

Cumbria Safeguarding  
Children Partnership



C S C P

# Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023-24



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# Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report for Cumbria Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CSCP), covering the period from 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024.

The CSCP provides the safeguarding arrangements, which safeguarding partners and relevant agencies use to work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify and respond to the needs of children in Cumbria, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Helping and protecting children through a coordinated approach to safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Through collaborative working across organisations and agencies who work with children, young people and families, including those who work with parents/carers, we want everyone to recognise, respond and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that children, young people and families are effectively safeguarded and supported.

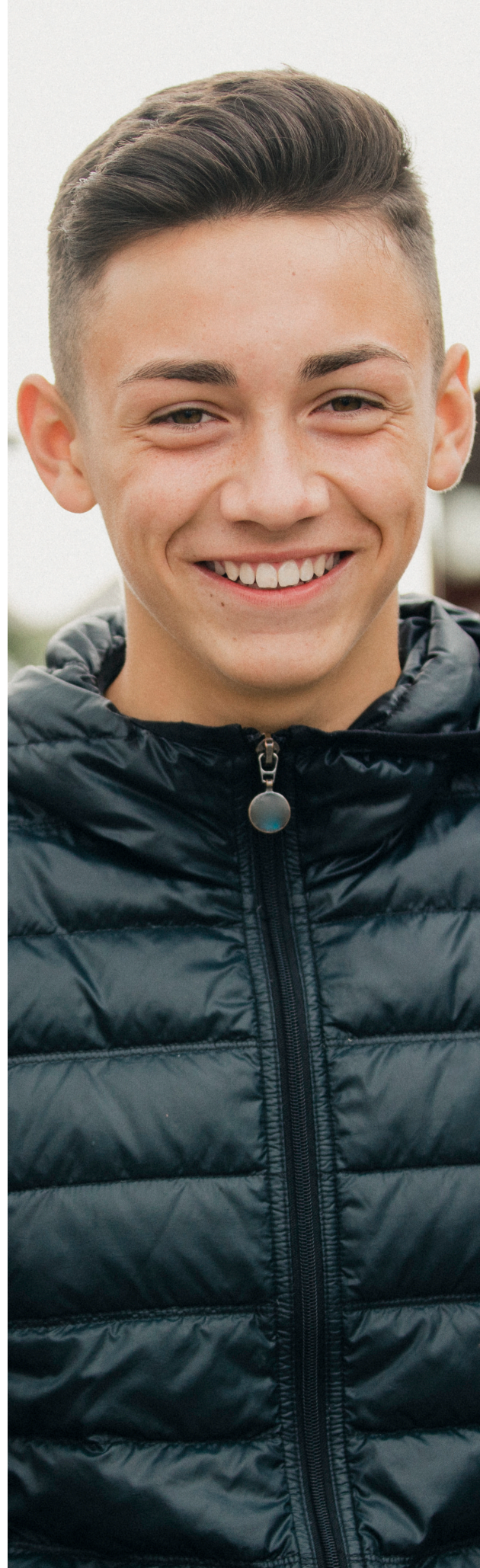
At the heart of the arrangements is a commitment that the voice and lived experience of the child is at the heart of everything we do.

The Annual Report sets out the impact of the work undertaken to address our partnership priorities, which are: safeguarding adolescents from risks and harms outside the home, improving responses to neglect and embedding learning to improve practice.

This reporting year, 2023/24, has been a period of continual change with the implementation of Local Government Reform. From 1 April 2023, Cumbria County Council and the six District Councils of Cumbria, were replaced with two new Local Authorities, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. 2023/24 has also seen significant staffing changes across all partner agencies.

Cumbria's Lead Safeguarding Partners agreed to continue with a Pan-Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2023/24 to provide stability and maintain a robust focus on safeguarding children and young people, during a period of significant change. As a result of the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children in December 2023, Lead Safeguarding Partners are expected to review and publish new arrangements by December 2024. In Cumbria, this will include a full review of the effectiveness of the pan-partnership arrangements.

Finally, we would like to end by providing our thanks to all of our partners and their dedicated front-line staff for their support and steadfast commitment to safeguarding all children in Cumbria.



# About Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership

Our partnership vision is that we will be “Working together to keep Cumbria’s children safe”. As a partnership, we commit to the following shared values, which underpin everything we do:

- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Practitioners from all agencies working with adults and children work together and share information effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.
- The lived experience and the voice of children and young people is listened to and acted upon at all times.
- A ‘Whole-Family’ approach is understood and implemented by all practitioners across the Partnership.

Cumbria’s arrangements are delivered through a Lead Safeguarding Partners Group, wider Partnership Board, which includes relevant agencies, and a number of sub-groups.

The current published arrangements can be found via the link below or on the CSCP website: **Cumbria arrangements**

## Lead Safeguarding Partners Group

Lead Safeguarding Partners are the key decision-making body, and they consist of the executive leads of the three statutory partners; the two Local Authorities, Police and the two Integrated Care Boards.

Representatives from the Lead Safeguarding Partners meet six times a year to ensure the business of the Safeguarding Children Partnership is efficient and effective, the vision is upheld, and the priorities are delivered.

## CSCP Board

The CSCP Board membership includes the statutory partners, as well as the other ‘relevant agencies’. In Cumbria, this includes representatives from education, health, district councils, criminal justice and the voluntary sector. CSCP Board membership is shown at Appendix A.

The CSCP Board develops, implements and monitors an Annual Business Plan, agrees priority actions against core business, and directs the sub-groups in delivery of the plan.

