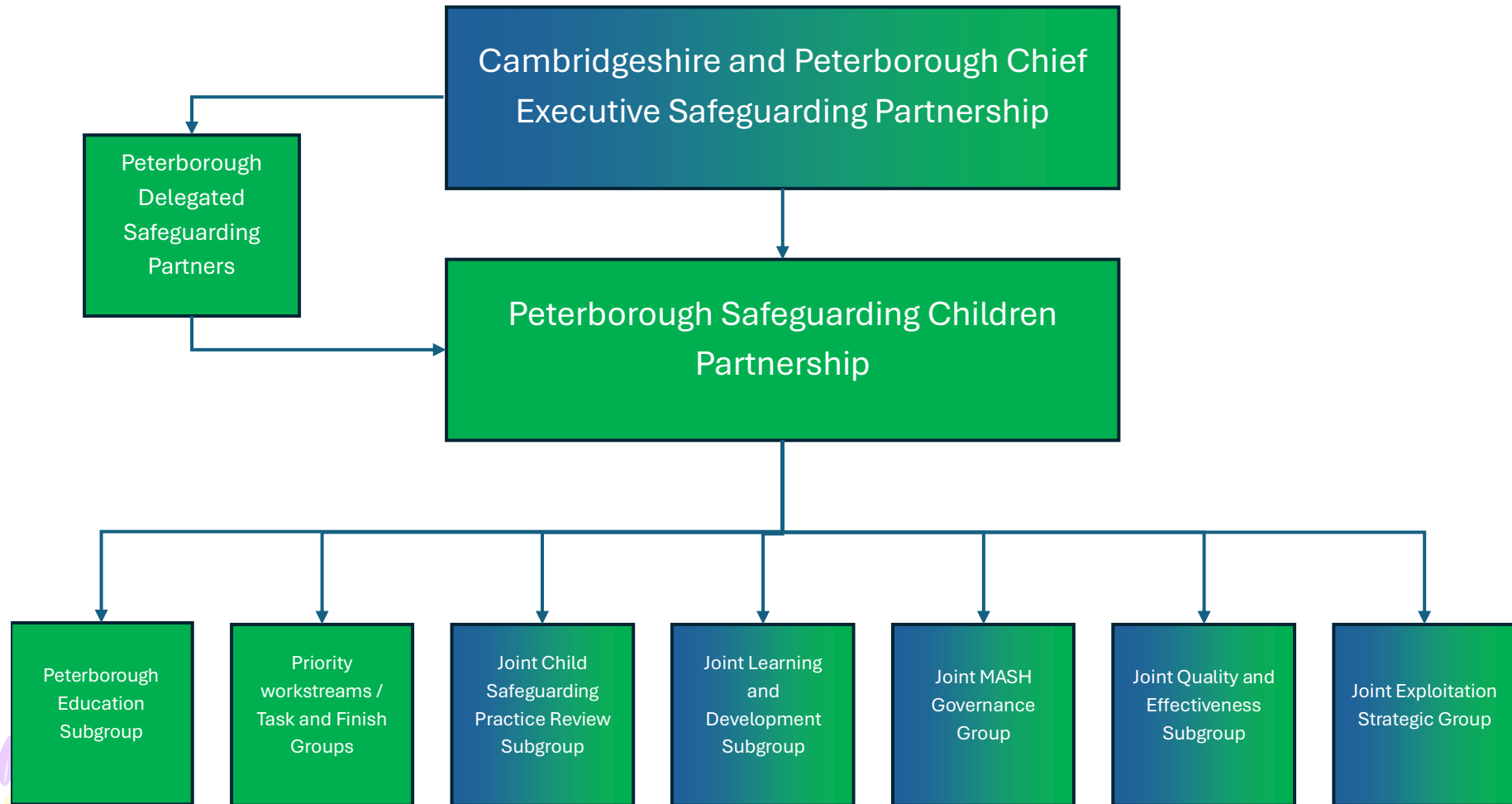
Priority workstreams

Time limited priority workstream groups have continued to progress themed areas, for example a local response to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's reports on child sexual abuse: *'I wanted them all to notice'* and *'Its silent'*, Race, racism and safeguarding, as well as the Neglect Project group focussed on the local responses to child neglect in Peterborough.



Governance structure

The diagram below details the current safeguarding partnership governance structure.



PRIORITIES 2025-2027

In March 2025, following the separation of the partnerships, priority areas for the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Partnership were discussed with the delegated safeguarding partners and the following priority areas were agreed:



Implementation of the Families First Partnership Program

The Partnership have received regular updates on the progress of its key partners in implementing the reforms, to maintain oversight and governance of the local changes proposed. Where appropriate, key work strands of the partnership are aligned with the timetable for the reforms, such as a review of the Threshold Document, with involvement from all partners.

Making the Child Protection system work effectively

The multi-agency audit planner overseen by the Quality and Effectiveness Group has been reviewed to ensure that the quality of multi-agency practice across the child protection system is regularly reviewed and overseen by the partnership.

Neglect:

An additional priority area of Neglect was added in December 2025 following the completion of a rapid review. Thereafter the Neglect Project was established to focus on improving practice relating to child neglect in Peterborough. The work of this group aims to support the implementation of changes under the Families First Partnership Programme, particularly in relation to the Family Help pillar of work.

School Attendance:

This has been a key area of focus for the Education Safeguarding Group, exploring how multi-agency relationships can such as those between schools and the Safer Schools Officers within the constabulary, can support improved outcomes for children in relation to school attendance. StudyBugs has also help schools to improve recording and monitoring of school attendance to support a better understanding of the issue for Peterborough students.

Domestic Abuse:

Planning commenced for an annual Safeguarding Children Partnerships Conference on 21st April 2026 focused on the lived experience of children at risks of, or suffering from harm from domestic abuse. Work under this priority has been undertaken in collaboration with colleagues from the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership.

Further discussion in February 2026 reviewed these priority areas and determined that whilst any ongoing work under each of the priority areas should continue through 2026/27, the main focus for the partnership should be the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme.



THE WORK OF THE SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP SUB-GROUPS

Below the Chief Executive Safeguarding Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships are a number of subgroups, work streams and task and finish groups. These groups are responsible for a range of areas, including case reviews, policies, the priority areas, training and quality assurance. All sub-groups of the Partnerships will remain joint across the county for the calendar year of 2025-2026. The aim is to ensure alignment of working, to benefit from efficiencies of scale and avoid over-commitment of partner agencies. Similarly, the structure retains one multi-agency set of safeguarding policies and procedures, being implemented across the county and hosted on a single website with the aim of ensuring consistency for practitioners and service users. All subgroups are accountable to the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children's board and must provide regular updates to the board

During 25-26, the Peterborough Safeguarding Children partnership had the following principal sub-groups.

