

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2024/2025



Contents – Click on a Section to Read

Foreword

Who We Are

**Developing
Together**

**Learning
Together**

**Listening
Together**

**Working
Together**

**Our Aspirations
and What Has
Happened**

**The Next
Year**

Partners' Foreword

As safeguarding partners in Newcastle, we are proud to present this Annual Report, which reflects a year of significant progress, collaboration, and shared commitment to protecting children and young people across our city.

This year has seen the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership make significant strides in strengthening multi-agency safeguarding across the city. In response to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, we've reformed our governance, clarified leadership roles, and set focused priorities that reflect both national expectations and local needs.

Throughout 2024–25, our partnership has demonstrated its strength through coordinated audits, learning reviews, and targeted interventions. We have deepened our understanding of complex safeguarding issues—from domestic abuse and neglect to youth violence and risk outside the home—and translated that learning into tangible improvements in practice. Our investment in training, data infrastructure, and inclusive engagement has empowered practitioners and elevated the voice of children and families in shaping services.

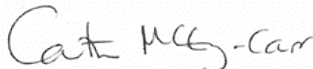
The impact of these efforts is evident: improved multi-agency collaboration, increased practitioner confidence, and more responsive safeguarding systems. We have laid strong foundations for the future, guided by our Strategic Delivery Plan 2025–27 and a shared vision that every child in Newcastle feels and is safe, healthy, and ready for life's next steps. Looking ahead, we remain committed to building on the momentum of this year to further strengthen our responses to emerging challenges, and we will continue to listen, learn, and lead—together.

Finally, on behalf of all safeguarding partners, we would like to extend our thanks to all of the practitioners, organisations and families that have supported the Partnership and contributed to this journey over this last year. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and together, we are making a difference. We look forward to this continuing into 2026.



Richard Scott

Director of Nursing (North):
NE&N. Cumbria Integrated Care Board



Catherine McEvoy-Carr

Director of Children and Families:
Newcastle City Council



Barrie Joice

Chief Superintendent Area Commander:
Northumbria Police

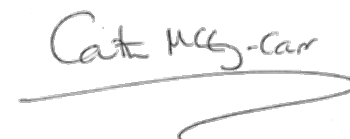
Chair's Introduction

As the new chair of our Newcastle Safeguarding Partnership, I am delighted to introduce our annual report for 2024-2025. Even though I have only been Partnership Chair for a few months, I have been a member of the Partnership for a number of years and so would like to formally thank Heather Pearson, our former Chair for her contribution over the years as she has led us through a number of system and structural changes over her time in post.

The last year has seen some further significant changes in relation to how we are required to deliver our safeguarding responsibilities across the local authority, health, and the police. As a partnership, we have risen to these challenges and as equal safeguarding partners we have developed our statutory arrangements in conjunction with our wider partner agencies.

As I am sure you will read, there is much to be proud of in terms of achievements and progress, but we are not complacent and will continue to develop and seek assurance in relation to our safeguarding responsibilities and that we are compliant with regulations and legal requirements. Children and young people are the focus of all that we do, and we want them to feel happy, healthy and safe no matter where they are in our city.

As one third of the delegated safeguarding partners, it is an absolute pleasure to work with my colleagues from the police and from health to ensure we promote and provide the most effective service to all of our children and young people across Newcastle.



Catherine McEvoy-Carr

Director of Children and Families: Newcastle City Council



Independent Scrutineer Summary

This report marks my final year as Independent Scrutineer for the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) having elected to stand down from the role in March 2026.

In line with the statutory requirements and national guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, this annual scrutiny summary outlines key strengths and developments across the partnership between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

The role of the Independent Scrutineer, as defined in the statutory guidance, is to offer independent oversight and assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are effective, child-focused, and compliant with both legal and local expectations.

My work as Independent Scrutineer involves engaging with safeguarding partners and relevant agencies at both strategic and operational levels, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement. The role adds value to the partnership by helping to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are not only functioning well but also evolving in response to local needs and national learning.

This scrutiny forms part of the broader system of assurance and accountability, which includes:

- Oversight and assurance activities requested by the three statutory safeguarding partners

- Ongoing partnership work such as quality assurance, performance monitoring, and learning and improvement activity
- External accountability through inspections by independent inspectorates

In Newcastle, I have experienced a strong and sustained commitment from the strategic leads on ensuring that scrutiny activity is undertaken across all aspects of the safeguarding partnership. My role is well embedded with regular participation in both strategic and operational activity, including membership of the Executive Group and the facilitation of meaningful contribution to thematic workstreams. I also actively oversee multi-agency audits, learning and rapid reviews, and I support the ongoing review and refinement of the partnership's overarching safeguarding arrangements.

Importantly, my input is not limited to reviewing past performance, I am also engaged in assisting to shape future priorities and influence the strategic direction of the partnership. This strategic approach to scrutiny reflects a mature and constructive culture rooted in mutual respect, shared accountability and a collective commitment to continuous improvement.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) leads representing the three safeguarding partners (Northeast and North Cumbria ICB, Newcastle Council and Northumbria Police) work

collaboratively with partner organisations and across the wider regional footprint to ensure robust governance arrangements are in place for NSCP. This includes the launching and embedding of a new governance model for the partnership over 2024 to 2025. The Executive Group meet formally on a quarterly basis and this structured meeting provides a clear framework for oversight, decision making and strategic alignment of safeguarding activity within Newcastle. The Executive receive regular updates from Priority Leads, Subgroup Chairs and seek assurance from wider boards and partnerships relating to work with children and young people.

The structural changes that took place in 2023 to 2024 within Northumbria Police have resulted in the strengthened local accountability and enhanced the local focus on emerging safeguarding issues, patterns and trends specific to the Newcastle area and contributed to strengthening collaborative work around targeted early intervention, prevention and tailored support for children and families in Newcastle. The ICB has continued to evolve with further structural refinement aimed at improving efficiency and governance. A key development during the period has been the establishment of a Health Safeguarding Executive Subcommittee which now plays a central role in delivering the assurance model for NHS commissioned services.

The NSCP benefits from strategic lead involvement in national, regional and local wider partnership activity. This includes work undertaken at a regional level through the Tyne, Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNSP).

This meeting is strongly chaired by the Northumbria Police ACC for Safeguarding and Newcastle is well represented with involvement from DSPs and scrutineer membership. Regional workstreams included the introduction of a Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) Annual Assurance and Development meeting to bring together the LSP leads from across the regional footprint. The first of these meetings took place in November 2024 and included regional with the sharing of local inputs relating to safeguarding activity, including a session on feedback from children and young people. A further meeting is planned for November 2025.

NSCP leads are members of or attend wider partnership and board strategic meetings where there is an ability to influence and shape and share practice, including the Newcastle Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership which brings together leads from wider partnerships, boards and organisations including the city's universities and voluntary organisations.

The 2023 – 2024 NSCP Annual Report set out the requirements introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the revised Newcastle Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) were formally published in December 2024. These updated arrangements clearly define the current safeguarding structures and responsibilities in place across the partnership.

