



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

pscp@plymouth.gov.uk

www.plymouthscp.gov.uk



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction from our Strategic Leaders _____	3
Young Safeguarders _____	5
Support for Children, Young People and Families in Plymouth _____	7
What is the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership? _____	9
Funding the Partnership _____	10
Trauma-informed Plymouth _____	11
Responding to Covid-19 _____	13
Learning and Development: What we've delivered _____	14
Learning and Development: Learning into Practice _____	16
Our Priorities Reviewed: Neglect _____	17
Our Priorities Reviewed: Adolescent Safety Framework _____	18
Our Priorities Reviewed: Child Victims of Domestic Abuse _____	20
Our Priorities Reviewed: Emotional Health and Well-being _____	22
Our Priorities Reviewed: Governance Arrangements _____	23
Our Priorities Going Forward _____	24
Safeguarding in Education _____	25
National and Regional Learning _____	26
Local Learning _____	27
Local Partnerships _____	28
Independent Scrutiny _____	30
Concerns about a Child or Young Person _____	32

Our vision: The right support is available and accessible, at the earliest opportunity, to ensure children and young people in Plymouth are safe and feel safe in their families and communities.

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR STRATEGIC LEADERS

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this, our third annual report, since moving to the current partnership arrangements and our first under the new A Bright Future governance 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. This report is a six-month update to bring the annual reporting cycle into line with the financial year-end.

The last 6 months have seen the launch of a brand new approach to the way we support children and families in Plymouth: Building Support. We've listened to what children, young people and families have told us and we have been working across the Partnership to co-produce this approach. We're really excited about the vision it offers, where we work towards offering families the help they need, at the earliest opportunity and we build upon the strengths and resources available within the family and community network. We anticipate that over the coming year, as a result of this approach, more families will receive support from early help services and fewer families will require statutory support from the Local Authority. A well-functioning child safeguarding partnership will have the right support available, at the right time - something we believe passionately we can achieve here in Plymouth.

"We are immensely grateful for all that you, our workforce, do across the city, on a daily basis - thank you!"

As we enter a new year for the Partnership, we are also pleased to welcome John Clements, our newly appointed Independent Scrutineer. John brings a wealth of experience and knowledge with him and we look forward to drawing on this to enable us to focus on what we should do more of and what we could do differently towards achieving our vision for children, young people and families across Plymouth.

Once again, there has been significant activity over the six months, as outlined in this report. However, we remain focused on how we evidence the difference this activity is making to children and young people. We've started to progress that with our new governance

arrangements and the appointment of an Independent Scrutineer, but we know we've still got much to do. Work continues, at pace, to ensure we have the robust quality assurance arrangements that we need to 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, we want to thank all those colleagues that are working across the Partnership in a variety of roles, to support children, young people and families every day. The past 2 years have presented challenges we never imagined we would face and yet despite that we still have a passionate and committed workforce that are doing their best for children, young people and families. We are immensely grateful for all that you, our workforce, do across the city, on a daily basis - thank you!

Sharon Muldoon

Director of Children's Services
Plymouth City Council



Chair of the Plymouth Children and Young People's Strategic
Systems Leadership Board



Matt Longman

BCU Commander
Devon & Cornwall Police



Member of the Plymouth Children and Young People's Strategic
Systems Leadership Board



Darryn Allcorn

Chief Nurse
NHS Devon Integrated Care Board



Member of the Plymouth Children and Young People's Strategic
Systems Leadership Board



YOUNG SAFEGUARDERS

In our city 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 and are supported by the Plymouth City Council Participation Team, with costs part-funded by the PSCP. They provide regular scrutiny of the PSCP, including a quarterly review of our data scorecard. They were also recently involved in the recruitment of our new Independent Scrutineer and Director of Children's Services.

Previously, the Young Safeguarders updated and relaunched the 10 wishes. These have been embedded in the PSCP multi-agency training programme.

The Young Safeguarders have been providing quality assurance of our training in recent months, helping to ensure the training we deliver is child focused and the best it can be. As a result of this, we've updated a number of courses.

Violence against women and girls is a topic that is important to the Young Safeguarders and what they see as a key priority. They

contributed to evidence submitted to the Plymouth Commission on Violence against Women and Girls. Within the evidence gathering workshops there was resounding agreement that violence against women and girls was a problem in Plymouth.

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.



“If you asked any girl they would probably say that they feel unsafe walking after dark.” (Female, 15)

The Young Safeguarders have also highlighted issues surrounding social media and the internet with concerns around the level of unsolicited pictures received by girls who are then expected to send suggestive pictures in return.

“In year 9 it was a bigger deal. Now we’re year 11, we are desensitised. It’s just something that happens. It’s been normalised. Oh great another dick pic. Block.” (Female, 15)

The Young Safeguarders and their peers have commented on how school should be a safe place but they often feel unsafe at school. Many of the young people attending the evidence gathering workshops with the Young Safeguarders said that they need to know that if they complain, they will be believed and not be accused of making malicious accusations.

