

A group of diverse children are holding hands in a circle, standing in a grassy field with trees in the background. The children are wearing various colorful clothing, including a blue denim skirt, a green and white plaid skirt, a light green patterned dress, and a purple and blue striped dress. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a positive and safe environment.

ANNUAL REPORT

October 2020 to September 2021

www.plymouthscp.co.uk



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INTRODUCTION FROM OUR STRATEGIC LEADERS

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this, our second annual report, since moving to the current partnership arrangements. As expected, we've had to learn and adapt how we do things and that continues as we enter our third year as the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership. Over the coming year we will be implementing our strategy for A Bright Future which will mean some slight changes to the governance of this Partnership.

Effective partnership working has never been so vital to realising our vision of ensuring all children in Plymouth are achieving their full potential and are happy, safe and contented. We are acutely aware of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 upon children, families and of course our workforce, across Plymouth. It is a testament to the creative and committed workforce we have that we've all been able to continue the work of the Partnership over the past 18 months.

Of course, for us here in Plymouth, COVID-19 is not the only significant challenge we've faced this year. The tragic events in Keyham, over the summer, will have touched a great many of us in different ways. Again, we saw the very best in the people of Plymouth in the way communities came together to support one

another in the aftermath. We know the recovery journey for this is only just beginning and that ongoing partnership working will be an essential component of how we ensure everyone impacted by these events are given all the support they need.

There has been a huge amount of activity over the past year, as outlined in this report. However, we know that our focus now needs to move to how we evidence that our hard work has made a difference to outcomes for children and young people. Over the coming months we will continue to work across the Partnership to ensure we have robust quality assurance arrangements that reassure ourselves and others that we are focusing on the right activity and having a positive impact on children, young people and families in Plymouth.

Finally, this is an opportunity for us to provide our genuine thanks to the workforce that makes up the Partnership. Your commitment, passion and skills shine through in this report and we don't underestimate how challenging the past year has been for you all – thank you!

Alison Botham

Director of Children 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



Devon & Cornwall Police

Darryn Allcorn

Chief Nursing Officer
NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group

Member of the Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children Partnership



OVERVIEW FROM OUR INDEPENDENT QUALITY ASSURANCE LEAD

Background

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 is the statutory guidance on multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This guidance established the requirement for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to be the subject of independent scrutiny with the purpose of providing assurance on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) established the Independent Quality Assurance role to contribute to this assurance process, a role that started in April 2020. The role is essentially one of being a 'critical friend', encouraging reflection and learning in practice as well as providing a line of sight into the safeguarding issues prevalent in the city. The role also chairs two sub-groups for the partnership- the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-group and the Quality Assurance Sub-group.

Independent Quality Assurance Activity 2020/2021

A range of activities has been undertaken over the last year including:

- Supporting the multi-agency safeguarding response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a joined-up understanding of risks and harm during these uniquely challenging times
- Developing a quality assurance framework to deliver assurance activity for the partnership, enabling a greater insight and understanding of practice.
- Developing and implementing assurance activity on the theme of neglect which involved several specific activities such as case audits, observations of child protection meetings, multi-agency case reviews, and a survey of over 100 professionals working within the safeguarding area.
- Oversight of a number of Rapid Reviews and local learning reviews into cases of significant harm that have impacted on our children and young people.
- Ensuring that lessons learnt from safeguarding cases are responded to and implemented in a timely and dynamic way.

Challenges

Significant challenges arose from the impact of COVID-19 as agencies continued to respond, adapt and re-prioritise against the demands of the pandemic, demands that are still with us. This has not only affected the multi-agency priorities and tasks but also highlighted the emergence of new (different) risk dynamics for our children and young people. These include the increased vulnerability of spending more time at home, sometimes in challenging environments as well as the stark effect lockdowns have had on the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

The Partnership has additionally been challenged with a high number of vacancies and turnover in key safeguarding and partnership roles and the transitional arrangements with the Partnership Business Manager role. Plans are in place to address these issues which should help to provide a more stable footing as we enter 2022.

Leaders within the partnership have also recognised a need to learn from the experiences over the last year and have already begun a process of resetting the business planning arrangements and engagement with key sectors. This has been helped by publications of national reviews on safeguarding (Wood review).

The partnership is encouraged to retain this learning focus and in particular put in place a more business orientated approach in the setting of budgets, risks, priorities, and work programmes. Other matters which should be considered include:

- Clarifying the role for independent scrutiny within the new partnership developments.
- More consistent use of social media.
- Better understanding the impact and outcome of safeguarding work across the city.

Andrew Bickley, Independent Quality Assurance Lead

OUR YOUNG SAFEGUARDERS

In Plymouth we have a group called Young Safeguarders. This is a group of young people from across Plymouth who work to make sure that the voices of children and young people are heard and that things like the information they read and the policies and procedures that affect their lives are fair and understandable. They meet fortnightly.

