



ANNUAL REPORT

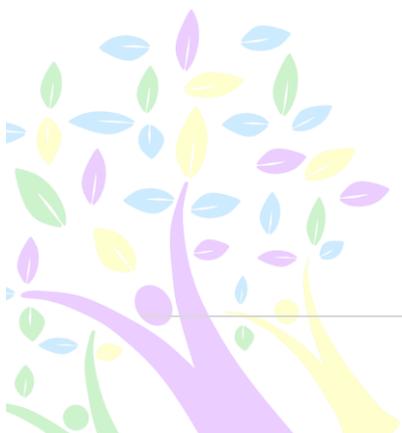
April 2024 – March 2025

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FOREWORD

Once again we are pleased to present the annual report of the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and the Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Partnership for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. This is presented on behalf of the lead safeguarding partners and delegated safeguarding partners for both partnerships.

Changes have continued in this reporting year and most notably 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 evolution of local arrangements signified a desire by the partnerships to understand and focus on the specific needs of the children and families within each area. The partnerships have agreed their priority areas for 2025-2027 with some areas specific to each partnership and some commonalities. There remains a commitment to shared learning across the partnerships and for this reason the subgroups of the partnership have remained joint. This has allowed for collaboration and reduction in duplication, whilst also adhering to confidentiality and data protection safeguards.

We have continued our work this year to actively identify learning from rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews and to drive improvement in practice following these reviews. There has also been progress under the priority areas in the form of quality assurance, awareness raising and consultation activities. New Education Safeguarding subgroups have been established and are beginning to formulate plans to increase the voice of education providers within the partnerships. We continue to look for ways of evaluating the effectiveness of these pieces of work to inform continuous improvements.

Practitioners and managers across the partnership have again demonstrated their commitment to the safeguarding of children and families in our area, despite the challenges and pressures of this work. We wish to extend our gratitude to all members of the partnerships for their continued hard work, professionalism and commitment. It is the dedication of frontline staff and the managers who support them that can make a positive difference in our area.

Martin Purbrick
Executive Director for Children,
Education and Families



John Gregg
Executive Director for Children
Services



Carol Anderson
Chief Nurse



Vaughan Lukey
Assistant Chief Constable



REFLECTIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER

The new Government guidance for safeguarding partners and other agencies in England was launched in December 2023. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* introduced a number of changes, one of which was to require all partnerships to put into place arrangements for independent scrutiny and for the statutory partner agencies (Children’s Social Care, Police and NHS) to lead and chair partnerships rather than use independent chairs as had previously been the case.

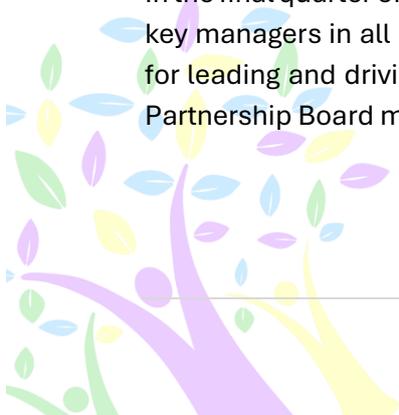
The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnerships appointed the author as Independent Scrutineer in December 2024 and I commenced work in this role in January 2025.

The Partnership moved to a new arrangement in January 2025 whereby Cambridgeshire and Peterborough both hosted their own safeguarding partnerships further to the separation of the two local authorities and creation of separate accountable bodies in each authority. The new Independent Scrutineer assumed this role in respect of both new safeguarding partnerships.

The new Government guidance built on research conducted by the University of Bedfordshire and others in 2022 about what makes for effective independent scrutiny and this is best summarised as the provision of support and challenge to the statutory safeguarding partners and others involved in service provision relating to the safeguarding of children. The functions of the Independent Scrutineer in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are based on this guidance and are to:

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a ‘critical friend’ and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

In the final quarter of 2024-25, the Independent Scrutineer in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough met with key managers in all agencies, including meeting with the Delegated Safeguarding Partners responsible for leading and driving the work of the partnership on several occasions. The Scrutineer also attended Partnership Board meetings and case review and quality assurance sub-groups.



The Scrutineer was involved in supporting the partnerships to agree their priorities for 2025-27 in which there is clear main focus on planning for implementation of the Government's *Families First* reform programme aimed at improving the offer of family help and reducing the need for child protection interventions and reducing the number of children needing to enter local authority care.

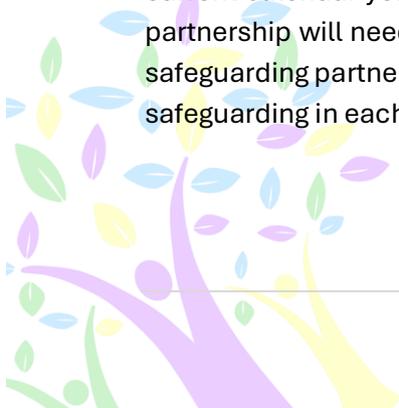
The Scrutineer provided a comprehensive report on initial reflections to the statutory partners in March 2025 and the partners agreed at the same time the Scrutineer's suggestions for the independent scrutiny plan for 2025-26.

The Scrutineer agreed on request of agencies in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to take on a temporary chairing role for the Case Review sub-group responsible for ensuring that cases are reviewed in line with national guidance in the rare circumstances where children die or suffer serious harm as a result of abuse or neglect or exploitation. This proved a helpful introduction to understanding key themes in such cases and to provide input to excellent work carried out in the partnership to clarify and publish written processes to guide decision-making of the partners around these cases. It will be important that the statutory partners assume the leadership of this group and its functions to fit with the expectation that partners should be providing clear leadership to agencies in both authorities.

The Independent Scrutineer drew attention of the statutory partners to areas where the structure of the safeguarding partnerships could be improved and work has started on this front with a new sub-group responsible for improving practice and procedures set up and consideration underway of engaging with the voluntary and community sector bodies and improving the visibility of the Partnership with multi-agency staff undertaking direct work with families and children. A new sub-group responsible for oversight of safeguarding arrangements related to schools and colleges has also been established. The Scrutineer has now begun to plan meeting with groups of frontline staff across agencies as part of the scrutiny plan implementation in 2025-26.

In meeting with a range of managers and staff in different organisations working in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, it became clear that the most common issues concerning effective safeguarding related to the areas of domestic abuse, child neglect and criminal and sexual exploitation of children in the community. These themes are in line with national trends. The National Panel responsible for oversight of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews has also issued a review of themes in the country regarding practice difficulties in identifying and dealing with cases of child sexual abuse in the home and number of reported cases have fallen in England over the last ten years. This report was timely and has helped to inject further direction into multi-agency work across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to review and recommend improvements where possible in this area.

Additionally, the separate partnership arrangements are new and will involve adaptation for those involved. Most but not all the partnership sub-groups are meeting with members representing both local authorities to consider details of matters such as reviews, audits, case reviews, practice, procedures and themes relating to cases of exploitation in the authorities. This arrangement was agreed for the current calendar year and its continued effectiveness and relevance in relation to assisting each local partnership will need a judgement ahead of 2026-27. The Business Unit responsible for supporting the safeguarding partnerships is stretched as it is now supporting partnerships relating to children and adult safeguarding in each authority and this will need resolving in the next year.



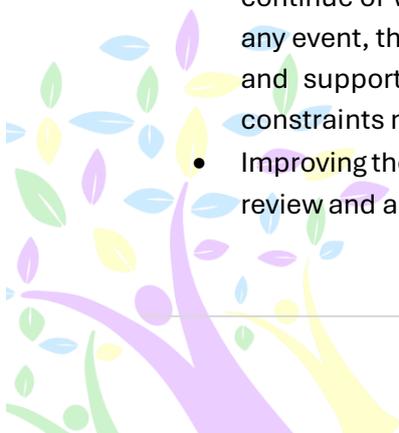
There is separately a process of consultation underway with residents of both authorities about local government reorganisation so that the present geographical boundaries might change again in 2028-29. There is an unsettling impact of these changes on staff and managers involved.

In addition, the Secretary of State for Health announced in March 2025 a decision to close NHS England and restructure NHS functions. This will involve significant financial reductions to the Integrated Care Board responsible among other areas for co-ordinating and providing safeguarding input to multi-agency strategic work. The details at the time of writing remain unclear but it is likely that all safeguarding partnerships will in future need greater engagement with each NHS provider body to obtain professional health perspectives on safeguarding planning and learning. The scale of change in the NHS will complicate further plans to implement reforms to multi-agency family help and child protection services.

In meeting with managers in all agencies, the Independent Scrutineer has found a high level of commitment to the safeguarding of children and there is a positive level of attendance and contribution at Partnership Board meetings. This is important as these managers are responsible for the steps to ensure effective working relationships and professional conversation, support and challenge between agencies as these are the hallmarks of a mature multi-agency safeguarding system. The introduction at the end of 2024-25 of new additional DSP meetings will need to become more embedded to ensure that DSPs work together to provide the leadership and clarity required by the wider safeguarding partnership and the Scrutineer will continue to advise, support and challenge on this front.

The most significant work for the Safeguarding Partnership in 2025-26 in the view of the Independent Scrutineer will be:

- Ensure full multi-agency involvement in design of the new Families First programme of services while making sure that the aim of improving family help services does not overshadow the need to provide effective interventions to safeguard children from neglect and abuse.
- Ensure that the priorities agreed for 2025-26 are progressed in ways which achieve demonstrable improvements in knowledge and working together to safeguard children. The Scrutineer has proposed key questions about what is working well, where are the gaps and what does research and practice elsewhere tell agencies locally about each of the priority areas. This will help those working on these areas to do so productively.
- Ensure that the revised structure of the safeguarding partnership works to full effect at a time when each of the three statutory partners faces significant challenges over resources. It will be important that the DSPs meet regularly to good effect to drive the work of the sub-groups in the partnership and the wider partnership itself. It will also be important to establish clear regular meetings between the DSPs and those responsible for leadership of safeguarding of adults and community safety arrangements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Determine whether the future shared arrangements in respect of partnership activities should continue or whether to move to arrangements in line with current local authority boundaries. In any event, the resourcing of the Business Unit will need attention to ensure that it is able to drive and support the work of the safeguarding children partnership effectively albeit resource constraints may yet hamper the ability of the statutory agencies in this respect.
- Improving the multi-agency assurance of safeguarding service quality through a range of different review and audit approaches. This will strengthen the partnership's ability to direct attention and



resources quickly where needed. The Independent Scrutineer has joined the partnership's quality assurance sub-group to assist discussions and planning to this effect.

- Enabling the new Education Safeguarding sub-group to bring to the partnership a stronger perspective on safeguarding issues from the perspective of schools and colleges and to take a lead in planning work to reduce in time the problem of non-school attendance which results in too many children then being additionally at risk of exploitation and poor life outcomes.
- Enhancing current arrangements to ensure that the voice of children and young people influence safeguarding arrangements so that there is direct input from children and young people and especially those with experience of safeguarding systems.
- Improving the linkages between frontline staff and those making decisions in the safeguarding partnership so that the visibility of the partnership for frontline staff is enhanced and the partnership can benefit from the input of frontline managers and practitioners more than currently. The Independent Scrutineer will commence meeting with frontline staff and managers to support this aim and will advise the safeguarding partners of their contributions.

Overall, the safeguarding arrangements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are improving and in only the first couple of months of engagement, the Independent Scrutineer has seen further improvement in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. There is more to do as indicated above but the moves made in 2024-25 are in the right direction.

The year ahead involves additional external challenges and opportunities. The NHS reforms and financial reductions and the design and implementation of the first steps of the Families First reform programme are critical while agencies continue to need to improve while faced with levels of austerity which do not support this journey easily.

It is testament to the skill and professionalism of managers and staff in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that so many children receive effective support and safeguarding despite these factors and it is the skill and professionalism of those working with children and families and those managing this work which will be most critical in securing future improvements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. As Independent Scrutineer, I will endeavour to provide the support and challenge needed to assist this improvement journey.

David Derbyshire

Independent Scrutineer

Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

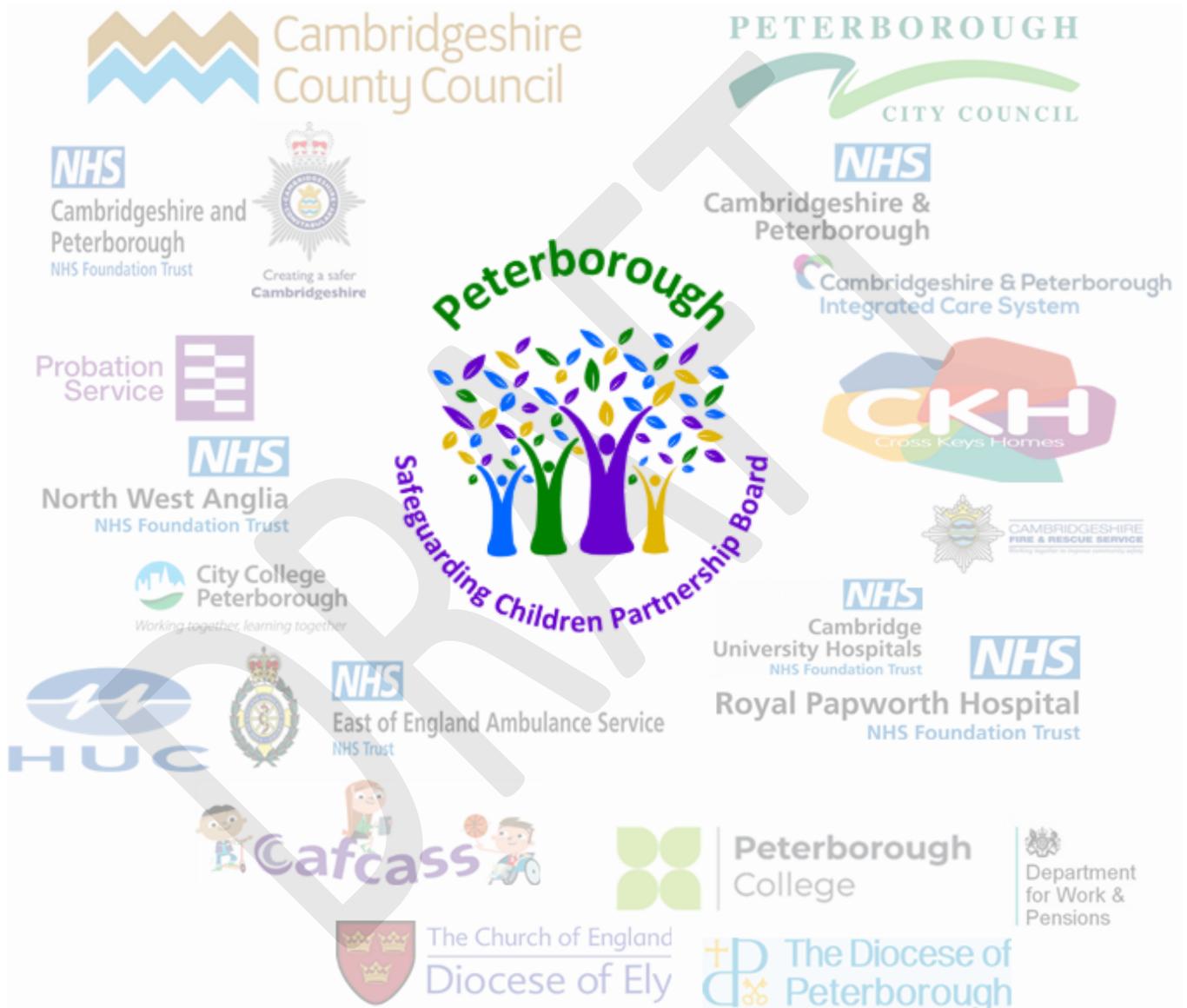
Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIPS

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, 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 Cambridgeshire and 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:



We do this by:



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

A decision was made within this reporting year to separate the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership along the local authority boundaries. From January 1st 2025, there have been separate Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. this report covers the period from 1 April 2014 to 31st March 2025, for the majority of which the partnership was engaged in a joint arrangement. The reports produced next year will reflect the establishment of the separate partnerships and the individual work undertaken towards the priorities set.

The revised arrangements are detailed in a diagram at the end of this section of the report. The arrangements will continue to scrutinise and monitor safeguarding practice but also seek to produce accessible learning for both practitioners and senior managers from the themes and trends arising from quality assurance and case review activities.

The structure supports the lead safeguarding partners and delegate safeguarding partners to fulfil their statutory duties as set out within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, as well as the Care Act 2014.

Future Direction of the Partnerships

From 1st January 2025 there will be separate Children’s Safeguarding Partnerships agreeing the safeguarding strategies for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These partnerships are then accountable to the single Chief Executive Safeguarding Partnership.

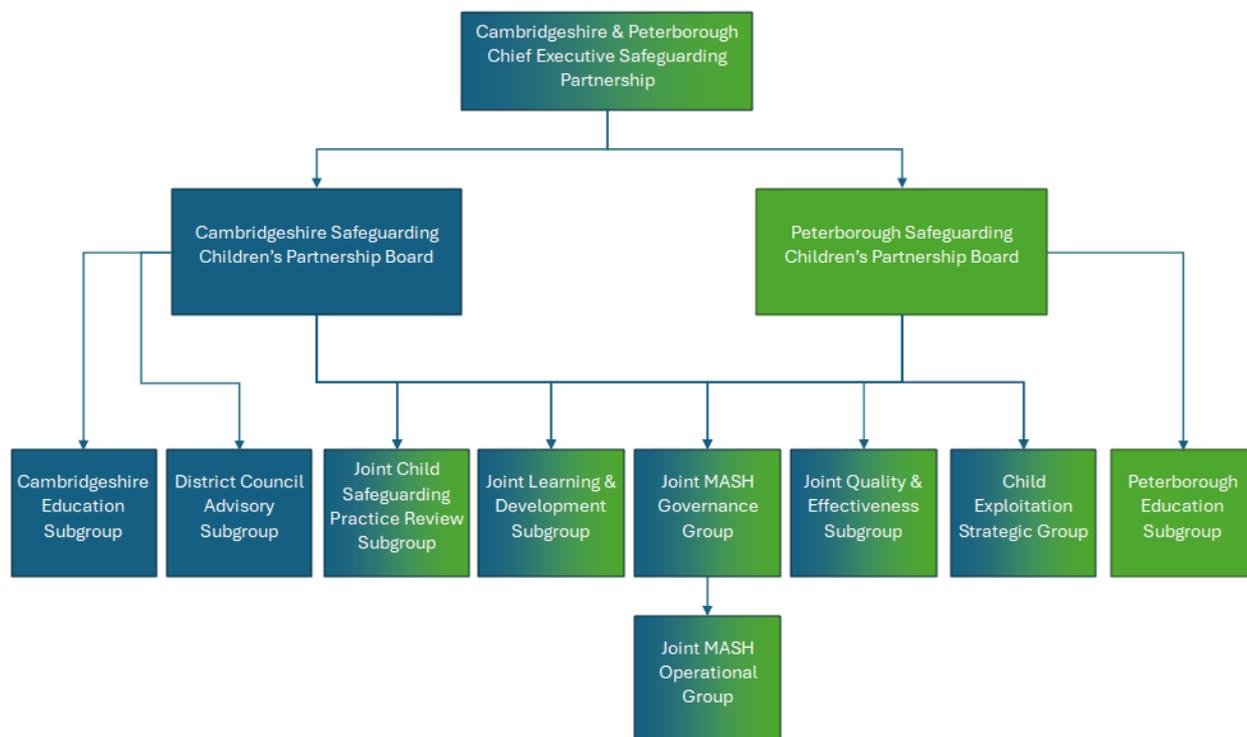
A Partnership Chair has been agreed to chair both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships meetings, to promote a continuing close working relationship between the partnerships. Similarly, an Independent Scrutineer commenced in post in January 2025 to cover both children’s partnerships.

Subgroups

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 subgroups of the Partnerships will remain joint across the county for the calendar year of 2025. 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.

The diagram below details the current safeguarding partnership governance structure.