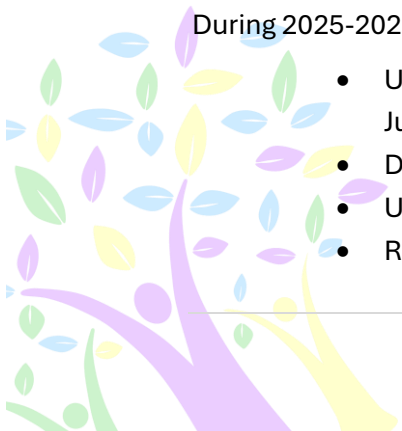
- Quality and Effectiveness group (QEG)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-group
- Learning and Development Sub-group
- Child Exploitation Sub-group
- MASH Governance group
- Education Sub-group

Quality and Effectiveness Sub-group (QEG)

The Quality and Effectiveness Group is constituted to ensure that the Safeguarding Partnership Boards have a detailed overview of the quality and effectiveness of agency's practice and performance in relation to the safeguarding of children across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. During 2025-2026, the group was chaired by the Service Director Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement, Children, Education and Families, Cambridgeshire County Council. The Quality and Effectiveness Group is authorised by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Partnership Boards to investigate any activity within its terms of reference and to report and escalate to the Boards as appropriate.

During 2025-2026 the Quality and Effectiveness subgroup has:

- Undertaken the Section 11 audit and professionals' survey December 2025 – April 2026. Report of findings and analysis are due in July 2026 and will feature in next year's Annual report
- Developed and agreed a multi-agency audit timetable for 2025 – 2026
- Updated and shared the Resolving Professional Differences policy
- Reviewed audit actions taken from local rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews



- Undertaken extensive work to develop a multi-agency safeguarding dataset.
- Child sexual exploitation audits completed. Reports circulated and findings presented. Recommendations developed relating to:
 - Professional language.
 - Information sharing.
 - Missing children processes.
 - Tier 2 Risk Outside the Home pathway.

Multi Agency Assurance Activity 2025-2026

Child Sexual Exploitation

In September 2025 an audit took place in Peterborough which focused on the multi-agency response to those children deemed to be at “Moderate” risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. The audit took the opportunity to look at highlighted recommendations from the Baroness Casey report, as well as asking the question “What difference has been made to the child’s safeguarding?”.

Representatives from partner agencies were then invited to attend an audit day where cases could be reviewed in response to the question set within the audit tool. Themes noted within the exercise:

- Information sharing was positive and effective in all cases but as previously stated there was still significant information that had not been shared despite it being thoroughly recorded on individual partner records.
- Use of police powers to deal with perpetrators for non-connected matters where convictions were easier to obtain, were positive to an extent but some cases indicated a need to ensure that focus was not lost on criminal charges or other activity being used to focus on the perpetrator’s future risk to children
- There feels a real positive change to how children feel and what difference has been made to their safeguarding with numerous comments throughout about positive relationships, being seen and being heard

Child Sexual Abuse

A workshop took place in September 2025 where over sixty multi-agency practitioners and managers benchmarked the recommendations from the National Panel’s “I wanted them to notice report” against the services and support available for children in the Cambridgeshire area. The findings from the workshop were correlated and shared with the Learning and Development Group to inform future commission of child sexual abuse training.

Section 11 Audit

The biennial Section 11 audit commenced in December 2025. An audit tool was developed and sent to partner agency leads for completion and the professionals survey was launched. The audit closed in April 2026 and the findings will be reported in next year's annual report.

Child Protection System Audit

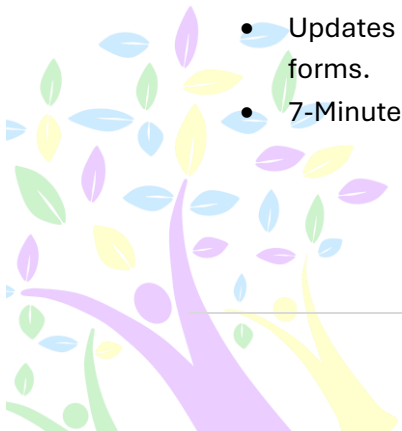
In line with a recommendation from a Peterborough Rapid Review members of QEG wanted oversight of qualitative data on attendance at child protection and child review meetings. This oversight would include the standard of all agency reports, attendance of relevant partners and inclusion of the lived experience of the child within reports and recording. To capture this information an audit tool was developed and agreed by QEG partners and agencies used the tool to benchmark against their reports and contributions to the meetings. The findings from this audit will be shared in next year's report.

Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Sub-group

The CSPR subgroup acts with delegated responsibility from the lead safeguarding partners (LSPs) and delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs). Its main purpose is to monitor the delivery of its statutory duties with regards to carrying out rapid reviews and CSPRs where there are lessons to be learnt around how relevant agencies may have acted differently to prevent harm or death and advising the Safeguarding Children Partnerships on the lessons to be learnt. The CSPR subgroup will be chaired by the Service Director for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Peterborough Children's Services for a period of 12 months and then rotated between the members of the group.

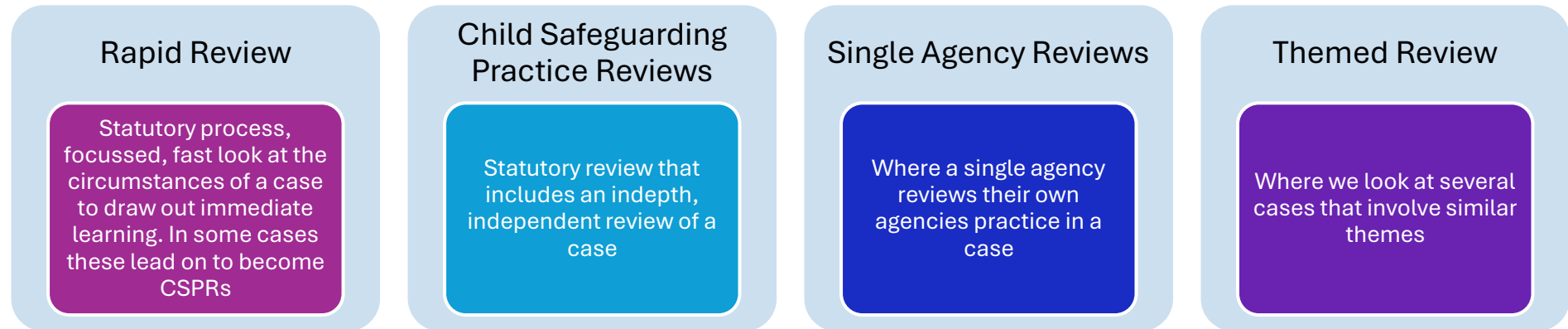
During 2025-26, the group has overseen:

- In September 2025 completed a thematic review of all local CSPR's exploring practice themes and what works in safeguarding.
- A presentation from Dr Russell Wate on the findings from the Sara Sharif CSPR.
- Agencies' internal audits and updates on outstanding actions taken from CSPRs and rapid reviews.
- An action Planner of outstanding actions from child reviews shared alongside the CSPR/RR tracker of pending and completed reviews.
- Themes from our local reviews, including: consent, being curious, the involvement of father figures in a child's life and being confident to work with race, racism and ethnicity.
- Updates to national guidance on CSPRs/rapid reviews shared and discussed and corresponding changes to our local guidance and referral forms.
- 7-Minute briefings from all local reviews which are cascaded across agencies.



Learning from practice reviews

Peterborough has a strong culture of wanting to learn lessons from practice, evidenced through our local approach to undertaking learning from a range of cases. This includes looking at those cases that meet the statutory criteria for a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review but also having the flexibility to consider cases that do not meet the statutory criteria but involve systems learning. Within the partnership we undertake;



The safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Police, ICB) need to agree whether to notify the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel of any safeguarding incidents where a child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Following notification to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, a rapid review is undertaken to enable safeguarding partners to:

- Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time.
- Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately
- Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Decide what steps should be taken, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review.

Rapid Reviews

During 2025 – 2026 there were three rapid reviews completed involving a child in their teenage years, young children and a baby under one year old. Risk factors including missing episodes, neglect, offending behaviours, and concerns of child sexual abuse were noted within these reviews.

These reviews highlighted some key learning themes:

Identified Practice Improvement Areas

Curiosity about ...

- Father figures and their role in caring for the child(ren)
- Family structure / all family members
- Relationships to the child
- Parenting capacity

Sharing Information ...

- Communication between care homes and social care / Sexual Assault Referral Clinic
- Disconnect between strategic meetings and frontline staff

Assessments ...

- What about other children in the family, what are the risks to them?
- Use of assessment tools to evidence chronic child neglect
- Recognition of cumulative harm

Cultural Humility ...

- Confidence to work with children and families from diverse backgrounds
- Understanding cultural implications on the needs of children
- Family members are not interpreters

Identified Good Areas of Practice

All review activity also seeks to identify those areas which are considered good practice. Activity following case reviews is focussed, not only on the individual recommendations and learning, but also on determining whether learning is an indication of wider practice. An example of this is the establishment of the Neglect Project which has sought to gain a better understanding of practice relating to child neglect, in the knowledge that local learning themes identified are often common to the whole country.

Learning and Development Sub-group

The Learning and Development Sub-group provides oversight of countywide multi-agency safeguarding children learning and development. Its role includes identifying lessons from child safeguarding practice reviews and ensuring appropriate learning opportunities are available, monitoring agencies' ability to meet statutory safeguarding training requirements and overseeing the multi-agency training programme. The group also conducts training needs analyses to identify gaps in learning provision and produces an annual report for the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board on training attendance, quality, impact, and practitioner feedback. In addition, the Chair provides regular Learning and Development update reports to each Partnership Board meeting.

In the last year the Learning and Development Group has:

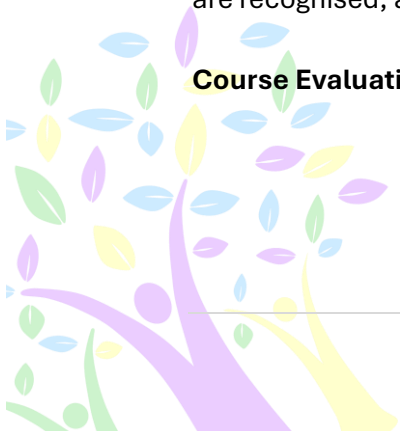
- Put together a training pool for the delivery of Neglect face to face training for practitioners.
- Established an implementation group for the Graded Care Profile 2 tool.
- Carried out a training needs analysis to identify which training is missing from the training programme from all agency's available training.

Training Activity in 2025-2026	2025-2026
Safeguarding Partnership Conferences	1 conference/124 participants
Courses Available	31 courses
Participants on Training	1026 participants
Practitioners Trained Via Partners and Community	870 practitioners
Sways Available	38 Sways
Sway Views	181,977 views

31 courses were offered in our training programme for 2025-2026. The safeguarding training topics continued to focus on either the partnerships' priority areas or identified high risk areas from partners. Within all the PowerPoint presentations are links to multi-agency policies and procedures, safeguarding assessment tools, CPSPB briefings and other useful internal and external information resources. Across the programme, we provided training to 1026 participants through our programme of multi-agency safeguarding courses. There remains the on-going challenge of professionals booking on to on-line training and then failing to attend or cancel their place. In 2025-2026, there were 206 people who booked a training place and then did not attend.

During 2025-2026 the Learning and Development subgroup has recognised that the offer of multi-agency training to the safeguarding children workforce has not been as robust as it has been in previous years. There is acknowledgement that the provision of online only programmes is not sufficient to meet the needs of the multi-agency workforce dealing with a need to learn together, both online and in person, about an increasing range of topics arising from case reviews or from other developments such as understanding risks to children in their online worlds. The group recognises that the next year should focus on reestablishing the provision of face to face training, as the many benefits of learning together are recognised, as well as widening the topics covered.

Course Evaluation comments from practitioners



I enjoyed the learning from this course and have been able to use this within my day to day working.