“There was a 14 year old getting texts from a 20 year old and she thought it was so cool. I’m like, it’s not; you’re being groomed.” (Female, 17)

The importance of education surrounding women’s safety is key as the Young Safeguarders are concerned that there are many victims that don’t realise that they are victims. The Young Safeguarders want to be assured that the Partnership is committed to any actions coming out of the commission.

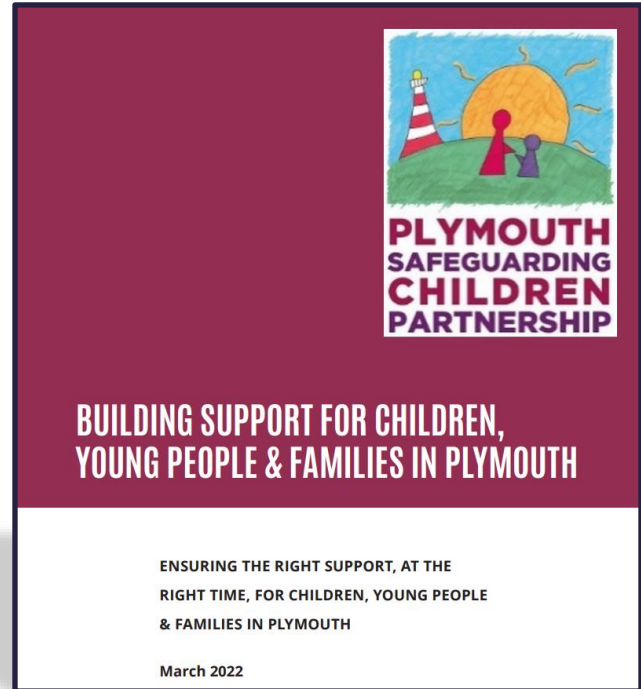
Find out more:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/academysocialworkplymouth/voiceschildrenandyoungpeople/youngsafeguarders



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN PLYMOUTH

Over the past 6 months, a significant focus of the Partnership has been working to design and launch a new approach to the way we work with children, young people and families in Plymouth. In April 2022 we published Building Support for Children, Young People and Families in Plymouth.



It's about the way we do things in Plymouth. It's about seeing families as a source of strength and safety, it's about each agency thinking 'what can I do here to support families?' It's about working restoratively with families, it's about consent, it's about a different mind-set. Instead of 'I'm worried, who will pick this up and fix it for me' we move to 'I'm worried so I'm going to talk to the family and see how I can support them. I might need others to work with me to support them but I'm not going to step away whilst that happens.'

This approach replaces what was known as the threshold tool and is very much a different way of working. All agencies are signed up to this at a senior and strategic level so we can work together to support families differently.

We will be placing a focus on this in the coming year. It fits neatly with our right support, right time priority for this year and will also cut across all the other priorities as it's about the way we work with families, regardless of what the particular concern/need is.

Making a difference:

A Barnardo's children's centre was working with Parent A who needed some financial support but didn't feel comfortable sharing her information with other agencies. Although children's social care was involved, Parent A was anxious about what she shared and didn't want to keep repeating her story. Parent A felt that the children's centre had a better understanding of her needs and that she would feel better able to be open and honest with them, rather than a different agency.

Barnardo's were able to support this parent, utilising the principles of Building Support, to get her and her children the help they needed, at the right time. It avoided delay and felt more positive for the parent. It is an example of where universal and early help support has remained in place, during statutory intervention, and utilised the existing positive relationships to facilitate change.