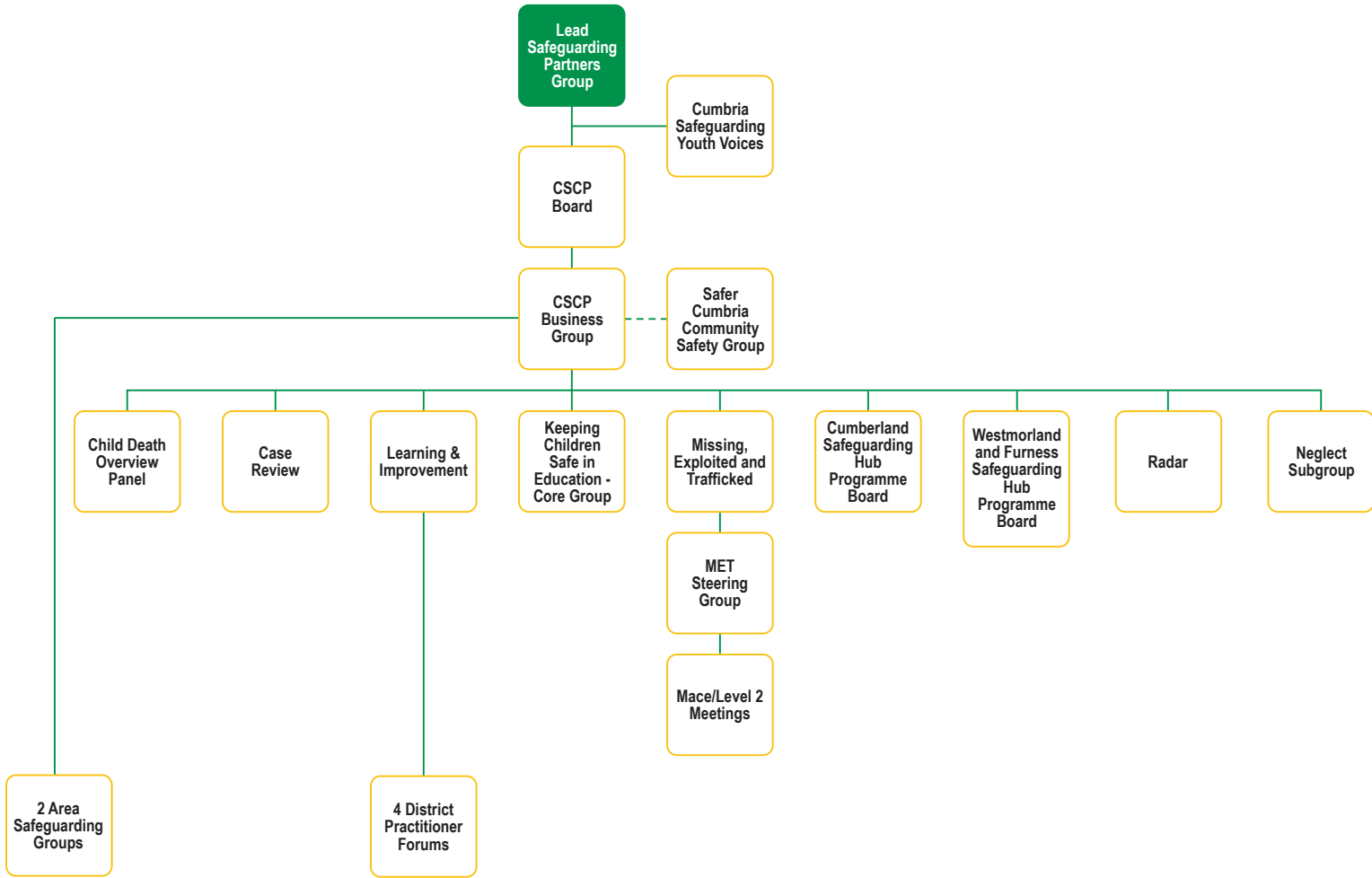
## Partnership Sub-Groups

The CSCP is supported to deliver its priorities through a number of countywide partnership sub-groups:

- Learning and Improvement
- Case Review
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group
- Missing Exploited and Trafficked Children
- Safeguarding Hub Programme Board
- Children’s Radar
- Area Safeguarding Groups
- Neglect

The governance of the Child Death Overview Panel also sits with the CSCP.

# Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure



# Independent Scrutiny

This Annual Report covers my second year as the Independent Scrutineer for the CSCP. My role is to bring a high level of support and challenge, and to independently scrutinise and evaluate the quality and impact of safeguarding partners practice and collective work; to ensure it is effective in protecting and safeguarding children and young people across Cumbria. By reflecting and reporting on the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, independent scrutiny supports Lead Partners, agencies and organisations to improve practice where necessary. The CSCP partners acknowledge that the Independent Scrutineer can never be the sole provider of feedback or reflection, but they play a critical role alongside a comprehensive Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework in evaluating effectiveness and impact. In my role as Independent Scrutineer, I chair the CSCP Board, which focusses on assurance and directly reports progress and any areas of concern to the CSCP Lead Safeguarding Partners meeting.

This report outlines the work the partnership has undertaken to drive improved practice across the three key practice areas agreed in the CSCP business plan: neglect, safeguarding adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home and embedding learning from practice. It also outlines how the CSCP has focused on receiving assurance on the impact of key strategies and workstreams relevant to safeguarding children and young people. It covers information on findings from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews including how learning has been disseminated and recommendations tracked, to provide assurance about necessary improvements.

Significant work has been undertaken by the partnership this year to improve the recognition and response to neglect, including the launch of the CSCP's new neglect strategy and toolkit in September 2023. The toolkit uses age appropriate, and disability focused "Day in my Life" tools that evaluate the child's lived experience, to facilitate improved recognition and assessment. The aim is to improve outcomes for children who are at risk of neglect. Further details of the new strategy launched by the CSCP, and action taken to embed the new ways of working are outlined on page 15. A full evaluation of the impact of the partnerships' work on neglect will be undertaken next year using the agreed scrutiny process.

This year, I have led two significant pieces of scrutiny to evaluate multi-agency practice and the impact of work on the business plan priorities. The first in July 2023, focused on assessing the impact of learning from practice and the findings are reported on page 15 of this report. The scrutiny evidenced good work to disseminate learning, including briefings, training and Lunch and Learn sessions led by the CSCP and work within individual agencies. However, there is still significant work to do to embed learning across all agencies and evidence it is having the necessary impact on practice. As outlined, an action plan has been developed to address the findings and I will be seeking regular assurance about progress being made.

The second planned scrutiny event to evaluate the impact of the Exploitation Strategy on safeguarding young people at risk of harm outside the home was undertaken in March 2024 and is reported on page 16. The subsequent scrutiny report findings and areas for action will form the basis of the MET sub-group action plan. The CSCP worked closely with me to ensure an interactive scrutiny event that focused strongly on the voices of young people, with our young scrutineers presenting the findings from their interviews of young people and asking challenging questions of senior leads. The key messages highlighted the need for greater awareness raising about the risks of exploitation and support for young people about what healthy relationships look like. Moreover, the need for a trauma informed approach and longer-term therapeutic support for young people who had experienced childhood trauma are key elements in preventing exploitation.

I identified early in my tenure that more intensive work was required to strengthen engagement with schools and colleges to support them in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities. A refreshed Keeping Safe in Education sub-group has been set up this year and the chair and deputy chair are headteachers from secondary and primary school, who now attend CSCP board meetings. The two new local authorities have also committed additional funding for posts to support safeguarding in schools, and further work is planned next year to ensure effective engagement with education in the partnership arrangements.

The partnership previously agreed that it was important due to the significant challenges and changes caused by Local Government Reform, to stay as a Pan-Cumbria partnership this year to ensure a robust oversight of safeguarding practice. The partnership's commitment to review the arrangements has coincided with the new Working Together 2023 guidance and provides an opportunity for a full review of partnership safeguarding arrangements. This has just commenced, and the partnership must publish its new arrangements by December 2024. Whilst significant changes in staffing are impacting across all CSCP agencies, the partnership has remained focused on key business, and I continue to hold agencies to account for delivery on key priorities.

**Lesley Walker**  
**Independent Scrutineer, Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership**



# Cumbria Context

In April 2023, Local Government Reform was implemented. Within Cumbria, there are two unitary councils Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness.

Cumberland Council includes the districts of Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland and has a population of 273,200, 56,500 of which are children aged 0-19 years. Cumberland is much more sparsely populated than the national average but has both rural and urban centres.

Westmorland and Furness includes the districts of Eden, South Lakeland and Barrow in Furness and has a population of 226,600, 43,300 of which are children aged 0-19 years. Westmorland and Furness is the third largest local authority area in England and Wales by land area, but is much more sparsely populated.

7.9% (14 out of 177) of Cumberland's Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) sit within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England. These communities are located across the whole of Cumberland, with 7 being in Allerdale, 4 in Carlisle and 3 in Copeland. (Source: IMD 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019.)

8.3% (12 out of 144) of Westmorland and Furness's LSOAs sit within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England. These communities are all located within Barrow. (Source: IMD 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019.)

Cumberland has a total of 172 local authority-maintained schools and academies, comprised of:

- Nursery schools – 3
- Primary schools (including infant, junior and primary schools) – 145
- Secondary schools – 19
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) – 2
- Special schools – 3

Westmorland and Furness has a total of 148 local authority maintained schools and academies, comprised of:

- Nursery schools – 2
- Primary schools (including infant, junior and primary schools) – 122
- Secondary schools – 20
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) – 1
- Special schools – 3

For Health, Cumbria covered by two Integrated Care Boards (ICB), North East and North Cumbria ICB and Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB. However, the geographical footprint of the two ICBs and the two new councils are not coterminous. Cumbria Constabulary are the Police Force covering the whole of Cumbria.

As a proportion of the 0-25 age population in Cumberland, 3.68% have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) – 2656 young people (SEN2, January 2024).

As a proportion of the 0-25 age population in Westmorland and Furness, 3.95 % have an EHCP – 2196 young people (SEN2, January 2024).



# Children and Young People in Cumbria

Cumbria has a population of **99,800** children aged 0-19, approximately 19.9% of the total population.

In March 2024, there were:

**56,500** children aged 0-19 in Cumberland

**43,300** children aged 0-19 in Westmorland & Furness

In March 2024, Cumbria's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs received:

**802** contacts in Cumberland

**505** contacts in Westmorland & Furness

The following number of referrals transferred to Children's Social Care:

**189 (23.5%)** Cumberland

**115 (22.7%)** Westmorland & Furness

The Top 3 Referrers in each area were:

Cumberland	Westmorland & Furness
1. Education (25%)	1. Education (23%)
2. Police (24%)	2. Health (20%)
3. Health (16%)	3. Police (19%)

The Top 3 Referral Reasons in each area were:

Cumberland	Westmorland & Furness
1. Domestic Abuse	1. Neglect
2. Neglect	2. Domestic Abuse
3. Physical Abuse	3. Drug/Alcohol Substance Misuse

As of 31st March 2024, the following number of children were subject to Child Protection Plans:

**272** Cumberland

**223** Westmorland & Furness

As of 31st March 2024, the following number of children were subject to a Child in Need Plan:

**410** Cumberland

**359** Westmorland & Furness

As of 31st March 2024, the number of children cared for in Cumbria are:

**484** Cumberland

**246** Westmorland & Furness

As of 31st March 2024, the number of children looked after placed in Cumbria by other Local Authorities are:

**93** Cumberland

**188** Westmorland & Furness

During March 2024, there were the following number of missing episodes in Cumbria:

**106** Cumberland

**65** Westmorland & Furness

As of 31st March, the following number of children were identified as being at risk of Child Exploitation:

**34** Cumberland

**27** Westmorland & Furness

# The Impact of the Partnership upon Safeguarding Children

The Safeguarding Partnership has engaged in a range of activity during 2023/24, detailed within this report, which has contributed to ensuring that children and young people are more effectively safeguarded. This includes learning the lessons from cases where, unfortunately, children have suffered harm and where we have undertaken rapid reviews and subsequently Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, in accordance with statutory guidance (Working Together 2018). We have also considered and disseminated the learning from the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel. Further detail is provided about the work of our Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and how learning from these is being implemented through practice improvements.

The CSCP has delivered a programme of multi-agency training to partners during the past year, and this has involved feedback from participants to demonstrate the impact upon their practice and changes made to improve safeguarding.

Our independent scrutiny function is particularly focused on measuring the impact of the partnerships collective work in relation to the agreed business priorities and, ultimately, focused on the impact of the partnership as a whole, on outcomes for children and young people locally. Our model of Quality Assurance and Scrutiny is particularly robust and triangulates multi-agency audit, data, practitioners feedback, young people's voice and our young scrutineers to evaluate impact. Our scrutiny events ensure those leads responsible for change are fully involved in developing improvement plans and retesting to ensure impact of agreed actions.

We have continued with a full programme of quality assurance activity via our sub-groups and Area Safeguarding Groups, which involves qualitative multi-agency audits undertaken together, to examine the quality of practice across a range of professionals including social workers, health professionals, police officers and others to support and protect children and young people. The findings from quality assurance activity is developed into Action Plans, which are regularly reviewed and evaluated for their impact. The practice themes and some of the improvements undertaken are summarised later in this report.

We continue to have strong communication with partner agencies via our regular communications, including monthly Safeguarding Newsletters, 5-minute briefings and Practitioner Forums, which provides information on latest safeguarding practice developments, new legislation, research findings, and safeguarding training opportunities and reaffirms key messages.

The partnership has also engaged in a variety of ways with children and young people to hear their voice and views with regard to safeguarding. The outcome of this work is addressed later in this report.

The partnership has recognised that, whilst some strong work has been undertaken to improve safeguarding practice, they require additional assurance about practice and the impact of the partnership's work.

# Our Priorities

The CSCP will seek to gain assurances that safeguarding arrangements across the partnership are effective in helping to keep children and young people safe from abuse and neglect and achieving positive outcomes. Our priorities from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 were:

## **Priority 1 - Improving Responses to Neglect**

The Partnership's priority is to ensure that Practitioners across the partnership can collectively identify, assess and intervene early to prevent the harmful impact of neglect on children and young people. This work is part of a whole system approach and is based on a clear understanding of local need.

## **Priority 2 - Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home**

The Partnership will work with all agencies to ensure that there is a highly coordinated multi- agency approach to a range of adolescent risks that occur in contexts beyond the family home (e.g. neighbourhood, schools, local shopping centres, youth venues etc.). These risks include child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, peer on peer abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and other overlapping forms of harm.