The course was informative, helping me reflect on previous cases I have managed and how I would approach them differently in the future

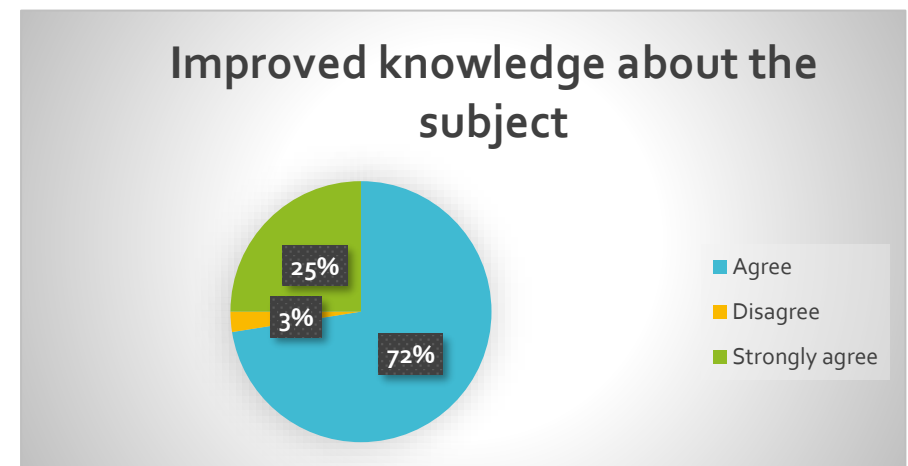
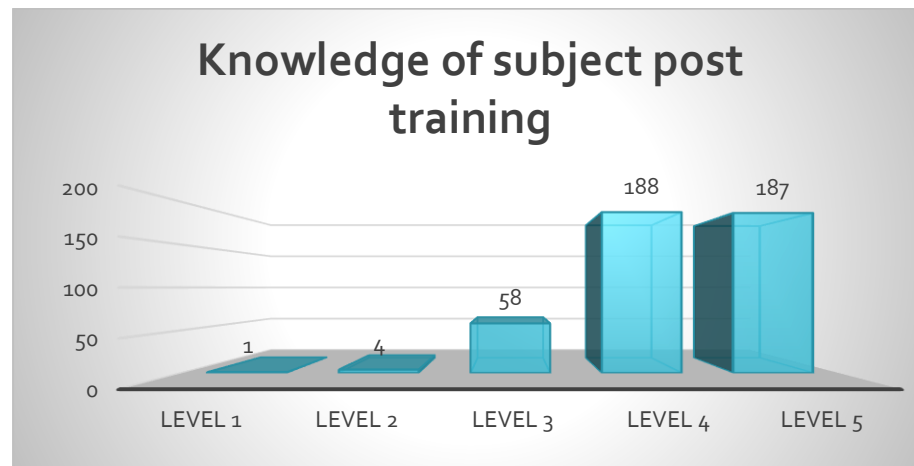
Course was brilliant and perfectly combined research methodology with steps to implement in daily practice

This study session was very informative and as I had a basic knowledge of the subject, I felt that I learnt a lot.

The knowledge of the trainer was exemplary and very well delivered. The visual materials were also of a high standard.

Expert Knowledge Ratings

These graphs reflect responses of self-assessed knowledge levels after training and how delegates have rated their improvement of knowledge on the subject



Child Exploitation Subgroup

The Child Exploitation Subgroup provides multi-agency leadership, coordination, and oversight of the response to all forms of child exploitation across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Reporting to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board and chaired by the Head of Protecting Vulnerable People at Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the subgroup works to improve safeguarding practice, information sharing, early intervention, and disruption of exploitation. Its key responsibilities include monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, promoting

learning from reviews and research, analysing performance data and emerging risks, strengthening responses to protect children and disrupt perpetrators, raising awareness within communities and professional networks, and ensuring that the views and experiences of children, young people, and families inform service development and delivery.

During 2025-2026, as part of the work of the Child Exploitation Subgroup there have been the following activities:

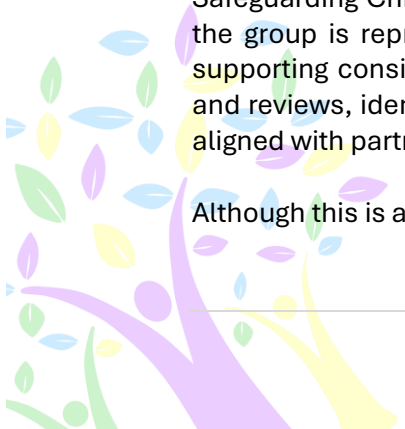
- Supported Education leads with DSL training.
- Delivered face to face and online training to GP's and Integrated Care Board.
- Carried out an audit of Child Sexual Exploitation cases and made recommendations to enhance the service provided;
- Supported Anglia Ruskin University in delivering their Social Work degree course
- Contributed to national guidance in support of the Crime and Policing Bill 2026
- Supported provided to the Ivison Trust to deliver parent webinars to over 600 parents across the county:
 - Ivison Trust were contacted by the partnership board in light of media information across the county concerning Child Exploitation and Knife Crime. They were asked to provide three sessions , two sessions were open to any parent and carer who wished to find out more about exploitation with the third and final session restricted to parents and carers who wished to speak specifically about their personal situation. The session were heavily publicised throughout our education network and took place in the early evening to ensure we were available at the most convenient time.

Peterborough Education Subgroup

The Education Safeguarding Group brings together all education providers, including early years settings, to promote and strengthen the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people up to age 18. It serves as the collective voice of the education sector within safeguarding partnerships, providing a forum for collaboration, information sharing, and problem-solving on safeguarding issues affecting educational settings.

The group identifies and addresses strategic and operational safeguarding concerns, develops solutions, and escalates issues to the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (CSCPb) and other relevant partnerships where needed. Reporting to the PCC Safeguarding Partnership, the group is represented at partnership level by its Chair. Key responsibilities include reviewing safeguarding guidance, sharing best practice, supporting consistent safeguarding arrangements across Cambridgeshire, monitoring the implementation of recommendations from inspections and reviews, identifying service improvements and gaps for vulnerable children, considering new safeguarding policies, and delivering a work plan aligned with partnership priorities.

Although this is a relatively new subgroup, during 2025-2026 the Education Subgroup has:



- The group was initiated in June 2025 and is growing to include representatives from higher education, special schools and primary schools and meet quarterly.
- To allow the group to develop, people from different agencies are being invited to present what their agency does to safeguard children and how educational colleagues can support this and vice versa e.g. local authority's school attendance service, elective home provision and Peterborough safer partnership colleagues. Engagement with this group from the Education sector has been positive and the group will continue to develop into 2026/27

MASH Governance Subgroup

The MASH Governance Group provides strategic oversight of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership Boards. Its role is to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding processes through scrutiny of performance, quality assurance, and audit activity, while identifying and managing risks and opportunities. The group oversees the development and review of MASH policies and procedures, monitors multi-agency performance and risk registers and supports continuous improvement through horizon scanning and partnership working. It also escalates significant issues to the Partnership Boards and provides regular governance update reports on MASH activity, performance, and emerging concerns.