During 2024 a comprehensive, whole-system review of the partnership's governance framework was undertaken. This review

assessed the effectiveness, clarity and impact of existing structures and culminated in a series of findings and recommendations which were formally endorsed by the Executive Group. The implementation of the agreed changes has taken place throughout the 2024 to 2025 period. The revised model of working has significantly enhanced strategic oversight and strengthened collaborative work across agencies and is outlined within the body of this year's annual report. Key strengths include the introduction of a DSP Group, extended Executive Group and a new Scrutiny and Assurance Group.

The new role of Partnership Chair was introduced in Newcastle during January 2024 and is designed to be held by one of the DSPs on a rotating basis every two years, with the Director of Children's Services taking on the inaugural term. As a result of this change, the responsibility for the chairing of the Executive Group transitioned from my role to the Partnership Chair function. The Scrutineer role has been retained and remains an active member of the Executive Group and Chairs the Scrutiny and Assurance Group, ensuring ongoing independent oversight and constructive challenge within the revised governance model.

The development of the 2025 to 2027 priorities and strategic plan was shaped through a series of development engagement sessions with wider safeguarding partners and input and feedback from children and young people. These collaborative efforts ensured that the priorities reflected both professional insight and lived experiences of young people across Newcastle. This annual report outlines these agreed priorities and provides a detailed account of the partnerships progress against

intended outcomes, highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement. Progress is monitored through the Executive Group where updates are received from priority and subgroup leads and actions tracked.

As demonstrated throughout the annual report, this approach has helped consolidate good practice and address key areas where improvement was required and addressed. Building on the work over the course of 2024 the activity throughout this current year (2025 to 2026) has set out a more refined focus on specific safeguarding themes with ongoing work progressing in line with agreed timelines and objectives.

Learning and Development is a strength in Newcastle. The new NSCP website has a refreshed training offer, easily accessible to practitioners. The learning style is contemporary and adaptive to need. Wider learning is disseminated through regular communications including the partnership bulletin.

The Gateshead and Newcastle Joint Case Review Group has embedded into the partnership arrangements and meets quarterly and is developing into a strong forum that oversees learning and rapid reviews with an established pathway for referrals. The annual report highlights the work of this important group. There were three NSCP learning reviews undertaken over the reporting period relating to vulnerable babies. The learning has been identified, with recommendations progressed and learning disseminated across the partnership.

The NSCP performance information framework provides strategic and operational leads with single and multi-agency performance information and is reviewed quarterly at the Executive Group and Subgroups to identify emerging issues, themes, patterns or trends. The work also includes reviewing and analysing information from children and young people including the health-related behaviour questionnaire (HRBQ) completed by over 5992 pupils from across the city. Multi-agency audits have been undertaken over the reporting period, bringing together practitioners from a wide range of partner organisations and the audit work has included multi-agency decision making relating to child protection processes; identification and response to child victims of domestic abuse, risk outside the home and vulnerable adolescents. The learning from these audits leading to strengthened practice.

To conclude, this reporting period has been characterised by meaningful progress in enhancing safeguarding arrangements across the partnership. Strong, effective collaboration has been evident throughout, with partners working collectively and purposefully at both strategic and operational levels. The annual report outlines a range of positive developments and successful initiatives, reflecting the partnership's continued commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people. There is much to acknowledge and celebrate.

It has been a privilege to undertake the role of Independent Chair and Scrutineer for Newcastle during my time in post (August 2021 to present date). Newcastle is a dynamic and resilient city, recognised for its deep-rooted community values,

cultural richness and forward-looking approach to inclusion and innovation. The area is supported by strong and committed statutory partners and agencies, working together through purposeful and effective multi-agency arrangements.

What has stood out for me is the genuine warmth, integrity and grounded nature of the people of Newcastle – qualities that are clearly mirrored in the way partners collaborate to protect and support children and families. This spirit of cooperation and shared commitment to improving outcomes has been a consistent strength of the partnership.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those involved, from strategic leaders to frontline professionals, for their continued dedication, expertise, and unwavering focus on keeping children safe. The strength of these local partnerships will remain essential in navigating future challenges and in ensuring that all children grow up safe supported and with their voices heard.



Heather Pearson
Independent Chair and Scrutineer

What Do We Know About Our Local Area



What is Safeguarding?

Every child & young person has a right to be safe.

Safeguarding is everybody's business.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

All adults have a responsibility to protect children & young people. It is the role of all partnership stakeholders, including parents and carers, professionals such as teachers, learning mentors, doctors, nurses, social workers, police officers, faith leaders and sports coaches to work together to ensure that children and young people are safe.

What is Abuse and Neglect

According to the law, there are 4 main types of abuse that could cause harm or neglect. These are:

- **Physical Abuse:** when an adult deliberately hurts a child, such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating.
- **Emotional Abuse:** this would happen, for example, when a child is made to feel worthless or unloved; is prevented from participating in normal social interaction and made to feel unhappy or frightened by being bullied or seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can also occur online or through the use of technology offline.
- **Neglect:** this is when a child is not being looked after properly; for example, not getting enough to eat, or being left alone in dangerous situations.

More information about what abuse can look like at the NSCP Website. - www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk.

Demographics

Using government and local information that describes people in the local area supports the Partnership's ability to understand the lived experience of families living in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Overview

Partners recognise that understanding the demographic profile of children and young people (CYP) in Newcastle is vital for strategic planning and effective service delivery. Newcastle's population grew by 12% between 2014 and 2024—almost double the national rate—reaching over 320,000 residents. It is now the most densely populated local authority in the North East.

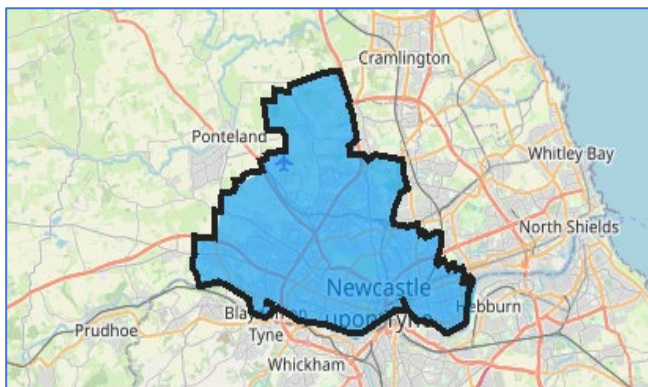
Children under 15 make up 8.1% of this growth, with notable concentrations of 15–24-year-olds in the city centre due to higher education institutions, and more school-aged children in outer wards. Understanding demographic variation informs partnership development and reinforces our determination to embed education providers as key partner, it will be particularly significant in the introduction of locality-based partnership working and the Family First model.

We aim to leverage understanding of our local areas, to align and deliver more coordinated, efficient, and impactful partnership working and collaboration across Newcastle.

Implications for Services

Newcastle's age distribution directly influences how services are planned and delivered. The city's 0–19 population shows a balanced spread across ages. However, locality data highlights significant variation. **Inner West** has the highest concentration of CYP, with **30.6%** of residents aged 0–19. Other areas range from **21.4% to 22.4%**, indicating differing service needs across the city.

This insight supports the **Children and Families Newcastle (CFN)** model, which integrates services through community hubs tailored to local demographics. Understanding locality needs supports awareness of the value of effective partnership working and communication in responding to demand with targeted support.