## **Priority 3 - Embedding Learning from Practice**

The Partnership will ensure effective systems are in place which means learning and practice improvements highlighted by the CSCP's work is effectively disseminated and embedded in CSCP agencies and is having a demonstrable impact for children and their families.

The Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework will assess the impact of the work against the three priorities and will ultimately assess the impact of and success of the partnership as a whole, in meeting its key purpose and vision.



# Involving Young People

The CSCP believes that it is important for children and young people to take an active role in the design and development of services that are provided for them.

As part of the CSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework, our Young Scrutineers, who are users by experience have been central to our scrutiny work in relation to Embedding Learning from Practice and Safeguarding Adolescents from Risks and Harm Outside the Home (Child Exploitation (CE)). This work has included the Care Experience Ambassadors developing a video, which was created by young people to inform professionals about their own experiences and to spark conversation about a range of topics.

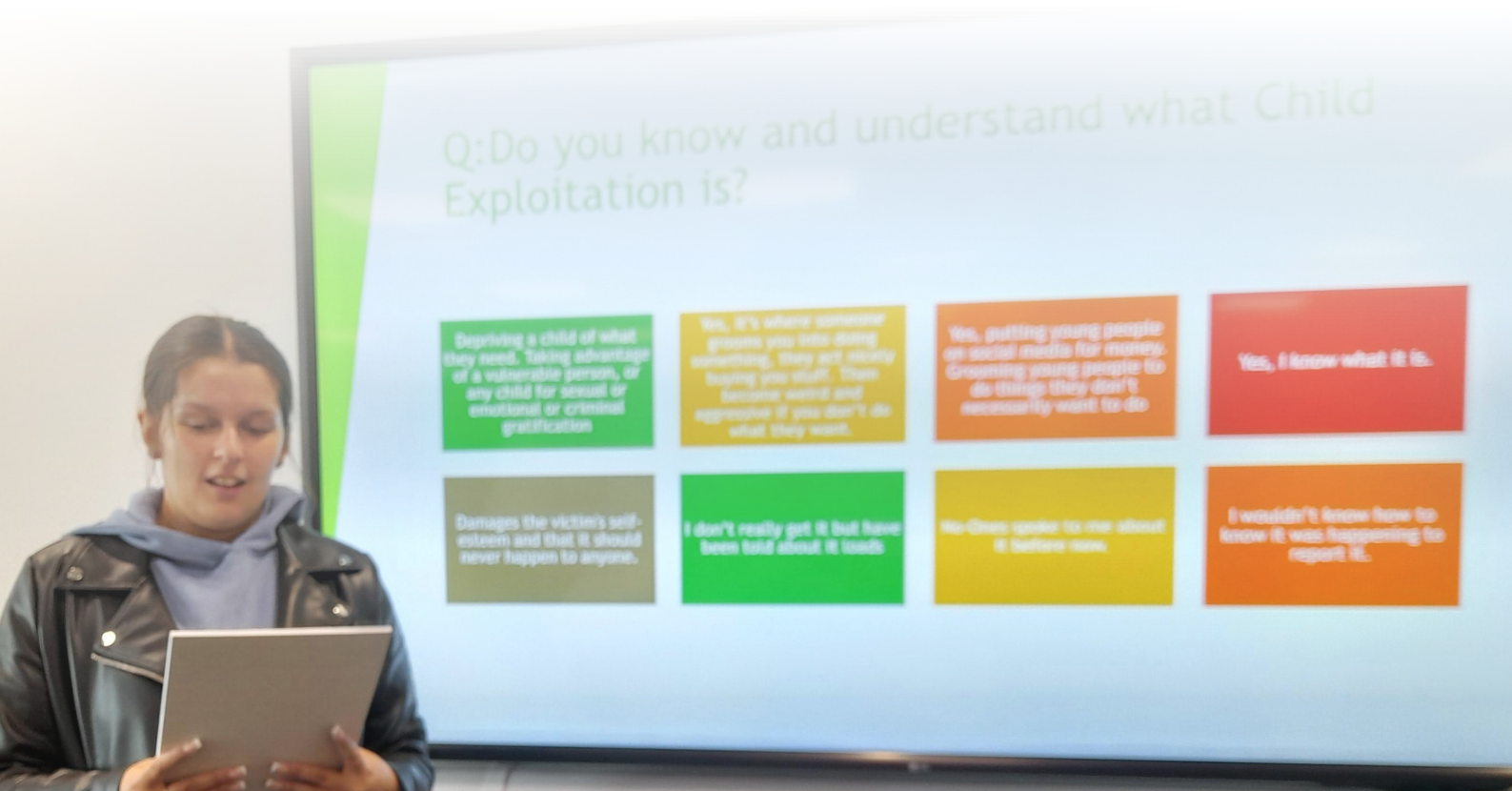
As part of the CSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework, the Young Scrutineers worked with young people to identify if they knew and understood what CE is. The impact of this piece of work brought home to partners that more work needs to be undertaken with children and young people understanding the risks of CE, but more importantly, what a healthy relationship looks like. The Young Scrutineers also identified that agencies need to recognise that trauma has a long-lasting effect, and support does not take this into account, as support is often temporary or time limited.

The Children's Rights Officers contacted families and young people to gain insight into their experiences of services, as part of Multi-Agency Audits, which form part of the CSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework. This identified that trusting relationships had been formed with CE Intervention Workers, where young people were on a CE Pathway.

## What we plan to do

During 2024/25:

- We will continue to involve the role of Experts by Experience as Young Scrutineers in scrutiny exercises, as this has proved invaluable.
- To evidence impact, we will support the Young Scrutineers to develop a tool to feedback on the impact of their involvement.



# Missing Exploited and Trafficked Children

The CSCP's 'Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) Children Group' has multi-agency strategic oversight of Child Exploitation (CE) in Cumbria. This group is chaired by the Police, it meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from across a range of agencies.

## What we have done

Both councils (Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council) have implemented a Complex Safeguarding Team. Each team includes a Complex Safeguarding Team Manager and Child Exploitation Intervention Workers.

Operationally, as a partnership, we now have oversight of all children identified as being at risk of CE via the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings. The MACE meeting currently meets monthly. The meeting provides the framework to allow regular information sharing and action planning to tackle CE in Cumbria. It also enables the group to discuss those children who are cared for and placed outside of Cumbria and also considers children who have repeated episodes of going missing. The process for MACE is currently under review with proposals for it to be held separately in each Local Authority area. This does not detract from the need to have discussions across each council boundary.

The Child Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan that was developed and launched in November 2021 has been reviewed and the CSCP MET Steering Group have benchmarked themselves against the Research in Practice Multi-Agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.

The impact of this benchmarking includes:

- The opportunity for parents, and the young person experiencing CE, being able to attend part of their CE Pathway meeting.
- Feedback Forms being developed for the child and family on the support they receive.
- Training being regularly updated.
- Planning is underway to develop training in relation to unconscious bias.
- Along with the analysis of the Child Exploitation Scrutiny, the benchmarking will be included in the 2024/25 CSCP Child Exploitation Action Plan.
- Implementing three monthly reporting from each council's Complex Safeguarding Team.
- Identifying that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that we have the right educational representation at the CSCP MET Sub-groups.
- A twice-yearly CSCP Child Exploitation Newsletter has been published.

The Child Exploitation/Missing Champions Network is in place; they meet on a regular basis and it includes a wide range of professionals. The membership is regularly reviewed to identify agencies that may not have a CE Champion. Specific training has been delivered for the CE Champions, examples being:

- Online safety, delivered by the Cyber Dependent Crime Specialist
- Kendal Fearless Presentation
- Sextortion Presentation

A Transitional Safeguarding Group was implemented to review the process for Child Exploitation transitions. An additional process and flowchart has been added to the CSCP Child Exploitation Policy to ensure that the Safeguarding Adult Services are aware of when a young person who has been experiencing child exploitation may be transitioning into, or need, Adult Services.

## What we will do

- Continue CE performance and quality assurance activity, including the regular cycle of auditing
- Continue to improve the engagement and direct work with children and young people, and their parents and carers, as part of the CERAR process
- Following the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny of Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home in March 2024, the 2024/25 Child Exploitation Action Plan will be developed and will include actions from the benchmarking against the Research in Practice Multi-Agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Further testing of the Transitional Safeguarding process for young people who have been experiencing CE to seek assurance that the process is having an impact and young people are being supported into adult services where needed.

## Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group

The previous Keeping Children Safe in Education sub-group model of operation was developed in 2018, in response to the move away from Local Safeguarding Children Boards to Safeguarding Children Partnerships. A group was established which initially operated with good in-person attendance.

The impact of Covid-19 on the operation of the group was significant. It has become apparent that the strategic purpose of the group had become less certain. There was a sense, shared by members of the group, the wider system and the Independent Scrutineer, that there was a need to change the way the group operates.

Local Government Reorganisation presented us with a good opportunity to rethink the purpose of the group, its constituent representatives and operating model.

The impact of this was, following consultation with both the Cumbria Primary and Secondary Heads Associations, a refreshed Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group was developed. The inaugural meeting of this group took place in December 2023. The group is chaired by a Primary School Headteacher and there is representation from primary, secondary and further education colleges.

Alongside this, there has been a drive for Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Networks across the county being developed, to ensure there is a two-way flow of information and to enable education to be involved at both a local and strategic level. The greater impact of these groups is still to be seen, but one of the DSL networks has opened up discussion with social care within a locality.

With the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the requirement for all schools to be fully engaged, involved and included in local safeguarding arrangements with local safeguarding partnerships which involve senior school leaders in strategic discussions, the partnership is committed to challenge how we can further strengthen the engagement of education as we review and develop our new safeguarding arrangements next year.

# Early Help

Following the development of the two new unitary councils in Cumbria, the governance of Early Help has transitioned, and each council is developing their own Early Help Strategies.

Each council has developed Family Help Partnership Boards.

The CSCP Board will seek assurance from the Early Help Boards in each council and this will continue to be part of the CSCP Board Assurance timetable.

Within Cumberland, a Quality Assurance Framework has been developed for Early Help, setting out how we will measure the quality of Early Help Services and Early Help Processes across the county. This includes reviewing performance information, undertaking audit activity and listening to the voice of children and families. Regular audits are undertaken by the Early Help Team.

The impact and learning of the Quality Assurance Framework is cascaded via the CSCP Practitioner Forum and the Cumberland Early Help Champions Network, CSCP Early Help Training and Cumberland Council Practice Week.

Westmorland and Furness have undertaken a review of early help across the system, which includes:

- Capacity building for schools
- Internal service realignment
- Development of a Family Hub in Barrow (opened December 2023)
- Service review to develop a Westmorland and Furness Early Help Strategy
- Strengthened the improved the early help offer and front door
- Evaluated the effectiveness of the front door.

The impact of the changes within Westmorland and Furness is that they have developed a better response to support families earlier, strengthened confidence in schools in initiating and coordinating Early Help Assessments and supporting families. Quality supervision is also in place for all schools.

The Early Help and Family Support Panels have continued in both councils and there is good attendance from professionals and rich conversations, which support practitioners who are working with families where the situation feels stuck.



# Area Safeguarding Groups

The aim of the Area Safeguarding Groups is to bring the CSCP Board closer to frontline practitioners in order to drive practice improvement and learn from them. The groups consider a range of practice issues by facilitating multi-agency events, which triangulate evidence from a variety of sources, including audit and performance, and use this to challenge the practice of all agencies and support improvement.

In 2023, in recognition of Local Government Reform and the development of the unitary councils, three CSCP Area Safeguarding Groups were aligned to the new Local Authority footprints:

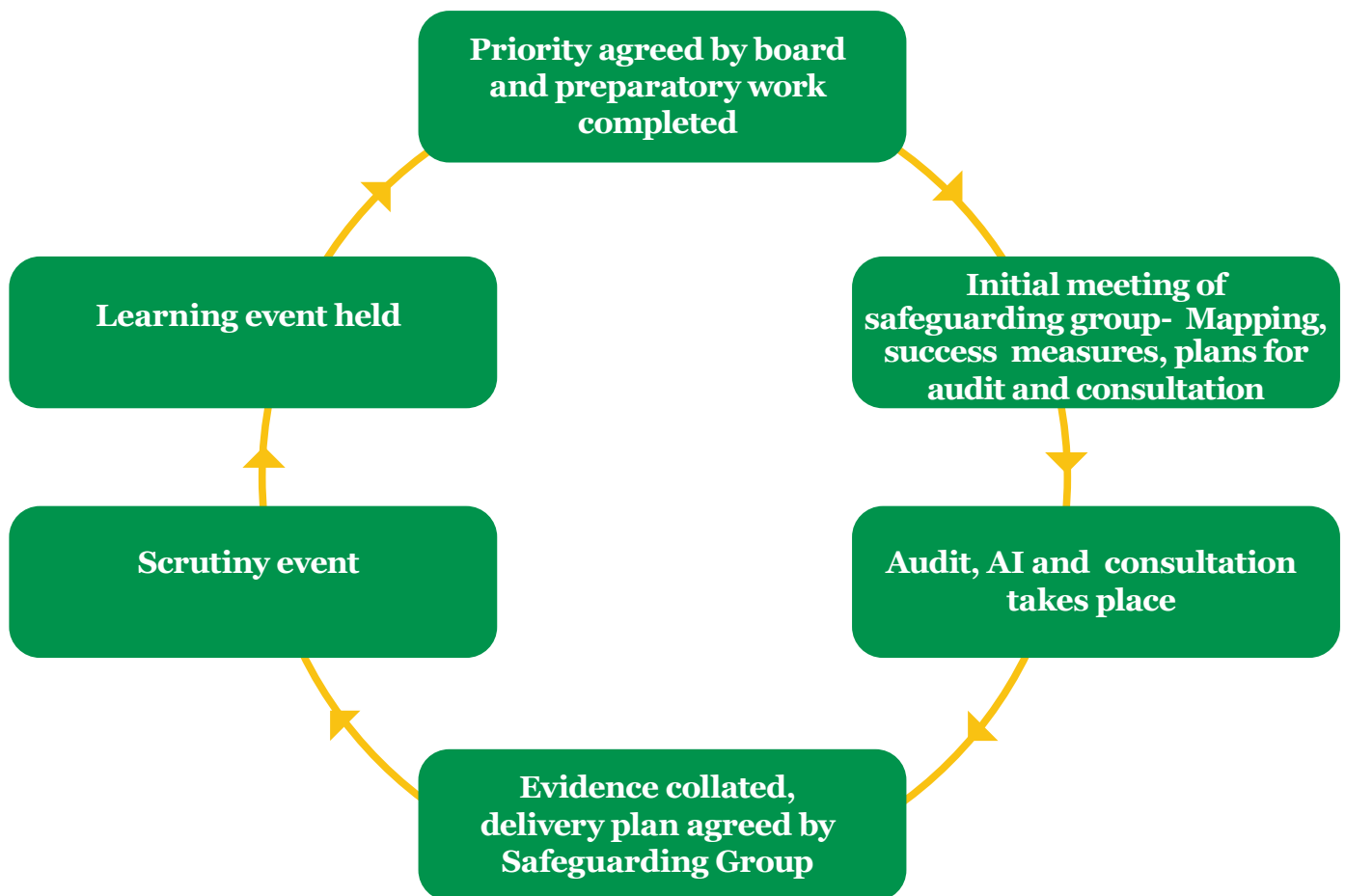
- Cumberland Area Safeguarding Group
- Westmorland & Furness Area Safeguarding Group

Each Area Safeguarding Group brings together the views of children, their families and professionals to inform the continuous development of services and approaches aimed at protecting children from harm and making positive differences to their lives.

These two newly reformed Area Safeguarding Groups continue to develop their membership to ensure the groups are looking at safeguarding practice within each of their localities.

Data is reviewed regularly and some of the findings are looked at in other Sub-Group work.

## The Process to Improve Practice





# CSCP Business Themes

## Theme – Improving Responses to Neglect

During this reporting year, much work has been undertaken to improve the response to neglect. Following the format of the CSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework, scrutiny of practice where children and young people are at risk of neglect was undertaken in 2022, with the final Scrutiny Report being signed off by Lead Partners in 2023. The impact of this scrutiny work was the development of the **Cumbria CSCP Neglect Strategy 2023 – 2026 and neglect toolkit**.

The strategy was launched at a conference in September 2023. The conference had Jan Horwarth, Emeritus Professor of Child Welfare at the University of Sheffield as a keynote speaker. Along with the strategy, the 'Cumbria Day in my Life Tools' were launched as the scrutiny identified that practitioners found the NSPCC Graded Profile 2 too complicated and it was not being used. The training also caused difficulties as it was licensed and the demand for the training far outweighed the capacity to deliver, due to the constraints of the licensing.

A specific Health - Neglect Guide to Decision Making was also developed for those health practitioners who have concerns that a child or young person may be neglected, but only have contact with the child or Young Person for a short period of time.

A CSCP Neglect Sub-Group is in place and all agencies have developed an individual Agency Action Plan that details how they will roll out and embed the use of the strategy and Day in my Life Toolkit. Progress on implementing the action plans is reported into the group. The CSCP are developing a scorecard to be able to better measure the identification of neglect and support for where children are suffering neglect.

The next step is to undertake further scrutiny to evaluate the partnership's work since the launch of strategy and toolkit. This will be carried out in Autumn 2024.

## Learning from Practice

As mentioned earlier in the report, one of the priorities of the CSCP is Embedding Learning to Improve Practice. The CSCP disseminates information and learning from local and national reports, local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and from previous Serious Case Reviews. This theme was to explore if agencies are embedding the learning and evidencing the necessary changes in practice arising from the learning. Six success factors were agreed with the Independent Scrutineer. The scrutiny work included:

- 12 multi-agency audits, six from each councils' Children's Services in between May and June 2023
- A Practitioner Survey was developed and disseminated via the CSCP
- Mapping was undertaken via Practitioner Forums
- A questionnaire was developed for the CSCP Board members to complete
- The voice of the child and family was sought by the Children's Rights Officers

The findings from the work were collated and an analysis completed. A Scrutiny Event was also held in July 2023, which was chaired by the Independent Scrutineer.

## Findings

- It was evident there are clear lines of dissemination of learning
- There was evidence that some practitioners were not aware of key learning
- Time allowed to complete reading of disseminated learning was seen as a barrier
- Good evidence of the use of safe sleeping guidance was reported
- There was evidence of the use of some tools to support the assessment processes
- Evidence of some work with males/male carers was reported
- Professional curiosity was evident in some of the multi-agency audits
- There was some evidence of history of the family being reviewed and understood

An Action Plan was developed and although there was very clear evidence of disseminating learning, the embedding of learning and a change in practice still needs to be better evidenced.

## **Theme – Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home**

In October 2023, work began on the scrutiny of the CSCP priority of Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home to evaluate the impact of the strategy and new ways of working on practice and young people's outcomes. This work was undertaken via the CSCP Area Safeguarding Groups and the CSCP MET Sub-Group. The scrutiny work included, multi-agency audits, a practitioner survey, questionnaire for the CSCP Board members and mapping with practitioners via the CSCP Practitioner Forums. Using the Cumbria CE Strategy, set out in the 4 Ps of Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue, key success criteria were agreed to support the evaluation.

Cumbria Experts by Experience as Young Scrutineers consulted with young people to identify if young people understand what CE is and presented their findings at the scrutiny event. The Children Rights Officers contacted children and young and their families who had experienced CE.

The Independent Scrutineer also contacted families to independently gain their experience of services supporting children and families experiencing CE.