During 2025-2026 the group has:

- Developed and implemented MASH information sharing agreements (Tier 2) for Cambridgeshire MASH and Peterborough MASH.
- Shared updates from each agency in relations to risks by exception.
- Created a risk register to allowing for the oversee of key multi-agency risks relating to this area of work, with reporting to the Safeguarding Partnership as necessary.
- Agreement of quarterly multi-agency audits being completed on dip samples of MASH cases lead by local authorities. Findings presented back to MASH governance.
- Undertaken MASH Operations Audits and fed back key area of learning to the group for oversight and action as necessary.



ADDITIONAL AREAS OF WORK

Impact of Partnership work undertaken in 2025/26

Threshold Document has had a refresh in terms of changes made to the language used. This is to reflect a relational approach to working with children and families and the implementation of the families first programmes for Peterborough.

Measuring the impact of the Professional Curiosity training programme. Learning from the professional curiosity doctoral research, on everyday safeguarding practice, has been cascaded to over 850 professionals (practitioners and managers) across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. This took place through multi-agency face to face workshops and conferences. The feedback and evaluation of the training was overwhelmingly positive with attendees, managers and agencies noting how they have embedded changes into their front-line safeguarding practice, supervision, policies/procedures and training.

- *The professional curiosity training has been superb. As a direct result of this we have changed our processes around referrals, where we are following up the referral and if there is a waiting list, we contact the client in the interim. We are also changing how we ask questions so that they are more open and give the client the opportunity to open up more. Thank you so much*
- *Amazing and empowering workshop. Provided us with useful knowledge + tools to improve our practice/ Very thought provoking for practice - thank you! (everyone should go)*
- *Being more aware of what the outcome I wish to achieve is and how professional curiosity enables this. Also be more aware of what I feel is usual behaviour and notice the small changes.*

The training programme is set to continue and has been facilitated and shared with other partnership boards and their agencies across the Eastern Region

BUDGET

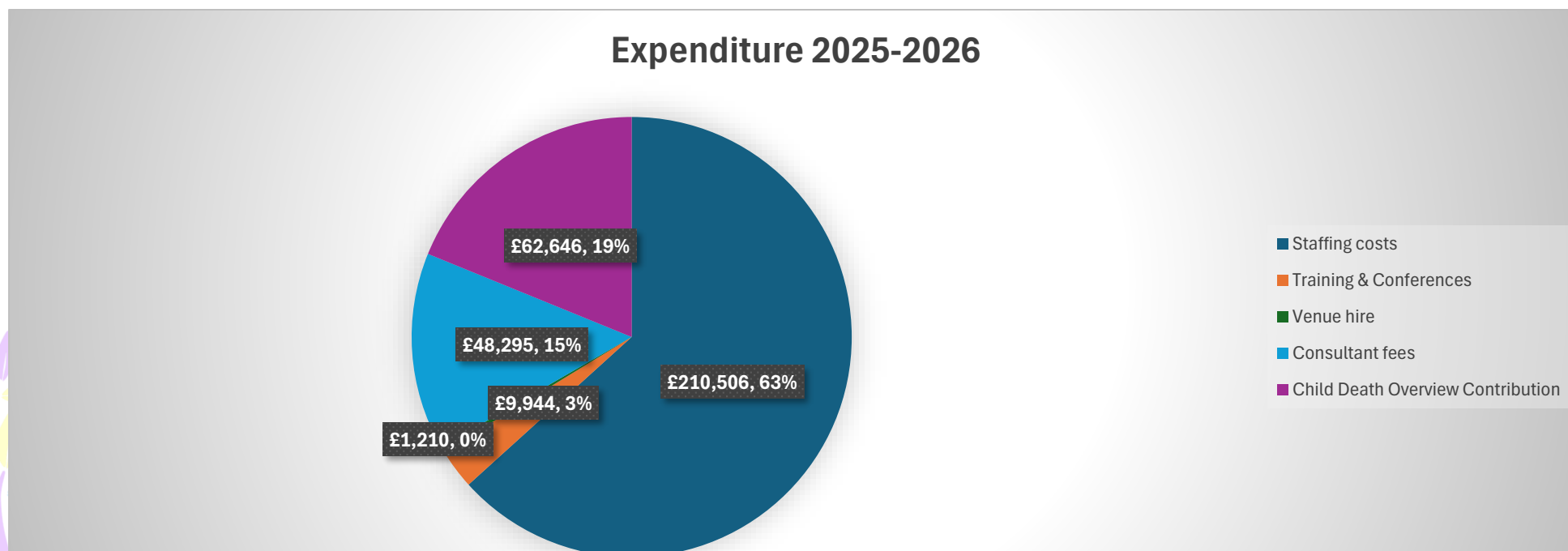
Funding for the Children's Safeguarding Partnerships is made up of contributions from, Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire Police, NHS Centra East Integrated Care Board, NHS England, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust, North West Anglia Foundation Trust and the National Probation Service.

Partner Agency annual Contributions:	2025-2026
Peterborough Local Authority	£182,975
Police	£71,182.50
NHS Central East Integrated Care Board (CEICB)	£13,305
NHS England	£10,167
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Trust Foundation Trust (CPFT)	£12,645
North West Anglia Foundation NHS Trust (NWAFT)	£11,120
National Probation Service	£2,200

Expenditure

All costs for activity associated with the Adults Safeguarding Boards and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships across Peterborough are taken from the same financial budget.

As well as staffing costs, expenditure incurred by the partnership includes case review authors, conferences for practitioners and consultant fees and the Independent Scrutineer. There are also support costs for training, travel and venue hire. It has not been possible to disaggregate the



expenditure associated with work to support the Peterborough Children's Partnership from that for the Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board, so the expenditure outlined in this diagram covers all activity relating to the two Safeguarding partnerships in Peterborough.

PETERBOROUGH AT A GLANCE



The county of Cambridgeshire covers an area 1,309 sq. miles in the East of England with an estimated population of 895,000.

For local government purposes, the county is divided between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

Peterborough is a unitary authority providing a number of services including Education, Social Care, Youth Justice, and Public Health, Housing, Refuse Collection, Environmental Health and Leisure Facilities

The population across the Peterborough City Council area is estimated to be 223,655, of which around 62,655 (28.1%) are children and young people aged 0 – 19.

Population Profile

223,655

Total population

23%

Ages 0–15

63%

Ages 16–64

14%

Ages 65 and over

Contacts raised during the year

10,972

Early Help Assessments initiated

3,107

Referrals initiated

3,023

% of referrals were re-referrals

20%

Single assessments completed

3669

Single Assessments completed
within timescale

62.4%

Section 47s completed

1,076

% of Section 47s led to an Initial
Child Protection Conference

38.3%

Children subject to a Child
Protection Plan at end of March
2024

242

Children in Care at the end of
March 2024

425

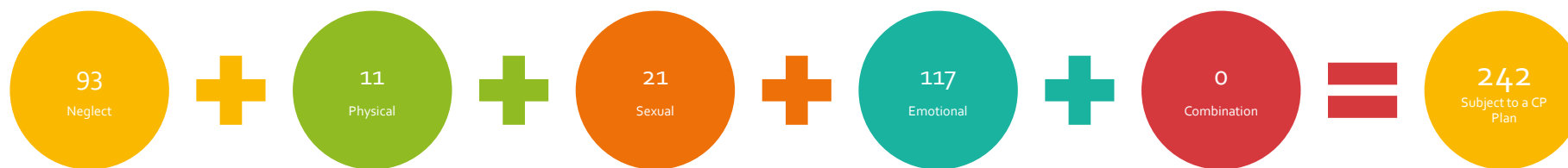
Number of missing from Home
episodes

523

Number of missing from Care
episodes

384

Children on a Child Protection plan (at the end of March 2026) by category of Abuse



Above information received from local authority performance team

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE STATUTORY SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Peterborough Local Authority Children Services

Throughout the year, face to face and virtual engagement events raised awareness of different participation groups and opportunities, and we were able to recruit to all groups through these activities. The Participation Team sought further feedback from all attendees on our main feedback theme; *'I wish people knew...'*

The annual awards and celebration day for Children in Care was designed by young people and featured fun activities, challenges, henna, face painting, balloon art, inflatables, soft play, arts and crafts, gaming and a magic show. Staff from around Children's Services attended to support the event, as well as senior managers and councillors. All Children in Care were recognised with award certificates for the skills and strengths they had displayed over the last year including helpfulness, resilience, bravery, hard work and passion.

The [annual art exhibition](#) gave all children with experience of Children's Services an opportunity to have their artwork displayed at the Peterborough Museum. Young people told us that having their artwork shown in a public exhibition at the Peterborough Museum was an incredible accomplishment and made them feel proud of themselves. At the exhibition, young people led an interactive paper feather activity with attendees, contributing towards a collaborative piece entitled 'Spread your wings and fly'.

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) has continued to be consulted by various Children's Services and other organisations to improve services for Children in Care. CiCC consultation work in the year included Domestic Abuse awareness campaign feedback, Child-View Personal Education Plan meeting questions feedback with the Virtual School, feedback to the Department for Education on the effectiveness of services and consultation on planning for an improved Local Youth Provision.

The CICC also worked hard on several projects that have led to improved services for children in care, including creating and sharing their 'Hear Me Out!' cards for young people to use to communicate with professionals and hosting a launch event for their advocacy awareness myth-busting video, with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS).

The Peterborough Care Leaders (PCL) met regularly and shared their views and experiences on the Local Offer, housing / first move to independence, access to health services including mental health, out of hours support, improving support for care leavers when receiving social care records and apprenticeships and work experience opportunities. They also worked on a video project for employers around the value of care experienced people in employment.

During the summer the PCL completed a grant funded project enabling Care Leavers to have access to new experiences, build skills and alleviate social isolation and loneliness. This project resulted in two national awards through the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum and Coram Voice Amplified Awards.

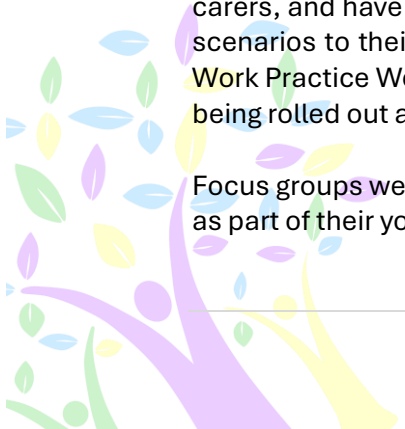
The Participation Team facilitated several engagement activities in partnership with Peterborough United Football Club, with unaccompanied children in care. This group designed a bespoke coming into care pack which is now available for all staff working with unaccompanied children and is widely used across Children's Services.

The Young Inspectors conducted inspections throughout the year, sharing recommendations for improvement on the new family time setting, a potential care leaver accommodation provider, and new care leaver engagement space at Chauffers' Cottage. Inspections include viewing premises and interviewing key staff. Re-inspections are conducted to ensure young people see what improvements have been made and for their sign off.

Young Recruiters continued interviewing candidates for roles across Children's Services throughout the year. Young Recruiters often interviewed alongside recruiting managers and on other occasions formed separate young people panels to interview candidates, in roles ranging from frontline workers to senior managers across Children's Services. Young Recruiters attended bespoke training during the year to ensure best practice when supporting recruitment. The Young Recruiters also spent time developing a comprehensive guide for recruiting managers which includes their feedback, questions they like to ask, why they ask those questions, and the responses they expect to those questions.

Young Trainers continue to facilitate foster carer training, sharing their expertise to improve the knowledge and skills of new and prospective foster carers, and have also contributed to social worker training. The group is constantly developing new training materials, adding videos, questions and scenarios to their facilitation pack. This year, Young Trainers designed and delivered their first 'Every Word Matters' training session during Social Work Practice Week, to complement the videos and glossary that have been published. Feedback from the session was positive - the training is now being rolled out across the service and will be delivered throughout 2026 for all professionals to book on to.

Focus groups were delivered in response to consultation requests where appropriate and included a session with the CICC led by the Youth Council as part of their youth stress campaign and focus groups with the PCL and CICC by Youth Employment UK as part of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.