This group is supported by the Plymouth City Council Participation Team and costs are part-funded by the Partnership. They regularly input into the work of the PSCP, including providing scrutiny of key performance indicators.

Earlier this year, the Young Safeguarders updated the 10 wishes booklet - www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Ten-Wishes-The-why-and-the-how-booklet.pdf. They didn't feel that the wishes needed to be changed but rather to be relaunched, with more detail and a film - <https://vimeo.com/542120818>. The 10 wishes have been embedded in the PSCP multi-agency training programme.

The Young Safeguarders continue to play a role in recruitment and were involved in the recruitment of the new Partnership Manager for the PSCP.

In the second half of this year, the PSCP employed (through Barnardo's) a young person with experience of being in care, to sit on our Quality Assurance Sub-group. This young person also attends our Young Safeguarders meetings. We are still in the early stages of this new initiative and working to get it right for all involved. We hope that this role will eventually lead to us having an additional perspective, from a young person with lived experience of our services, influencing the work of the Partnership.

More information about the Young Safeguarders and their aspirations can be found on their website: www.plymouth.gov.uk/academysocialworkplymouth/voiceschildrenandyoungpeople/youngsafeguarders.

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.





GROWING UP IN PLYMOUTH WHAT OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY...

I want to feel safe when I go out with my friends

*I worry about so many things – who can help me and my friends
with our mental health?*

*I am lonely and want your help so I can make connections with other
people and places*

*I have special educational needs and I need to know how I will be
helped as I grow up*

*Being a child in care makes me feel different – I'm the only one in
my class and everyone knows about me*

What is being done to save the environment and how can I help?

*I'm worried about being able to get a job in the future – what choices
do I really have?*

I'm going to be 18 soon and I don't know what to expect

I want to make my own choices

*I help to care for my mum and little brother, but I don't want you to
forget about me*