A scrutiny event was held on 21st March 2024 and was attended by a range of practitioners, senior leaders from across statutory partners and the Young Scrutineers. From this, a report will be presented to the CSCP Board and Lead Partners in July 2024. Findings will be developed into an Action Plan, which will be overseen by the CSCP MET Sub-Groups.

Initial findings and impact of the scrutiny include:

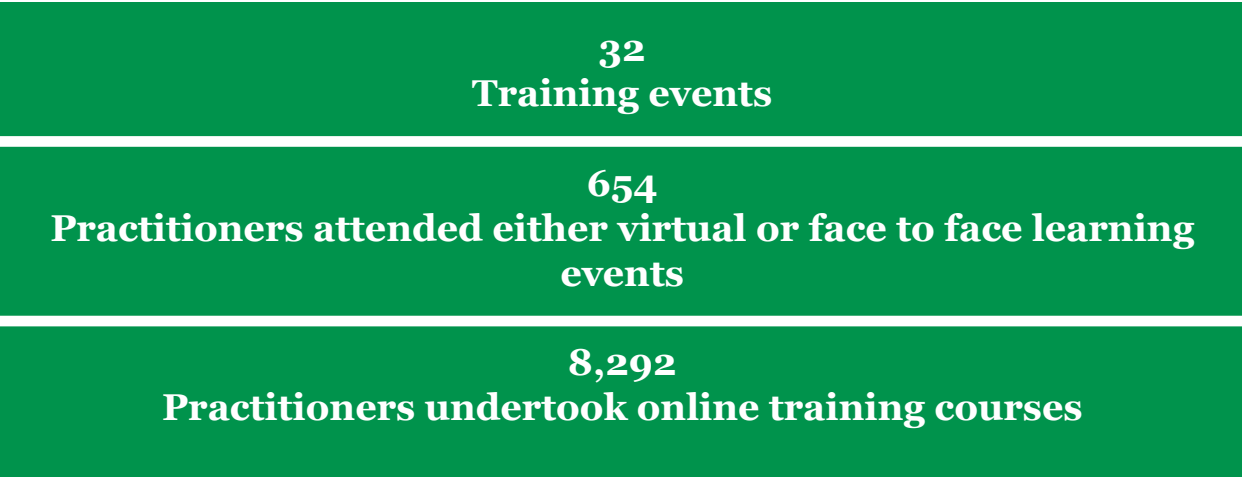
- Some young people don't know how to spot the signs of CE or how to report CE.
- The need to strengthen work with local communities.
- A more fundamental issue identified was that some young people couldn't identify what a healthy relationship looked like.
- The Young Scrutineers also highlighted that they learnt a lot about trauma from speaking to so many young people and that it was this trauma that often makes young people susceptible to harm outside the home, therefore the offer for children with trauma needs to be robust.
- The development and implementation of the Complex Safeguarding Teams have made a difference in supporting families with CE, with examples being "I appreciate the support workers involvement; my son needs this intervention, and I am glad it is being addressed at an early stage", "at first, we had a lot of questions, our support worker answered every one honestly, restored my faith, they have been nothing if not fantastic with both my daughter and ourselves".

# Learning and Improvement

The Learning and Improvement Sub-Group is in place to ensure that the CSCP fulfils its obligations as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children, which is ‘to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where ‘learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice’. The group is responsible for the planning, co-ordination, commissioning and evaluation of high-quality multi-agency training to the children’s workforce, and the Sub-Group also helps influence the content of training and education resources.

The group review and strengthen policies and procedures in the light of learning from quality assurance and scrutiny work and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, to ensure their effectiveness and application.

## Summary data



E-Learning remains a popular medium for providing training opportunities to professional safeguarding practitioners, third sector organisations, education settings and faith groups across Cumbria. Awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection Level 1 is the most popular course, completed by 3341 practitioners. During the reporting year 2024/25, the CSCP will undertake work to commission a new Learning Management System. This will enable better reporting and training need analysis for the provision of E-Learning.

<b>Course Title</b>	
CSCP - Awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection Level 1 2023/2024 (E-Learning)	3341
CSCP - Child Exploitation (E-Learning)	1118
CSCP - Early Help for Children and Families (E-Learning)	322
CSCP - Safeguarding Responsibilities, Threshold Guidance and Referral Process - Level 2 (E-Learning)	828
CSCP - Female Genital Mutilation (E-Learning)	149
CSCP - Safer Recruitment (E-Learning)	117
CSCP - Domestic Abuse (E-Learning)	171
CSCP - Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (E-Learning)	170
CSCP - Honour based violence and forced marriage (E-Learning)	118
CSCP - Neglect (E-Learning)	255
CSCP - Self-Harm (E-Learning)	143
CSCP - Emotional Abuse (E-Learning)	144
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) (Blended)	51
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6927</b>

## Impact

During 2023/24, the CSCP has struggled to maintain a multi-agency training pool and it has been fed back to the Learning & Improvement Sub-Group that practitioners would prefer face to face delivery for some training opportunities. The reduction in the training pool membership has been due to a significant number of staff changes across partner agencies. This was escalated to the CSCP Board and Lead Partners. It is expected that 2024/25 will see a greater number of face-to-face sessions delivered to practitioners.

Following CSCP Training, attendees are asked to complete an Evaluation Sheet. Feedback has included:

- The training was packed full of Information. Glad to receive the slides for future reference when applying my training.
- The training made us think about our practice and how well we do.
- The course has allowed me to highlight gaps in my knowledge that I can now go and correct.
- The content was good. I will be sharing some of the information with the wider team at the next briefing.

The Learning and Improvement Sub-Group continues to ensure that the learning from reviews and audit is incorporated into training materials. Learning information continues to be published via the partnership's monthly newsletters, 5-minute briefings, developed learning guides, and delivered sessions at district Practitioner Forums.

- CSCP Learning Briefing – Ivy
- Promotion of Multi-Agency Training Opportunities
- Drug Use Awareness and Links to Child Exploitation
- Safer Internet Day 2024
- CSCP – Policy and Procedures
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Changes
- Safer Sleep Week
- National Child Exploitation Awareness Day
- Updates Information Sharing Advice Document – May 2024

A CSCP Monthly Newsletter is produced, which includes both national and local safeguarding practice information.

## What we will do

- In 2024/25, we will undertake S.11 and S.175 audits and undertake quality assurance of agency responses.
- Continue to disseminate the learning from audit and reviews.
- Further develop collaborative working with the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Further develop a programme of events and resources for practitioners to take place throughout 2024/25 to increase practitioner knowledge of child safeguarding, any emerging threats / themes and learn about contemporary approaches and provide opportunities for reflective practice.
- Develop and enhance the voice of children and young people in driving learning and improvement and scrutiny activity.
- Develop the multi-agency training pool.
- Ensure there is a Learning Management System in place, so that partners can access E-Learning, this may mean exploring opportunities for CSCP's own Learning Management System.
- Publish the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review Leo and embedding of the learning.



# Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)

During 2023/24, the Case Review Sub-Group was chaired by the Head of Probation. The group has the responsibility for overseeing the commissioning of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews for cases that meet the criteria set out in Chapter 4 of Working Together 2018 and chapter 5 in the subsequent Working Together 2023.

During 2023/24, two Rapid Review Meetings were held to consider if individual cases met the criteria for an LSCPR and highlighted any learning. Neither of these Rapid Reviews met the criteria for an LSCPR. The CSCP Case Review Group ensure that Single Agency and Multi-Agency Action Plans are completed, and learning is disseminated.

Key learning that was identified from these Rapid Reviews is provided below:

- Where there are mental health, needs a Multi-Agency Care Plan needs to be developed to address and identify which agency/ies is best placed to support and coordinate the care.
- There needs to be Multi-Agency discussion to ensure there is not over reliance on individual agency information in Complex Cases to enable full understanding of presenting needs.
- Where referrals do not progress, and there are still presenting concerns, the Lead Professional should consider a Multi-Agency referral, to provide a holistic approach.
- There needs to be an offer of support for children, where there is a potential risk of suicide.
- Agencies need to better understand, and be able to identify, where there is both substance misuse and misuse of prescription medication and the impact this may have on parenting.
- Better information sharing and seeking is required, and where information is sought, this needs to be followed up on.
- Agencies need to be continually professionally curious to understand family history.
- Agencies need to be confident in professional challenge and be able to challenge decisions where they do not agree. If agreement cannot be sought, the CSCP Escalation Policy should be followed.

The previous LSCPR, Child Leo, has not yet been published, due to parallel criminal proceedings. It is anticipated that they will be published during the 2024/25 reporting period.

# Child Death Review and the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Child Death Review partners, the Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards for Cumbria now hold responsibility for the delivery of the Child Death Review Process, as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The CDOP is multi-agency with differing areas of professional expertise. This process is undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident in Cumbria. The governance for CDOP in Cumbria is via the CSCP. Our child death review arrangements can be accessed [here](#).

The purpose of the Child Death Review Process is to try to ascertain why children die and put in place interventions to protect other children and prevent future deaths wherever possible.

The process intends to:

- Document, analyse and review information in relation to each child that dies, in order to confirm the cause of death, determine any contributing factors and to identify learning arising from the process that may prevent future child deaths
- To make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified which may prevent future deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- To produce an Annual Report on local patterns and trends in child death, any lessons learnt, and actions taken, and the effectiveness of the wider Child Death Review Process
- To contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve learning from Child Death Reviews.

The Child Death Review information in this report covers the 2022/23 reporting year, as the 2023/24 report had not been signed off at the time of this Annual Report's publication.

## 2022/23

- A total number of 18 children residing in Cumbria died in 2022/23.
- During 2022/23, a total of 11 cases were reviewed and signed off for that year. All the deaths signed off occurred in the year 2021/22. Delays in sign off were due to challenges in accessing adequate information and other statutory processes. Post-Mortem results are taking some time to be completed. This is an issue nationally, not just locally.
- 5 CDOP meetings were held during 2022/23 and the cases were reviewed by the panel, to see if there were actions that could be taken to prevent other deaths.
- In 2022/23, the highest number of deaths notified were for children aged 0-27 days, closely followed by 28-364 days.
- 7 children who died were male and 11 were female.

## CDOP Priorities for 2023/24

- Work closely with neighbouring CDOPs for effective learning including participating in regional networks, national webinars and conferences for wider education and understanding of child deaths.
- Themed Panel Meetings with geographical neighbours.
- Strengthen child death processes within education, including awareness raising and training.
- Continuous embedding of the Child Death Review Process by working in partnership to ensure timely response and review of cases prior to CDOP. The Panel will continue to oversee the effectiveness of the arrangements.
- Undertake work to identify if there are any local issues delaying the CDOP process, in order to reduce the number of child death cases that are outstanding to be reviewed.
- Undertake a piece of work to review the local data to identify if there are any recurring themes in modifiable factors linked to deprivation.
- Encourage schools to develop bereavement policies.
- Implement a CDOP operational group to implement actions aimed at reducing the risks identified in modifiable factors.





## Summary and Priorities for 2024/25

The Safeguarding Partnership has played an important role in bringing agencies together to debate issues and to provide challenge and assurance through audit activity and multi-agency training, to ensure partners are fully sighted on the risks to children and young people and are working together effectively to support their families and to safeguard children from harm. There has been a significant challenge with the implementation of Local Government Reform which has had an impact on staffing. 2023/24 has also seen all partner agencies have restructures, which has meant the partnership has seen significant change in personnel within agencies.

Looking forward to 2024/25, the Partnership will continue the delivery of its strategic priorities to safeguard children, and a new partnership Business Plan developed. Through a development session with Lead Partners and the CSCP Board in September 2023, it was agreed that following the evaluation of the work that had been undertaken, including scrutiny, the business priorities should remain the same as the previous business plan. These remain significant priorities for all agencies and will enable more time for the impact of changes to be embedded and evidenced. It was also recognised that the implementation of Local Government Reform may have an impact on some development work on the key priorities.

An additional priority for the partnership is to review the current pan-partnership arrangements, as previously agreed following Local Government Reform. This needs to be completed alongside the need for the partnership to review and publish their arrangements, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.



## Appendix A – CSCP Board Membership

Agency	Role
Cumberland Council	Assistant Director – Children and Families
Westmorland and Furness	Assistant Director – Children and Families
Cumberland Council	Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Inclusion
Westmorland and Furness Council	Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board	Safeguarding Designated Nurse Children, Adults & Children Looked After
Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board	Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Children Looked After
University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay	Director of Nursing
North Cumbria Integrated Care	Director of Nursing
Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust	Head of Safeguarding
CNTW Foundation Trust	Group Nurse Director
Public Health - Cumberland Council	Director – Public Health
Public Health – Westmorland and Furness	Director – Public Health
Cumbria Constabulary	Chief Superintendent
Cumbria Probation Service	Head of Probation Service Cumbria
Voluntary Sector Representative	Joint Chair Voluntary Sector Reference Group
CAFCASS, Cumbria	Service Manager
Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group	Chair/Representative
<b>Board Support</b>	
Cumberland Council	CSCP Partnership & Improvement Manager

## Appendix B – Financial Arrangements

### Budget Contributions for 2023/24

Agency	Budget Contribution
LA (47.1%)	£109,228
Police (9.2%)	£21,344
Health (45%)	£101,103 NENC ICB £62,593 (27%) LSC ICB( 16.6% ) £38,510
<b>Total</b>	<b>£231,675</b>