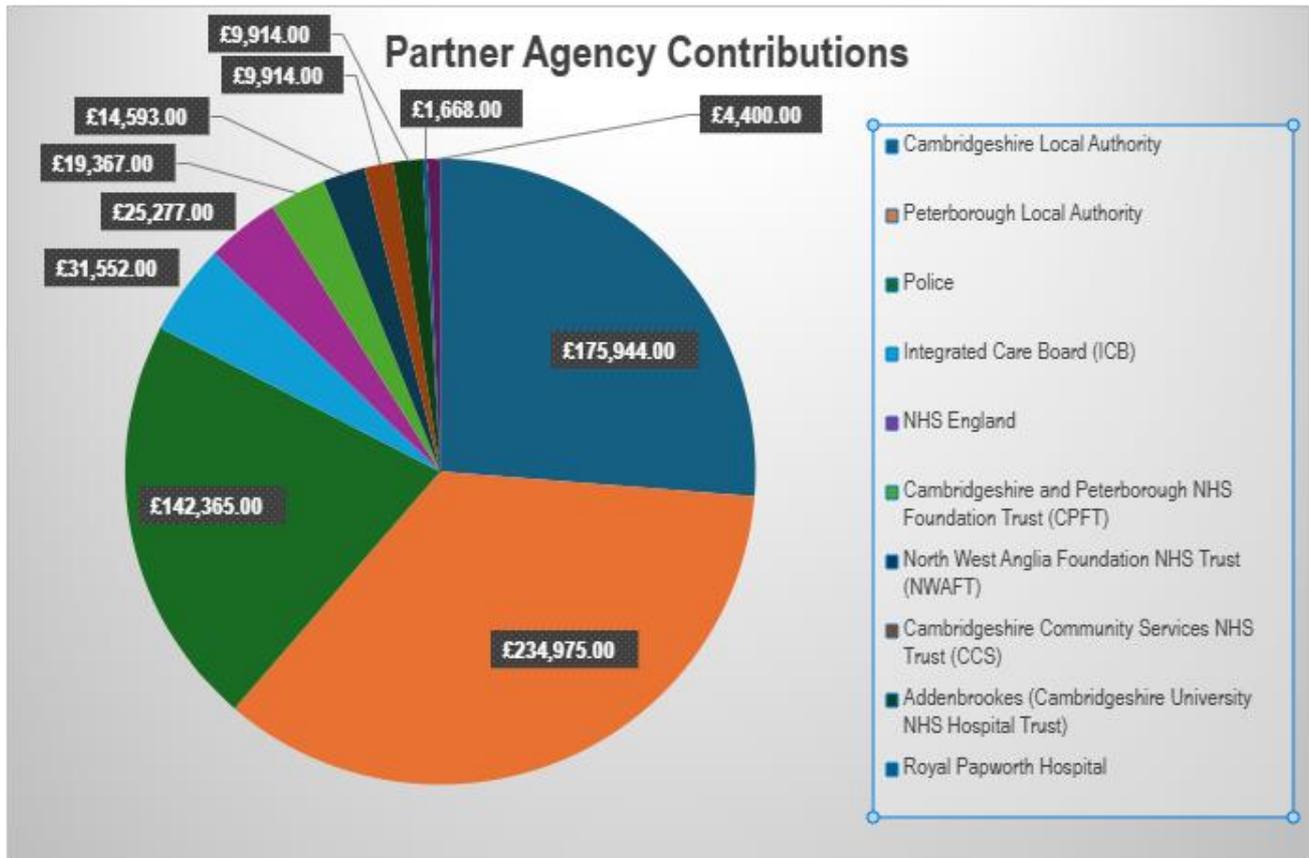




Budget

Funding for the Safeguarding Adults Board and Children’s Partnerships is made up of contributions from Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police, NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board, NHS England, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust, Cambridgeshire Community Services, North West Anglia Hospitals Foundation Trust, Royal Papworth Hospital, Cambridge University Hospital and the National Probation Service.





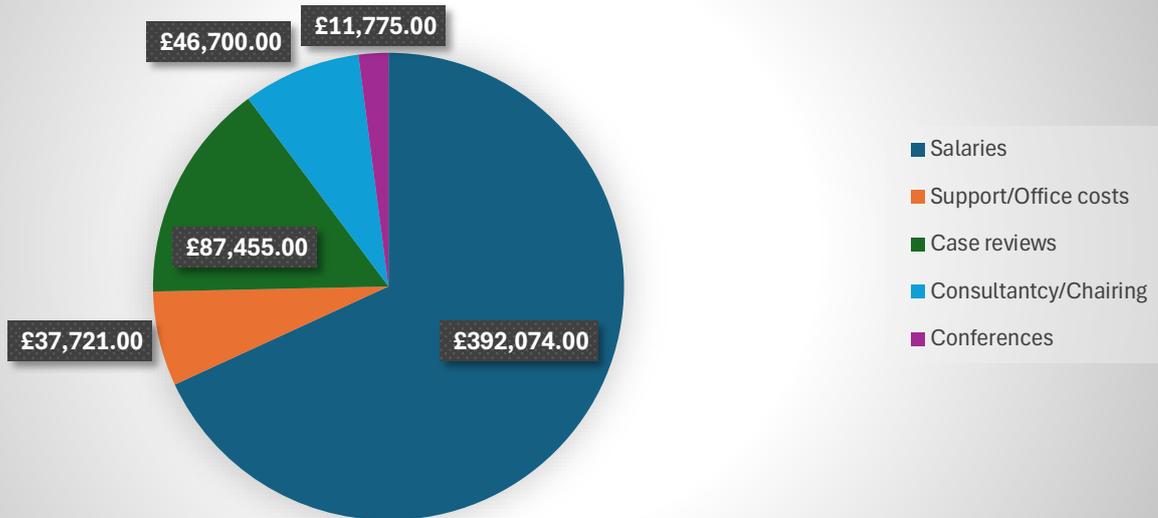
Expenditure

All costs for activity associated with the two Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships and the Safeguarding Adults Boards across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are taken from the same financial budget. After staffing costs, expenditure incurred by the partnership includes case review authors, conferences for practitioners and consultant fees covering posts such as the Independent Scrutineer. There are also support costs for training, travel and venue hire.

During the year there was an underspend as a result of vacancies within the Independent Safeguarding Partnership Service. These funds will be carried over towards the costs of future case reviews and consultancy.



Expenditure 2024-25



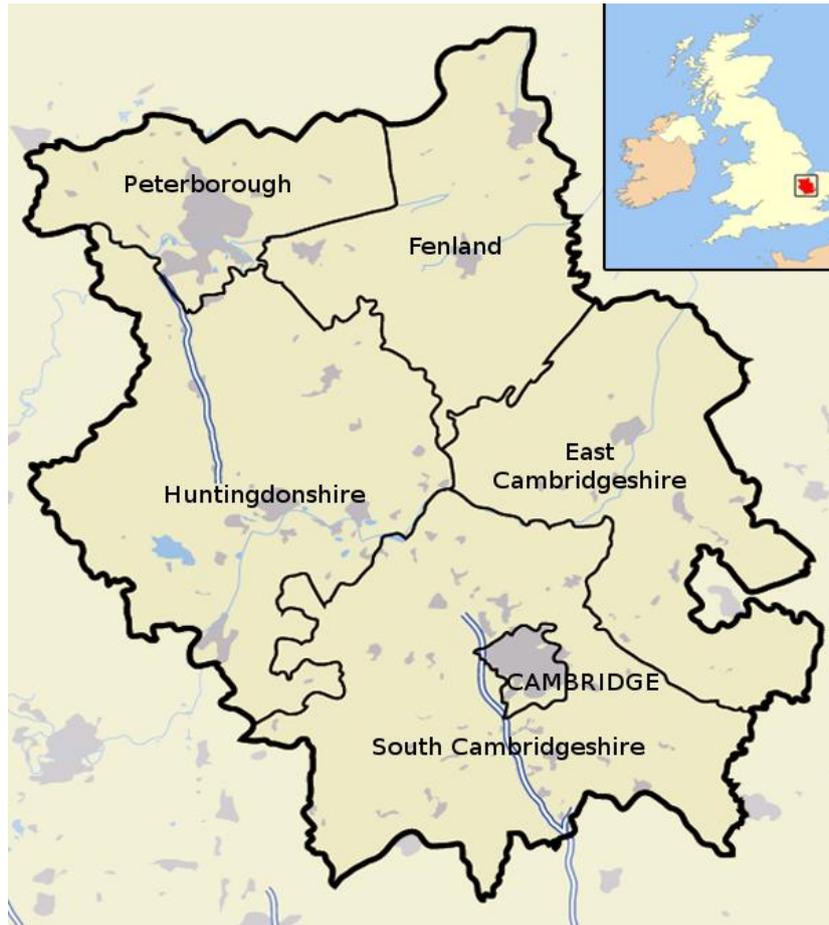
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH AT A GLANCE

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

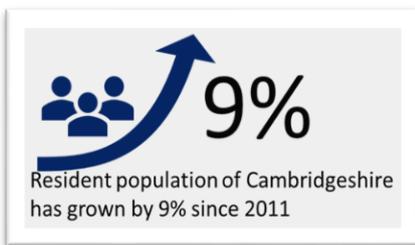
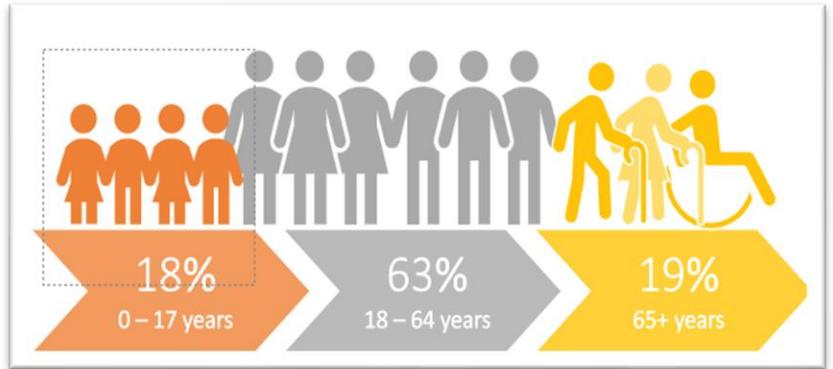
For local government purposes, the county is divided between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

Cambridgeshire County Council as a non-metropolitan county 'upper-tier' local authority providing a number of services including Education, Social Care, Youth Justice, and Public Health across the five districts, or 'lower-tier' areas of Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Peterborough City Council which became a unitary authority in 1998 has both the powers of a non-metropolitan county and district council combined.



Cambridgeshire



Above information available <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>



Children on a Child Protection plan (at the end of March 2025) by category of Abuse

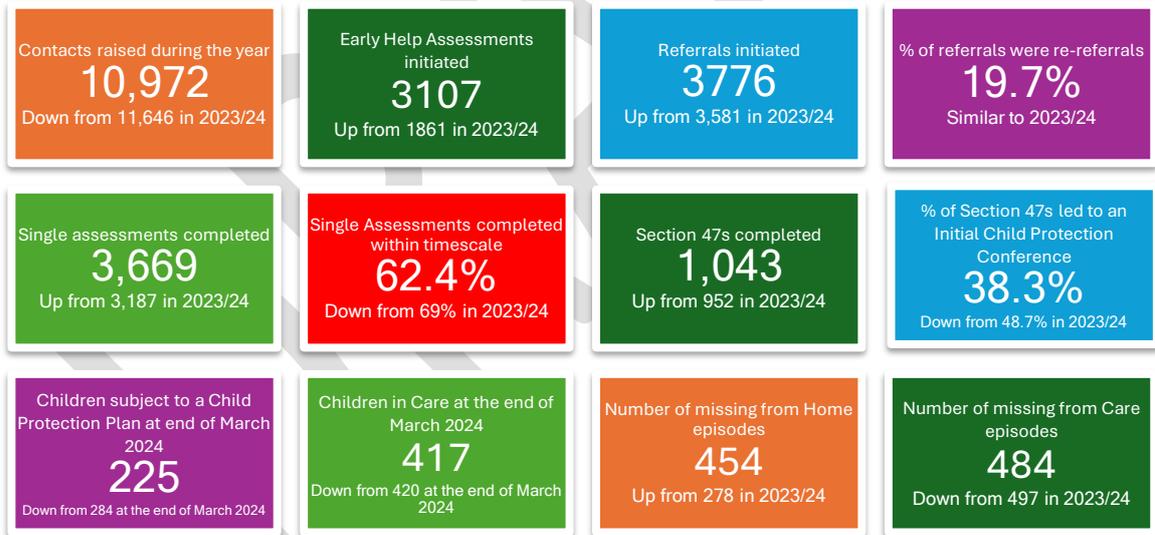


Above information received from local authority performance team

Peterborough



Above information available <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>



Children on a Child Protection plan (at the end of March 2025) by category of Abuse



Above information received from local authority performance team

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE STATUTORY SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Cambridgeshire Local Authority Children Services

Cambridgeshire County Council Children's Service has continued with significant development in safeguarding practices, with strengthened governance, multi-agency collaboration, and sustained commitment to transparency and learning period between April 2024 and March 2025. A stable Senior Leadership team together with key strategic frameworks have steered continued improvements. Strategic leadership actions, such as the launch of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Workforce Strategic Action Plan have provided an overarching framework for service delivery. These strategies provide clarity and accountability for safeguarding partners, our workforce, whilst ensuring that child-centered and responsive practices remain at the heart of all training and outcomes initiatives.