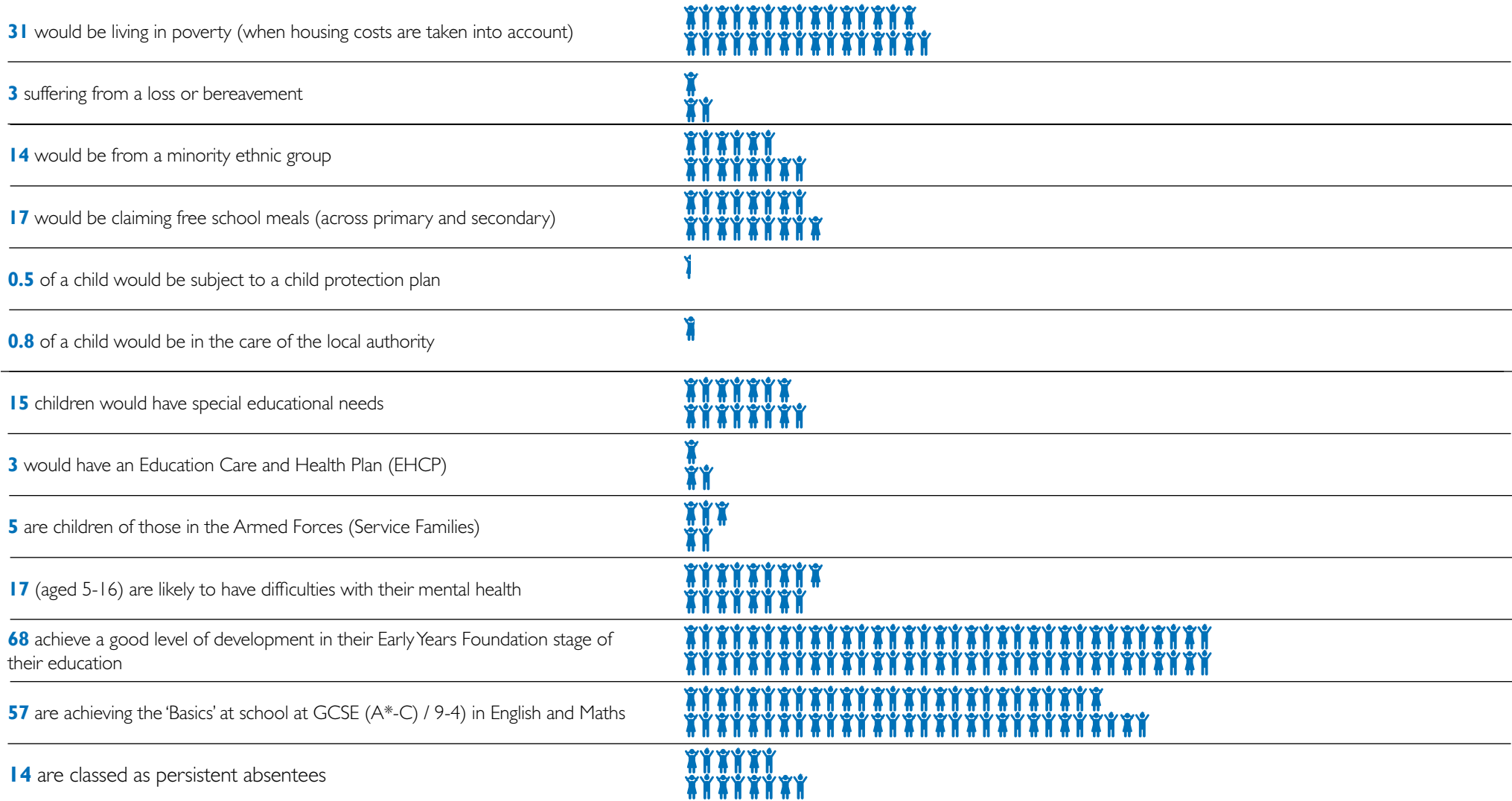
I need somewhere safe to live

*I want someone to talk to, who I can trust and isn't going to walk
away*

Social media makes me feel my life needs to be perfect

GROWING UP IN PLYMOUTH – IF OUR CITY HAD 100 CHILDREN

There are approximately 52,898 children and young people under the age of 18 years living in Plymouth.
This is approximately 20% of the total population in the area (based on ONS Mid-2019 Population Estimate).



WHAT HAPPENS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN PLYMOUTH WHEN THEY NEED SUPPORT

296

Children went 'missing' – which equated to 861 total missing episodes.

847

Repeat Referrals (23.6%)

10,147

Contacts into Plymouth Gateway (up from 8,224 in previous year)

3,584

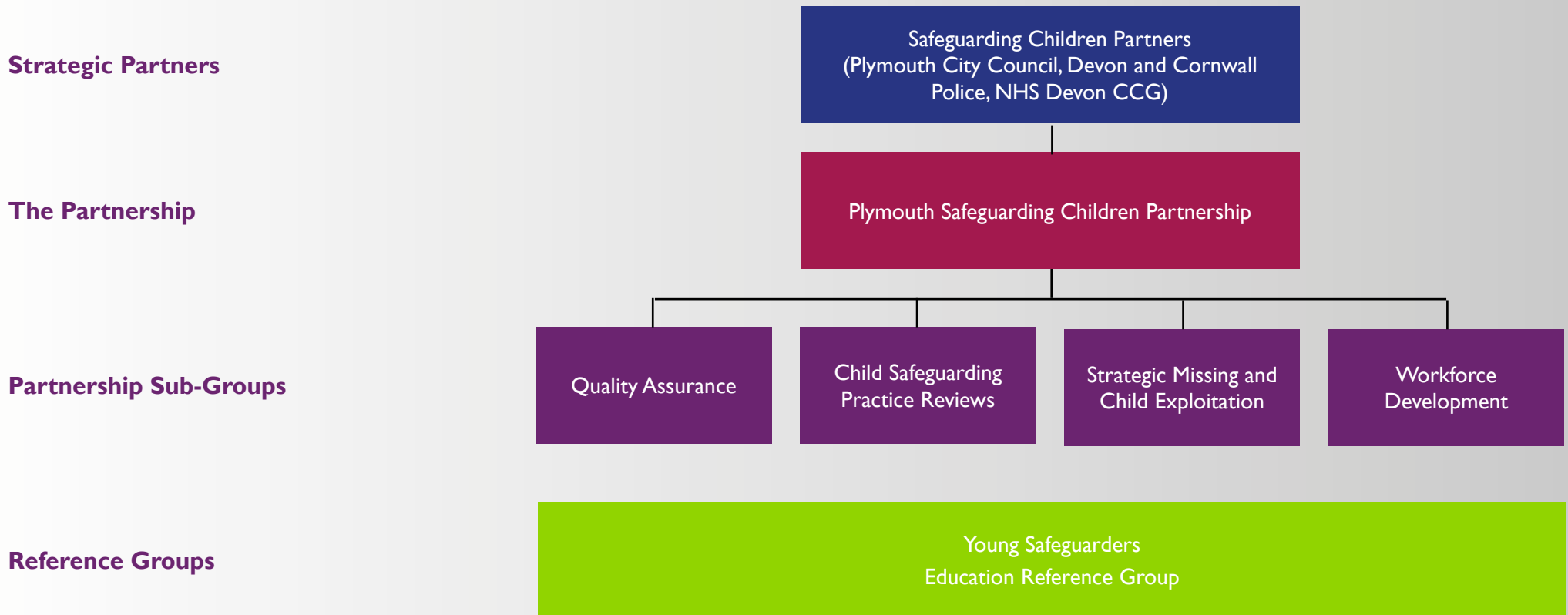
Contacts that become Referrals into Children's Social Care (up from 3,498 in previous year)

Data for the period October 2020 to September 2021

Having reviewed the data around Contacts and Referrals, the Partnership have commenced work on reviewing the Threshold Tool. This is now being reviewed within the Quality Assurance Sub-Group, with a view to it being out for wider consultation in order to be agreed by the end of March 2022.