Significant consultation was undertaken in the year with children and young people in relation to the new Corporate Parenting Board, replacing the Corporate Parenting Committee. Young people shared their views on the timing, duration, venue and content of the meetings and helped ensure they are child friendly, dynamic and action driven and focused on issues that are important to them. CiCC and PCL representatives attended workstream meetings and the Corporate Parenting Board to provide their perspective and hold agencies involved in their care and support to account.

Feedback from all participation groups and activities is discussed with Participation groups on a regular basis, who identify action for themselves as well as overseeing the service response to feedback. To ensure that the views of children and young people are acted upon to improve services, and that children and young people are able to review, amend and challenge this action, a quarterly feedback loop report is shared with corporate parents.

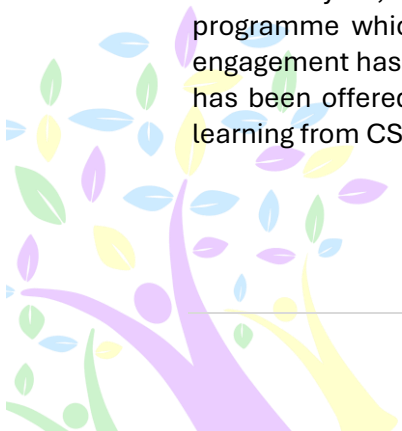
Practice Development

The QA service has maintained a detailed audit programme over the past year, supporting the provision of accurate self-assessments submitted to OFSTED during monitoring visits. Full-service audits have assisted each service area in identifying strengths and areas requiring improvement. Additionally, regular deep dives have been completed with a focus on specific practice areas. Audits are completed collaboratively with practitioners to inform efforts to enhance practice.

The QA service works closely with the Centre for Professional Excellence to support the delivery of workshops and practice development forums throughout the year. These sessions are centred on specific practice themes and ensure that QA findings, alongside learning from local and national practice reviews, are embedded into training and wider learning opportunities. Forums also provide space to share best practice approaches, with guest speakers and utilising multi-agency partners such as the recent sessions focused on attendance which was supported by the colleagues in education.

Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Child Protection Conferences have continued to evolve and are now held under the Child Protection Pathway, in recognition of the significant harm that can arise from risks within the wider environment. While several positives have been highlighted in the individual work undertaken with children to understand and reduce risk, the focus over the next year will be on strengthening the Tier 2 response across places, people and spaces. This will ensure that work is not only completed directly with the child to support risk reduction, but also with the wider environment in which risk is occurring.

In the last year, training has been offered every six months by the Centre for Professional Excellence through the Foundations of Family Led Practice programme which covers Assessment Skills, Direct Work with Children & Families, Planning, Multi-Agency Working, and Language. Although engagement has been limited, those who have attended have reported a positive impact on their practice in key skills. Bespoke, service-led training has been offered throughout the year, including practice improvement sessions with PAs, care planning and pathway planning workshops, and learning from CSPRs.



Peterborough has participated in the Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads programme from 2025-26, with 10 practice leads across service areas due to complete training in July 2026. The CSA practice leads have offered ad hoc reflective discussions with teams where child sexual abuse is an identified risk, and this offer will be formalised through regular reflective thinking spaces starting in the Autumn of 2026.

Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews is now embedded in the service with practice development forums being held every 6-8 weeks to share learning from both local and national CSPR's. Feedback from practitioners following these sessions is positive. Following the sexual abuse practice development forum, QA found, during a file audit, that the practitioner had implemented learning from the session into practice by directly talking to the child about sexual abuse. This enabled the child to speak openly about their experiences and receive the support they needed.

There continues to be a well embedded EDI offer through continued monthly sessions which are well attended. This has been supplemented through lunch and learn sessions, which are linked

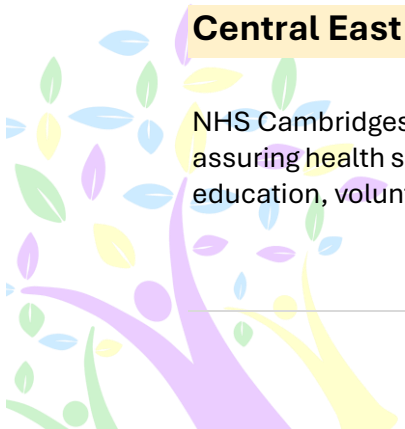
The Family Valued Team is now in place and are progressing a programme of relational and restorative practice training across the workforce. This will support and improve the quality of practice with Children, Young People and their families and carers.

Clare Lodge, located within the boundaries of Peterborough, is a national provider of secure accommodation "welfare" only placements and the only all female unit in the UK. The service is owned and governed by Peterborough City Council and works in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) to provide an intensive and therapeutic environment, including an in-house psychiatric and psychological provision.

This setting continues to work at pace against a robust improvement plan, with evidence of sustained progress across a number of areas. Further stability and momentum are expected following the appointment of a new Registered Manager, who is due to take up post in November 2026. There are clear quality assurance and oversight arrangements in place in relation to the use of physical intervention and restraint, providing assurance that interventions are reviewed, proportionate and implemented appropriately. These arrangements include routine Regulation 44 visits, strengthened internal quality assurance processes, dedicated experience reviewers who scrutinise incidents and undertake debriefs with children and staff, and monthly visits by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to review physical intervention records and relevant CCTV footage. Together, these measures provide ongoing scrutiny, challenge and learning to support safe practice and continuous improvement.

Central East Integrated Care Board

NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) is the statutory NHS organisation responsible for planning, commissioning and assuring health services across the Integrated Care System (ICS). The ICB works collaboratively with local authorities, NHS providers, police services, education, voluntary sector partners and people with lived experience to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities across the population.



Safeguarding is fundamental to the ICB's role in improving health and wellbeing. The ICB has a statutory responsibility to ensure that all NHS commissioned services maintain effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, while ensuring that systems and processes are robust, effective and responsive to emerging risks.

The ICB remains an active statutory partner within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Boards. Executive leadership is provided through the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nurse, supported by Designated Safeguarding Professionals and the wider safeguarding people team. Together they provide strategic leadership, assurance, expert advice and professional oversight across the health system.

