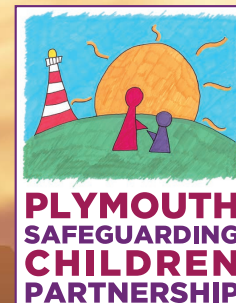




ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

www.plymouthscp.co.uk



FOREWORD

We are pleased to present this first annual report of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership which covers the period 30 September 2019 to 29 September 2020. This period marked the start of the transition from the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board into our new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, under the strategic leadership of ourselves as the statutory safeguarding partners (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

Since transition our world, and the lived experience of our children and young people, has substantially and dramatically changed. The unanticipated COVID19 pandemic brought an unprecedented set of challenges and uncertainties, and the PSCP had to act quickly in response. COVID19 inevitably increased our concern for our children and young people and our wider partnership worked well together to ensure our safeguarding arrangements remained effective and responsive.

As statutory safeguarding partners we must publish a report at least once in every twelve month period which sets out what we have done as a result of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. This annual report highlights the progress made against priorities and work streams, but does strongly feature our COVID19 response.

We hope that this report clearly provides information on what has gone well and where we are strengthening our arrangements and practice, as well as where we want to further improve.

This is also our opportunity to thank our partners and the multi-agency workforce for their unwavering commitment, passion and drive to uphold our vision for children and young people; particularly during the demands of the pandemic which affected our workforce both professionally and personally throughout 2019/2020.

Alison Botham

Direction of Children Social Services, Plymouth City Council
Chair of the Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children Partnership

Matt Longman

BCU Commander, Devon & Cornwall Police
Member of the Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children Partnership

Susan Masters

Deputy Chief Nurse, NHS
Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
Member of the Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Safeguarding Partners for Plymouth are:



Devon & Cornwall Police



**Devon
Clinical Commissioning Group**



CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Local Background and Context

Chapter 2

Explanatory

Chapter 3

The Partnership

Chapter 4

Partnership Priorities and Working

Chapter 5

How our children, young people and families have informed our work and influenced service provision

Chapter 6

Child safeguarding practice reviews and serious case reviews

Chapter 7

Changes to the arrangements

Chapter 8

Funding the arrangements

Chapter 9

Independent scrutiny

Chapter 10

Priorities for 2021/2022

TEN WISHES

What Children and Young People in Plymouth want from you...

We want professionals to be easier to contact.

We want professionals to be on time, as they expect us to be.

We want professionals to be properly trained and for us to be involved in the training.

We want professionals to ask us what we need and not to assume.

We want professionals to do what they say they are going to do, to listen and stand up for us.

We want professionals to use words we understand.

We want professionals to reassure us something is being done and tell us how long it will take.

We want professionals to understand when we need to talk to them one-to-one.

We want professionals to ask us 'do you feel safe?'

We want professionals to respect us and how we feel.



CHAPTER I

LOCAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Plymouth is a city situated on the south coast of Devon, England, approximately 37 miles south-west of Exeter and 190 miles west-south-west of London. The city is home to 262,100 people, and is governed locally by Plymouth City Council.



Whilst Plymouth has a lower rate of child poverty than some of its comparators, the extent is still significant. 18.6% of Plymouth children live in poverty (9,900) children, and the vast majority (76.9%) are living in workless households. The proportion of children in poverty and living in working households is rising and there are still some suggestions that data underestimates the volume of 'in-work' poverty.

In Plymouth the main problems facing families with children subject to child protection plans are unsafe parenting, domestic abuse, parental mental health problems, drug misuse and alcohol misuse.

Key Facts (Plymouth Report 2019/20 and PCC Data September 2020)

Age Group	Plymouth		South West		England	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<5	15,308	5.8	300,770	5.4	3,384,925	6.1
<16	47,120	17.9	977,522	17.6	10,637,971	19.1
< 18	52,296	19.9	1,096,477	19.7	11,869,346	21.3
18-24	32,108	12.2	471,357	8.5	4,881,655	8.7

Facts and Figures

- 50.2% female 49% male
- Christians largest faith community
- 97% white British
- Polish, Chinese and Kurdish largest BME communities

- 229 care leavers
- 471 children looked after
- 1774 children on child in need plan
- 330 children subject to Child Protection Plan

- 72 academies
- 20 local authority maintained schools
- 2 non maintained nursery schools
- 4 free schools

CHAPTER 2

EXPLANATORY

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 is the statutory guidance that transferred strategic local safeguarding arrangements from Local Safeguarding Children Boards to three new statutory partners, namely the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the chief office of police. This guidance permitted local arrangements that covered two or more local authorities. Following consultation and relevant cabinet and executive approvals it was agreed that the two existing Local Safeguarding Children Boards within Plymouth and Torbay would be replaced with one Plymouth and Torbay Safeguarding Partnership, such partnership to be underpinned by proportionate strategic and operational structures that directed and promoted safeguarding practices and responses across Torbay and Plymouth.

This new multi-agency safeguarding arrangement was published, in accordance with Department for Education requirements on 29 September 2019.

Since that date the Torbay Local Authority has evaluated the suitability of this arrangement in light of the dissolution of the joint arrangement and Director of Children's Services in January 2020, and the need to maintain the rate of improvement needed for Torbay children. They have concluded that they need a single strategic safeguarding partnership.

Accordingly, this document reports upon the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements implemented within the city of Plymouth for the period 30 September 2019 to 29 September 2020.



OUR VISION

All children within Plymouth are able to reach their full potential and be healthy, safe and contented.

Effective support is provided to the most vulnerable and at risk to ensure quality of opportunity in reaching these basic needs.



CHAPTER 3

The Partnership

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together organisations from across Plymouth to

- Ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- Set and oversee strategic direction of multi-agency arrangements
- Determine equitable and proportion funding on a yearly basis
- Hold local arrangements to account
- Challenge each other appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- Scrutinise the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Have oversight of multi-agency workforce development
- Facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries to ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families.