WHAT IS THE PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP?

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership is often known as the PSCP. We co-ordinate safeguarding services and take a leadership role in supporting and engaging agencies across the city. We endeavour to support agencies to learn from local and national reviews. We scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and hold agencies to account for ensuring everyone plays their part in keeping children and young people safe, in Plymouth.



More detailed information about our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people can be found at: www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Plymouth-MASA-FINAL-2020.pdf

FUNDING THE PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

The financial details on this page relate to the financial year 2020/21.

The PSCP is jointly funded by a number of agencies, with Plymouth City Council currently providing the majority of the funding:

Agency	Contribution
Plymouth City Council	£115,500
Devon and Cornwall Police	£20,307
NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group	£15,088
Livewell South West	£15,088
University Hospitals NHS Trust	£6,591
City College Plymouth	£3,122
Probation	£2,678
Total	£178,374

The expenditure for the same period was:

Item	Cost
Business Unit Staffing	£141,719
Business Unit Operating Costs	£3,030
Independent Quality Assurance Lead	£24,185
Young Safeguarders	£1,500
Child Death Overview Panel	£18,182
Training Delivery	£8,576*
Redundancy Costs	£5,712
Other costs	£935
Total	£203,839

*after taking account of paid places on courses

The difference between the income and expenditure was made up by using reserves. At the end of the financial year, the reserves were £102,120. Reserves are needed to cover unforeseen expenditure.

RESPONSE TO EVENTS IN KEYHAM

Following the tragic events in Keyham during August 2021, there was significant Partnership activity that involved agencies coming together to support children, young people and their families at a time of crisis.

Partners worked carefully together to ensure consistent and clear messages were communicated to families.

As well as coming together to support children and young people with the initial aftermath; the Partnership wants to think about how we work together going forward to protect children and young people from serious violence. Never has it been so important for us to be a trauma-informed city.

PLYMOUTH TOGETHER



TRAUMA INFORMED PLYMOUTH

The Plymouth Trauma Lens



As a trauma aware city Plymouth recognises the evidence base that is emerging day by day, across both national and international communities, which identifies the impact of trauma and the consequences of exposure to adversity as a profound health, wellbeing and social care issue of our time. The PSCP shall ensure that trauma-informed practice is everybody's business and shall apply the trauma-informed lens in its work by using the Plymouth Trauma Informed Network principles which:

Realises what trauma is and how it can have wide spread impact for children, young people, families and communities.

Recognises the signs and effects of trauma in individual children, young people, families, groups and communities. This includes our workforce.

Responds by integrating knowledge regarding trauma-informed approaches into safeguarding policies, procedures and practice.

Resists re-traumatising children, young people, families and communities by actively seeking to avoid situations where traumatic memories might be retriggered and seeking to de-escalate and diffuse potentially traumatic interactions when they occur.

Resilience is promoted in supporting children, young people, families and communities to cope with and adapt to adversity, and have the strength to challenge situations where it might occur.

This means that throughout its arrangements the PSCP shall ensure that it supports the five core values for a trauma-informed Plymouth:

Safe: there is consideration of the psychological safety of those involved in and impacted by its safeguarding arrangements, both as an ethical commitment and in the knowledge that this will lead to greater transparency and opportunities for learning which can be transferred into practice. When meeting, engaging and working with children, young people, families, communities and professionals all efforts shall be made to establish trusting relationships.

Person centred: understanding the lived experience of children, young people, families and communities and the circumstances which led to their involvement within services. Voices of the child, young person, families and communities shall be listened to and heard with respect.

Collaborative: children, young people, families, communities and professionals are treated as equal partners in the PSCP safeguarding arrangements. A collaborative approach shall be facilitated across safeguarding services, communities, families and individuals who can make a contribution. Learning shall be reflective with openness and emotional awareness.

Empowering: there is an overriding expectation that the PSCP safeguarding arrangements shall make a genuine difference. All involved, engaged or working within safeguarding services deserve to know that their contributions have influenced real change and that the PSCP is going to ensure that learning from their involvement, engagement or work is meaningful and widely disseminated.

Kind: ensure that language is appropriate and mindful of victim blaming or falling into judgement. There shall be understanding that traumatic circumstances may evidence behaviour that is considered challenging and the trauma lens shall be applied to try to understand the underlying cause of this. There shall be kindness, clear transparent and compassionate communication and engagement.



RESPONDING TO COVID-19

COVID-19 has been a very significant feature of the past year and looks likely to continue to dominate the agenda in so many ways in the coming months. It has presented both challenges and opportunities in the way we operate both as a Partnership but also as individual agencies. The PSCP has sought to be more flexible and responsive in the way we operate, utilising technology to enable us to continue our business but in a different way. Many agencies across the Partnership have sought to use those same technologies to engage differently with children and their families. We're still very much learning and responding to these new opportunities and the challenge for all of us is to consider, locally and nationally, will be how we assess the impact of these new ways of working, on outcomes for children and young people.

Working with the impact of COVID-19, for staff and for children has now become embedded within our usual practice. Rather than having separate COVID-19 response sub-groups, it is now an ongoing consideration for every aspect of the work we do, across our sub-groups.

Training programme moved online. Additional training was provided to education and health colleagues to accommodate changing needs.

More COVID-19 Information and help can be found at www.plymouth.gov.uk/coronaviruscovid19information

Some of the key challenges we've faced over the past year as a result of COVID-19:

Child Protection concerns

- This year has seen a rise in referrals to Children's Social Care, and a very significant rise in the numbers of children in care.
- A significant number of children in need and those subject to a child protection plan, have remained in need for longer than in previous years.
- This is replicated in many places nationally and is a cause of significant pressure on resources and consequently the ability of partner agencies to offer families the level of service they would want to.

Exploitation and Online Abuse

- With children and young people being seen less by professionals and spending more time online, there is an increased risk that abuse and exploitation is hidden.

Families struggling financially

- Increased use of foodbanks and other similar resources to ensure families have the food they need.
- Increased number of families reporting poverty as an issue when visiting Children's Centres.

Staffing

- The impact of different levels of lockdown during the course of the last 12 months has had a significant impact on service delivery across a range of agencies within the partnership.
- Recruiting staff has become more difficult than it was previously due to the national recruitment and staffing challenges.

We know that for many of our families, COVID-19 merely added to the pre-existing challenges they faced. For those faced with poverty, isolation or a lack of community resources, lockdowns weren't just an inconvenience but in some cases have had a huge and lasting impact on wellbeing. In particular we know that for years to come we will want to support children, young people and their families with making up for the lost time in education and early years settings.

A number of agencies report increasing their social media and online presence during the past year to mitigate some of the impact from COVID-19. Children's Centres across the city have remained open during the past year, adapting how they work to ensure they can safely support the families that need them most.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED

The PSCP provides a large amount of multi-agency training to professionals across the city. Below is a snapshot of what we've done in the past year.

91 days of training

540 individual practitioners have taken 1170 training places

A range of different topics including:

- Child Protection and Working Together
- Supervision Skills
- Trauma-informed Practice
- Neglect and Emotional Abuse
- Online Safety
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Child Exploitation / Adolescent Safety
- Domestic Abuse



Feedback on our training offer:

732 responses that give us an average score of 4.6 / 5 when asked about the quality of the training.

Participants valued:

- The quality of the training
- Knowledge and expertise of our trainers – all having a background relevant to the topic delivered
- Practical up to date content that is relevant and useful to their role
- Interactive sessions

We also heard that we need to improve on the number of courses available and think about the timing to ensure it is as accessible as can be for education colleagues and others.

Our full training offer and more information about how to book on can be found on our website: www.plymouthscb.co.uk/training-development

Learning into practice

We feel that it's really important to not just offer the training but to go back to practitioners after they've had time to reflect and ask them what difference it's making to their practice. We currently do this three months after attending a training session. Here is some of the feedback received:

“Watching the film of the family and the discussion that we had on the course really helped me to understand why a family I’m working with did not want to accept support for their daughter. When I next saw them we had a very different conversation as a result of the training which really helped me and them understand what was getting in the way of them accepting help and how we could get over that. In the end because I took that different approach the child got all the help they needed and is doing much better.”

(Neglect Course)

“This tutor managed to cover both sides of the coin (theory and practical hands on) and gave lots of further reading/videos etc. I have been able to support my young person positively and constructively (in her moving out), following her along her journey within the care system, maintaining our relationship and continuing to build on that bond in a trauma informed manner. I’ve also seen the results of this training in the way the Police have handled her... The patience, understanding and respect they’ve shown this young girl has been inspiring and has taken her from a position of viewing the police as the enemy to viewing them as a friend in time of need.”

(Trauma-informed Course)

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED

At the beginning of this year we agreed upon five priorities that we felt were important for us to focus on, in order to achieve our vision of:

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 equality of opportunity in reaching these basic needs.

Those priorities were:



The next few pages provide an overview of what we've delivered against each of those priorities and what we think still needs to happen.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED - NEGLECT

- Neglect training course resulting in increased awareness of neglect across the workforce.
- Neglect focused audit activity highlighting good practice and areas for improvement. We anticipate a report on this being completed in December 2021.
- Agencies working collaboratively with families at an earlier stage to identify need and how they would like to be supported.
- Police awareness within their organisation - Voice of the child video - <https://vimeo.com/527849152/a563760575>.
- Health colleagues have updated their 'was not brought' policy to ensure they are fully considering the indicators of neglect for children.
- In the year up to 30 June 2021, Barnardo's Children's Centres in Plymouth saw a significant increase in the number of children they were supporting, ranging from 10.1% to 55.9% increase across their centres. This demonstrates that more children and families in Plymouth are being supported by one of our key early intervention tools – Children's Centres.
- When analysing the vulnerabilities of the children accessing Barnardo's Children's Centres; 'family poverty' was a significantly increased factor – up across the different centres between 25.2% and 41.2% year on year.
- Barnardo's Children's Centres noted 72% of the children they were supporting are living in poverty compared with 53.9% the year before.
- Police colleagues have successfully challenged CPS decisions not to prosecute neglect against children by escalating their concerns and prioritising the rights of the child involved.
- Police and health colleagues are working closely together to ensure early identification of any need for medical examinations for children experiencing neglect.

Example of where concerns about neglect have been acted upon and consequently a difference has been made to a family:

One of our Children's Centres noted that they had been concerned about increasing levels of neglect for a family of eight children ranging in age from 2 to 17 years old. There were a number of concerns relating to neglect but when professionals started visiting and working with the family, it became clear that domestic abuse, parental mental health and other concerns were present. Staff at the Children's Centre, worked with the family and with colleagues in Housing, Police and Children's Social Care to ensure welfare checks and appropriate statutory support was in place. They then continued to work together, visiting the home, applying for grants and listening to what the family needed help with. Feedback from the children identified how much they enjoyed the play sessions offered in the Children's Centre. Feedback from the father identified how much he appreciated the support of the Children's Centre to help them bring about change for the children.

Going forward:

- We need to better understand what difference this focus on neglect in the past year has had on outcomes for children.
- We need to consider what, if any, neglect practice tool would assist practitioners to identify and work with neglect.
- We need to ensure we fully understand the interplay between poverty and neglect.
- We will review our Neglect Strategy and Framework.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED - ADOLESCENT SAFETY FRAMEWORK

- Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) is now live and being used across Plymouth – www.plymouthscb.co.uk/asf
- Workforce have been offered overview training of what it is and how it supports young people in our city.
- Dedicated ASF section on the PSCP website – with all the documents professionals need as well as guidance on how it works. Thanks to the Devon Children and Families Partnership for their kind support and collaboration in helping us to launch the Adolescent Safety Framework.
- True multi-agency collaboration to ensure the final 'product' draws on the knowledge and experience of a range of professions.
- During development of the ASF, a 'pilot' was initiated using a live issue in St Budeaux. A partnership meeting was held in line with the principles of the ASF conference. It was felt that this was the first time that this number of relevant agencies had come together in that way, around this issue of exploitation for this group of young people. This enabled the professional group to explore creatively how to best support these young people and not feel constrained by 'what we've always done'.

Contextual Safeguarding seeks to understand, and respond to people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form among their peers, in their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online can involve or lead to violence and abuse.

Going forward:

- We need to embed the ASF knowledge into all PSCP training so it becomes as central as any other tool/assessment we use to support young people.
- We need to ensure our whole workforce understands and utilises the ASF.
- We need to assess the impact of the ASF and this focus on outcomes for young people in Plymouth.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED - CHILD VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Delivered domestic abuse training as part of core training programme.
- Supported and contributed to 'Awareness Week of Action' led by the Safer Plymouth Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group.
- We attend the Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel to ensure the learning from these cases where appropriate is shared and disseminated across the workforce and to support the voice of the child in the Domestic Homicide Review process.
- Police note that robust intervention and response investigation plans have allowed the specialist officers within the Domestic Abuse unit (SODAIT) and Public Protection Unit (PPU) to work together to identify and tackle domestic abuse amongst children. The training and use of Police child protection powers by frontline staff to protect and take children to a safe place during high risk domestic abuse allows the children to be safeguarded. Those children who are direct victims of domestic abuse are dealt with by PPU a specialist team with close working relationships with partner agencies.
- A number of various domestic abuse programmes are running throughout the city, delivered by various agencies, including all Children's Centres. These all ensure that the safety of children is kept in mind and paramount.
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness training delivered to over 100 health colleagues across University Hospitals Plymouth NHSTrust.
- Data from Barnardo's Children Centres shows that 56.5% of the children they worked with this year are living in households affected by domestic abuse compared with 47.3% in 2019/20. Data nationally and across agencies in Plymouth suggests that the prevalence of domestic abuse is increasing; however, we also expect that awareness raising, both nationally and locally will mean some of the increase is about professionals being more aware of domestic abuse that was previously 'hidden'.
- Action for Children Children's Centres report working with 219 children this year where domestic abuse was identified as a vulnerability.

Going forward:

- We need to better understand what difference this focus has had on outcomes for children and young people in Plymouth.
- We need to understand the effectiveness of the various domestic abuse programmes in place, in terms of outcomes for children and young people.