Diversity: Gender, Ethnicity, and Language

Newcastle's children and young people (CYP) population is diverse across gender, ethnicity, and language. As the population continues to grow, understanding diversity is key to understanding the lived experience of families living in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Newcastle's children and young people (CYP) population is diverse across gender, ethnicity, and language. Census 2021 data show an even gender split among those aged 0–19, though detailed data on non-cisgender identities is limited to those aged 16+. However, local surveys such as the Health-Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) offer insight: of 5,992 pupils surveyed, 60 identified as transgender and 63 as 'other', reflecting a broader spectrum of gender identity.

There was an approximate population increase of 7% between 2011 and 2021, and the ethnic diversity of the population has also increased. Ethnic diversity has also grown, when looking specifically at the 0-19 population in Newcastle, this population is significantly more diverse than Newcastle's overall population.

The 2022 School Census recorded 79 ethnicities among 42,000 pupils, with White British (58.8%), Black African (5.0%), and Pakistani (4.3%) being the most common.

Language diversity is also notable. While 75% of pupils speak English as their main language, 139 languages are spoken across schools. Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, and Romanian are among the most common. Pupils with a first language other than English are concentrated in western wards and are more prevalent in primary schools than national or regional averages. This diversity highlights the importance of inclusive, culturally responsive services and targeted support, particularly in areas with higher concentrations of multilingual and ethnically varied populations.

The North East has experienced **the largest increase in child poverty rate between 2014/15 and 2021/22 compared to all other regions in England**, rising from 26.3% to 35.2% of children living in poverty after housing costs.

(Source: Loughborough University, 2023)

It is estimated that as of 2021/22 (prior to the Cost of Living Crisis), **22,801 children under 16 in Newcastle were living in poverty**, representing 37.9% of the population under 16 years of age. This marks **an increase of 9.5 percentage points since 2014/15**.

(Source: Loughborough University, 2023)

Free School Meals

Government and local information supports the Partnership’s ability to understand the pressures and needs experienced by families, children and young people living in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in Newcastle has risen sharply, reflecting growing financial hardship among families. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, eligibility increased from 26.5% to 38.1%, significantly outpacing national (22.7%), regional (28.8%), and statistical neighbour averages (30.5%).

This trend is consistent across both primary and secondary schools. In secondary settings, free school meal eligibility rose from 31.4% to 40.0%, compared to a national increase from 15.8% to 24.0% over the same period.

Such sustained growth in eligibility signals increasing economic pressures on families, many of whom were already facing challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic. These figures underscore the need for targeted support and inclusive educational strategies to address the wider impact of poverty on children and young people.

Why is this important?

We have seen a continues rise in the number of pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Such a rise indicates that more families are struggling. This has an impact on our children and young people, many of whom were already finding education difficult after the COVID-19 pandemic.

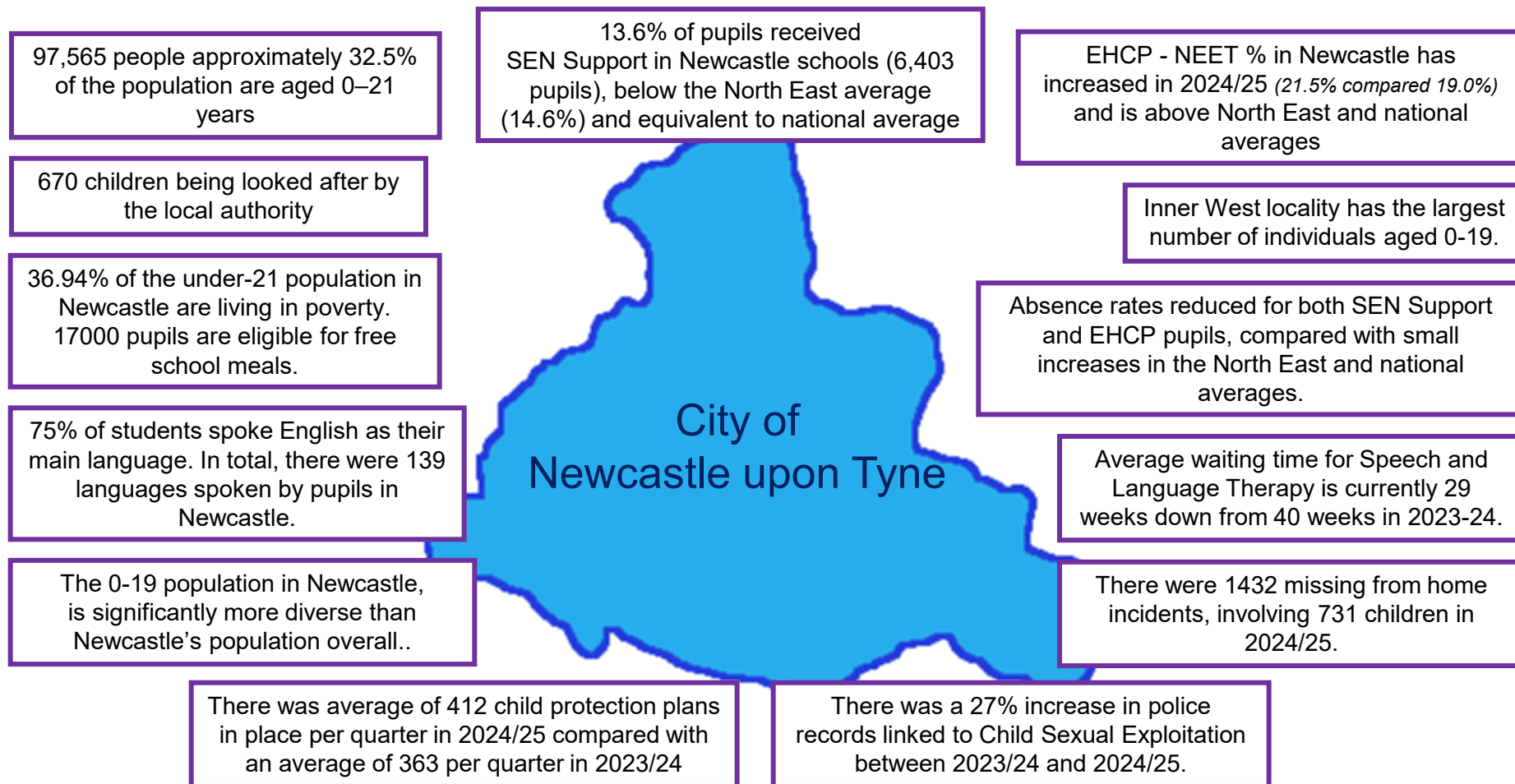
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Newcastle	26.5	28.7	33.9	36.7	38.1
National	14.1	15.9	18.9	20.9	22.7
Regional	18.7	21.2	24.5	26.8	28.8
Stat Nbours	21.0	23.2	26.8	29.0	30.5

% **secondary** school pupils eligible for free school meals

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Newcastle	31.4	33.5	39.2	39.9	40.0
National	15.8	17.7	21.6	23.1	24.0
Regional	22.0	24.4	28.9	30.1	30.8
Stat Nbours	22.7	24.7	29.1	30.4	30.9