Partnership Transition

In September 2019 Plymouth and Torbay published their joint multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements were established in the context of a wider partnership and governance structure which reached across Plymouth and Torbay and referred to as the Plymouth and Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership. Proportionate strategic and operating structures were formed to support and direct safeguarding responses.

At the end of March 2020 this partnership had to respond quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic. The safeguarding partners of the Plymouth and Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership immediately agreed that these joint arrangements should be suspended in light of the need for both Plymouth and Torbay to have their own focused arrangements during COVID-19 period. Subsequent to that suspension the Torbay Local Authority evaluated the continuing suitability of the joint arrangements and concluded that in order to maintain the rate of improvement required for Torbay children that a single strategic safeguarding partnership was required.

As a consequence Plymouth set out its new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which are detailed further in this report. As such this Report focuses upon the effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements within Plymouth only and includes information about:

- The impact of the work of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- Implementation of recommendations from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews
- How the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership have sought and used feedback from children and young people to inform its work and influence service provision
- Changes to the multi-agency arrangements



CHAPTER FOUR

PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES AND WORKING

In September 2019 the following priorities of the former Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board were maintained:

**Prevent
abuse**



**Put learning
into practice**



**Promote children
and young people's
emotional health and
wellbeing**



**Provide quality
assurance**

**Improve outcomes
for children, young
people and families**

Preventing Abuse

The PSCP agreed that it would

- secure effective multi-agency responses and promote child centred prevention, identification, support, disruption and prosecution
- enable its agencies to be alert to existing and new risks to children and young people in Plymouth and work jointly to take timely action where an issue was identified

There is a joined up approach to safeguarding across Plymouth with strong links into other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and young people. Collaborative engagement, in with the Safer Plymouth Partnership (Community Safety) and the Children & Young People's Partnership, has provided a greater oversight on need, demand and responses to child safeguarding issues, including children as victims of domestic abuse, and development of a city approach to extra-familial harm, i.e. child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation.

A wide range of early help and targeted services are strengthening parental capacity and supporting resilience in families. Thresholds are well understood and where children's needs change or risk increases professionals refer promptly to children's social care.

The Together for Childhood programme is now in its third year. Working collaboratively Together for Childhood seeks to prevent child sexual abuse, support children in their families and addresses how our agencies and organisations work together. It is a place-based approach focusing action within Ernesettle in Plymouth to achieve its goals. Activity achieved to date includes:-



- Quality assurance of delivery of relationships and sex education in school
- Promoting online safety
- Delivery of healthy relationship messages
- Supporting professional networks and community leaders
- Developing community knowledge and training
- Aligning pathway and thresholds for tertiary support

- Promote PANTS campaign
- Auditing professional identification and understanding of harmful sexual behaviours
- Improving peer to peer healthy relationships.

The PSCP's Operational Missing and Child Exploitation Group (OMACE) has provided a strong multi-agency arena to ensure information is shared about both children and young people at risk of child exploitation, locations of concerns, websites and drugs of concern together with perpetrators. This information has been shared with key agencies and partners to provide an effective disruption approach. Ongoing multi-agency collaboration is still required to analyse and respond to risk within community settings; learning from collaborative efforts this year through the OMACE by Devon and Cornwall Police, Children's Social Care and Community Connections shows an increase in understanding around contextual safeguarding and best deploying resource to support young people.

The PSCP has an agreed child exploitation screening tool, but it has been found that this is not used consistently, and when it is used, it not always being applied in order to evaluate and review the level of risk. As a result CYPFS now ensure that the child exploitation screening is completed as part of assessment for all children over the age of 11 when they are referred to CYPFS. This promotes holistic consideration of all exploitation issues which are integrated into assessments and planning for children.

Provide Quality Assurance

Safeguarding partners promote and share the PSCP vision throughout their workforce, reinforcing that safeguarding is everyone's business. The new multi-agency arrangements have placed greater focus upon, and are evidencing, effective ambitious child-focused leadership across the city.

We have put in place independent scrutiny by the appointment of an Independent Quality Assurance Lead who is ensuring that multi-agency working is delivering a positive experience to the lived experience of children and their families. This has supported an increased culture of healthy challenge and ensures agencies engage effectively in the business of the PSCP.

In November 2019 the response to children's mental health in Plymouth was subject to a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services and HMI Probation. The inspection found that the quality assurance of the then newly formed Plymouth and Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership was underdeveloped. This meant that the partnership did not have the benefit of robust analysis of the impact of statutory training and multi-agency audits.

Since then a new robust Quality Assurance Framework has been devised, consulted upon and approved with an agreed work programme and assurance activity. The Independent Quality Assurance Lead attends and provides a minimum of quarterly reporting and challenge into the PSCP and in meetings with the three strategic partners to ensure that they remain sighted on quality assurance activities and impact. The current work programme focuses upon the theme of neglect, subsequent to findings from Serious Case Reviews, and is providing a breadth and depth of understanding of the partnership response and provide an accurate, systematically updated understanding of effectiveness and use this to drive improvement in multi-agency safeguarding practice.

At the time of this Report work is ongoing to recruit, in collaboration with Barnardo's, an Assistant Project Worker to attend the PSCP Quality Assurance Group and provide direct lived experience advice and engagement to the PSCP. This Project Worker is being recruited from our cohort of care leavers; their experience of the care system and possible transition from child to adult services,

will be an invaluable perspective to inform the work of the PSCP. This appointment will promote the value of young people's voice and lived experience, and enable their influence on leadership and decision making. It further supports the Plymouth City Council Care Leaver's Pledge.

Put Learning into Practice

The PSCP supports a culture of continuous professional learning and improving access to a wide range of learning disseminated through a range of methods. Our training offer is well aligned with the multi-agency priorities and helps professionals to understand their respective roles and responsibilities, the procedures of each agency involved in safeguarding children.

Key outcomes, findings and learning from Serious Case Reviews and thematic reviews are embedded within the training offer, which also contains direct messages from our Young Safeguarders' Group

As a result of the JTAI in November 2019, the PSCP has constituted its Workforce Development Group which holds partnership learning to account via robust and clear terms of reference, with an experienced Learning and Development Chair. This group monitors the impact of learning on practice, and an improved Learning and Improvement Framework is now in place. The PSCP receives quarterly reports to ensure that they are sufficiently sighted upon and able to inform training needs, effectiveness and impact.

To support the existing work taking place within Together for Childhood, and learning arising, the PSCP Workforce Development Group are currently developing a child sexual abuse learning matrix to support knowledge, skills and practice across the workforce. The aim is to develop a matrix that mirrors the levels of wider safeguarding training but that is specific to identifying, responding and preventing child sexual abuse.

OUR PLEDGE...

We will encourage and support you to access opportunities in education, training and employment until the age of at least 21. We will respect the choices you make and support you even if sometimes things go wrong, we will support you to get back on track.

Improving Outcomes

Plymouth benefits from partnership arrangements that fosters a child centred safeguarding system which recognises children and young people as individuals with rights.

Devon & Cornwall Police has pioneered a Child Centred Policing approach when interacting with children and young people, which reflects both the National Police Chief's Council and Youth Justice Board aspirations for every encounter with young people to have the best interest of the child at its heart and to treat young people as people first in every interaction. The police have brought all of its youth specialist resources including Youth Intervention Officers, Youth Offending Team Officer, Youth Engagement Officer and Missing Person Safeguarding Officer into one team to better coordinate child centred responses for children who interact with the police, but to also assist with more child focused partnership approaches. For young people at risk of anti-social behaviour, criminal offending, becoming exploited, or where substance use or mental health might be of concern, the team ensures a person-centred approach is taken where all of these vulnerabilities are recognised and addressed through police and partnership responses. The Child Centred Policing Team worked with a local authority youth worker to undertake street interactions and home visits to over 110 young people who were at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour during the summer holiday period to provide diversion opportunities, and also undertook proactive visits, alongside local policing colleagues and police cadets, as part of Op Lavender, which tested city hotel responses to child sexual exploitation.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 set out expectations in relation to extra-familial abuse. In response the PSCP has endorsed a proposal to create a framework for multi-agency coordination of the risks to young people from outside their family. This approach will frame our work to address extra familial abuse through the lens of child welfare as opposed to crime reduction or community. The PSCP has evidenced strong leadership and direction in the continued development of its Adolescent Safety Framework, harnessing existing strengths in multi-agency innovative practice and learning from intelligence and information from our Operational Missing and Child Exploitation Group. Our

Adolescent Safety Framework is creating strong conduits between strategic, operational and practice levels so that as a city we have a clearer picture of contextual safeguarding and the threats and opportunities for young people in our area. In response services will be coordinated in the most appropriate way and strategic and commissioning decisions reflect the needs of our young people.

The PSCP continues to embed the Plymouth trauma-informed approach as a model of good practice. In March 2020 the PSCP with Safer Plymouth commenced delivery of multi-agency trauma informed learning with lead trainers from Police, Local Authority, Harbour Drug and Alcohol Services and the NSPCC. The PSCP learning offer includes research and principles of trauma informed practice with a focus upon power of language, avoidance of victim blaming terminology, child and adolescent development and adverse

CASE STUDY

12 year old Sam has experienced significant adverse childhood experiences. Sam lives with his mum and siblings, but is sometimes cared for by his dad who has links to dangerous drugs networks. Agencies were concerned prior to the initial COVID-19 lockdown that Sam was increasingly linked with anti-social behaviour and there were concerns he might be criminally exploited by a dangerous drug network.

Contact with police proved challenging due to family history and Sam's distrust. Interactions often led to aggression and conflict. In anticipation of adverse risk to Sam posed by the COVID-19 lockdown a Child Centred Policing Risk Plan was created to support his vulnerabilities. The plan included the local neighbourhood team undertaking routine visits to his home, to support mum and provide more positive interactions with the family outside of the police dealing with Sam at incidents.

Over time Sam started to build a positive relationship with the local policing team. The team saw him not as a 'problem' responsible for incidents, but as a young person in need of support. Sam's offending stopped and he even had his push bike returned to him as a reward for his progress by the police, after it had been seized as being linked to his involvement in offending.

childhood experiences awareness webcasts and webinars. A free vicarious trauma presentation was made available to the city's workforce to support their understanding of the potential traumatic impact of COVID-19. A trauma informed leadership virtual workshop has been piloted within the city, to develop conversations on what trauma informed leadership looks like and how practice can be embedded at all levels.

Work is ongoing to increase placement sufficiency – local placements for local children. This continues to be a challenge, given the complexity of need and rising demand nationally, but some progress is being made. We have increased the local provision of residential placements in the city to 23 beds, in homes ranging from 1 to 3 beds. By comparison, in 2012 there was one home which could not meet the needs of Plymouth children. We have a block contract for 14 beds (12 in the city and 2 on the outskirts) which means that we work closely with the providers to make sure that these are provided to meet the needs of Plymouth children and young people. Plans are ongoing to further increase the supply of local residential care, particularly for those with more complex needs including disabilities. The provision of local homes has prevented some children from leaving the city and enabled others to move back from out of area, as a stepping stone to foster care, returning home in a planned way or on to independent living.

A specialist fostering marketing provider has been commissioned to work with the Plymouth City Council fostering service to make sure as many people as possible know about opportunities to become a local authority foster carer.

The Complex Lives Alliance (Children & Young People Partnership subgroup) is working to improve the assessment, accommodation and support offer available for young people in care aged 16+, and a Plymouth based tender for other 16+ accommodation and support is currently in progress, to try to attract new providers to the city. Alongside this, our work with Peninsula partners is focusing on the redesign of our commissioning of independent foster placements, and a whole south west regional group is beginning to work together on a placement sufficiency/market position statement, to be clear on how we will work together over the next 3-5 years to bring the right provision to the region.

Covid-19 has proved positive in bringing a cross-sector group of our children and

young people providers together. Through regular non sector-specific engagement calls since March 2020, short breaks providers and drug and alcohol services have shared information and experiences with children's centres, parent and child, fostering agencies and children's homes, growing a sense of working together to meet need across the city.

The voice of children and young people remains key to our commissioning activity. We have engaged with young people to inform our Family Hubs case for change in 2020, and will continue to ensure we hear from children and young people at all stages of our work.

The Plymouth Trauma Lens



Emotional Health and Wellbeing

The PSCP sought to ensure that children, young people and families could access help when and where they needed to, and to support a confident workforce able to identify and provide early help for children and young people with emerging health issues.

There is good multi-disciplinary work between CAMHS and other health services to ensure that children receive well-planned care delivered by the most appropriate service. Following the learning from a previous Serious Case Review (SCR Child A), when children present in mental health crisis at our acute hospital the CAMHS outreach team provides a timely response and all children are seen within 24 hours. The CAMHS outreach practitioner supports hospital support staff to commence an assessment as soon as child is well enough. This means that appropriate intervention is offered at an appropriate time for the child.

Devon and Cornwall Police have a street-triage car staffed with an approved mental health practitioner to provide a community-based response for children experiencing mental ill health. This prevents children from presenting to acute services and provides effective support at the earliest opportunity.

The JTAI concluded that partnership working was integral to Plymouth's approach to improving services for children. Well-established strategic planning helps to focus on improving services to meet the emotional and mental health needs of children. A clear commitment to learning and development from the partnership evidenced to Inspectors that our workforce is equipped to understand and meet children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs.

This means that there is a wide and varied range of services, from the community to the voluntary sector that work well together to deliver targeted emotional health support for children. We focus upon early intervention to prevent escalation into statutory services. Inspectors found that children and families used these services when support was required to address their emotional and mental health needs.

Within University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust a new Mental Health Pathway has been introduced for children admitted into hospital. This provides a

structure for staff to follow and ensures the child/young person has relevant risk assessments carried out and that they are safeguarded throughout their stay. This Pathway also contains the escalation procedure for risk support/ delayed discharges for those children/young people in crisis; this has improved communications between the acute Trust and community partners, which in turn has enhanced multi-agency planning.

The CAMHS extended provision covering longer hours; including weekends has had a considerable positive impact on the discharge of medically fit children/ young people. Since Covid-19- CAMHS have implemented a new system whereby when they are confident a child/ young person is safe to be discharged from hospital they make a same day appointment for them to be seen at Mount Gould Hospital. The impact has resulted in fewer admissions from the Emergency Department (ED) onto the children's wards and prompter discharges from the hospital. A successful pilot we now intend to look at making practice. CAMHS

CASE STUDY

A looked after young person with a number of adverse childhood experiences has experienced a significant number of episodes of going missing, criminal and sexual exploitation, substance misuse, offending behaviour and disengagement from education. The young person has substantial mental health difficulties, impacting on their safety and emotional well-being. They have previously been provided with a series of unsuitable places to live. More recent agencies have worked collaboratively to improve things for this young person. A change of placement, and good coordinated support, using a trauma informed approach, means that professionals now have a stronger understanding of the young person's needs and how best to work with them. A robust multi-agency approach to supporting the young person's access to mental health provision and a tailored education package has helped the young person to settle in their home. The young person's identity has been considered and they have been given the opportunity to decorate their own personal space. Risks have significantly reduced for this young person. Professionals describe the young person as being a positive role model for others. This young person now reports feeling safe and has told staff that they are happy.

carry out assessments of children and young people who have presented to ED with a mental health crisis but are deemed to be medically fit for discharge. This allows the child/young person to be assessed and sent home direct without being admitted to the children's ward.

The inspection identified a number of areas for improvement. Activity upon these areas include:

- Strengthened and robust governance arrangements for Youth Offending Team
- Review of front door referral pathways used by Police
- Improved information sharing and information gathering within multi-agency requests into the MASH (to ensure the right agencies participate in decision making)
- Greater consideration of historic information for children experiencing neglectful home conditions to sufficiently analyse the cumulative impact on children's lives and plan for what need to happen to effect change.

In response, the Local Authority provided a written statement of action on behalf of the multi-agencies. Monitoring and scrutiny of this activity is held by the PSCP Quality Assurance Group.



Covid-19 Response

At the end of March 2020 the country faced an unprecedented set of challenges and uncertainties brought by the Coronavirus. COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation and the PSCP had to react quickly in response. The safeguarding partners of the Plymouth and Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership immediately agreed that their joint arrangements should be suspended in light of the need for both Plymouth and Torbay to have their own focused intelligence and responses.

In Plymouth the PSCP established a time limited COVID-19 Response Group chaired by the PSCP Business Manager. This was a flexible senior safeguarding lead forum which sat outside of the normal partnership construct in order to provide a dynamic response to safeguarding and COVID-19. It actively identified, responded, supported and directed the multi-agency response to our children, young people and families' needs during COVID-19, and worked in conjunction with existing strategic partnerships and networks. This Group met, virtually, initially on a weekly basis, prior to being absorbed into the usual PSCP structures and systems.

During the initial lockdown (March 2020) a number of partner agencies were unable to deliver a full service with direct face to face work with children. These agencies put in place alternative provision to actively support, communicate and work with their children, young people and families, e.g. phone, instant messaging and video conferencing.

Agencies RAG rated their children and families when considering urgency, frequency and type of visiting/support under COVID-19 conditions. This helped services to maintain delivery of the support at the right time, and have sight on risk to our vulnerable children, young people and families.

During the school closure period March to July 2020 with joint service working and cooperation individual schools received, from the Plymouth Virtual School, the names of children who were open to a social worker. This two weekly communication also supported schools to see the Children Young People and Families' RAG ratings to enable them to review their risk assessments and programmes of monitoring, contact and support for vulnerable children and

families. This meant that children, especially those subject to an open single assessment, received an increased level of contact and support from schools, meaning that there were more opportunities to identify emotional and welfare vulnerabilities, and Educare opportunities increased to provide stability and further support.

There was a clear and steady increase of children in care being in school during the period March to September 2020, which was the result of the hard work of schools, social workers and educational welfare officers. In the week commencing 13 July our average attendance for year 10 students was 35% and 39% for year 11 students.

The PSCP recognised that the emergency response to COVID-19 may exacerbate and escalate domestic abuse. Isolation of families meant that perpetrators were more likely to be at home with the victim, and traditional routes to help and support were disrupted as schools, GP's, children centres and nurseries were closed. The impact on people's emotional health and wellbeing during the lockdown could also create new domestic abuse cases.

In response the COVID-19 Response Group responded as follows:

- A new approach launched by Devon and Cornwall Police (funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner) in partnership with Plymouth Domestic Abuse Services. A dedicated unmarked vehicle brought together an independent domestic violence advisor and plain clothes police officer to respond together to any domestic abuse incident in the city.
- Following receipt of funding via the Ministry of Justice the virtual placement of Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service independent domestic violence advisor within Children Social Care. This meant that families were able to seek and receive early help and intervention, and Children Social Care benefited by the presence of specialist advice within child in need and child protection conferences and interventions.
- Participation in Devon & Cornwall Police and Plymouth City Council campaigns on domestic abuse.
- Engagement with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to secure oversight of resilience and reach of domestic abuse services.

- Weekly contact with Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service to understand level of demand within the city and capacity of shelters for families.
- Multi-agency guidance for responding to children as victims of domestic abuse.
- Provision and access to free practitioner e-learning on identifying and responding to children at risk of becoming victims of domestic abuse.
- Maintenance of Operation Encompass. Where police attended a domestic incident but the child/ren of the family were not at school due to COVID-19 restrictions, and there was concern about their vulnerability, this was recorded and passed to the school by the Central Safeguarding Team. Consideration could then be given as to whether a school place should be offered as part of the vulnerable group allocation at that time. To further support teachers, Operation Encompass set up a Teacher's Helpline staffed by a child and educational psychologist, or clinical psychologist.

The PSCP were aware that the COVID-19 interventions, such as social distancing, and stay at home guidance, including school closures, were likely to have a negative effect on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, as well as upon their parents and carers. Livewell South West mental health support services did, and still are, extending and increasing support for children, young people and adults during COVID-19:

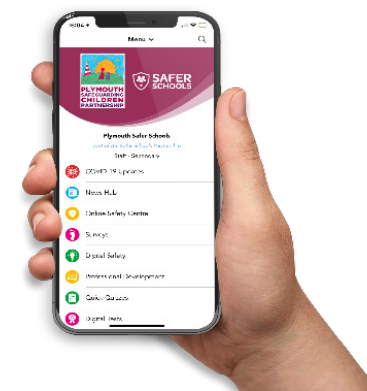
- First response service for adults is available 24/7
- Local helpline for children and young people is available 24/7
- Access to Chathealth, a confidential help and advice tool enabling safe and secure messaging between Livewell South West and children and young people
- Website – Health for Kids and Teens was launched which includes information about feelings, growing up, health, lifestyle, relationships, and sexual health. This new resource was promoted across Plymouth.

In April 2020 the National Police Chiefs Council recognised that as children were spending more time online to do school work, or occupy themselves whilst parents or carers are busy, they faced an increased threat from offenders who were, and are, online in greater numbers. In addition, as lockdown eased there were some freedoms for our children, but for older children especially without

schools being fully opened and structure in place the PSCP recognised that they could be more vulnerable to exploitation.

In response the COVID-19 Response Group responded as follows:

- Participation in Devon and Cornwall Police online safety and county lines campaigns and circulation of NSPCC/O2 Learning and Support packages.
- Expansion of NSPCC In-Ctrl virtual offer; providing children and their parents, where appropriate, tailored 1-1 support to help children safe online.
- Development, provision and circulation of free online bit-size learning and support materials for practitioners
- Children Social Care Front Door staff used a COVID-19 script to assist in receiving referrals and considering increased threat of online and extra familial abuse.
- Child Exploitation Screening Tool updated with an increased lens upon online use and risk, and drug and alcohol networks.
- The Operational Missing and Child Exploitation Group increased their meetings, virtually, to weekly during the COVID-19 lockdown to increase sighting and scrutiny of young people reported missing and those at risk of child exploitation. This led to timely disruption activities to mitigate and prevent risk. It is known that 91% of children reported missing during 6 month lockdown were either open to LA as LAC, CP or CIN or previously open to Children Social Care.
- Provision of Plymouth Safer Schools app. This app was made available, free of charge, to all schools within the city for use by teachers, school staff and safeguarding professionals. The Plymouth Safer Schools app provides access to advice, guidance and CPD accredited training with a specific focus on making children and safer in the online world.
- Pop Up Youth continued to provide disruption activity within the city where there were concerns of risk of child



exploitation. The Community Youth Service were able to provide targeted activity boxes, universal tutorials and workshops, external and diversionary activities during the summer period. 200 themed activity boxes were delivered to young people across the city aged 11 to 19 years of age.

The PSCP further considered the needs and experiences of children who were not being sighted by way of the alternative and interim arrangements put in place during COVID-19. Those children who were hidden from view; not receiving support currently from statutory organisations and those who are at risk and/or experiencing adverse impact to their health and wellbeing. The PSCP engaged with Barnardo's, in partnership with the Department for Education, delivered the See Hear Respond initiative within Plymouth. Delivery partners were able to provide a flexible model to de-escalate the likelihood of harm and ensure other support and networks were in place. The model provided online digital support, youth interventions and reintegration into education. Phase 1 of the initiative



, in partnership with The Zone supported 92 young people, with a large number of the referrals being received via our education partners and voluntary sector agencies.

The PSCP Business Support Team worked intensively during the COVID-19 period to ensure that learning materials and webinars were available to maintain learning and development of the multi-agency workforce. In September 2020 the full training offer had moved online, with interactive learning sessions supported by pre-course reading.

In summary, a number of organisations have reported that most of their children and families reacted positively to the change of direct support and contact to virtual, with some services commenting that it increased engagement. This has not obviated the concern that some children and families will be less visible, with the potential for safeguarding issues to be underreported.

Health, community and voluntary sectors, and early help and targeted support sectors remain vigilant to the future consequence the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown periods will have upon children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, and the impact upon familial and peer group relationships.

Partners commented upon the close partnership working during the COVID-19 lockdown acknowledging the flexibility, agile working and communication which supported safeguarding services to better meet children's and families' needs during the pandemic.



See, Hear, Respond

A new service provided across England for children, young people, parents and carers who are experiencing crisis due to Covid-19.

A new support hub and referral link is now available.

If you are worried about a child or young person experiencing harm and increased adversity or are looking for advice and help, visit www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond

Or call 0800 157 7015 to speak to one of our Barnardo's project workers.

**We operate between:
Monday - Friday 9am - 9pm and
Saturday and Sunday 10am - 6pm**

**Believe in children
Barnardo's**

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW OUR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES HAVE INFORMED OUR WORK AND INFLUENCED SERVICE PROVISION

The Plymouth Young Safeguarders produced an audio on “The Power of Language”. This was a powerful clip which demonstrated to our multi-agency professionals the need for their work language to be understandable by young people – to remove jargon and make our young people feel like individuals rather than a case. This audio was shared widely by the PSCP Workforce Development Group to help change practice. Particular feedback included a set of foster carers who listened to the audio and then reflected and sensitively re-thought the language they use when describing their foster children’s time spent with their parents, i.e. avoiding the word “contact”.

Livewell South West HYPE (Helping Young People Engage) Project led by Barnardo’s increases children and young people participation in co-production, feedback, workforce and service development within the primary care system.

The Young Voices Project is funded by the Samworth Foundation as part of the wider partnership activity within Together for Childhood. Young Voices is focused on the participation of young people to develop campaign messaging to tackle peer to peer problematic sexual behaviours. 24 young people from Marine Academy Plymouth worked alongside 2 NSPCC youth workers to share their knowledge and ideas about relationships. The sessions included a focus on building

relationships, psycho-education and learning about Speaking Up, a media and Nudge theory. Young people also got involved in selecting suppliers who would help them create their logo and campaign. Young people chose to develop a rap and prior to lockdown had the chance to visit a music studio. A small group continued to work during lockdown and produced a rap which can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIfEG_dyFvw&feature=youtu.be



Young people and school staff took part in evaluation interviews. Young people told us that being part of the participation groups had made them think about their relationships more and they really welcomed the opportunity to have a safe, informal space where they could talk about issues. Young people also valued having the opportunity to learn practical skills by working with professionals to design a logo and record their rap, but they also developed other skills. They talked about building relationships and friendships with each other, improving their communications skills and being able to negotiate with each other to develop their rap. School staff also highlighted a range of positive changes that came out of the project. From their perspective, they felt that young people were empowered and the workshops made it okay for them to talk about things and feel less embarrassed. There were also a number of disclosures which resulted from young people talking about relationship issues and realising that some of the behaviours they were experiencing weren’t appropriate. This led to a greater understanding of the issues that young people were facing and enabled better support to be provided.

PL5 - CATCH YOU THROUGH IT ALL

I know you’re stressed, i hope you’re ok

Try and wash it off, it doesn’t go away

You rely on me, can i rely on you?

If i can’t, becomes a trust issue

Together through it all, through the rise and fall

We will build you up, so we can stand tall

You don’t have to worry, if you ever fall

I’m stood right here to catch you through
it all

Catch you through it all



CHAPTER SIX

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEWS AND SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS

The Independent Quality Assurance Lead chairs the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group and has responsibility for overseeing the commissioning of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews that meet the criteria of Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. It also manages and seek assurances upon the recommendations from completed reviews so that learning can be addressed and transferred into practice; thus improving our approach to safeguarding children in Plymouth.

Serious Case Reviews

Some of the former Plymouth Safeguarding Children Boards Serious Case Reviews were not completed and/or published at the point the new safeguarding arrangements began to operate. The transitional arrangements of Working Together to Safeguard Children allowed all Local Safeguard Children Boards to continue for a 'grace period' of a maximum of 12 months from that point to complete and publish these SCRs. The latest date for completion and publication of an LSCB SCR was 29 September 2020, although this was subsequently extended due to the impact of COVID-19.

The former Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board published three Serious Case Reviews during this year and progressed work on a further two published in November and December 2020.

These Serious Case Reviews identified a number of key areas and themes, including:

- Prevention of abusive head trauma
- Identification and response to post-natal depression in mothers and fathers
- Responding to unusual medical presentations in pre-mobile babies
- Adult services working with parents and their responses to safeguarding concerns
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy
- Safe sleeping
- Practitioner Supervision frameworks
- Multi-agency response to children living with and affected by neglect.

Agencies have responded to assure the PSCP that key learning and actions for practice are embedded, and the PSCP continues to challenge and test against that assurance. Learning is also shared within the PSCP multi-agency training programmes, webcasts and webinars.

Action already taken includes:

A new programme, ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope! to help parents and carers cope with a crying baby and reduce the number of babies being seen with abusive head trauma of non-accidental origin. This is an evidence based programme to help parents and carers understand the normal crying pattern of young infants and help them develop coping mechanisms to manage the stresses which can be caused by normal infant crying.



Promotion of DadPad, an essential guide for dad in caring for babies and very young children. It is a free app and includes a section on coping with crying and supports the ICO messaging.



Partnership working with the South West Peninsula Child Death Overview Panel, supported by Lullaby Trust, to put in place a 'prevent and protect' practice model for reducing the risk of sudden unexpected infant death (SUDI) and promotion of safe sleeping advice.

Health colleagues have responded robustly to recommendations and have significantly improved training and availability of resources, risk assessments for sentinel injuries, designated named document for safe guarding children within Emergency Department, strengthened supervision processes, and induction training with emphasis on sentinel injuries and bruising in non-mobile children.

Continuing development of new Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework in partnership with the NSCPP in order to

- Develop sufficient knowledge and skill across our professional network to recognise and respond to young people who sexually harm;

- Support the professional network with effective multi-agency procedures which responds and manages risk of children with harmful sexual behaviour
- Have oversight of systems of working with young people who sexually offend.

Quality assurance activity remains ongoing with regard to children living and affected by neglect.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

During 2019/20 four Rapid Reviews were undertaken at the request of the Children Safeguarding Practice Review National Panel. Two of the four reviews concluded that the case concerned met the criteria for a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. These two reviews remain ongoing with one subject to ongoing police investigation. It is anticipated that they will be published in 2021/2022. The PSCP has identified immediate learning for each of the two cases and is currently working with its agencies to ensure that that such learning is effectively transferred into practice.

National Thematic Reviews

The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published two national thematic reviews during this report period.

'It was hard to escape: Safeguarding children at risk of criminal exploitation' was published in March 2020. Learning is being applied locally within the continuing development of the Adolescent Safety Framework.

'Out of Routine: A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)' was published in July 2020. Key learning is being applied locally in partnership with the South West Child Death Overview Panel and conversations with the Lullaby Trust to effect and maintain a prevent and protect model.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHANGES TO THE ARRANGEMENTS

As previously referred to, our original multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were published, in accordance with Department for Education requirements on 29 September 2019. Since that date the Torbay Local Authority has evaluated the suitability of this arrangement in light of the dissolution of the joint arrangement and Director of Children's Services in January 2020, and the need to maintain the rate of improvement needed for Torbay children. They have concluded that they need a single strategic safeguarding partnership.

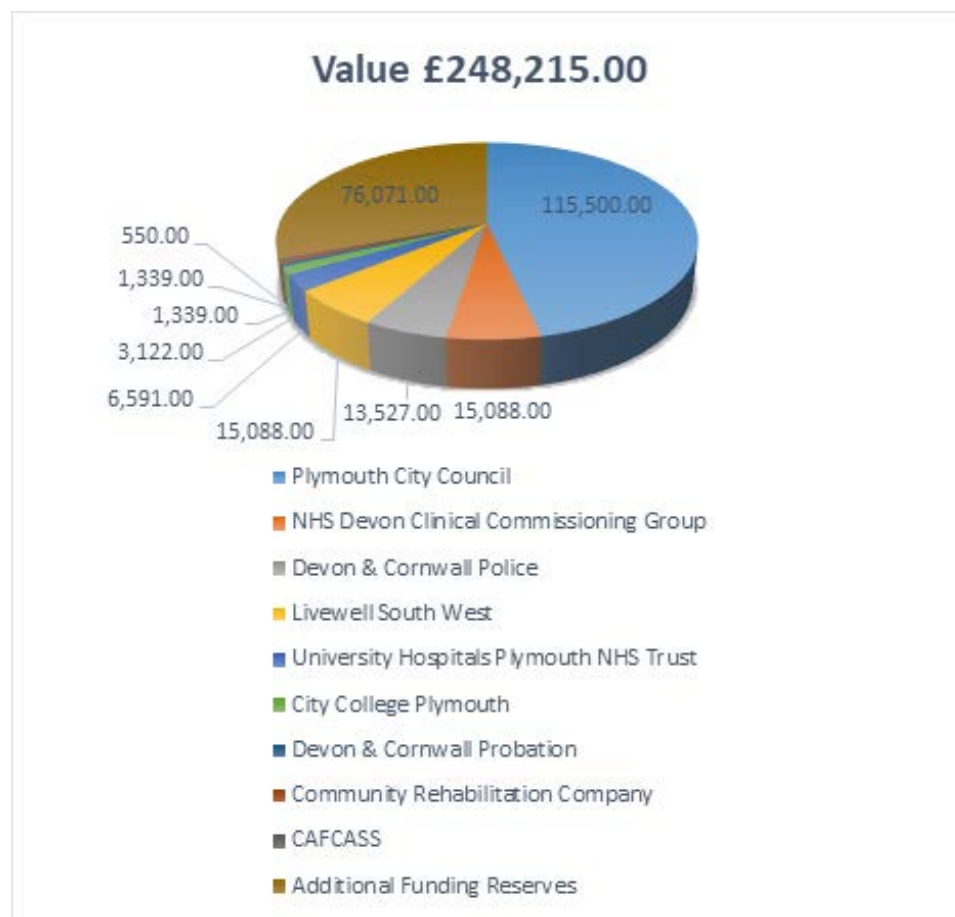
The subsequent Plymouth Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements were published in December 2020, further details of which are available at <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/uncategorized/plymouth-multi-agency-child-safeguarding-arrangements/>



CHAPTER EIGHT

FUNDING THE ARRANGEMENTS

Partner agencies continue to contribute to the PSCP pooled budget, in addition to providing a variety of resources in kind, e.g. training venues and staff time. Contributions from agencies for the 2019/2020 period is as follows:



The expenditure for the PSCP for the 2019/2020 period was

	£
Staffing	140,821.00
Independent Chair	11,071.00
Serious Case Reviews	5,950.00
South West Child Protection Procedures	0.00
Child Death Overview Panel	18,181.00
Operating Costs	6,517.00
Agency Services	19,921.00
TOTAL	202,461.00

CHAPTER NINE

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

Background:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTG) is the statutory guidance on multi agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, issued in accordance with the Social Work Act 2017. WTG requires multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to be subject of independent scrutiny for the purpose of providing assurance in judging the effectiveness of these arrangements. Effectiveness includes the way the safeguarding partnerships identify and review serious child safeguarding cases in the local area.

An integral element of the PSCP's approach in 2020 to deliver these requirements and provide scrutiny and assurance was to create an Independent Quality Assurance (IQA) role. The role is one which essentially reflects that of a 'critical friend', encouraging reflection on practice and providing an objective line of sight and independent scrutiny for the PSCP into the experiences of children and young people. It seeks to ensure that partnership working enhances the identification of learning which is then applied to practice and policy. An open, responsive and progressive culture is also an important hallmark of an effective partnership and forms another aspect of assurance work.

Activity 2019/2020:

- Independent quality assurance work commenced in April 2020 to support assurance activity on the partnership response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the potential safeguarding impacts on children and young people during these times of unprecedented risks to public health. Reactive assurance and oversight were secured in the following areas of partnership working:
 - Bespoke governance to support a child and young people safeguarding focus via a 'COVID19 Response Group'.
 - Clarity on the relationship and role of partnership groups established in response to the pandemic; to ensure clear ownership of messaging and key leads for activity.
 - The development of priorities delivered across the partnership including the co-production of responses in areas such as domestic abuse; extra familial abuse; neglect, online safety; mental wellbeing; school attendance

- and increased vulnerability of those on child protection plans.
- Engagement with Young Safeguarders.
- A dedicated Quality Assurance (QAS) group was established to drive the development of a quality assurance (QA) framework and QA work programme. Both of these processes represented innovative improvement for the partnership. Neglect was identified as the highest priority of safeguarding for the partnership to address from an assurance perspective. This priority was reflected in an extensive and instructive review of national, regional and local research, including findings from local Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) and new Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. A range of QA activity was designed to explore and understand the neglect landscape and key drivers of neglect at a local practice level, including geographical mapping. A set of complementary plans were also developed by the Young Safe-guarders group. Unfortunately, lockdown restrictions have delayed the delivery of the programme. Whilst the activity has had to be deferred to later in 2021 it represents a significant opportunity to achieve a better understanding of how partnership services can enhance their response to this significant issue and improve both practice, policy and crucially the outcomes for our children and young people. Sustained exposure to the harms from neglect is debilitating with potentially life defining consequences.
- The IQA has also been leading the partnerships Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group, addressing a number of current and non-current cases where children have been exposed to significant harm or on occasions tragically died. Oversight and challenge have been applied to ensure the quality and timeliness of the Rapid Review processes and subsequent reports to the National Panel as well as the quality required for the learning reviews arising from these cases. A significant effort has been demanded of the partnership to deliver and implement recommendations arising from non-current Serious Case Reviews, carried over from the previous safeguarding arrangements which ended in September 2019. Progress has been made (as documented throughout this report) but there is more work to do to move these cases

forward for QA monitoring and compliance activity. Sustaining improvements will be key in this regard.

- The local safeguarding system is complex and responds effectively to a number of often unforeseen challenges. There are significant strengths in the safeguarding partnership which benefits from many years of development and experience. One of these strengths is the quality of individuals representing the different agencies who hold a real desire to collaborate across the system, learning and seeking to constantly improve.

Partnership arrangements continue to develop and improve following the transition in Sept 2019 to new working arrangements with a focus upon creating and maintaining a culture of learning development. Relationships across the partnership are strong and mutually supportive. There is a willingness to challenge as well as support the system leadership as the circumstances demand.

- Whilst there are many strengths, the partnership framework would benefit from renewed development in the following areas:
- Firstly, 2020 highlighted the need for better disciplines in budget setting and business planning mapped against a clear risk envelope. There is confidence in the strategic partners' vision for the future of multi-agency safeguarding yet this needs to be aligned to financial investment, the prioritisation of risk and the implementation of OFSTED inspection reports to make that vision a reality.
- A more proactive and open engagement with communities, stakeholders and the media concerning the nature of safeguarding work in the city is considered to be beneficial. This requires a paradigm shift to be more outward focused, challenging what can be seen currently as a closed system, particularly when publishing the learning from cases that involve failings and oversights with the care and protection of children and young people. This approach could also drive benefits in terms of connecting with communities and young people as well as showcasing the strengths of city-wide safeguarding practice.
- Finally, a stronger focus upon the outcomes and the impact of safeguarding work on our children and young people needs to be secured and be more prominent within the activity. The difference being made across a complex

system is often difficult to identify although there have been encouraging developments in recent months which augur well for the future. There is a clear commitment to better understand and demonstrate the positive impacts that can be delivered through multi-agency safeguarding as we enter 2021.

Mr Andy Bickley
Independent Quality Assurance Lead

CHAPTER TEN

PRIORITIES FOR 2020/2021

It is recognised that the impact of and response to COVID19 will progress into the next business year. As such the PSCP will remain agile and flexible in its core priorities to enable to it dynamically respond to emerging threats, concerns and needs of our children and young people. PSCP business planning and partnership working will remain under review to ensure it is able to respond to the ever changing situation.

At the point of this Report, the PSCP has identified the following core priorities for the 2020/2021 year

NEGLECT

Recognition and response to children and young people suffering from or at risk of neglect.

ADOLESCENT SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Develop and implement the Plymouth Adolescent Safety Framework to provide a system wide approach and effective multi-agency working with children experiencing or at risk of extra-familial harm.

CHILD VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Preventing, recognising, intervening, and supporting children and young people who are victims or at risk of becoming victims of domestic abuse.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Improving safeguarding response to children living with mental health.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

To review and improve cross-strategic (children and young people) governance arrangements and understanding.





WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON?

**Call 999 if the child is in
real danger**

If you are worried about a child or young person, or think they are being abused, even if you are unsure, please contact: Plymouth Gateway Service on 01752 668000 - Select Children's Services – Option 1 or email: gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

You can also call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership
pscp@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouthscp.co.uk