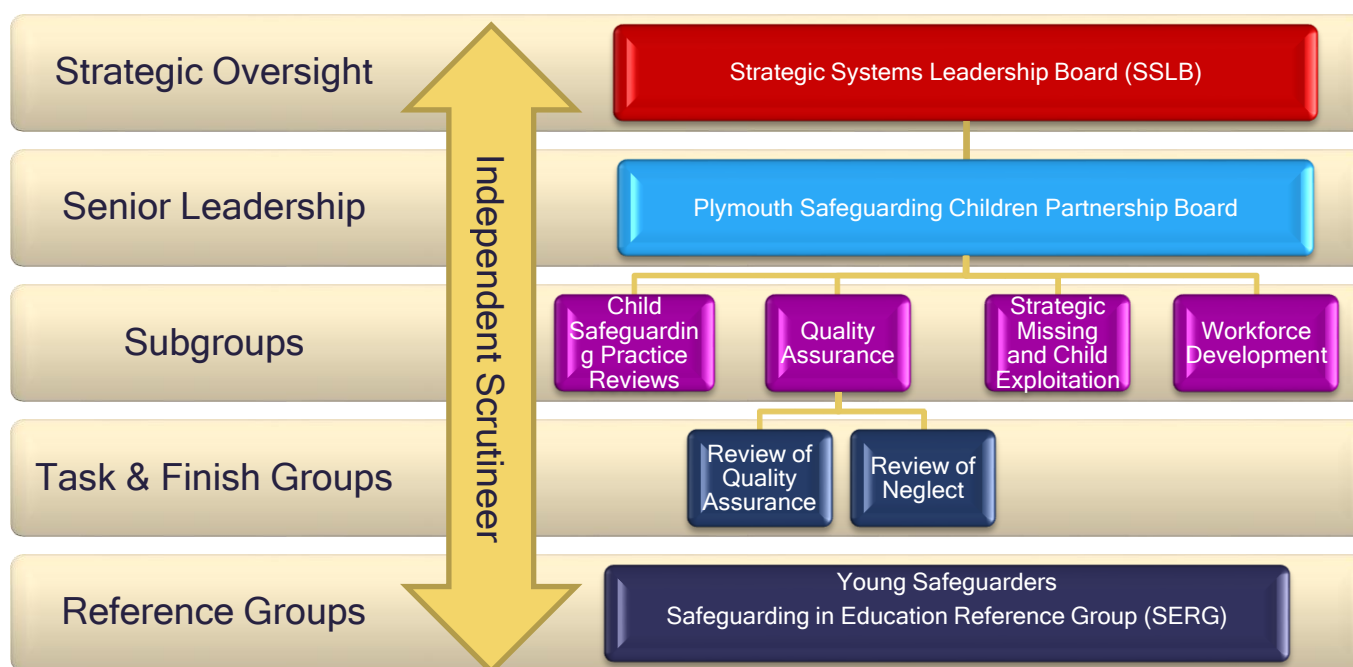
Find out more:

www.plymouthscb.co.uk/building-support



WHAT IS THE PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP?

The Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership is often known as the PSCP. We are a partnership of agencies, co-ordinating and leading safeguarding services across the city. We support each other to learn from local and national reviews (see pages 26-27) into what works and what could be improved within children’s safeguarding. We scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and hold each other to account for ensuring everyone plays their part in keeping children and young people safe, in Plymouth.



Find out more:

Find out more about the Partnership and what each group does by visiting our website: www.plymouthscb.co.uk/subgroups/



FUNDING THE PARTNERSHIP

The income for 2021/22 was:

Agency	Contribution
Plymouth City Council	£115,500
Devon and Cornwall Police	£20,307
NHS Devon Integrated Care Board	£19,614
Livewell South West	£15,088
University Hospitals NHS Trust	£6,591
City College Plymouth	£3,122
Probation	£2,678
Total	£182,900

The expenditure for 2021/22 was:

Item	Cost
Business Unit Staffing	£141,866
Independent Scrutiny	£26,280
Commissioned reviews	£13,970
Policy handbook and other learning materials	£2,781
Business Unit Operating Costs	£2,682
Subscriptions	£2,560
Young Safeguarders	£1,000
Other costs	£500
Total	£191,639