% **primary** school pupils eligible for free school meals

A Children and Young People Data “Snapshot” of Newcastle upon Tyne

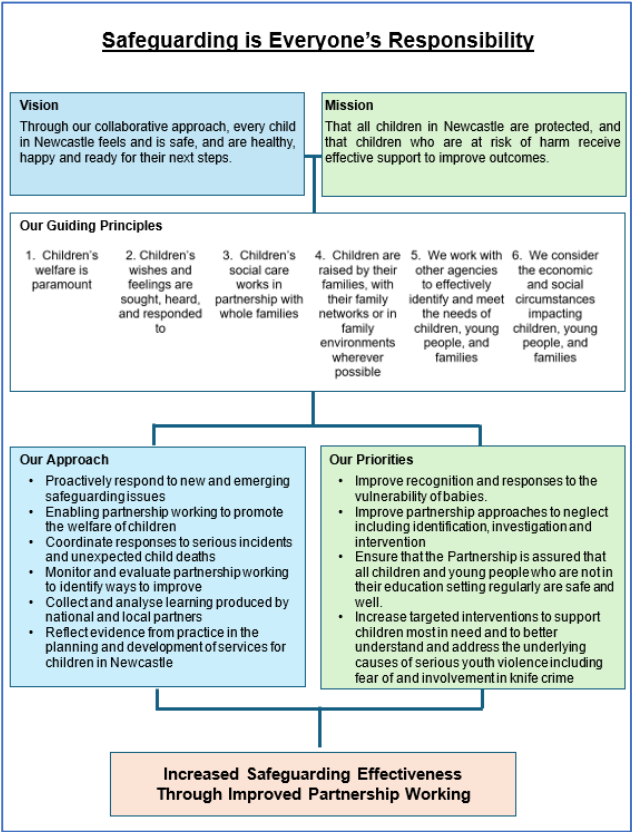


Progress Against Statutory Guidance



Safeguarding Arrangements in Newcastle

As Safeguarding Partners, we are committed to improving how we all work together to safeguard our children



To improve strategic coherence, the Partnership adopted new Vision and Mission statements.

In 2024–25, the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) aligned its multi-agency arrangements with the updated Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) guidance. This included a full review of governance structures, strategic priorities, and partner engagement. A series of multi-agency meetings, reviews, and a partnership consultation event helped shape the revised framework.

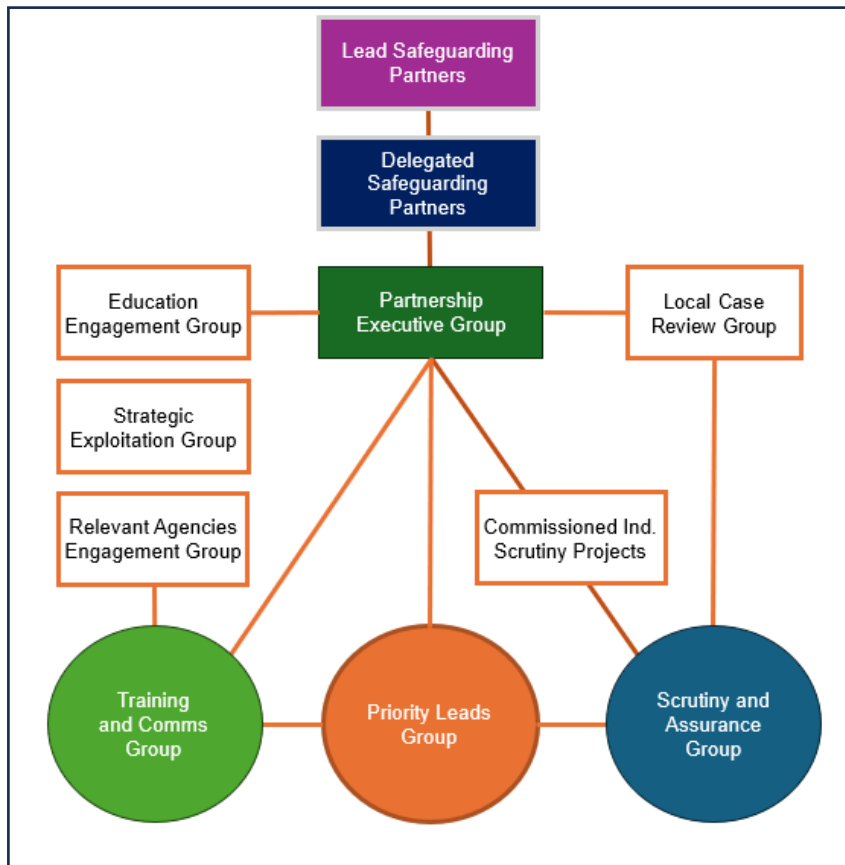
To improve strategic coherence, the Partnership adopted new Vision and Mission statements, providing a clear reference point for planning and collaboration. Previously, shifting priorities had strained resources and relationships. The new structure introduces Partnership Leads for each strategic objective, enabling focused delivery and cross-agency coordination.

The [Newcastle Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) for Children and Young People sets out how the Safeguarding Partners will work together, and with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Newcastle.

The latest version of the multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements was published in January 2025. A new version will be published in January 2026.

Safeguarding Arrangements in Newcastle

This is the proposed new Partnership structure designed in 2024 for implementation in 2025, it was designed as part of our response to Working Together 2023.



The [Newcastle Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) for Children and Young People sets out how the Safeguarding Partners will work together, and with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Newcastle.

The latest version of the arrangements was published in January 2025. A new version will be published in January 2026 following implementation of new arrangements in 2025.

Key Structural Changes

- Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners were confirmed, supporting a two-year delivery cycle and priority setting.
- The Partnership Chair role transitioned from the Independent Scrutineer to the Local Authority's Delegated Partner, enhancing leadership clarity.
- The new Partnership Lead role was introduced to drive delivery of strategic objectives.
- Broader partner inclusion was embedded into governance, improving communication and joint working.

The new Partnership arrangement integrates two new roles as defined in Working Together 2023, Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners, and introduces a third within the local arrangement, Partnership Lead.

The new Partnership Lead role will improve alignment across the Partnership's strategic planning and partner agency operational delivery.

Education as a Partner

Education: evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input of education at both the operational and strategic levels of the arrangements

Continuing our work in 2023/24 to involve more partners from education settings, NSCP has prioritised stronger engagement with the education sector throughout 2024/25.

We invited the Department for Education's National Facilitator for engaging education in safeguarding children partnerships to review local arrangements and received positive feedback for the Partnership's proactive inclusion of education.

Following this feedback, 'Education' was firmly embedded as a strategic priority within the Partnership's objectives and plans were developed for a new Education Engagement Group to represent over 100 schools across Newcastle, including alternative, private, and further education providers.

A dedicated Education Partnership Lead was appointed to drive planning and delivery. Representation within the Executive Group was expanded to ensure education has a strong voice in strategic oversight. A leading independent school support provider will co-chair the Education Engagement Group and has joined the Executive Group, further enhancing collaboration.

This strengthened engagement has already delivered tangible impact. The Partnership now has a strategic delivery plan dedicated to the 'Education' priority and a named Partnership Lead for the priority focused on ensuring children not attending education regularly are safe and well.

Looking ahead, the Partnership will embed the Forum within its governance structure, deliver strategic planning activity led by the Education Partnership Lead, and explore the development of an online case study database. This resource, beginning with online safety scenarios, is scheduled for release in August 2025 and will support shared learning and strengthen safeguarding practice across Newcastle's education community.

NSCP Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2027

Priority Objective:

Ensure that the Partnership is assured that all children and young people who are not in their education setting regularly (less than 90%) are safe and well.

Partnership Lead:

Ian Dawson
HEAD OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT &
INCLUSION
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, NCC



Partner Contributions

Financial breakdown and value for money

Working Together states that “Funding contributions from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable and agreed by the LSP.” The Partnership received contributions with a total value of £223,571. The breakdown of individual contributions is shown in the Table 2.

Contributor	Contribution 2023/24	Contribution 2024/25	Increase	Contribution to Total
Newcastle City Council	£164,324.00	£164,324.00	0%	73%
NE&C ICB	£40,000.00	£40,240.00	0.6%	18%
Northumbria Police	£12,167.00	£14,722.00	21.0%	7%
Probation Service	£4,217.00	£5060.00	20%	2%
Total contribution / Income	£220,708.00	£224,346	2%	100%

Newcastle City Council includes contributions from:

NCC	141,140
0.5 FTE Admin Support	17,184
EH Contribution	3000
Workforce Development	3000

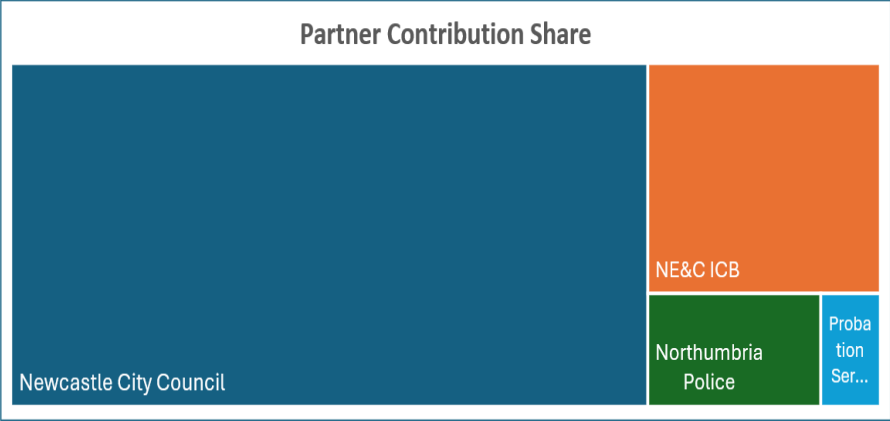


Figure 1 Visual representation of partner contributions as a proportion of total

Almost three quarters (73%) of the total partner contribution was provided by Newcastle City Council.

Equitability in Partnership contributions would lead to significant differences to the current statutory partner contribution profile and may impact other safeguarding children partnerships operating within footprint of the regional partner’s contributory budgets.

Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners are continuing to discuss options regarding achieving equitable contributions at a regional level.

**Learning
Together**



Decision Making in Child Protection

This multi-agency audit explored how decisions are made during statutory child protection processes, focusing on how agencies share and analyse information. All audited cases included child protection plans, allowing for a detailed review of multi-agency contributions.

Key Learning

Auditors found that early-stage information quality significantly influences outcomes. Limited initial detail often narrowed risk assessments, placing greater reliance on professional curiosity later in the process. Stronger cases featured early engagement from a broad range of partners, enabling more holistic analysis and effective planning.

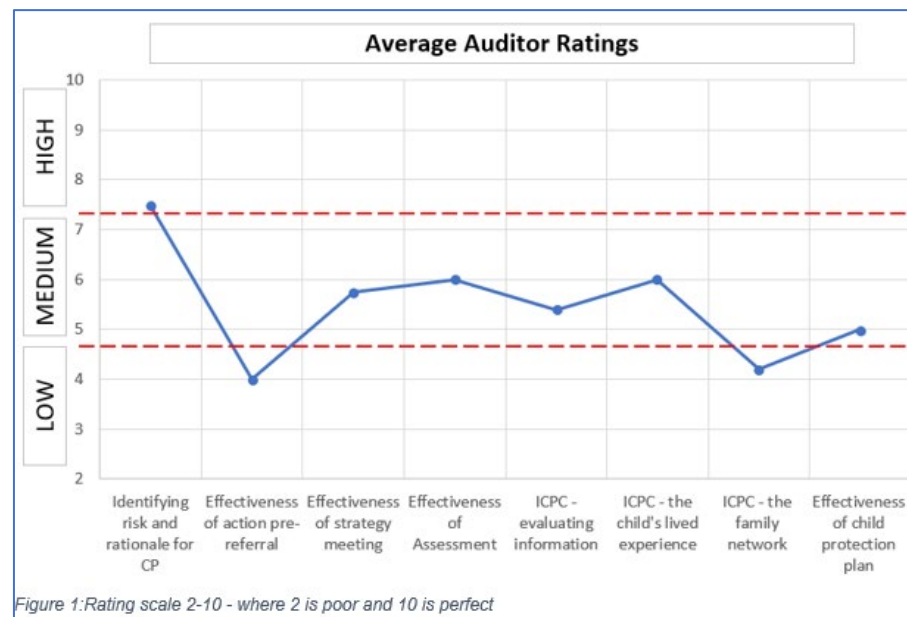
While decision-making was generally sound, it often focused on presenting behaviours rather than broader contextual risks. The most effective interventions balanced risk and strengths, explored family networks, and demonstrated rigorous multi-agency collaboration.

Actions Taken

- New guidance was developed to encourage early recognition of family networks at referral stage.
- A training event, featuring the Family Group Conferencing Team, promoted best practices in engaging extended families.
- Plans were initiated to improve partner contributions to child protection conferences, supported by the new Training and Communications Group.
- A recommendation to prioritise face-to-face meetings for child protection processes, reinforcing commitment and accountability.

Next Steps

A multi-agency working group will be convened to review child protection plans, aiming to strengthen development, delivery, and risk focus across the partnership.



Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) and Vulnerable Adolescents

NSCP has responded to multiple serious safeguarding incidents involving extra-familial harm. In 2024/25, partners committed to deepening their understanding of these risks and improving multi-agency responses.

Key Learning

A pilot pathway under the ROTH framework was developed and expanded to support children facing both intra-familial and extra-familial risks. This initiative was informed by a thematic review of seven serious incidents, which highlighted strong links between childhood trauma and youth violence, particularly knife crime.

The review underscored the complexity of working with vulnerable adolescents and reinforced the importance of flexible, trauma-informed approaches that can adapt to the diverse and evolving needs of young people exposed to significant harm..

Actions Taken

- NuTH's 0–19 service contributed insights into the timing of health assessments, revealing a mismatch between professional priorities and young people's needs.
- The pilot and review highlighted 18 key learning points, including the persistent challenge of addressing family-based abuse amid wider societal pressures.

- A revised screening tool for exploitation was introduced in emergency settings, now covering both criminal and sexual exploitation.
- Feedback from children and families involved in the pilot, co-produced with the Children's Society, was largely positive despite ongoing anxieties.
- The thematic review directly informed the strategic priority to increase targeted interventions and address the root causes of serious youth violence.
- Partners committed to launching a new dedicated ROTH service, building on pilot learning and improving cross-agency coordination.

Next Steps

A Strategic Delivery Plan for 2025–27 will guide coordinated multi-agency efforts to address risks outside the home (ROTH). Central to this plan is the development of a new service within the Local Authority, requiring investment in a specialist team that will act as a bridge between Children's Social Care, Youth Justice, and other partners. This aims to ensure joined-up support for vulnerable adolescents. Additionally, NuTH will review its health assessment processes to better meet the complex needs of this age group.

Local Learning Review: Baby NL

This multi-agency learning review looked to identify improvements in the assessment and decision-making processes for prospective foster carers. The review aimed to strengthen multi-agency contributions and ensure safeguarding practices are robust and responsive.

Key Lines of Enquiry

The review explored whether health information was clearly presented and effectively used, and whether all relevant agencies were involved in the decision-making process.

It examined the level of professional curiosity applied when triangulating information, the completeness of data available to the fostering panel, and whether a multi-agency perspective was reflected. It also questioned why alternative carers were not considered earlier and whether current practice reflects learning from previous safeguarding reviews.

How we did it

A multi-agency discussion was facilitated by the Designated Nurse. Participants included professionals from health, social care, fostering services, and safeguarding.

The session was guided by a Terms of Reference, with key questions shared in advance. Responses were documented and analysed to identify learning and areas for improvement.

Scope

The review focused on the assessment and approval process for connected carers, the extent of multi-agency involvement, and the quality of information shared. It also considered decision-making at the fostering panel, historical concerns about carers—such as substance misuse and mental health—and challenges in cross-boundary communication. Reflections on practice were informed by the Leiland James Corkill Safeguarding Review.

What We Learned

Key areas for improvement include enhanced training for fostering workers, panel members, and social workers—particularly around substance misuse and assessment frameworks. The fostering panel would also benefit from broader representation, including health and specialist professionals.

Improvements in information sharing, especially with GPs and education, are planned, alongside clearer escalation routes. Greater emphasis will be placed on exploring wider family networks early in placement planning.

Local Learning Review: Baby DF

This review evaluated multi-agency practice to identify improvements in work with care experienced families.

Key Lines of Enquiry

The review explored whether risks and vulnerabilities were properly identified and addressed throughout Baby DF's safeguarding journey. It examined the extent of professional curiosity, particularly in relation to parental vulnerabilities such as care leaver status.

The review also considered whether decision-making was appropriately challenged across agencies, and whether positivity bias may have influenced assessments and planning.

How we did it

Commissioned by the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership, the review was led by an Independent Reviewing Team Manager.

It drew on reports from social care, health, police, and other safeguarding partners covering a two-year period and included analysis of case records, staff interviews, and strategic meetings to build a comprehensive understanding of the case.

Scope

The review focused on Baby DF's safeguarding journey. It considered the impact of maternal vulnerabilities linked to traumatic life experiences, the role of fathers and male partners, and concerns around substance misuse, mental health, and housing instability. The quality of multi-agency assessments, decision-making, and safeguarding responses were central to the review's scope.

What We Learned

Key improvements include better coordination between services supporting both parent and child, especially when both are receiving care. Training and tools will be embedded to support trauma-informed practice and assess long-term impacts on parenting.. Support for care leavers who become parents will be enhanced, and male figures will be more consistently included in safeguarding plans.

The review's recommendations have been referred to the newly established multi-agency Scrutiny and Assurance Group. This group will cross-reference findings with other reviews and identify practical actions to ensure the recommendations lead to meaningful change in safeguarding practice.

**Listening
Together**



Safeguarding Data

In 2024/25, NSCP continued to strengthen its data infrastructure and information-sharing protocols to support evidence-based safeguarding.

Following the successful launch of “always available” online dashboards in 2023/24, the Partnership expanded its data provision and reorganised resources into a centralised online library.

Key Developments

A new Education dashboard was created, featuring over 70 indicators across elective home education, SEND, exclusions, and attendance.

A Youth Justice dashboard was added, tracking serious youth violence and custodial sentencing.

Automated expiry alerts and assigned document owners now ensure protocols are regularly reviewed and maintained..

Impact

- Gaps in partner data—particularly around mental health services—were identified, prompting further scrutiny.
- Key protocols were reviewed and updated, including:
 - ✓ Police Information and Intelligence Sharing Form
 - ✓ Education Health Information Sharing (Standard Operating Procedure)
 - ✓ NSCP Information Sharing Protocol

Next Steps

- Data analysis will become a standing item in the Scrutiny and Assurance Group, with updates included in the Chair’s report to the Executive.
- A new “What the Data Tells Us” section will be embedded in strategic planning templates to ensure data informs decision-making from the outset.
- Continued development of the resource library will ensure all guidance remains current and accessible.
- Workflow efficiencies will be improved in collaboration with the Partnership’s web development provider.

Feedback from Children and Families

In 2024/25, safeguarding partners prioritised listening to children and young people to shape service provision.

A city-wide **Health-Related Behaviour Survey**, commissioned by Children and Families Newcastle and delivered by Public Health, gathered responses from **5,992 pupils across 55 schools**.

Topics included:

- emotional wellbeing
- safety, relationships
- physical health
- school experience

Key Insights and Impact

- The data provided a rich picture of lived experiences, informing the Newcastle Healthy School Programme and PSHE planning.
- Comparative analysis with national datasets highlighted unique local challenges and strengths.
- Findings directly influenced the Newcastle Plan for Children and Young People, shaping priorities around feeling safe, healthy, and ready for life's next steps.

The survey also guided the development of Partnership Priorities for 2025–2027, ensuring strategic objectives reflect real needs and avoid duplication.

Voice of the Child – Practice Improvements

- Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals (NuTH) embedded the Voice of the Child across all 0–19 contact templates and hospital concern forms.
- Training was delivered to ensure staff could capture lived experiences, even for pre-verbal children.
- Compliance in recording improved from 90% to 95%.
- Quality of records now enables a vivid picture of the child's experience.
- Increased attendance at school nurse drop-ins (116 children in 2024–25) followed awareness campaigns.

Next Steps

- Voice of the Child training is now part of all core record-keeping modules and included in Level 3 Safeguarding Children training at NuTH.
- Continued use of feedback to refine strategic planning and service delivery.

**Working
Together**



Father and Male Carer Inclusive Practice

Over the past 18 months, Barnardo's has worked closely with Children's Social Care to embed inclusive practice for fathers and male carers across Newcastle. This initiative aims to improve recognition, engagement, and support for paternal figures in safeguarding and early intervention.

Key Activities

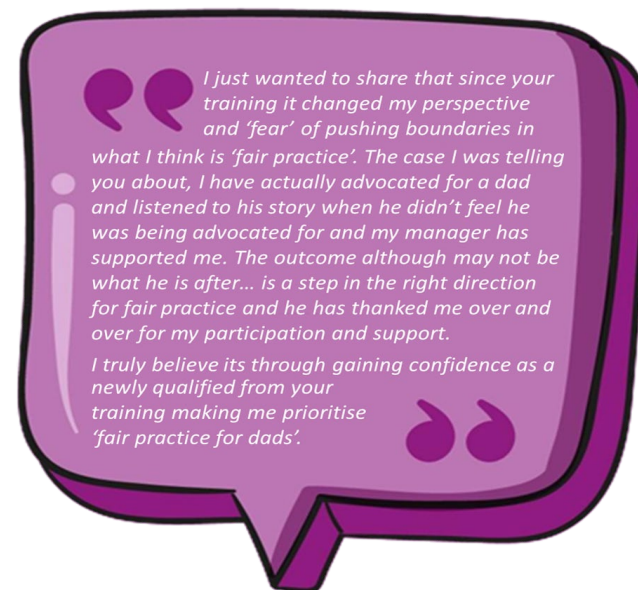
- Awareness raising within Children's Social Care teams about barriers to father engagement, including missing referral details and maternal gatekeeping.
- Delivery of training and Reflective Learning Circles focused on working with fathers and male carers.
- Development of multi-agency resources, including early intervention tools for refugee and asylum-seeking fathers.
- Updates to 0–19 service record-keeping now allow health records to be opened for dads, with plans to make this universal.

Impact

- Increased awareness of the importance of identifying and involving fathers to gain a full picture of family dynamics and risks.
- Highlighted the developmental benefits of positive male role models and the support networks paternal families can offer.
- Provided practical tools and safety guidance for fathers,

especially during early parenting stages.

- Resources and signposting are now available via the Newcastle Dads webpage, supporting case-by-case engagement.



Next Steps

- Continue collaboration with Children's Social Care to refine practice and respond to emerging challenges.
- Monitor the impact of recent health system changes and resource embedding to ensure sustained improvements in father-inclusive practice.

Improving Practitioner Knowledge and Responses to Mental Health

The NuTH 0–19 service has led efforts to enhance practitioner understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing through training, system improvements, and collaborative initiatives.

Key Activities

- Delivered bespoke training covering assessment, support pathways, referrals, and suicide awareness.
- Partnered with Children and Families Newcastle to roll out the Make Every Contact Count (MECC) training, incorporating restorative practice, Solihull, and conflict reduction.
- Developed inclusive resources for dads and male carers, including a pocket-sized guide on safety and wellbeing.
- Played a key role in shaping the Newcastle Infant Mental Health Strategy, training staff in Video Interactive Guidance and supporting access to specialist courses.
- Rolled out the “We Can Talk” training across Acute Trusts, equipping staff to respond compassionately to children in mental health crisis.

Impact

- All 0–19 practitioners now screen for emotional wellbeing using trauma-informed tools, with clear pathways for early intervention..

- The dad's resource is routinely distributed to new parents, improving engagement and support.
- School health staff received emotional wellbeing toolkits, ensuring consistent service across the city.
- Visibility of male carers in health records has improved, enhancing multi-agency assessments.
- “We Can Talk” training feedback shows staff are 18× more confident and 30× more knowledgeable, with 99% recommending the course

Evidence of Change

- Between March 2024–2025, 164 records were opened for dads and male carers by health visiting, and 93 by school health.
- Expanded support now includes mental health, housing, parenting, safeguarding, and more tailored to male carers’ needs.

Next Steps

- Continue developing inclusive and trauma-informed practice in collaboration with statutory and third-sector partners.
- Conduct assurance activity in Q1 2025 to evaluate acute care experiences, including privacy, access, and discharge support.

Improving Communication Channels: Website and Bulletin

Recognising the need for a more effective digital platform, NSCP redesigned its website to serve as a central hub for safeguarding communication, resources, and practitioner engagement

Key Activities

- A new website specification was developed to enhance usability, resource access, and communication tools.
- A suitable web development partner was selected, and funding approved by the Executive.
- Despite time constraints, the site was delivered on time and on budget, launching on 1st January 2025.

Impact

- The new site offers streamlined navigation, faster performance, and significant time savings for the Business Team.
- A searchable Resource Library now hosts over 100 curated resource packets, improving access to policies, procedures, and tools.
- The News section saw over 50 safeguarding-related articles posted in just 60 days.
- Briefings are now hosted on Vimeo, offering a professional, ad-free experience.

Evidence of Engagement

- Between January and March 2025, 578 user accounts were created for training and events.
- Feedback submissions increased from 46 to 147 in Q4, reflecting improved user experience.

The top five downloaded resources included:

1. Local Learning Review Guides – 326 downloads
2. Early Help Forms and Guides – 292
3. SIDS Guidance – 286
4. Bruising in Non-Mobile Children Pathway – 280
5. Domestic Abuse Services – 260

Next Steps

- Enhance web analytics to better understand user engagement and resource utilisation.
- Launch a regular NSCP Bulletin to improve communication with subscribed partners.
- Continue refining the Resource Library and improve workflow efficiencies with the development partner.

Data Dashboard

The NSCP Data Dashboard was developed to provide partners with real-time access to safeguarding data, supporting transparency, strategic planning, and identification of gaps in multi-agency reporting.

Key Activities

- Initial dashboards were launched as planned in 2023/24, with ongoing expansion in 2024/25.
- The dashboard now includes an Education module aligned with Working Together 2023, and continues to develop previously missing data areas such as mental health service provision.

Impact

- Partners can now interact with data flexibly, tailoring queries to specific timeframes and topics.
- The dashboard has become a go-to resource for the Business Team, improving response times and supporting strategic reporting.
- It underpins planning for Partnership Leads, helping shape priorities and delivery plans.
- Data gaps have prompted increased scrutiny and accountability, strengthening data integrity across agencies.

Evidence of Use

- Strategic planning has been directly influenced by dashboard insights.
- Challenges raised by agency reps regarding data accuracy have led to improved data-sharing practices.

Next Steps

- Data analysis will be a standing item in the Scrutiny and Assurance Group, with updates included in the Chair's report.
- A "What the Data Tells Us" section will be added to strategic planning templates to embed data-driven decision-making.
- Continued development of the dashboard and resource library will ensure relevance and usability.
- Workflow improvements will be explored with the web development partner to enhance dashboard administration.

Online Safety

Building on work from NSCP's Education subgroup, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership undertook a system mapping exercise in 2024 to better understand online safety risks. This initiative was supported by a Northumbria University Fellow through the Insights North East programme.

Key Activities

- A multi-agency working group was formed, including NSCP, Newcastle College, Youth Justice, 0–19 services, VCSEs, and Northumbria Police.
- Two mapping workshops were held with stakeholders from education, youth services, and academia.
- Planned engagement with young people via Newcastle Youth Council and children's homes aimed to capture lived experiences.
- NSCP's Business Manager actively contributed to the mapping process.

Impact

- A shared understanding of the online safety ecosystem was developed, identifying five key influence areas: parent–child interaction, CYP needs, school capacity, practitioner support, and industry messaging.
- The mapping revealed reinforcing cycles that sustain risky

- behaviours and highlighted strategic intervention points.
- Cross-sector collaboration was initiated, laying the foundation for any future initiative as part of the City Council's adoption of Marmot principles

Next Steps

- Research potential for a campaign to deliver consistent messaging across schools, families, and services.
- Seek support from Strategic Partnership members for:
- Intelligence gathering on emerging risks
- Funding contributions
- Sharing best practices and resources
- Strengthening engagement with parents, carers, and professionals.

Training and Practice Development



Training and Practice Development

Throughout 2024–25, the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) continued to invest in the development of a confident, well-informed safeguarding workforce. The training programme was designed to be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of practitioners across the city.

By offering a blend of virtual modules, in-person sessions, and co-produced briefings, the Partnership ensured that safeguarding knowledge was not only disseminated widely but also tailored to specific roles, sectors, and communities. From foundational safeguarding principles to complex issues such as child sexual exploitation, youth violence, and cultural contexts, the programme supported shared understanding and strengthened multi-agency collaboration.

The training offer extended beyond statutory partners, engaging voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, elected members, and community representatives. This broad reach reflects NSCP's commitment to ensuring that safeguarding is truly everyone's responsibility—and that every practitioner, regardless of setting, is equipped to protect and support children and young people effectively.

Training Delivery

Virtual Training:

- 2,055 completed Level 1
- 978 completed Level 2
- 271 completed modules on Child Sexual Exploitation and Gangs and Youth Violence
- Feedback showed over 98% found the courses engaging and knowledge-enhancing.

In-Person Training:

- 356 completed Level 3 multi-agency training
- 67 childcare providers attended a tailored two-part course
- 37 foster carers received face-to-face training
- Average knowledge increase: 1.3 points (from 7.9 to 9.2 out of 10)

Training and Practice Development

Throughout 2024–25, the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) continued to invest in the development of a confident, well-informed safeguarding workforce. The training programme was designed to be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of practitioners across the city.

Multi-Agency and Co-Produced Sessions

- Young Dads Safeguarding (Barnardo's) – 32 attendees
- Bruising in Non-Mobile Children – 72 attendees
- Safeguarding in Religious Context (Diocese of Newcastle)
- Elswick Mosque Women's Group – 11 attendees
- Trustee Safeguarding Training – 42 attendees
- Elected Members Training – 14 councillors

Additional Briefings and Resources

- Supported Domestic Abuse and Substance Abuse training with a children's focus.
- Delivered Early Help Training on neglect screening and ROTH.
- Coordinated a DfE Working Together (2023) briefing – 102 participants.
- Hosted a MASA Consultation Event to shape strategic priorities.
- Developed a Multi-Agency Neglect Screening Tool to improve practitioner confidence and consistency.

Impact and Engagement

- Resources from briefings are among the most downloaded on the NSCP website.
- Feedback highlighted practical value, Newcastle-specific insights, and improved confidence in safeguarding roles.
- In December 2024, 97 individuals from diverse organisations attended Partnership events, reflecting growing engagement across statutory, voluntary, and community sectors.

Next Steps

The Partnership intends to build on this engagement and commitment to working together and partnership delivery of safeguarding in Newcastle.

Several initiatives are being developed for delivery in 2025/26 including a new Relevant Agencies Group, a new multi-agency Training and Communications Group and thematic programmes concerning Child Sexual Abuse and Adolescent Neglect.

Partnership Events and Strengthening Responses to Neglect

In Quarter Four of 2024/25, NSCP delivered a diverse programme of multi-agency events designed to strengthen safeguarding practice across Newcastle.

Led by the Business Team and Training & Communication Officer, these sessions addressed a wide range of topics including neglect, elective home education, serious youth violence, and risk outside the home.

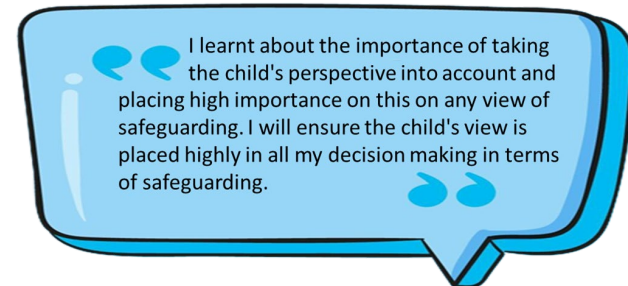
Key Activities

- Bruising in Non-Mobile Children (NSCP/Health)
- Neglect Screening Tool (NSCP)
- Safeguarding in a Religious Context (Newcastle Diocese)
- Risk Outside the Home briefings and practice sessions
- Engaging with Family Networks (Family Group Conferencing Team)

These events were the first to be managed via the new NSCP website, with over 100 bookings from practitioners across children's services, education, health, and the voluntary sector—demonstrating growing engagement and reach.

In parallel, the NuTH 0–19 service led a multi-agency task and finish group to develop the Home Environment Assessment Tool (HEAT).

This strength-based tool supports early identification of need and complements existing resources like the Neglect screening tool. Initial feedback from the pilot indicates it is effective in guiding referrals to Children's Social Care.



I learnt about the importance of taking the child's perspective into account and placing high importance on this on any view of safeguarding. I will ensure the child's view is placed highly in all my decision making in terms of safeguarding.

Next Steps

- The HEAT tool will be rolled out across safeguarding partners in 2025, supported by training and inclusion in the NSCP resource library.
- NSCP will continue to expand its event programme, with a focus on inclusive participation and practical tools that strengthen frontline safeguarding practice.

Next Year



Our Priorities for 2025–2027

These priorities reflect an understanding of both national and local issues and risks, and our commitment to focused, collaborative efforts to improve safeguarding across Newcastle.

Priority	Sponsor	Partnership Lead
Youth Violence Increase targeted support and address root causes, including knife crime	Northumbria Police	D/Chief Inspector Safeguarding
Neglect Strengthen identification, investigation, and response	Newcastle City Council	Lead Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care & Early Help
Education Attendance Ensure children not attending regularly are safe and supported	Newcastle City Council	Head of Educational Development & Inclusion
Babies Improve recognition and response to vulnerabilities in early life	North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board	Designated Nurse
Improving Evaluation and Evidence of Impact	NSCP Executive	All Partners
Learning, partnership development and practice	NSCP Executive	All Partners

Conclusion

The 2024–25 reporting year marked a period of meaningful change and progress for the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). In response to the updated Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance, the Partnership reviewed and reformed its governance, strategic priorities, and collaborative structures. We are confident that these changes have strengthened multi-agency coordination, widened participation, and laid the groundwork for more effective safeguarding across the city.

Key achievements include:

- Embedding statutory guidance through new Lead, Delegated, and Partnership Lead roles to clarify accountability.
- Prioritising youth violence, neglect, school attendance, and early life vulnerabilities, supported by dedicated leads and cross-sector sponsors.
- Using audits and serious incident reviews to drive practice improvements and service development.
- Engaging children, families, and education providers to ensure lived experience informs strategy.
- Training over 3,000 practitioners and introducing tools for neglect screening, domestic abuse response, and father-inclusive practice.

- Enhancing data systems for real-time safeguarding indicators and better agency information sharing.

These developments have led to stronger multi-agency working, greater practitioner confidence, and more responsive safeguarding. NSCP's commitment to learning and transparency continues to foster a culture of shared responsibility—making safeguarding everyone's business.

Looking Ahead: 2025–26 and Beyond

NSCP will focus on embedding the Strategic Delivery Plan 2025–27 and tracking progress against shared goals. New initiatives include the Education Engagement Forum, the ROTH service, and an Online Case Study Database. The Partnership will deepen its response to complex issues such as child sexual abuse, adolescent neglect, and online safety, while amplifying the voices of children and young people in planning and evaluation. Regional collaboration through TWNSP and exploration of equitable funding models will also continue.

NSCP remains committed to ensuring all children in Newcastle are protected and supported to thrive. By working together, we will build a safer, healthier, and more inclusive city for every child and young person.

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership