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED - EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Ensured that child development and impact of abuse is central theme running throughout multi agency training programme to equip workforce with skills and knowledge of how best to support children and young people. Our Trauma-informed course is particularly focused on ensuring children, young people and families receive a compassionate, trauma-informed and responsive offer of help when in need.
- Police have developed mental health rapid response cars allowing for a practitioner to be called to an incident involving mental health and make quick and preventative decisions for children and link into the appropriate agency.
- Pilot initiative by Action for Children to support children's well-being during their transition to school.
- The Local Authority have worked with education provisions across the city to deliver the Healthy Child Quality Mark (HCQM) programme. So far, 75% of Plymouth schools are part of the HCQM family.
- Barnardo's Children's Centres noted that 81.1% of the children they supported this year are living in households affected by Parental Mental Health compared with 63.5% on 2019/20. We know that COVID-19 and the associated restrictions have had a significant impact on mental health for parents, carers and children across Plymouth.
- Action for Children Children's Centres recorded that 314 children they supported this year had parental mental health noted as a vulnerability.
- Feedback from children working with Action for Children Children's Centres evidenced that they had fun whilst also building resilience and confidence. Parental feedback included "The weeks I spent at the Soapbox Theatre with my son and daughter, were magical. Each Wednesday morning injected fun and creativity into our week. My son found a new love of using story telling in his play and grew more confidence in building friendships, My daughter enjoyed exploring the natural, outdoor environment and interacting with new, friendly faces and I was inspired to be more imaginative in how I play with my children which I think will only strengthen my relationship with them which is invaluable! I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this project." And: I felt really anxious about returning to groups after so much time, but this was great for me and my son, it built up my confidence and supported us both. Kind of like a medicine after COVID"

- This year, 596 children were seen by University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust (UHPNT), having presented with an acute mental health crisis/illness including deliberate self-harm. All 596 have been assessed by a CAMHS paediatric practitioner before discharge; with a commitment that UHPNT's safeguarding service will screen each one to ensure good practice.

Going forward:

- We need to work together as a Partnership to address the increased need that has resulted from COVID-19.
- A new Healthy and Happy Partnership will be established in January 2022 and will focus on the key priorities to support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing.



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The PSCP has participated in the A Bright Future review and considered how we fit into that to ensure a more robust and streamlined approach to governance across Plymouth.

The Chair of the Partnership and the Strategic Partnership have remained stable throughout the past year, along with the Independent Quality Assurance Lead. This has provided necessary stability and continuity during a challenging few months. As we head towards 2022, we know that all three posts will change and that presents an exciting opportunity, alongside A Bright Future, to ensure we have the very best governance and scrutiny arrangements we can, so that we can achieve our vision for children and young people in Plymouth.

Going forward:

- We need to review what we feel our independent scrutiny should look like when the current arrangements end in 2022.
- We need to finalise and implement the A Bright Future governance arrangements within the PSCP.



OUR PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

Our priorities for the coming period sit within the A Bright Future Strategy priority of 'Safe'. Find out more at www.plymouth.gov.uk/abrightfuture

This means we have a city where:

- Children and young people are safe and protected from the risk of harm at home and in their communities.
- Families tell their story once, and are fully involved in their plans to support change with a focus on their strengths.
- Families receive their support in the places and from the people that best suit their needs, for as long as they need to embed resilience.
- Families don't see the 'join' between services.
- Children and young people have opportunities to have fun and take calculated risks to support their development.

We will be continuing with our current priorities for the next six months. These are:



FAMILY HUBS

As outlined in March of this year, Family Hubs are an exciting new 10 year programme coming to Plymouth - <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/newsroom/pressreleases/newfamilyhubstransformsupportparentsandchildrenacrossplymouth>.

“Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care”.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2018

We envisage that the Family Hubs will come into operation by 2024 and will be a key tool in our Partnership approach to achieving our vision and priorities set out in earlier pages. We know that good Early Help for families is key to ensuring that more children in Plymouth live safely within their own families. Family Hubs provide a ‘front door’ for families to access that Early Help when they need it and where they need it.



LOCAL LEARNING REVIEWS

As outlined earlier, the PSCP has a responsibility to undertake reviews locally where we feel lessons could be learned, both in terms of what could be improved upon and what could we do more of that has worked well. We have also, in the past year, published the last of the outstanding Serious Case Reviews from our time as a Safeguarding Board.

Rapid Review - Child C:

- Rapid Review and learning event undertaken very promptly after establishing there were concerns and the likelihood of lessons for future practice. Positive feedback received from the National Panel about the comprehensive nature of this review and learning.
- This led to a significant review of the way agencies consider and support children who are electively home educated.
- The Police noted that they are now working closely with Children's Services to consider how they ensure that children being home educated are visited, where appropriate.

Serious Case Review - Harry:

- Link to the published review: <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SCR-Harry-Final-Report-for-publication.docx.pdf>
- A series of 'best practice webinars' were held to share learning that resulted from this report
- A case study for circumstances similar to this have been embedded into our core training package.

Serious Case Review - Child A and B:

- Link to the published review: <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Overview-Report-Twins-FINAL-for-publication.docx.pdf>

Serious Care Review - Child WR:

- Link to the published review: <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final-Review-Child-WR-PUBLICATION.doc.pdf>
- A case study for circumstances similar to this have been embedded into our core training package.

Two further Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) are in progress and due to be published shortly.

Our supervision skills training course provides detailed learning from our recent and historical reviews.

Alongside Rapid Reviews and CSPRs, we regularly undertake themed audits in line with our priorities or events that arise during the year. This year we used our Multi-agency Case Audit (MACA) process to better understand how all agencies are responding to neglect in Plymouth. We've learnt from this process that there is a need to refresh how we undertake MACAs and ensure the process is both efficient and clear in delivering the desired outcomes.



WIDER LEARNING AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Learning from what works well and what could be improved in safeguarding, doesn't stop at the Plymouth city boundaries. Here's a little about how we are seeking to improve outcomes for children and young people by engaging with wider sources of learning.

Regional Learning

The PSCP has been working closely in recent months to think about how Plymouth, Devon and Torbay can share processes and learning surrounding our Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Although the Greater Devon area is made up of three Local Authorities, we share one NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and one Police service. We also have a number of other agencies that work across the three Partnerships. We hope that by working more closely together and aligning some of our processes we can make it easier for agencies to engage with us and ultimately improve outcomes for children and young people across Plymouth and the Greater Devon area.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

The National Panel review all Rapid Reviews and local CSPRs that we and other Local Authorities undertake. They produce an annual report which can be found on their website. They also produce national reviews into particular themes they feel warrant it. In the past year they have produced one called 'The Myth of Invisible Men – Safeguarding children under one from non-accidental injury caused by male carers'. This has been considered by the PSCP to think about how we translate the learning into action for children in Plymouth. The report can be found on the National Panel website. We have begun to incorporate this learning into our core training package. We are also going to think about how we could best provide some short learning sessions about this specific issue to raise awareness and improve the way professionals across Plymouth engage with men in families.

OFSTED

OFSTED were asked by the government to carry out a review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges. They produced a report which can be found on their website. Agencies in Plymouth have worked quickly to digest this report and produce an

action plan that is relevant for Plymouth children and young people. This is going to be incorporated into the work of the Together for Childhood project and report into the PSCP Quality Assurance Sub-group, to ensure oversight and accountability for delivery of this action plan.

Together for Childhood (TFC)

The PSCP continues to play an active role in ensuring that the NSPCC Together for Childhood 10 year project is successful in tackling child sexual abuse in Plymouth. More information about that can be found at https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Together_for_childhood.pdf

Letting the Future In (LTFI)

The PSCP is excited to be support Plymouth's involvement in this project. Plymouth City Council, Barnardo's, Livewell South West and Firstlight have been selected to work with the NSPCC, with funding from the Home Office, to improve local responses to child sexual abuse. Plymouth has been selected as one of only ten sites nationally to receive the full training and implementation support to pilot delivery of the NICE recommended child sexual abuse recovery service – Letting the Future in. More information can be found here - <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services-children-families/letting-the-future-in>

Care Journeys

Care Journeys works in partnership with young people and Plymouth City Council to create change and make it more likely for care experienced young people to reach positive destinations. More information about Plymouth Care Journeys can be found here: <https://plymouth.carejourneys.org.uk>.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The PSCP continues to engage with the regional arrangements for overseeing child deaths – South West Peninsula Child Death Overview Panel. For more information about CDOP see here - <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/professionals/child-death-overview-panel/>.

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Call 999 if the child is in real danger

For members of the public

If you're worried about a child or young person or think they're being abused, even if you're unsure, call 01752 668000 or email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk or outside of normal working hours call Plymouth Out of Hours Service on 01752 346984.

The Gateway service is made up of multi-agency professionals who can give you advice, information and support. You can also contact the NSPCC if you want to talk to someone about your concerns and get advice.

When you get in touch you will be asked some questions including:

- the child's name and date of birth
- the address and contact details for the child's parent or carer
- why you think the child is at risk or is being abused

All agencies involved with the child, such as the police or the child's school, will work out together what support is needed to keep them safe.

Sometimes there's nothing to worry about and we don't need to do anything. Sometimes we need to put together a plan to make sure the child is kept safe.

Everyone involved will work hard with the family to keep the child at home, but if it's not safe for them to stay with their family then in some cases a child can be taken in to care to keep them safe.

For professionals

If you're a professional with an urgent child protection concern, please make an immediate Contact by calling the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01752 668000 (01752 346984 out of hours) or email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk.

You'll be asked to follow up your call by submitting a MASH referral form which you can download at www.plymouthscp.co.uk