The impact of these decisions and actions was evident across multiple service areas:

- Launched in November 2023, CARE Academy offers innovative learning opportunities for the workforce, catering to newly qualified social workers, international staff, and apprentices.
- Greater consistency and quality in legal decision-making for children, underpinned by the Legal Gateway process.
- New systemic training programs aim to elevate social work practices, emphasizing core priorities for service improvement.
- Review of the Practice Approach which will be co-designed with the workforce to support continued practice improvement building on the strengths
- Robust tracking and review mechanisms, ensuring that learning from reviews and audits translated into demonstrable improvements in practice and policy.
- There have been improvements in the timeliness of assessments and there has been successful recruitment of permanent team managers and a reduction in caseloads across most teams.
- Sustained workforce stability and enhanced service quality, achieved through strategic leadership, targeted training, and continuous quality assurance.
- The use of agency staff decreased from 40% in 2022 to 20%.

The County Council and the NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB), as part of the Cambridgeshire Area SEND Partnership, are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in the county. Following the inspection in January 2025, the partnership has been given the middle rating of three possible outcomes by the inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Outcome: **The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.**

The Inspectors' report highlights several areas of good practice, including:

'A clear and coherent strategy to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Cambridgeshire is already starting to see some positive impacts.'

‘Recent leadership appointments have created more stability, after some changes due to reorganisation of how the local authority manages and delivers its SEND services. This creates the capacity to improve provision.’

The report also highlighted the strong relationships across the partnership with the children and young people who are supported:

‘Across the area, many professionals work effectively to meet children and young people’s needs successfully. Many children and young people with SEND praise the support they receive from staff in schools. Health, wheelchair and equipment services provide timely support. Occupational therapy and physiotherapy services are comprehensive and effective, with professionals going above and beyond to meet needs.’

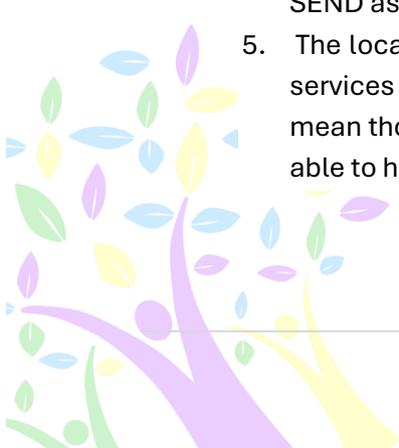
Inspectors also found that:

‘Children and young people often have their health needs promptly assessed and supported. For example, the healthy child programme and health visits identify needs early on, including antenatally. Waiting times for many health services are appropriate.’

The report also included a positive endorsement for ‘Inclusion for All’, the council’s partnership plan to drive better **outcomes** for all children and young people, for focusing on the key priority areas for improvement. Taking this approach ensures the partnership identifies and meets individual needs earlier, enables children to stay in mainstream education and creates a more financially sustainable system where all children can thrive and feel they belong, are wanted and cared about.

The report makes five recommendations for improvement:

1. The local area partnership should work together to improve the timeliness and quality of the statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) plan processes so that children and young people with SEND get the right support at the right time. This should include a particular focus on:
 - a. improving the timeliness of EHC plan needs assessments and annual reviews;
 - b. improving the quality of EHC plans;
 - c. amending EHC plans appropriately after annual review.
2. The local area partnership should improve access to, and reduce waiting times for, specialist mental health pathways and neurodevelopmental assessments. Leaders should ensure that children and young people and their families consistently receive effective communication and support while waiting for neurodevelopmental assessments.
3. The local area partnership should develop better opportunities for co-production with children and young people with SEND, so their voices and views are more fully included in the design of support and services.
4. The local area partnership should improve the support for children and young people with SEND as they prepare for adulthood, especially in mainstream schools.
5. The local area partnership should improve how it communicates its offer, so that schools, services and families know about and understand what the area seeks to provide. This will mean those who work most closely with children and young people with SEND will be better able to help them access the support available.



The reporting period saw the maturation of the Practice Quality Governance Board, established in January 2024, as a central forum for sharing findings and disseminating learning from Rapid Reviews, Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), and inquests. Targeted audits, scheduled as part of the Quality Assurance (QA) plan, provided empirical evidence of the impact and effectiveness of implemented learning

The establishment of a comprehensive Quality Assurance framework has ensured continuous improvement in practice and governance. Key strategic documents, such as the launch of the Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2025-2030, have set clear priorities and commitments, guiding future improvement and accountability. The Sector Led Improvement Programme (SLIP) from Essex has underpinned the development of robust service action plans, integrating findings from Ofsted inspections, diagnostics, audits, and reviews into a unified, ongoing process of organisational learning and development. Regular Performance Management Meetings have ensured that actions arising from reviews are closely tracked and integrated into daily practice.

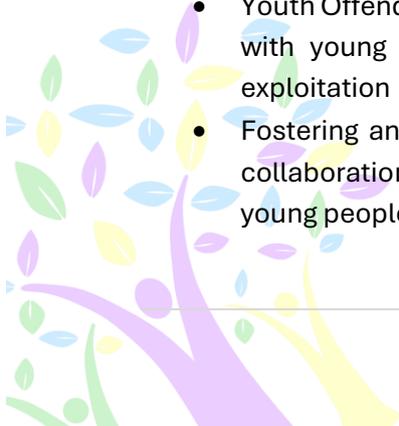
Safeguarding partners demonstrated a commitment to translating lessons from Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews into tangible service improvements. Significant cases, including the death of a child known to the service in October 2023, were subject to intensive internal review and scrutiny. The Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review (LSCPR) process delivered comprehensive action plans, policy reviews, and dedicated workshops, ensuring that all recommendations were systematically addressed.

Decisions and actions taken during the reporting period included:

- Implementation of targeted audits, scheduled through the forward Quality Assurance plan, to monitor the impact of learning and track progress against recommendations.
- Comprehensive policy reviews and workshops following significant case reviews, with explicit focus on safeguarding practice improvement.
- Integration of key outcomes and recommendations from reviews into all training modules, ensuring that lessons learnt are disseminated and embedded within practitioner practice.
- Continued refinement of service planning, including the embedding of neglect-focused workstreams within school and college safeguarding initiatives.

There has been a continued strength to capturing and acting upon the voices of children, young people, and families. The refreshed multi-agency lived experience of the child guidance from the partnership has strengthened practice. In Children, Education Families we have various initiatives and practice to improve the experiences of child and young people:

- Virtual Schools: The Virtual Schools program ensures that the lived experiences of children are embedded within Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Designated Teacher training, with regular quality assurance and follow-ups
- Youth Offending Services: Youth Offending Services implement Child First principles and engage with young people to expand participation and support, particularly for those at risk of exploitation
- Fostering and Clinical Services: The Fostering Service has launched carer forums to improve collaboration, while the Clinical Service provides consultations and direct work with children and young people



- Child Protection: Child Protection services utilize NYAS referrals to ensure children's voices are heard and maintain positive relationships with parents throughout the child protection process.
- Leaving Care Services: The Leaving Care services have increased local offers based on young people's input and developed forums for education, employment, and training empowerment.
- 0-25 Co-production and engagement : Monthly feedback from children, young people, parents and carers is collated by the service and circulated to share best practice examples and encourage continuous practice improvements
- Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC): Efforts have been made to strengthen links with key providers and offer specific activities for UASC to help them integrate into the community.
- Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement: Quality assurance processes include regular audits, feedback from service recipients, and ensuring the child's voice is central to care planning and assessments.
- Participation Initiatives: The Participation initiatives focus on embedding the voices of children in care through various programs, training, and activities, including the Children in Care Council and Care Experience Network. The creation of a Participation Steering Group ensured that the voices and lived experiences of children were considered at all levels of service planning and delivery.
- Consultation with children for the Care Leaver Local Offer, Staying Put Offer, and the Corporate Parenting Strategy ensured that these initiatives were tailored to the needs and aspirations of users.
- Monthly youth clubs and holiday activities promoted engagement and participation, strengthening connections between agencies and users.
- Ongoing review and updating of locality office resources ensured that both staff and users had access to relevant and current materials.

The result has been a sustained feedback loop, where user input directly informs service design and delivery, and where the impact of changes is transparently tracked and reported. Identified areas for improvement include enhancing participation from diverse demographics, understanding the impact of services on children's experiences, and co-producing more policies with children and young people.

Peterborough Local Authority Children Services

Participation

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; 'Is Peterborough Child Friendly and Safe?'

The annual awards and celebration day for Children in Care was designed by young people and featured fun activities, challenges, 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. The art exhibition included an interactive piece of artwork entitled 'shine bright like the star you are' - attendees were shown by a member of the Children in Care Council how to make an origami star to add to the piece, which was then gifted to Welland Family Contact Centre.

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 Special Educational Support Needs for Children, working with the Commissioning Team on what is important for children in various home settings and supporting foster carer recruitment through recording audio content about their experiences of foster care and sharing recruitment ideas. They also fed back on the local bus station, Youth zone project, the future of the Corporate Parenting Committee meetings, the role of corporate parenting champions, the structure and language used in Personal Education Plans, gave feedback in relation to the new Cambridge Children's Hospital and co-produced the new Social Work Academy logo.

The CiCC worked with the Young Inspectors to create posters and a workbook for corporate parents on the Promise to Children in Care. This work won the young people a Coram Voice National Award for promoting collaboration and accountability and ensuring the promise is actively followed at all levels. The CiCC also recorded an interview with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) as part of an advocacy awareness myth-busting project.

The CiCC and Peterborough Care Leaders (PCL) worked together with the Director of Children's Services to deliver a Dragon's Den challenge to challenge senior council leaders to improve the lives of care experienced young people. Young people also had the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents in a fun bowling tournament, attended by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, the Director for Children's Services and Service Directors.

The CiCC, PCL and Young Inspectors were recognised by the Mayor of Peterborough with Young Person awards at the Peterborough Civic Awards 2025. Their nomination was supported by the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee, for using their own expertise and experiences to improve the lives of all Children in Care.

The Peterborough Care Leaders worked with Leaving Care, Virtual School, Corporate Parenting and wider community services to share feedback and ideas. Themes included the Local Offer, the first move to independence, housing, health, apprenticeships, work opportunities and care experience as a protected characteristic. They also engaged in consultations to improve the commissioning of supported accommodation. Much of the year involved the PCL delivering a grant funded programme of activities enabling Care Leavers to have access to new experiences, build skills and alleviate social isolation and loneliness. This has included first aid, cookery skills, a couch to 5k, badminton and ice-Skating, all including take home items to continue progress with these experiences. Further events have been planned for Easter and Summer 2025.

The Participation Team facilitated several engagement activities in partnership with Peterborough United Football Club, with unaccompanied children in care. The group has explored their first experience of social care support when arriving in the UK and worked on creating a bespoke coming into care pack,



including resources to help learn English, which has now been made available for new unaccompanied children in care.

Focus groups were delivered by the Participation Team in response to consultation requests where appropriate. These included a series of sessions for Care Leavers on the Local Offer, Sufficiency Strategy, Education, Training and Employment Support through the Virtual School and Transformation Team, focus groups with teenagers in care for a new Teen Zone youth club, feedback from Unaccompanied Children in Care and a focus group with the Children with Disabilities Service on preparing for adulthood.

In addition to their award-winning work with the CiCC on the promise, the Young Inspectors conducted an inspection of supported accommodation this year, sharing their recommendations and reviewing the response from the provider.

The Young Recruiters have continued interviewing candidates for roles across Children's Services throughout the year, ranging from frontline workers and social work apprenticeships to Heads of Service and Directors, as well as specialist roles in Children's Services. Young people's involvement in recruitment has strengthened the service's decision-making and demonstrates to candidates the local authority's commitment to hearing the voice of the child and also the lived experience of children and young people.

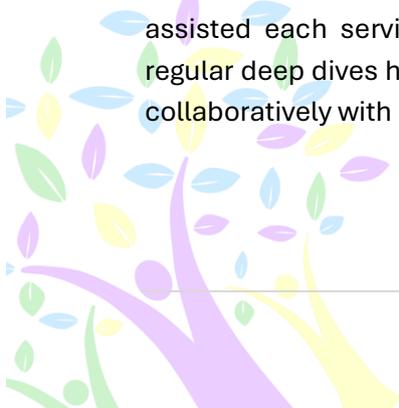
The Young Trainers have been involved in foster carer training, sharing their expertise to improve the knowledge and skills of new and prospective foster carers, and have worked on contributing to social worker training. The group is constantly developing new training materials, adding videos, questions and scenarios to their facilitation pack. Their recent video '[Twiggy's Journey into Care](#)' is a powerful poem to help people understand the journey into care.

Training is regularly provided to children and young people to equip them for Participation opportunities that they choose to be involved in. To prepare Young Recruiters for interview panels, training covers recruitment principles, interview skills and job descriptions. Young Trainers receive facilitation training and guidance on creating resources and presentations, and Young Inspectors receive guidance on regulations and expected standards dependant on the inspection theme.

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 has also continued to deliver practice development forums throughout the year, each centred on a specific topic. These forums share findings from local and national practice reviews and discuss best practice approaches. Guest speakers have participated, including ASPIRE (for sessions on parental substance misuse) and more recently family hubs, to provide information on available resources within the family hub offer.

The previous annual report indicated that the Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Conference pathway would soon be adopted. A three-month pilot was agreed and conducted, identifying both strengths and areas for further development. The ROTH conference pathway has involved children and their families in planning processes aimed at risk reduction. An action plan has been created following the pilot to address identified development needs.

In the last year training has been provided to practitioners on best practice when responding to sexual abuse. Audit activity has found emerging evidence that the response to sexual abuse has started to improve. The assessment service audit found that the sexually harmful behaviour tool was being completed to support in better understanding the risk of sexual abuse, ensuring targeted support and interventions are offered.

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 to pertinent EDI issues and wider practice subjects to support learning and development.

Peterborough City Council have recently appointed a Service Director for practice who commenced in role in November 2024. This service director leads on working in partnership with practitioners to improve and develop practice. This will include the re-launch of the family safeguarding model and the implementation of Leeds family valued approach. Furthermore, the launch of the Centre for Professional Excellence and the Social Work Academy will continue to support the learning and practice development.

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.

NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board

The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk remains a core priority for the NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB), alongside our statutory partners Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridge County Council and Peterborough City Council. The Integrated Care System continues to evolve and adapt safeguarding practices to meet the needs of the local population to protect those accessing our services from abuse and harm. It requires effective joint



working with partner agencies, professionals and voluntary groups so that vulnerable individuals and groups in the community are protected from harm.

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is a statutory NHS body responsible for planning and commissioning health services to meet the needs of the population. It oversees NHS budgets and coordinates care within the Integrated Care System (ICS), working collaboratively with partner agencies, professionals, and voluntary organisations.

In line with its statutory responsibilities, the ICB remains an active member of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adult Boards in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Representation at Chief Executive Partnership meetings is provided by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nurse, supported by Designated Safeguarding Professionals and the wider ICB safeguarding people team. The team also contributes to all children's partnership and SAB sub-groups and other multi-agency forums. While maintaining high standards, the ICB is focused on anticipating future needs and developing responsive strategies. This involves strong collaboration with local and regional partners to share good practice, drive improvement, and ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults remain a priority.

Highlights of Safeguarding Team Activity This Year:

- **Health Executive Safeguarding Group:** This strategic group strengthens safeguarding practices across the health system and supports organisations in meeting their statutory duties. An operational health safeguarding group complements this by promoting shared learning and supervision.
- **Child Sexual Abuse Strategy:** The Designated Doctor leads the Children's Safeguarding Partnership workstream focused on improving identification and response to child sexual abuse. This included development of a strategy and toolkit to address sexually harmful behaviour in children. Benchmarking has also commenced against the recent National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Report to further support the partnerships' response to child sexual abuse.
- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP):** The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) reviews the lives and deaths of children and young people who die prior to their 18th birthday (excluding stillbirths and terminations of pregnancy). Between April 2024 – March 2025 the team were notified of 60 deaths, and during the same period the CDOP reviewed and closed 40 cases. The main cause of death during 2024/25 was perinatal/neonatal events, often linked to prematurity.

In November 2024, the CDOP team hosted their first multi-agency conference, lasting a full day and covering topics such as the role of the Medical Examiner, the offer provided by the East Anglian Children's Hospices (EACH) and how a keyworker can support bereaved families. The conference was well attended by representatives across the system from Primary Care, Secondary Care, Education and Police.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Designated Doctor for Child Death Review contributed her expertise to a thematic review of child deaths from asthma and anaphylaxis, with this work being published by the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) and shared amongst CDOP teams for consideration of recommendations at a local level.

Dental Access for Children in Care: Improved access to dental services for Children in Care living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. 89% of Children in Care living in Cambridgeshire and 88% of Children in Care living in Peterborough have seen a dentist within the last 12 months. The safeguarding team continue to encourage all dental practices to sign up to the volunteer dental service to ensure continued access to dental services.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) health assessments- The Designated Nurse for Children in Care considered the impact of re-traumatising young people when repeatedly sharing difficult and traumatic experiences (in this case their journey to the UK) as part of their health assessment. The Designated Nurse scoped practices nationally and initiated a small working group in Peterborough to consider specific questions to be added to the request for a health assessment to support the Doctor completing the assessment is to explore the impact on their emotional and mental health. The pilot has been a success and has been simulated beyond Peterborough due to the improved outcome for young people.

Serious Violence Duty Response: The ICB created a network of Serious Violence Champions to raise awareness, promote best practices, and support victims. Targeted training for health practitioners has also been delivered.

Learning from Safeguarding practice reviews: Our safeguarding people team work across the age continuum and have engaged in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Adult reviews, Child Death Overview Panel, LeDeR functions and Domestic Homicide Related Death Reviews. This has included the devolved NHS England role for reviewing domestic homicide related deaths for Home Office quality assurance panels. These reviews help us to understand the circumstances of safeguarding concerns, areas for development and to ensure that lessons are learned across the system. This has included a review of the processes for conducting reviews by the Safeguarding Partnerships

Training and policy development: Over the past year the safeguarding team has updated the Prevent, MCA and domestic abuse policies and supported the development of the ICB sexual misconduct policy in line with NHS Sexual Safety Charter. We have delivered safeguarding training programs ranging from basic awareness, for example Serious Violence, to advanced multi-agency training, and commissioning safeguarding supervision training for Named Nurses/ Professionals across the Integrated Care System. ICB safeguarding training has also been achieved. Monthly Safeguarding Matters Webinars are provided to general practice staff featuring external speakers, cover key topics such as domestic abuse and role of the independent domestic abuse advocate (IDVA), supporting members of the travelling community, case conference report writing, the Mental Capacity Act and DoLS. Additionally safeguarding drop-in sessions are available for General Practice staff and social prescribers

A review of MASH health function, child protection medical service and children in care health assessment has been completed in line with national guidance to ensure that commissioning arrangements meet the needs of children who are at risk of child abuse.

Looking ahead the safeguarding team will be supporting the implementation of the Child Protection Information System (CPIS) in line with the national roll out of phase 2 and working alongside our statutory partners to implement the Families First Partnership Programme.

The ICB remains fully committed to supporting the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and through strong multi-agency collaboration, we aim to achieve positive outcomes for children and families across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

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

Within the last 12 months, in response to learning and recommendations from local and statutory reviews, we have increased the workforce within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and enhanced individual Local Authority responses through representation at the Peterborough satellite hub. June 2024-June 2025 saw the Police MASH review, risk assess and share with partners 13537 referrals and undertake 1798 strategy discussions to safeguard the children at most risk across the county. The timeliness of referrals has improved significantly ensuring children and their families receive the holistic care and support required.

We continue to enhance and transform our provision for children who have experienced or at risk of sexual harm and/or Child Sexual Exploitation. Using the experience across the professional networks including those who advocate on behalf of children, we have embedded the principles of the widely publicised Operation Soteria. Whilst this approach, which takes a 'victim centred, suspect focussed, context led' lens, was developed for the investigation of serious sexual offences, we have extended this to Violence Against Women and Girl offences, and it is embedded within the day to day practices of our dedicated Child Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit. Nationally and locally, the number of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation cases has increased but through the commitment and professionalism throughout the partnership and a robust suspect focussed strategy that we continue to have a stable positive outcome rate which has seen dangerous predators removed from our communities.

Our responses to Child Exploitation, both sexual and criminal, has significantly enhanced over the past 12 months through ongoing development of Risk Outside the Home pathways. Our dedicated Child Exploitation Hub work closely with partners to develop intelligence, disrupt offenders and safeguard children. Considering the recent Casey Report in to 'group-based offending' we have a clear and detailed strategy which ensures ongoing assessment of intelligence, seeking every opportunity to identify and disrupt this criminality as swiftly as possible and to protect victims and potential victims from harm as part of concerted county-wide partnership activity. This work also compliments the partnership priorities of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Exploitation.

We have improved the governance around statutory and local safeguarding reviews to ensure recommendations are delivered. Work in this space over the last 12 months has seen improvements to multi-agency working in cases of children with complex needs and improvements to risk assessments undertaken within the MASH. The partnership child safeguarding practice review sub-group provides accountability for this work.

Listening to the voices of children is a golden thread within the work undertaken by the Constabulary from both the perspective of children at risk of harm but also a preventative and educational point of view, especially linked to Serious Youth Violence and Child Centred Policing. These responses feed into all the safeguarding partnership priorities:

All Police Officers are trained in capturing the lived experience of the child and use this to inform their decisions and make appropriate safeguarding decisions. This is recorded on the referral and shared with partner agencies to assist in multi-agency safety planning. These are quality assured through audit processes with data evidencing good compliance and qualitative evidence of the children's voice impacting positively on outcomes.

Since 2015, the Constabulary has run a Youth Panel which is now an independent group of young people aged between 13 and 21 who provide bespoke consultation.

The Constabulary is the only Police Force in the UK to employ young person's workers (YPW) as part of the Home Office Hotspot Action Fund, embedding them directly within Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Alongside these YPWs our police team can understand local issues from the perspective of a child as the YPWs patrol with us, build relationship and develop child specific diversion and support.

Youth justice boards make use of case studies to "tell the story" of a young person's journey and experiences through our partnership system.

Community engagement tactics have been developed over the last decade to allow the Constabulary to speak and listen to children in a method which best suits them. Via our safer schools teams, we use an online engagement process which directly feeds into Neighbourhood priority setting, ensuring that the voice of young people is considered equally alongside the adult population.

DRAFT



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES 2024/2025

Each priority work area had its own dedicated work stream and action plan, progress is reported as part of a standard agenda item at each Safeguarding Children Partnership meeting. This ensures work is progressed and activity is held to account.

Priority One: To understand what the neglect landscape looks like across the county and embed the neglect strategies and tools across the partnership to achieve better outcomes for children and their families.

Neglect continues to remain the most common form of child abuse across the UK. Partners across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough aim to ensure that there is early recognition of neglect cases and that from early help to statutory intervention, there should be appropriate, consistent and timely responses across all agencies. This work has been focussed around the review of the joint partnership Neglect Strategy: [Neglect Strategy 2025 – 2027 | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#) as well as the development of a tool to support the identification of neglect.

Additionally, the partnerships agreed this year to adopt the Graded Care Profile 2 tool licensed by the NSPCC. An implementation plan has been commenced to support the roll out of the use of this tool and will be the focus of work into 2025/26. The following activities have also been undertaken this year:

Single agency neglect audit findings reported into Quality and Effectiveness Group

Damp and mould review annually undertaken for every property by social landlord

Section 11 findings on the gaps surrounding neglect implemented into the neglect workstream's action plan all recorded as completed

Review into a partnership neglect assessment tool completed. Implementation of GCP2 tool agreed

Partnership neglect strategy rewritten based on feedback from quality assurance activity, practitioner feedback and child reviews.

Development of partnership tool to support identification of neglect

A suite of multi-agency neglect online training for practitioners to access, includes Graded Care profile tool and Sways on child neglect and no recourse to public funds

Priority Two: To understand what the sexual abuse landscape looks like across the county and embed the child sexual abuse strategy and tools across the partnership to achieve better outcomes for children and their families

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership recognises the need for cases of CSA to be acknowledged and addressed and as such it is one of the core objectives of its work. A multi-agency child sexual abuse workstream was established to progress this area of work.

This workstream has responded to the National Panel report 'I wanted them all to notice' focused on child sexual abuse in the family environment by commencing a benchmarking exercise against the recommendations. This exercise will include seeking feedback from local practitioners on their experiences of working with child sexual abuse and what support would benefit them to ensure consistent good practice in this area.

In the last 12 months training on CSA has included:

Our Using the Sexual Behaviour tool virtual Training (Sway) received 19433 views

Our Sexual Violence and Safeguarding virtual Training (Sway) received 217 views

Our Online Abuse virtual Training (Sway) received 91 views

Our FGM resource virtual Training (Sway) received 53917 views

For 2025 the Partnership Boards, in collaboration with the National Centre of Expertise on CSA, will be working with practitioners to benchmark the report's recommendations against current safeguarding practice.

Priority Three: To agree a multi-agency approach to identifying, assessing and responding to cases of child criminal exploitation. To develop an effective approach to identifying at risk groups and preventing them from being exploited

Child Exploitation (CE) is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities in the UK; it also victimises vulnerable young people and leaves them at risk of harm. A multi-agency

child exploitation strategic group is in place to progress this area of work. In the last 12 months there has been the following activities;

Managed a successful pilot of Tier 2 Contextual Safeguarding which concluded with both Local Authorities adopting the process into their own workstream

Supported both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in their implementation of Tier 1 Risk outside of the Home (ROTH) pathway

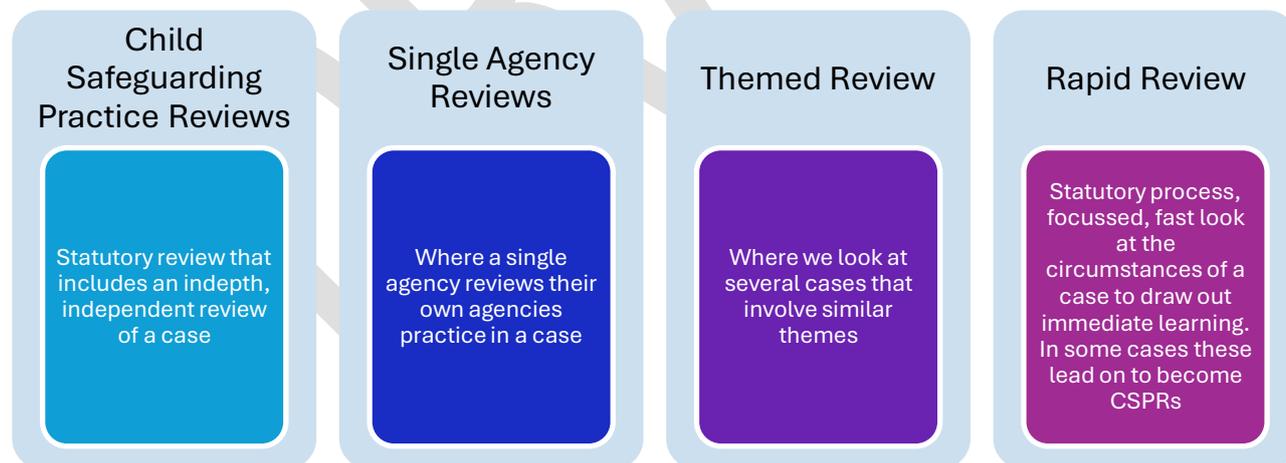
Continued to support Education Leads with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training

Delivered face to face and online training for level 3 training to the ICB

Supported Anglia Ruskin University in delivering their Social Work degree course

LEARNING FROM PRACTICE REVIEWS

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have 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 (CSPR) 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.

In the timescale covered by this report there were 2 Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents notifications made to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, of these;

- 1 Child Safeguarding Incident did not warrant a Rapid Review. This decision was agreed by the National Panel
- 1 Rapid Review was undertaken, relevant learning was identified and did not progress to a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

Between April 2024 and March 2025, 4 local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, commissioned during the previous year, were completed and published. An additional CSPR was completed. However, due to ongoing criminal proceedings, the report will not be published until the next reporting period. The learning from completed CSPRs and Rapid Reviews is taken forward through a themed composite action plan and summaries are produced and shared with agencies.

Child case review Learning

Rapid Reviews

During 2024- 2025 there was only one rapid review completed, relating to a Peterborough teenager who was a child in care. In her early years she had experienced being neglected and exposed to unsafe situations. Latterly, both her and her sister experienced changes to their main carers and this was an extremely difficult time for both siblings.

Identified Practice Improvement areas



Identified Good Areas of Practice – What worked well?



Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

During 2024- 2025 four CSPR's were published consisting of two teenagers, one child and four babies (as part of a child neglect and physical injury thematic review). Four of the children were Cambridgeshire cases and three were Peterborough cases. Child neglect featured within two of the CSPRs relating to babies and younger children. The teenagers experienced criminal exploitation with one of the teenagers being placed into secure accommodation.

Identified Practice Improvement areas:



Identified Good areas of practice – What works?

Unfortunately, across all of the CSPRs authors did not mention or focus on the good areas of practice. This is a missed opportunity in terms of learning and for practitioners and managers to know and understand what works to safeguard the child.

Lessons Learnt – what did we do?

- The partnership produced 7 minute multi-agency briefings on each child review to highlight the lessons learnt
- The partnership held a child neglect safeguarding partnership conference July 2024. Speakers presented on transitional safeguarding, cultural and intersectional insights and a member of the business unit presented findings from her doctoral research on what professional curiosity is and what enables it in child safeguarding practice.
- Since that time the professional curiosity research has been presented at a number of single agency conferences, provided within training sessions for agencies and developed into multi-agency workshops. The impact of this training and how this has been embedded into safeguarding practice will be reported on in next year's annual reports.
- The lived experience of the child practitioner guidance reviewed / updated in light of the rapid review and learning from recently published child safeguarding practice reviews and relaunched in January 2025 on the partnership website
- Agencies improving the confidence of their practitioners to use a relational approach when working with children and families
- Criminal exploitation risk assessment tool updated to screen for child exploitation and serious violence
- Department of Education and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough partners have created a Tier 1 and Tier 2 (MASH) data sharing agreement
- Renew and relaunch of the Threshold document
- Task and finish groups set up to
 - Review the resolving professional differences policy
 - Agree a pathway for working with children with multiple intersecting needs and vulnerabilities + create a child passport
 - Review prebirth and non-mobile baby bruising policy to include child disabilities and non-mobile children

Tier 1 and Tier 2 contextual safeguarding pathways set up across both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire local authorities

SCRUTINY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Requirement for independent scrutiny

Working Together 2023 stipulates that the partnership has a duty to show there is independent scrutiny, to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny can form part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates, single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and Joint Targeted Area Inspections.

In addition to the involvement of an Independent Scrutineer, the partnerships carry out a range of multi-agency quality assurance activities. The table below evidences the methods of scrutiny of the partnership arrangements.

What we scrutinise	Activity
Single agency operational practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of single agency and multi-agency practice • Decision making • Professional challenge/ escalation • Impact/outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single agency quality assurance activity. • Single agency inspections. • Serious incidents. • Performance management information.
Partnership working and multi-agency practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single agency and multi-agency practice • Decision making • Professional challenge/ escalation • Impact/outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent scrutiny of Case reviews through independent chair of the case review groups. • Head of Service for Safeguarding Partnership Boards has chaired case review panel meetings. • Independent authors for case reviews. • JTAI and other inspections. • S11 self-assessment and adult equivalent – this includes agency challenge sessions. • Regular QA assurance activity undertaken by business unit staff, including audits, surveys, thematic reviews, dip samples and case reviews. • Surveys and consultations with children and young people, parents and professionals. • Multi-agency workforce development feedback and impact process.

Multi Agency Scrutiny and Assurance Activity

Serious violence mock JTAI based audit exercise: The aim of this exercise was to determine what work is currently being undertaken to support young people at risk of harm from serious youth violence. The exercise commenced in February 2024. Agencies were asked to complete audit tools relating to their involvement with the cases identified and these were returned and compiled to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. A feedback event was then held with auditors and relevant agency representatives to discuss findings from the audit exercise and formulate an action plan. Findings from this exercise included:

- Absence of the child’s voice within assessments and plans
- Analysis of the impact of interventions on children, young people and their families is under-developed
- Development of Operation Guardian into the multi-agency arena
- Further exploration of child to parent violence to offer assurance of what support is available locally.

Domestic Abuse mock JTAI based audit exercise (Cambridgeshire only): This exercise focused on the multi-agency response to unborn children and children aged 0 to 7 years who are victims of domestic abuse, in line with the current subject area of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) regime. The methodology for this exercise returned to the method of 'live' case auditing undertaken by a group of multi-agency auditors which had been in use before COVID and was welcomed by those involved. The audit event took place in January 2025. Findings included:

- Some evidence of child focussed assessments and consideration of the child's lived experience
- Prompt and effective Police responses to incidences
- Further understanding and exploration of risk with victims to support them to better safeguard children
- Understanding and consideration of cumulative risk and the impact upon children.

An action plan was formulated and shared with the Cambridgeshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership as well as the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board.

Thematic review : The aim of this audit was to inform the Children Safeguarding Partnerships of the child, parent and professional themes found from Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews undertaken from March 2023 – March 2024 across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The findings were presented at the CSPR group and shared with the learning and development group throughout the latter part of 2024. Practice themes included:

100% of cases within rapid reviews involved the lack of, sharing information and delay of making referrals and allocation.

60% of the cases within the CSPRs professionals failed to undertake correct assessments and follow policies and procedures. 40% of cases practitioners did not share information, consider third party referrals, complete risk assessments and were not authoritative in their practice nor were they professionally curious.

Lived Experience of the child. The aim of this short audit was to provide assurances to the partnerships that agencies across the partnership captured the lived experience of the child and how this was used to influence practice. Findings show that most agencies evidenced that practitioners were prompted to record the child's wishes and views and are placed either on child safeguarding referral / logging forms or on electronic recording systems. Additionally, some agencies were able to show how practitioners communicated with and / or observed the child. For some agencies the lived experience informed their assessments, interventions and plans of work with the family. It was noted that there is still work to complete to embed 'understanding the lived experience of the child' into safeguarding practice.

Resolving Professional Differences. The aim of the short audit activity was to assure the partnerships that all case escalations are recorded on child(ren's) records and plans and that those escalations and their outcomes are monitored. Findings show the majority of agencies record escalations and where possible this is on the child's records and plans. Additionally, most agencies confirmed that they have developed internal escalation processes where escalations are reviewed and monitored. However, some agencies stated that this area of practice is under review and others reported to having no escalations.

Additional areas of work 2024/25:

Working Together 2023: the updated government guidance was released in December 2023. A working group of partner agency representatives was established to review compliance with the guidance locally. Since that time the following developments have included:

- Lead Safeguarding Partners, Delegated Safeguarding Partners and a Partnership Chair were agreed and named in the updated Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements¹, published in December 2024.
- Changes to the serious incident notification process were considered by the CSPR Subgroup and implemented into local guidance.

Performance framework: partnership activity has been undertaken to develop a multi-agency safeguarding performance framework, to offer senior leaders within the partnership assurance relating to practice, both more widely and focussed on the priority areas. The aim of this work is that it will also support in identifying areas requiring further quality assurance activity as well as highlighting good practice. This work continues to be overseen by the Quality and Effectiveness Group.

Thematic review : themes from the review feature within the implemented action plans to address the learning from individual child case reviews. These include:

- Peterborough and Cambridgeshire MASHs providing assurances through auditing cases that professionals ensure consideration is given to referrals received from family members or members of the public
- Doctorate professional curiosity research findings implemented into multi-agency training cascaded across the partnership.
- To support assessment for safeguarding referrals new Threshold documents for both local authorities has been developed by partners and launched December 2024.
- With the support of the Department of Education partners have developed, agreed and launched May 2024 information sharing documents (Tier 1 and Tier 2 (launch April 2025)) with a view to addressing sharing information issues that prevent ensuring the safety of the child.

Lived Experience of the child: As a result of the audit the Lived experience of the child guidance has been reviewed and updated (early 2025) to include a greater focus on understanding the lived experience of non-verbal children and children with disabilities.

Escalations (Resolving Professional Differences): As a result of this audit and further findings from two CSPRs, where the escalation policy was not used, the multi-agency resolving professionals differences is being reviewed and updated to include a greater emphasis on recording and with defined time scales.

Impact of Partnership work undertaken in 2024/25

Strategy discussion audit: a working group was established, led by Police to consider the timescale within which strategy discussions should be held. Guidance on strategy discussions within the local

¹ <https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/download/safeguarding-arrangements/>

MASH manuals has been updated to reflect the decisions made within this group. The MASH Governance group has oversight of the ongoing multi-agency audit activity focussed on the MASH.

Thematic Review: continued learning about professional practice to safeguard the child through multi-agency subgroups, training and briefings. Assurance of increased management oversight of referrals within both MASHs from family members or members of the public, positive feedback from practitioners in relation to understanding and the use of the new threshold document to support safeguarding assessments and referrals.

Multi-agency policy and guidance available on data sharing (Tier one)² developed with support from the Department of Education is an overarching agreement for data sharing across the partnership . In addition, more specific data sharing agreements were developed for the multiagency safeguarding hubs: Tier 2,³ recognising the highly sensitive and confidential nature of information shared and stored within this area.

Threshold documents for both areas have been updated this year to reflect the changes in local practice and to respond to feedback from those practitioners and manager who make use of the threshold document regularly. The business unit seeks regular feedback on the threshold document to ensure the language and areas of concern remain reflective of our local communities to ensure the guidance is useful in its purpose of supporting the safeguarding of children and families.

The impact of the professional curiosity training programme will be reported on in next years' annual reports.

Priorities for 2025/27

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 Family First Partnership Program
- Making the child protection system work effectively
- Attendance at school
- Domestic abuse
- Child sexual abuse in the family environment

Priority areas for the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership were discussed with the delegated safeguarding partners and the following priority areas were agreed

- Implementation of the Family First Partnership Program
- Risk outside of the home
- Neglect

² <https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures/overarching-tier-1-children-safeguarding-data-sharing-agreement-dsa/>

³ <https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures/tier-2-cambridgeshire-mash-data-sharing-agreement/>
<https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures/tier-2-peterborough-mash-data-sharing-agreement/>

- Domestic abuse
- Child sexual abuse in the family environment

Whilst it is recognised across the partnerships that work has already taken place in 2024-2025 linked with some of these priorities, it is recognised that there is a need to progress this work further and ensure that it is embedded and having a positive impact on practice. In addition, new priorities were selected for a two-year period with the intention of reviewing progress against these after 12 months to determine whether they remain relevant or whether there are other areas of practice which require a focus.

MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

In 2024-2025, we offered training in multiple formats, including a programme of training courses delivered via Microsoft Teams, a suite of virtual briefings (Sways) and live, in-person training in a conference. We also contributed to partners' training programmes, both in person and virtual, as needed.



In 2024, we offered training in multiple formats, including a programme of training courses delivered via Microsoft Teams, a suite of virtual briefings (Sways) and live, in-person training in a conference. We also contributed to partners' training programmes, both in person and virtual, as needed.

In August 2024, the post of Safeguarding Boards Trainer was vacated. This affected our multi-agency safeguarding programme and led to the cancellation of planned training for 213 places. However, overall participation across the scope of different training events that we offer, including the virtual training programme, the conference, and individual virtual and face-to-face workshops that we contributed to for partners, reached a total of 1422 contacts in 2024. Views of our Sways increased ten-fold from 45,523 in 2023 to 464,130 in 2024.

Training Courses

We offered 20 courses in our training programme for 2024. 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, learning briefings and other useful internal and external information resources.

Across the programme, we provided 32 sessions to 741 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 2024, there were 242 people who booked a training place and then did not attend.

Evidence of impact

Practitioners tell us they are using tools, sharing information, referring back to resources, and feel more aware and able to respond to concerns. It would be preferable to have more examples to draw on. This is an area for development; we need to consider other mechanisms for determining if training is having the intended impact on practice on a wider scale.

Course Evaluation comments from practitioners:

I have found this course very useful. It helped me build my understanding of a safeguarding process, which is important in my role.

I found this course very interesting and something I definitely can use in my job now.

The facilitator was extremely knowledgeable and the session was very informative. The videos were very impactful and beneficial to my learning.

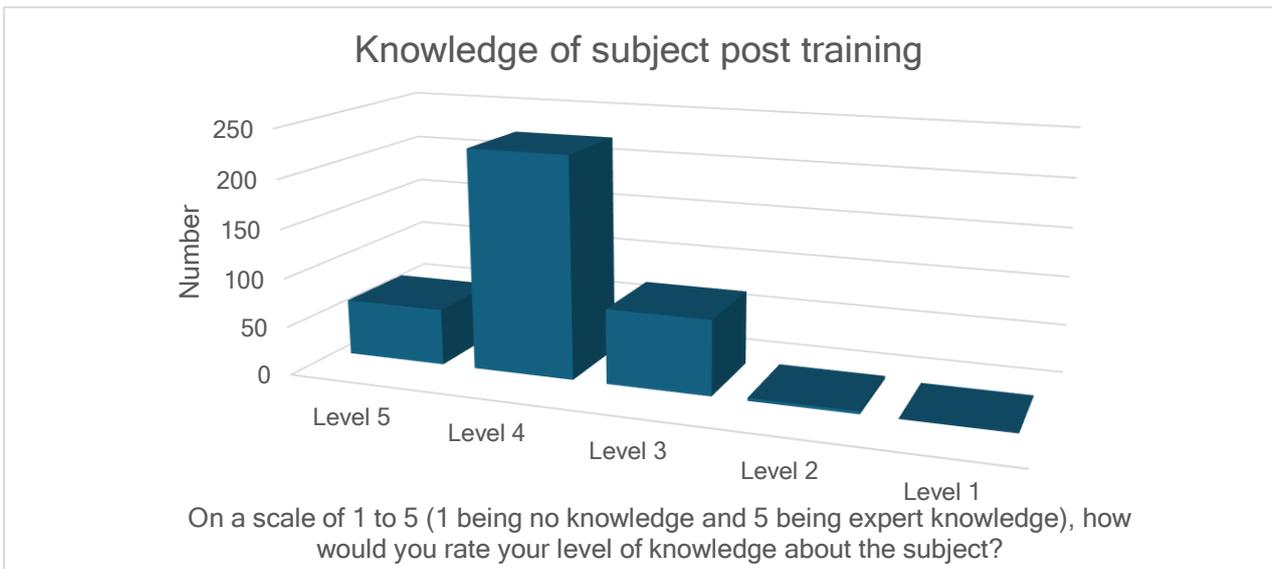
Trainers were knowledgeable and engaging and clearly have a passion for the subject matter. The material was easy to understand and there was a good mixture of delivery for all style of learners

Expert Knowledge Ratings

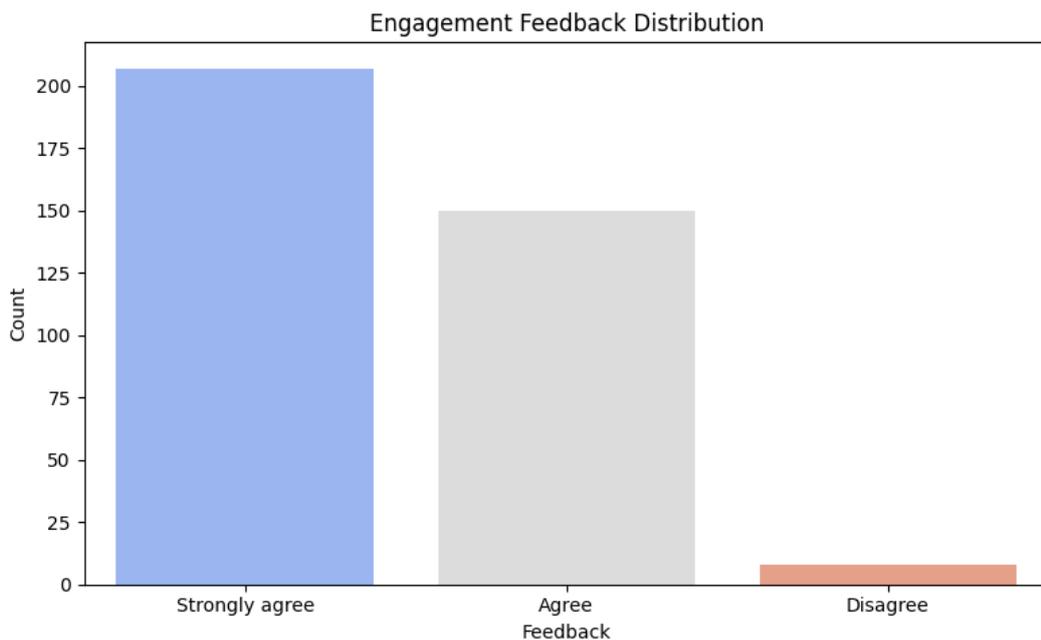
No participants rated themselves as having expert-level knowledge (5/5) post-course, suggesting room for further advanced training.



This graph reflects responses of self-assessed knowledge levels after training:



Engagement:

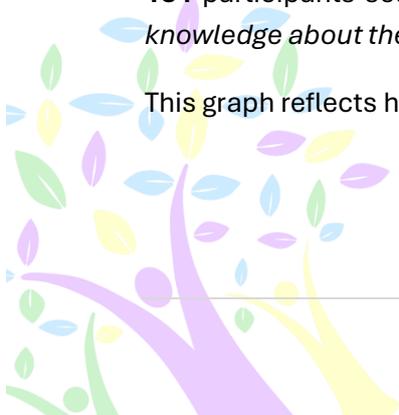


207 participants selected "**Strongly agree**" for the statement "*The course was engaging and interesting*".

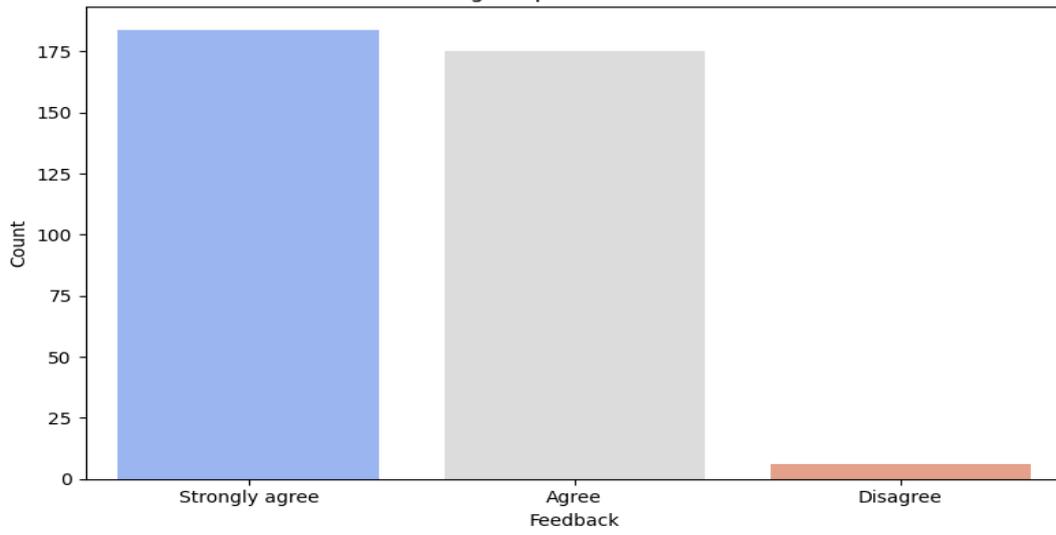
Knowledge Improvement:

184 participants selected "**Strongly agree**" for "*Having completed this course, I now have improved knowledge about the subject*".

This graph reflects how much participants felt their knowledge improved:



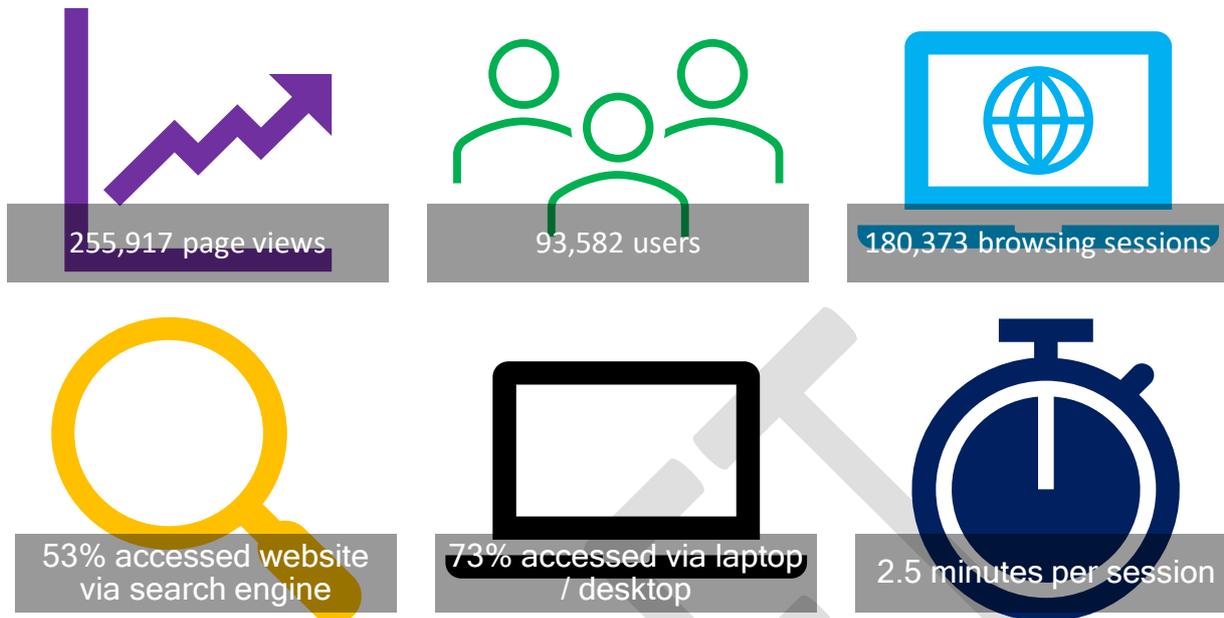
Knowledge Improvement Feedback



DRAFT



WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA



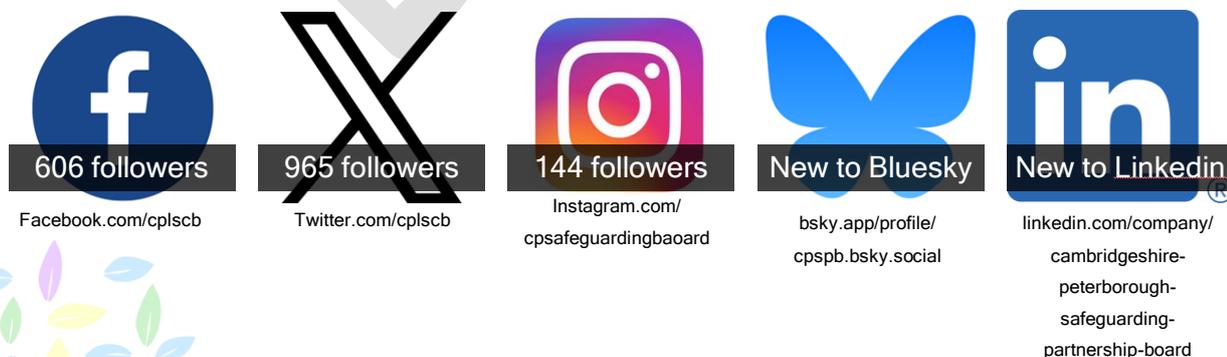
Apart from the home page, the 'Making a Referral' page was the most visited page on the site, followed by Multi-agency Training page and our virtual SWAY briefings pages.

Feedback from visitors includes:

- *It's really easy to use, very clear and content is good.*
- *Easy to manoeuvre around the website*
- *Breadth of training resources available and are easily accessible*
- *The clarity, layout and range of information available far exceeded what was expected*

Our social media presence

The CPSPB uses X, Facebook and Instagram for a variety of communications from the latest safeguarding news to events that the Safeguarding Partnership Board are hosting.



APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF AGENCIES REPRESENTED ON THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Authorities including
 - Children Social Care
 - Public Health
 - Elected Members
 - Youth Justice Services and Early Help
- NHS Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Integrated Care Board
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Education
 - Primary School
 - Secondary School
 - Further Education
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust
- Cambridgeshire Community Services
- Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- North West Anglia Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Ely Diocese and Peterborough Diocese representing faith groups
- Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue
- Cambridge District Council – representing District Councils
- Cross Keys Homes – representing Housing
- National Probation Service
- CAFCASS
- Healthwatch
- Department for Work and Pensions



APPENDIX 2 - GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CCS	Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CE	Child Exploitation
CiCC	Children in Care Council
CP	Child Protection
CPFT	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSC	Children Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSPR	Child Safeguarding Practice Review -
CUH	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-Based Violence
DASV	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ePEP	electronic Personal Education Plan
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
ICB	Integrated Care Board
ICS	Integrated Care System
IFD	Integrated Front Door
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspection
L & D	Learning and Development
LA	Local Authority
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MCA	Mental Capacity Act
MET Hub	Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Hub
NCMD	National Child Mortality Database
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NWAFT	North West Anglia Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PSW	Principal Social Worker
QA	Quality Assurance
RAPS	Reunification and Placement Stability
S.11	Section 11 of the Children's Act

Term	Definition
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
YOS	Youth Offending Service

DRAFT





safeguardingboards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk