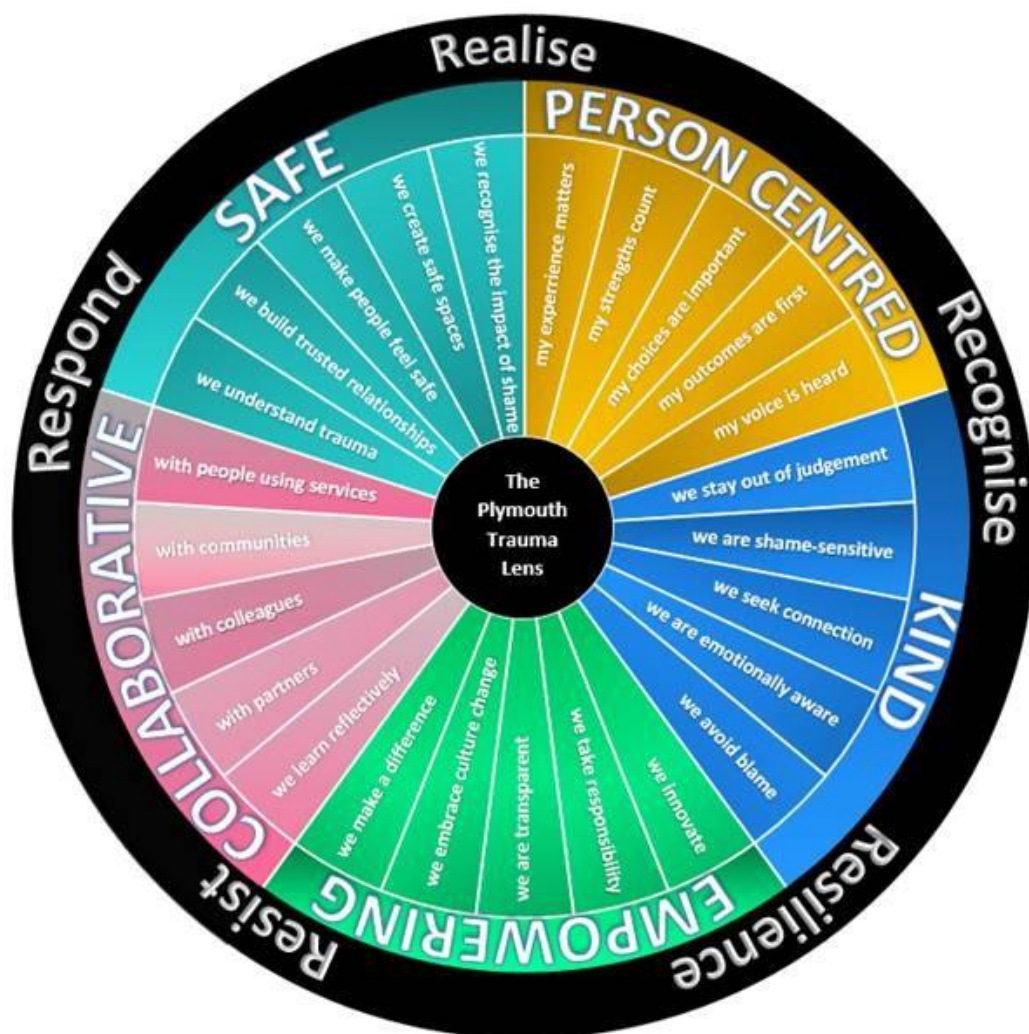
The difference between the income and expenditure was made up using reserves. At the end of the 2021/22 year, the reserves were **£98,699**. Reserves are needed to cover unforeseen expenditure such as learning reviews as well as being able to fulfil any legal requirements in the event of staff redundancies.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PLYMOUTH

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: Trauma-informed practice is achieved when we:

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

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



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

Resist 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 5 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.

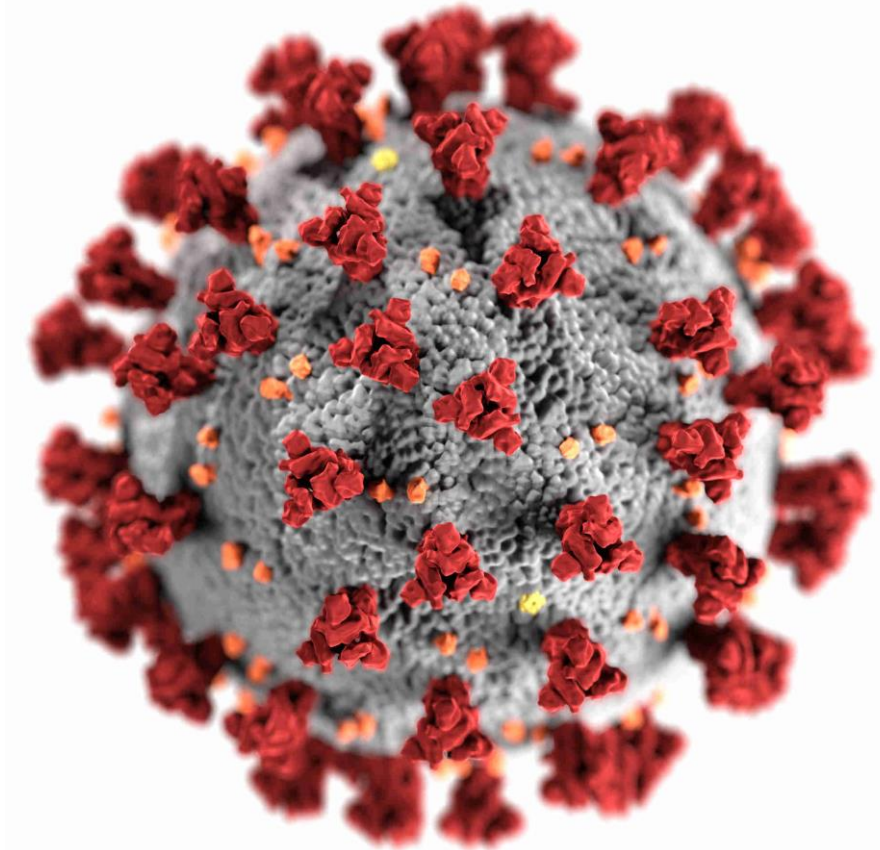
Collaborative: children, young people, families, communities and professionals are treated as equal partners in the PSCP safeguarding arrangements. A collaborative approach shall be facilitated across safeguarding services, communities, families and individuals who can make a contribution. Learning shall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

We're aware that the longer-term impact of Covid-19 for children and young people in Plymouth is yet to be fully known. For those children whose lives were already more difficult or risky, the legacy is likely to be significant. The impact of extensive home schooling is also likely to be long-term and yet to be fully realised. Work is ongoing to gather qualitative evidence and track data trends so that we have the best possible understanding of the long-term impact on children, young people and their families.



The Young Safeguarders reported that some colleagues were visiting young people and sharing how busy things were for them, as a result of Covid. This left young people feeling as if they needed to look after the worker and that they were not the priority. The Young Safeguarders worried that this may act as a barrier to young people talking about their worries. The PSCP have updated our training programme to reflect these messages and remind colleagues of the importance of any child, young person or family feeling that, in that moment, they are the priority and that colleagues have time to listen to them.

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 six months.



71 training courses

720 individual practitioners

1462 training places

We ensure we seek feedback during and after all of our training courses. Over the past 6 months, participants have valued:

Exploring the learning from local reviews

Variety of learning methods including films, case studies and group tasks

Opportunity to meet with colleagues from other agencies and learn together

Skills focused learning

95% of participants across the programme rated the quality of training as very good or excellent. They felt it met their needs and was useful to their role.



Find out more:

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 AND 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 3 months after attending a training session. Here is some of the feedback received:

'I was worried about a child's aggressive behaviour and this course really helped me think through what might be going on for the child and the reasons for their behaviour. What are they trying to tell me? Following the course I was able to put in place a range of practical and emotional early help support.'

(Understanding Child Protection course)



'The course reminded me of some aspects of good practice that I had forgotten. My reports into child protection meetings are more specific and thoughtful.....particularly about what needs to change and how to support the family to sustain that change. My conversations with the family have been more open and positive as a result.'

(Working Together Course)

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: NEGLECT

Back in 2021, we asked our Independent Quality Assurance Lead to undertake a review of how we respond to neglect. We received the final report during this review period and have begun to take action in line with the recommendations. We have set-up a Neglect Task and Finish group (chaired by University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust) to oversee those recommendations, including an update to the neglect strategy and toolkit. We look forward to implementing the changes that result from this work, in the coming year.

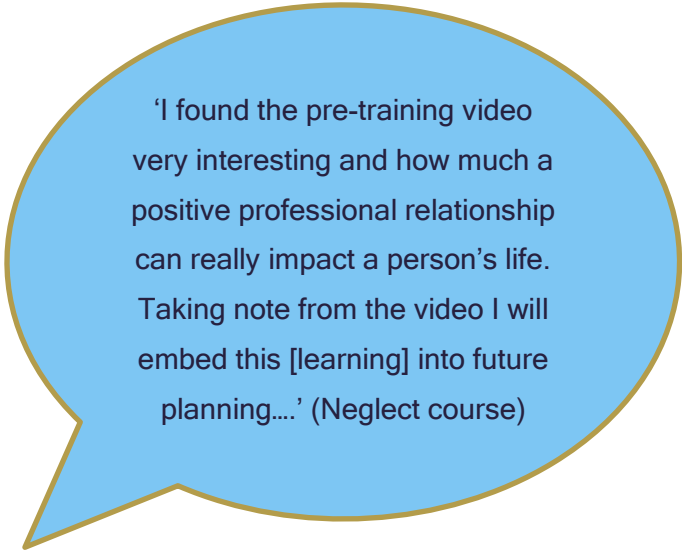
Making a difference:

Police colleagues report that the focus on neglect has encouraged them to challenge CPS decisions to not take criminal action where neglect has been a concern. This has recently resulted in multiple charges being brought that would otherwise have not proceeded.

The Partnership has been focusing on the increasing numbers of electively home-educated children and children missing education. We know that for some children it could be an indicator of current or future neglect. The numbers of children being de-registered from schools to be electively home educated continues to increase. Over the last 12 months we have seen the numbers of secondary aged pupils being home educated increase by 27.5% and an increase of 0.7% at primary age.

Following the Rapid Review of Child C, measures have been put in place to reduce the numbers of vulnerable children entering elective home education. Agencies within the Partnership have developed a range of protocols and local working agreements to embed collective responsibility for this cohort of children and young people.

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust have said that the focus on neglect means they've changed how they report on Child Protection Medicals to enable them to be clearer on where the focus is neglect and therefore monitor trends. Better collation and monitoring of data allows all agencies to better understand where resources are needed and how best to structure the services they offer.



'I found the pre-training video very interesting and how much a positive professional relationship can really impact a person's life. Taking note from the video I will embed this [learning] into future planning...' (Neglect course)

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: ADOLESCENT SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Plymouth is still in the early stages of implementing the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF). So far over 160 staff have been provided with partnership training and many hundreds more have received single-agency training.

Making a difference:

Following some training around the Adolescent Safety Framework, a colleague noted how it had helped them to think more about asking young people to ‘map out’ their different relationships - both online and offline. The participant is then going to draw on that work to think about both the risks and the support available for that young person.

Since becoming fully operational in January 2022, the Adolescent Safety Hub has undertaken 72 consultations and accepted 46 referrals. They’ve been working to upskill professionals from a range of agencies to feel more confident in undertaking Safer Me assessments with young people and their families. So far the Adolescent Safety Hub has identified the following themes:

Themes Identified					
Social Care History	96	DA in the home	3	Offending - YP	3
County Lines	3	School Exclusion	5	Online	7
CP Plan	6	Gangs	1	Poor school attendance	11
CSE	14	HSB	2	Child Missing from Education	1
CE	5	Mental Health - Parental	1	Radicalisation	0
Disability	2	Mental Health - YP	7	SEN	1
Drugs - selling	4	Missing episodes	12	Unauthorised Absences	1
Drugs - using	15	Offending - Parental	1	ASB	46

Our Operational Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings have undergone a review. A change to the way they operate now allows for a better focus on those young people most at risk of exploitation alongside a focus on themes, locations and particular adults of concern. The outcome is a more joined-up multi-agency response to protect young people.

‘Having this framework gives education settings an alternative way of supporting our young people when the issues are outside of the family home. It really helps that we can speak directly with the Adolescent Safety Hub.’ (Education provider)



Find out more:

The Safer Me Assessment is part of the Adolescent Safety Framework which can be found, with explanatory guidance, here: www.plymouthscb.co.uk/asf/



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: CHILD VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Over the past few months, we've been working to ensure the right services are in place, across the city, to support families impacted by domestic abuse. This includes support for those who are abusive, as this can help to prevent abuse in future relationships. Some of the services now available across the city include:

- 1:1 support for victims/survivors of abuse
- 1:1 support for individuals who exhibit abusive behaviours
- RESPECT
- Starting Point
- Freedom (awareness raising group for women who have experienced domestic abuse)
- Assert (exploration of communication styles and how we can be more assertive)
- Real Man (awareness and exploration for men of ways to promote positive and meaningful relationships with their children and partners)
- Respect Young People (support with adolescent to parent violence)

Making a difference:

Parent B was struggling with the impact of Covid restrictions as this meant she was spending more time with an abusive partner and was less able to get out of the home, with her children. Barnardo's Children's Centres were able to use the positive working relationship they had built to support Parent B to talk about the abuse and the impact of it. They then went on to work together to improve the situation. As a result of months of working together and linking in with other agencies, Parent B is now separated from her partner, with both her and her children feeling more settled and positive about the future.

“Many parents will be quite fearful of leaving a relationship, especially an abusive one. It's not just about safety but also fear of the unknown and loneliness. These are normal responses that need to be worked with rather than ignored or listed as further concerns.”

A review of some partnership data has noted that approximately 15% of children open to Children's Social Care are recorded as having domestic abuse as the primary concern. It also noted that at least 50% of children subject to Child Protection Plans have experienced violence either as a primary issue of concern or as part of the harm they have experienced.

Making a difference:

Following the PSCP domestic abuse training course, an education colleague reflected on an interaction they'd had with a child the day before. Upon reflection they realised something wasn't quite right and they liaised with the appropriate colleagues in school and social care to ensure information sharing occurred and led to action being taken to support that child.

Police colleagues have begun creating a network of domestic abuse champions across the force to increase awareness, embed learning and raise standards.

“Building restorative relationships that feel like we are working ‘with’ parents, is far more likely to be effective in supporting parents to understand and make changes in relation to domestic abuse”

‘Being an Operation Encompass provision, we have been able to have early discussions with those students when they arrive to support them through their day. We provide a safe space and person to talk to.’ (16+ education provider)

Find out more:

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. <https://www.operationencompass.org>



OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The new Healthy and Happy Partnership was formed in March 2022 and as a result has picked up much of the work that would sit under this priority. They reported that they are currently reviewing the challenges being faced around child mental health services and putting a focus on eating disorders. They also noted that the Education, Health and Well-being in Schools service has been extended to March 2023 thanks to some additional funding from NHS Devon Integrated Care Board to support a reduction in waiting lists and recovery from Covid-19.

Making a difference:

Parent C was supported by the Children's Centre Supporting Families Service through phone calls (during Covid restrictions) and then home visits. He was supported to open up about the difficulties he was having as a single carer for his children and how his mental health was impacting upon him as a parent. An Early Help Plan was put in place to engage appropriate agencies to offer support. The wider family were engaged with the support on offer to enable them to better support Parent C and his children.

The Quality Assurance subgroup have asked for assurance from Livewell Southwest about how the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support young people that present with self-harming behaviours. This will enable a better understanding of need and what support is provided to ensure the right outcomes for children and young people who require this service.

Making a difference:

Action for Children and Plymouth City Council have been working together to develop support for children that may struggle with a transition to starting school. Of those that attended and completed an evaluation form, 100% of families reported an increase in their child's confidence and self-esteem. 90% of families reported an increase in their child's concentration and ability to complete an activity. 80% of parents had seen an increase in independent play at home and in groups.

OUR PRIORITIES REVIEWED: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The governance arrangements for the PSCP and other children’s boards have changed since March 2022 and the implementation of A Bright Future. As part of these changes, the PSCP Board has taken on a greater role in providing oversight, support and challenge to the Safeguarding Partnership as a whole, with the new Strategic Systems Leadership Board (SSLB) providing a high level, strategic scrutiny of the work going on in the PSCP and the other children’s boards and partnerships in Plymouth.



NHS Devon Integrated Care Board have taken on the role of chairing the Partnership Board. Sharon Muldoon is the new Director of Children’s Services for Plymouth City Council and has taken on the role as Chair of the SSLB. We have also appointed John Clements as our new Independent Scrutineer.

OUR PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

Response to Neglect

We are looking to ensure a shared understanding, across the Partnership, about what neglect looks like and how each agency should respond. It's the most common reason for statutory intervention in the lives of our families so we have a lot of work to do to get it right - from prevention to early help to statutory support.

A few years into the partnership with the NSPCC to deliver Together for Childhood, we need to ensure the evidence gathered is embedded across the system as well as being clear about what more there is still to do. We have successfully initiated a campaign to direct adults who might sexually harm to get help and prevent abuse, the momentum for this innovative local approach will need to be maintained.

Response to Sexual Harm

Right Support, Right Time

Much of the data available to us suggest that we're not quite getting it right in terms of offering the right support, at the right time. We could do more, earlier, across the Partnership, to prevent so many families requiring statutory services at a later stage. Our values shape our desire to support families earlier and more effectively.

We want to take the motivation and understanding that has developed within the workforce and see that translated into practice that feels trauma-informed for children, young people and families.

Trauma-informed Practice

Cutting across all the priorities is a focus on organisational culture and professional support. We know that training, workshops, briefings and similar activities are helpful but fundamentally; good practice can only thrive where we have a culture of learning, respectful challenge and a workforce that feels supported and valued.

Find out more:

For this coming year, we've developed a 'plan on a page' to set out our vision, our priorities and what we expect to see change as a result of the work we undertake. This can be found here: www.plymouthscb.co.uk/priorities-and-plans



SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION

In the past few months we've undergone a review of the way education colleagues engage with the Partnership. Education is a vital partner and we've worked together to ensure that the way education is now structured doesn't get in the way of engagement, support and challenge from the agency that often spends the most time with our children.

The newly named Safeguarding in Education Reference Group (SERG) has been established with some revised terms of reference and an updated membership.



All relevant education provisions have completed and submitted their S175/157 audits and the Safeguarding in Education Reference Group have agreed a plan to use the data proactively with education provisions over the coming year.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEARNING

In recent months, we've been looking out beyond the Plymouth boundaries to see what learning we could take from our regional neighbours and further afield.

Child Q, Hackney:

The circumstances surrounding Child Q made national headlines and resulted in us creating an assurance plan to think about what lessons we could learn, here in Plymouth. We developed a Learning on a Page and shared a national report on Adulthood -

www.plymouthscb.co.uk/the-partnership/learning-resources.

Review of Child Protection in England:

As we compile this annual report, the National Panel have just published their review into Child Protection in England, following the deaths of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. As a Partnership, we have already begun learning lessons and seeking assurances following the published Solihull JTAI report. We will now also consider what else we might learn and act upon, following the recommendations made by the National Panel.

Best Practice for Rapid Reviews and CSPRs:

We've been working with regional colleagues, within the South West Peninsula, to think about how we learn from each other and from best practice nationally, to ensure we get the best possible learning from our Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs).

LOCAL LEARNING

Here in Plymouth, the PSCP has a responsibility to undertake reviews, where we feel lessons could be learned, both in terms of what could be improved and what we could do more of that has worked well. In the past few months we have published all outstanding reviews and currently have none underway.

Young Person A:

The report can be found here - www.plymouthscb.co.uk/csprs/

The learning can be found here - www.plymouthscb.co.uk/the-partnership/learning-resources/

Baby Isla:

The report can be found here - www.plymouthscb.co.uk/csprs/

The learning can be found here - www.plymouthscb.co.uk/the-partnership/learning-resources/

Alongside Rapid Reviews and CSPRs, we regularly undertake themed audits in line with our priorities or events that arise during the year. We have recently begun a review of the way we undertake audits and the broader quality assurance work within the Partnership to ensure it is as efficient as possible and delivering on the desired outcomes.

The CSPR subgroup is currently reviewing best practice for how agencies share learning with colleagues and ensure frontline practitioners are aware of it and that it is making a difference to their practice.

Making a difference:

Following the learning from Baby Isla, we undertook some safer sleep briefings. This led to one organisation changing their induction process to ensure all staff were briefed around the important role they play in supporting the safer sleep message to families. Staff attending the briefing reported an increase in confidence around discussing safe sleep with families and a better understanding of their responsibility for having this conversation and asking to see where a baby sleeps.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Together for Childhood (TFC)

The strategic importance and breadth of the Together for Childhood partnership programme with the NSPCC has been recognised so that it now reports directly into the PSCP Board. This ensures that PSCP Board members are well informed and taking an

active role in ensuring that the 10 year partnership is successful in learning how we prevent child sexual abuse in Plymouth. During the past 6 months, Together for Childhood has reached over 1400 professionals as part of their awareness-raising programme. They have also offered 'significant consultation' to approximately 42 professionals on a range of approaches to prevent CSA.



Making a difference:

“The most significant change from Together for Childhood both in my personal and professional life is that I feel empowered, and I hope I have empowered others, to talk about sexual abuse. In the past sexual abuse was something that was only whispered about, something people didn’t want to talk about. Even in safeguarding meetings it was something that was alluded to rather than using the actual words.

The Together for Childhood focus on prevention has made it easier to talk about child sexual abuse. People don’t feel like you are accusing them of anything. Conversations can be about keeping children safe and that’s something people are happy to talk about and take action on.” (TfC participant)

'I will encourage the parents and children I have contact with to use the correct names for body parts' and 'I will be more aware of children's responses and not pushing hugs on anyone in the family.' (TfC training participants)

Find out more:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Together_for_childhood.pdf



Letting the Future In (LTFI)

The PSCP is excited to continue supporting 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.

Find out more:

<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.



Find out more:

www.plymouth.carejourneys.org.uk



INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

It is a privilege to be appointed as the Independent Scrutineer for the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership. I look forward to working closely with staff, managers and leaders to ensure children and young people in Plymouth are provided with the best possible help and support. In the brief time I have been working in Plymouth I have met with a mix of people working across children's social care, health, police, the voluntary sector, education and other community services. It is clear all are committed to children and want to make their lives better.

From my observation there is a well-established multi-agency Partnership with all the relevant local partners involved. There is a good range of meetings that ensure child safeguarding is considered at all levels, operationally and strategically. There is good leadership involvement with clear lines of communication. Staff are relishing being able to work in new ways for the benefit of children and their families. They welcome the opportunities the 'Building Support' style of working brings and I look forward to learning how children benefit from the changes.

I have seen evidence in how being 'trauma informed' has changed attitudes and behaviours. Staff are thinking in different ways about how to support children and are displaying an increased understanding of the difficulties lying in the background of many children's lives. There is a strong commitment to learning, both from experiences within Plymouth and beyond. I have seen learning being transmitted to practice. There is a good learning offer from the Partnership and within individual organisations.

During my selection for the role I was interviewed by members of the Young Safeguarders and I have had the pleasure of meeting with a small number since. This is a fantastic resource for the Partnership and one that we need to cherish and develop. To be able to hear directly from children who represent different parts of our community and who understand the issues facing children in 2022 is a huge plus.



In reviewing the Annual Report I can see that a large amount of time and effort has been spent in developing child safeguarding across Plymouth. There are a clear set of priorities that were decided upon objectively. The workstreams reflect those priorities with sound structures, processes and administrative support to enable progress to be made. I have seen evidence of changing practices as a result.

One key issue for me is being able to understand what difference the Partnership has made, especially in improving outcomes for children and their families. I value the examples given in the report, as they provide an authentic feel to what is happening in Plymouth, but we must be able to understand how widely these outcomes are being experienced. I do not believe we are in this position yet. I appreciate this is a difficulty for all local safeguarding children partnerships but it is one we must concentrate upon. Quality assurance measures are being developed within the partnership so we need to focus on ensuring we understand, fully, across all safeguarding activities the outcomes we are enabling. I am interested in how new responses are identified, developed and embedded. I intend to examine how the Partnership works to make the most of the opportunities it has. Staff time is valuable so we must be efficient with it.

I have found relationships within the Partnership to be positive but we need to develop these further. All staff have to feel comfortable working together, especially in being able to have different opinions but coming to decisions that are in the best interests of our children. When we work well together we do our best work. I know there is a commitment to develop this area within the Partnership so I will monitor what difference is achieved.

There is an ambitious feel to the child safeguarding activity in Plymouth and I feel I have joined at a really good time. I look forward to working with a Partnership that has so much potential.

John Clements - Independent Scrutineer

CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

For members of the public

If you're worried about a child or young person or think they're being abused, speak to a professional that works with children or call 01752 668000 or email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk. Outside of normal working hours you can 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.

When you get in touch with them, they'll ask you some questions such as:

- 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.

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 Contact form which you can download from the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Visit our Partnership website for more details - www.plymouthscp.co.uk