Statutory Responsibilities and Assurance

During 2025/26, the safeguarding team supported the ICB to discharge its statutory responsibilities under:

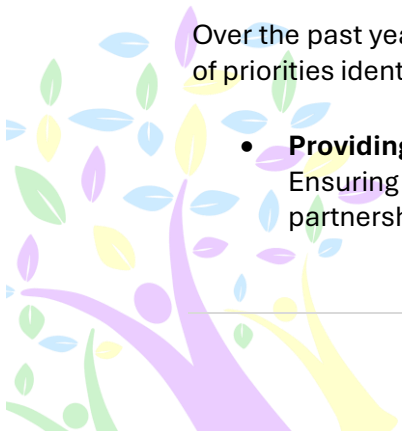
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Health and Care Act 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The NHS Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework (SAAF) 2024

The revised Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework (2024) provides a clear description of the safeguarding responsibilities placed upon NHS commissioners and Integrated Care Boards. Throughout the reporting period, the ICB has maintained robust governance arrangements to ensure compliance with these requirements and to provide assurance that NHS commissioned services are meeting their safeguarding obligations. Particular emphasis has been placed on safeguarding babies, children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children in care and care leavers, recognising the specific duties introduced through the Health and Care Act 2022. This work aligns closely with the ambitions of the NHS 10-Year Plan and the ICB's commitment to reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes for the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Delivering Strategic Safeguarding Priorities

Over the past year, the safeguarding team has continued to provide strategic leadership across the Integrated Care System, supporting the delivery of priorities identified by both the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Boards. The team's work has focused on four key areas:

- **Providing statutory assurance and governance**
Ensuring commissioned services meet safeguarding standards through oversight, assurance processes, quality surveillance and partnership accountability.



- **Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements**

Supporting effective collaboration across health, local authority, police, education and voluntary sector partners to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults at risk.

- **Driving learning and continuous improvement**

Embedding learning from local and national reviews, audits and assurance activity to strengthen professional practice and reduce the risk of future harm.

- **Reducing inequalities and preventing harm**

Promoting early intervention, trauma-informed practice and population-based approaches that address vulnerability, adverse childhood experiences and wider determinants of health.

Multi-Agency Leadership and Partnership Working

Throughout 2025/26, Designated Safeguarding Professionals provided leadership across a wide range of partnership forums, sub-groups and task-and-finish groups, ensuring that health perspectives informed strategic decision-making and service development.

The ICB actively contributed to:

- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Child Death Reviews
- Joint Local Child Safeguarding Reviews
- Care Leaver Death Reviews

Learning from reviews has been translated into improvement activity through multi-agency action plans, workforce development initiatives and targeted quality assurance programmes.

The safeguarding team has also supported the implementation of recommendations arising from national reviews and inspections, including activity linked to Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) findings and work relating to child exploitation, contextual safeguarding and transitional safeguarding.

Quality Assurance and System Oversight

The safeguarding team continued to provide robust oversight of safeguarding quality across NHS commissioned services through:

- Maintenance of the NHS Safeguarding Integrated Data Collection Framework
- Oversight of provider Safeguarding Compliance Assurance Tool (SCAT) submissions

- Multi-agency audit programmes
- Deep-dive reviews of thematic safeguarding issues
- Safeguarding assurance meetings with providers
- Designated Professional leadership forums

Bi-monthly meetings with Named Professionals and Children in Care professionals across the ICS have strengthened consistency of practice, facilitated shared learning and supported implementation of national safeguarding priorities.

The Community of Practice programme has further strengthened collaboration across provider organisations, enabling the sharing of expertise, innovation and best practice across the health system.

Looking Forward

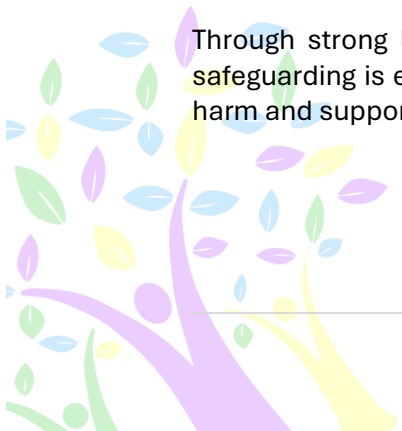
The safeguarding function continues to evolve in response to changing population needs, emerging safeguarding risks and the development of Integrated Care Systems.

During 2025/26, the safeguarding team will continue its transformation towards an All-Age Safeguarding Model, strengthening integration across children's and adults' safeguarding functions and supporting delivery of the emerging ICB Blueprint.

Priorities for the coming year include:

- Further embedding learning from national and local reviews.
- Strengthening approaches to child exploitation and contextual safeguarding.
- Supporting implementation of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- Enhancing safeguarding assurance across commissioned services.
- Developing data-driven approaches to identifying risk and reducing inequalities.
- Supporting delivery of the NHS 10-Year Plan through prevention, early intervention and partnership working.
- Continuing to strengthen the voice and lived experience of children, young people, adults and families within safeguarding system design.

Through strong leadership, partnership working and a commitment to continuous improvement, the ICB remains dedicated to ensuring that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that children, young people and adults across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are protected from harm and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Cambridgeshire Constabulary

We are represented at all key sub-groups and use these important learning environments to work towards the partnership priorities, share best practice and work towards the shared objective of safeguarding the most vulnerable members of our community.

Police have chairing responsibility for the CE subgroup, MASH Governance, and co-chair of the DASV group.

Over the previous 12 months Police have been working closely with partners across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire as part of the Families First Partnership Programme, and specifically Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT). The force have committed a Detective Inspector to this project. This will also involve changes to the force Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) department structure, specifically MASH and the Child Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit (CAISU)

The force have implemented an internal Child Protection meeting chaired by the force Head of Crime. This allows the force to review and implement feedback from across the partnership, for example CSPR learning.

Moving forward Government direction is that all Police forces will have a specialist Rape and Serious Sexual Offences investigation team (RASSO) in place by December 2027. In relation to children the most serious sexual offences and those committed by family members or those in a position of trust are already investigation by the CAISU specialist team. The new specialist RASSO team will strengthen this process bringing a wider range of offences into the specialist team, and improve links with partners, and outcomes for victims and survivors. This will also form part of the MACPT implementation. This supports our commitment to FFPP, Op Soteria and the wider VAWG agenda.

Recent changes in legislation have provided increased focus on offences involving Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) The force CE hub has built strong links with local partners, and work is underway led by the local authority to review and strengthen the ROTH and MCE processes, which the force are fully committed to supporting at operational and strategic level.

The force has strong engagement with partners, and a robust process in relation to rapid reviews and LSPR. The partnership works really well in this area to ensure learning is identified and acted upon across agencies.





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