



**BARNSLEY
SAFEGUARDING**
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP



2025-2026 BSCP YEARLY REVIEW

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Welcome to Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership's yearly report which covers our work from April 2025 to March 2026.

It provides an overview of this year's multi- agency safeguarding activity and reflects the hard work and commitment of all our partner agencies in continuing to protect and safeguard children and young people at risk in Barnsley.

Our aim is to create strong relationships and a positive multi- agency environment in our shared and equal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of Barnsley's children and young people, building a brighter future for every child. Our Healthy Barnsley 2030 ambition is that everyone has the right support, with early help at the right time and place; that fewer people live in poverty and that everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families; that our diverse places are welcoming, supportive and adaptable.

Our yearly report recognises the progress that has been made in working together to keep children safe from harm, the challenges that have been met and the work ahead of us. We are grateful to all of our partners and their dedicated front-line staff for their support and steadfast commitment to safeguarding children in Barnsley.



As Executive Director of Children's Services in Barnsley and chair of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, I am pleased to introduce this year's yearly Report of the Barnsley Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

This report highlights the significant progress we have made together in delivering our shared priorities and strengthening our commitment to keeping children and young people safe. Over the past year, our partnership has demonstrated strong collaboration, innovation, and resilience in the face of ongoing challenges, and we are proud of the impact this has had across our local system.

These changes have further reinforced our collective accountability and enhanced the way we work together to respond to the needs of children and families in Barnsley. I would like to thank all our partners for their continued dedication and shared determination to improve outcomes for every child in our borough.



**CARLY
SPEECHLEY**
Executive Director of
Children's Services

A Message from our Delegated Safeguarding Partners



SIMON WANLESS
Chief Superintendent-
Barnsley
District Commander

As Barnsley's District Commander and one of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners, I am proud of the progress we have made together over the past year. The achievements highlighted within this report reflect the strength of our partnership and our shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people across Barnsley.

By working collectively across agencies, challenging each other constructively, and keeping children at the centre of everything we do, we are making a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families in Barnsley.

I would like to thank all partners and frontline practitioners for their dedication, professionalism and unwavering focus on keeping children safe.



ALUN WINDLE
Deputy Chief Nurse ICB

It is a privilege to serve as one of the Executive Partners and to support the continued development of services that improve outcomes for children and families in Barnsley. Over the past year, the safeguarding landscape has continued to evolve in response to increasing demand, complexity of need, and sustained resource pressures across the system. Despite these challenges, the dedication, professionalism, and resilience of staff across all partner organisations have remained evident. Our partnership has continued to provide strong leadership and collective oversight to support this shared ambition.

As we move through 2026, we are now seeing the Families First agenda transition into delivery, bringing with it new ways of working focused on earlier intervention, strengthened multi-agency collaboration, and a more integrated approach to supporting children and families. While public services, including health, continue to operate within significant financial constraints, these reforms present an important opportunity to reshape how we deliver support in a more joined-up, effective, and sustainable way.

Our commitment to safeguarding children, protecting them from harm, and improving their outcomes remains unwavering. There is an increasing need to ensure that resources are used effectively and that services are aligned to meet the needs of families at the earliest opportunity. Families First supports this ambition, enabling us to work more closely with partners and with families themselves to deliver support that is timely, proportionate, and makes a positive difference to the lives of children and their families.

We will continue to strengthen our collaborative approach, ensuring that children and young people receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time, and from the right professionals. By working together as a partnership, we can continue to make meaningful progress and improve the lives and outcomes of children and families across Barnsley.

Expectations set out in Statutory Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children was republished in March 2026 and sets out the reporting requirements for safeguarding partnerships. The table below outlines these requirements and shows where the partnership's response can be found.

Working Together 2026 requirement	Sections in BSCP Annual report
What the partnership has done as a result of arrangements including on child safeguarding practice reviews	Section 3/Section 6
How effective these arrangements have been in practice	Section 4/Section 6
The contribution of each safeguarding partner to the functioning and structure of the multi – agency safeguarding arrangements	Section 3/Section 5
Any themes emanating from aggregated methods of scrutiny, for example, reviews and scrutineer activity and multi-agency audit	Section 3/Section 6
Evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families	Section 4/Section 6/Section 7
An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities	Section 4/Section 5
An analysis of learning from serious incidents	Section 6
A record of key decisions and actions taken by the safeguarding partners in the yearly cycle, including in relation to implementing the recommendations from any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and the impact this has had	Section 5/Section 6

Ways in which the safeguarding partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision	Section 4/Section 5
The breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements for that period, including the financial contributions of individual partners, any changes to funding and an assessment of the impact and value for money of this funding	Section 3
Evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input of education at both the operational and strategic levels of the arrangements	Section 3/Section 5
An overview of how data is being used to encourage learning within the arrangements and evidence of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes	Section 4/ Section 5
A review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure the leadership is strong and the arrangements are leading to the desired and necessary impact	Section 3
Any updates to the published arrangements with the proposed timescale for implementation	Section 3
Evidence that national reforms have been implemented, taking into account key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners in response to reforms, and any issues or concerns encountered within the yearly cycle	Section 3/Section 4

Understanding Barnsley



Population

Barnsley is home to around 244,600 people. Children and young people aged 0–19 make up around 22.2% of Barnsley's population. This is approximately 54,300 children and young people aged 0–19



Wellbeing

The average healthy life expectancy for women in Barnsley is 52.6 years, and for men its 52.8 years. These are nearly 10 years lower than the UK average



Deprivation & Inequality

Barnsley is ranked 40th most deprived out of 317 local authorities. Almost one in three children (30.6%) live in low-income households, significantly above the national average of 21.8%.



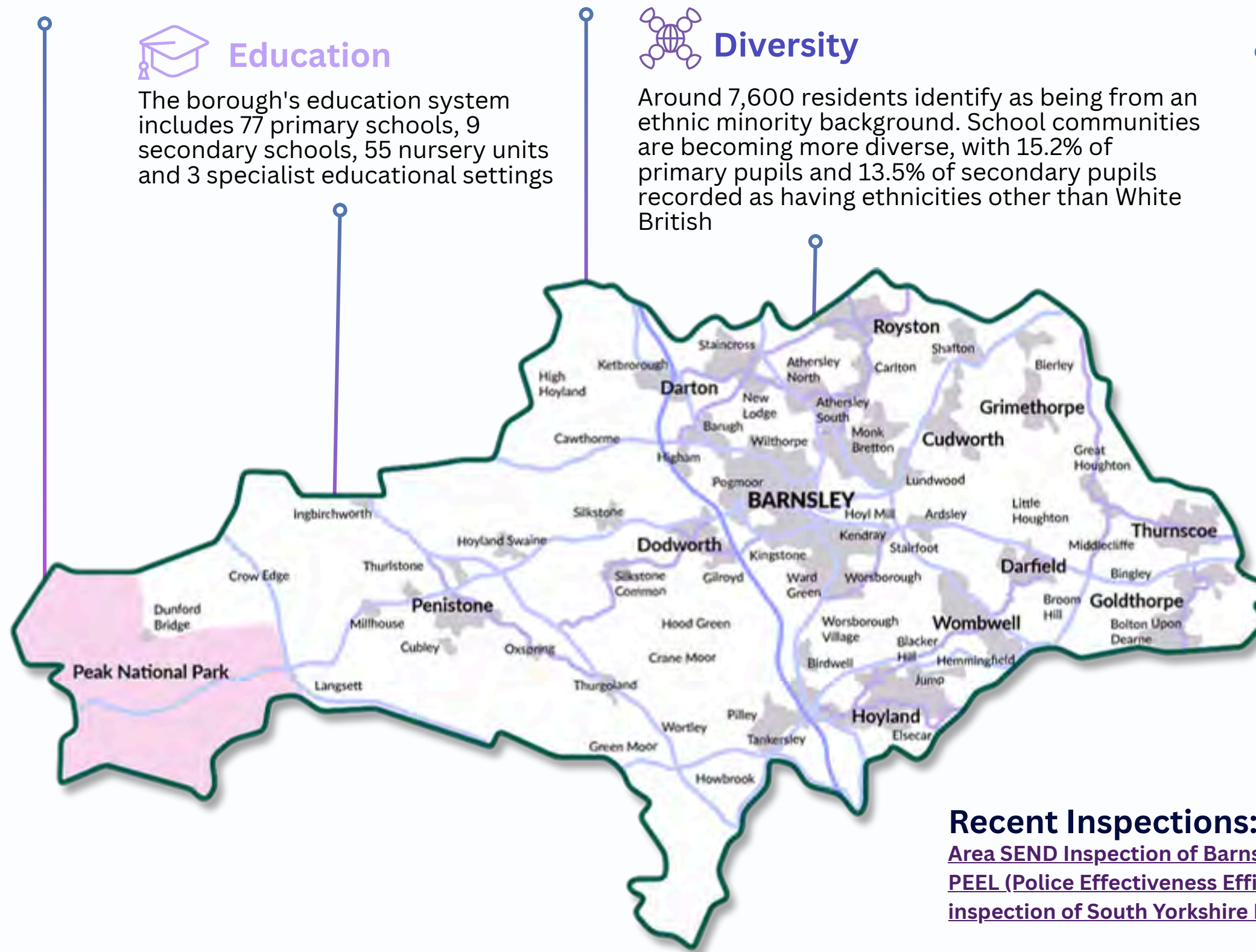
Education

The borough's education system includes 77 primary schools, 9 secondary schools, 55 nursery units and 3 specialist educational settings



Diversity

Around 7,600 residents identify as being from an ethnic minority background. School communities are becoming more diverse, with 15.2% of primary pupils and 13.5% of secondary pupils recorded as having ethnicities other than White British



Recent Inspections:

[Area SEND Inspection of Barnsley Local Areas Partnership](#)

[PEEL \(Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy\) 2023-2025 : An inspection of South Yorkshire Police](#)

How the Partnership works together

Barnsley's Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together three statutory partners – Local Authority, Police and Health (South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)- to plan and collaborate with all partner agencies who work with children and families.

As a partnership we are committed to:

- Keeping children and young people safe in Barnsley
- Working with our partners to continuously improve our effectiveness
- Placing learning and improvement at the centre of our shared work
- Keeping a focus on understanding the impact of our work on the outcomes for local children and young people

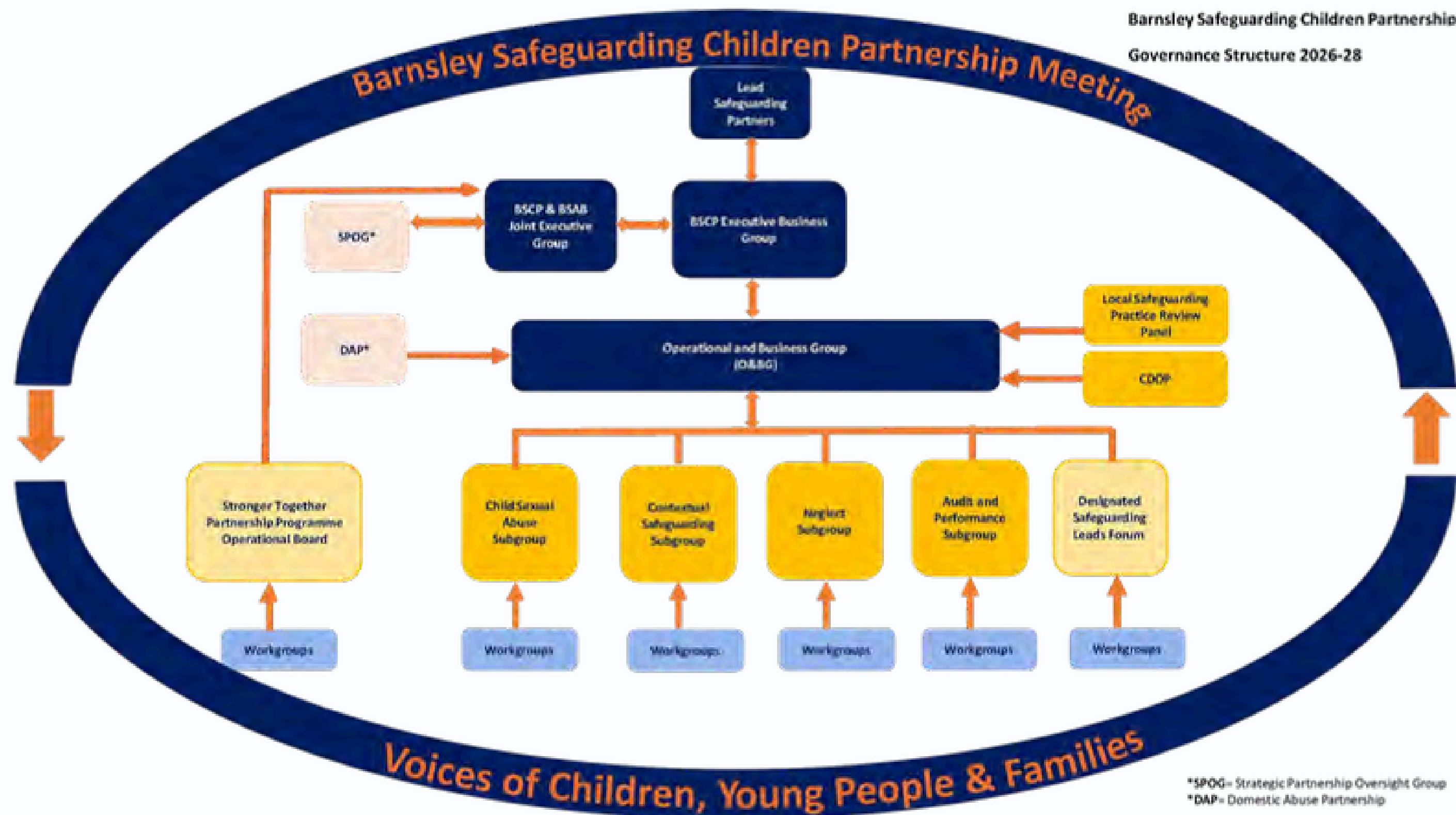
The Partnership's Executive Business Group has a strategic membership of key stakeholders and relevant agencies, including health and education representation. These meetings are chaired by one of the delegated safeguarding partners on a rotating annual basis. Since June 2025 Carly Speechley Executive Director for Children Services is the partnership chair and single point of contact for partnership related issues.

The Partnership Executive Group drives the work of the Partnership, in line with the vision and values. This group develops, delivers, and oversees the agreed yearly plan and directs the Partnership's subgroups with the implementation of our strategic priorities and business plan.



Leadership Structure and management arrangements

During 2025–26, the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership continued to strengthen its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in line with the expectations set out in Working Together 2023 (WT23) and more recently Working Together 26 (WT26). These changes have provided an opportunity to review and refine our ways of working, building on established partnership strengths and supporting a shared commitment to improving frontline practice. This ongoing development is intended to deliver meaningful and sustained improvements in outcomes for children, young people and their families. The structure chart below sets out how the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership was organised during the year.



Activities achieved this year

June 2025

- The Section 11 assurance midway report was discussed, highlighting clear progress against single-agency action plans, particularly in safer recruitment and in strengthening the inclusion of safeguarding responsibilities within job descriptions.
- Received updates from BSCP subgroups on progress across each workstream.
- Reviewed the Independent Scrutineer report, including findings from the review of partnership multi-agency audit activity and the proposed Quality Assurance Framework, and agreed the multi-agency auditing activity for the coming year.
- Reviewed multi-agency audit activity on the theme of domestic abuse, with the learning and recommendations agreed and referred to the Domestic Abuse Partnership for oversight.
- Agreed the proposed Section 175 audit platform for education safeguarding assurance, with implementation scheduled for September 2025.
- Endorsed the new assessment and support protocol on lining what professionals can expect when a referral is made to children's social care, clarifying how early help and statutory services operate locally and specific guidance relating to specific circumstances that involve children.

August 2025

- Endorsed the neglect screening tool to support early identification of neglect, strengthen early intervention, and improve workforce understanding of the indicators of neglect.
- Received positive feedback on the BSCP Annual Report 2024-25 and agreed the safeguarding priorities for the coming year, including the addition of child sexual abuse in the intra-familial environment.
- Reviewed the Contextual Safeguarding Improvement Plan and progress against the Independent Scrutineer's report, with a focus on harms occurring outside the home and recommendations incorporated into the improvement plan.
- Update provided on the National Audit on Group- based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Report and the recommendations for the partnership to consider, including future actions and a review of current work aligned to the recommendations.
- Reviewed Audit and Performance data for Quarters 1 and 2, including key findings, recommendations, and learning.
- Independent Scrutineer Report review of child sexual abuse cases on child protection plans evaluating multi agency responses, case management, safeguarding plans and the challenges faced in protecting children from harm.
- Received updates from BSCP safeguarding priorities on the work plan and progress made.

May 2025

- The Children's Safeguarding Partnership moved into a new directorate, bringing together the Reforms Programme and the Children's Safeguarding Partnership within one service team. This alignment strengthened joint working with the Family First Partnership Programme (Stronger Together Reforms) and ensures that governance, accountability, and key decision-making in response to the reforms are embedded within partnership arrangements.
- The partnership refreshed its governance structure to include the reforms programme. With clear accountability to provide regular updates, representation at partnership meetings including multi agency development sessions provided through both the Children's Safeguarding Partnership and joint meetings with the Adults Board to ensure key decisions and responses are made aligning to the work of safeguarding children and young people in Barnsley.

November 2025

- Reviewed the partnership subgroup functions and operations and endorsed the proposed changes to realign subgroup structures, including the merger of the Policy and Workforce Development subgroup and the integration of the Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review Panel into the Audit and Performance subgroup, effective from January 2026.
- Annual report update from LADO.
- Agreed the revised FGM protocol and pathways, with wider training to support partners, and strengthened processes to provide clearer referral pathways, timescales, and responsibilities.
- Agreed and endorsed the revised Joint Investigation Protocol, with further progress update to be provided in six months.
- Established a JTAI inspection group focused on child sexual abuse in the intra-familial environment, with partners working alongside the Local Authority Quality Improvement Service to review the criteria and evidence joint practice in this area.
- Reviewed multi agency audit activity on neglect with the agreement of learning and actions to sit within the neglect subgroup

March 2026

- A Suicide Thematic review of children and young people undertaken by public health was shared and the recommendations and learning shared with partners with recommendations to be built into the work of the partnership for 26-27 .
- Updates from the Safer Barnsley Partnership and how this partnership aligns to the work BSCP. With the agreement on developing the work of domestic abuse with a specific Child and Young Person subgroup .
- Reviewed multi agency audit activity on Child Sexual Abuse in an intrafamilial environment with the agreement of learning and actions to sit within the Child Sexual Abuse Subgroup
- Independent Scrutineer Report provided on reviewing Child Protection Processes and proposal for scrutiny audit on neglect report and proposal endorsed
- Safer Barnsley Partnership review on ketamine and action plan was shared and circulated to partners

Future plans 2026-2027

- Strengthening the voice and engagement of children and young people through scrutiny activity, helping to ensure their views and representation inform partnership work and its priorities moving forward.
- Develop and launch the new BSCP website for professionals, families, children, and young people.
- Work jointly with the Adults Board to strengthen our transitional safeguarding approach in Barnsley.

Funding Arrangements 2025-2026

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) states that funding from the statutory safeguarding partners should be equitable, agreed by the Lead Safeguarding Partners, and kept under review.

Over the past year there has been a review in South Yorkshire across the four Children's Partnerships with new funding arrangements coming into place for 2026-2027.

The three lead safeguarding partners agree BCSP funding, supported by wider partners and their contribution to partnership activity, including multi-agency auditing. Funding arrangements are reviewed regularly by the Executive Group.

The table sets out BCSP income and expenditure for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Income	
BMBC Contribution	159,020
Police and Crime commissioning	20,000
National Probation Service	-
South Yorkshire (ICB)	49,000
24/25 Underspend Carried forward	33,252
Total Income	261,272

Partnership Unit Expenditure	
Salary Cost	155,528
Consultancy- Independent Scrutineer	23,400
Agency- audit and performance officer	62,968
Conference Fees	167
Contracts/Subscriptions	16,776
Build of BSCP website	4,655
Salary Recharge	38
Total Expenditure	263,532
25/26 Overspend	2,260

Independent Scrutiny

Statutory guidance defines the role of the Independent Scrutineer as providing independent oversight, constructive challenge and assurance that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective, child-centred and compliant with statutory expectations. Independent scrutiny provides an important mechanism through which the Partnership can evidence the extent to which agencies are working together effectively to safeguard children, review the quality and impact of safeguarding practice, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Reflections from our Independent Scrutineer Victoria Horsefield

The Partnership has demonstrated a robust, transparent and constructive approach to independent scrutiny throughout the reporting period. Delegated Safeguarding Partners have embedded a culture in which independent scrutiny is valued as a core component of partnership assurance, governance and continuous improvement. This is evidenced through regular engagement with the Independent Scrutineer, openness to external challenge, and the use of scrutiny findings to inform decision-making, strengthen accountability and support improved outcomes for children. Scrutiny activity is aligned to the Partnership's agreed safeguarding priorities, with recommendations and actions accepted, progressed and monitored through the established governance arrangements.

During the reporting period, I have led, contributed and reported on a structured programme of scrutiny activity. This has provided the Partnership with an evidence base through which to test the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, assess progress against priorities and identify areas where further assurance or improvement is required. Scrutiny activity has included:

- Attendance and contribution to strategic and operational partnership meetings, providing independent challenge, assurance and scrutiny of progress against agreed safeguarding priorities.
- Review of sub-group activity, work plans and reporting arrangements to assess whether activity is appropriately aligned to partnership priorities and whether there is evidence of impact and sustained improvement.
- Provided challenge regarding equitable funding arrangements across the South Yorkshire region, supporting transparency, accountability and consistency across the regional safeguarding arrangements.
- Representation of Barnsley at regional and national meetings, ensuring local arrangements are informed by wider learning, statutory expectations and emerging evidence of effective practice.
- Scrutiny of the Child G Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review, including review of learning, assurance activity, governance oversight and the effectiveness of agencies response to identified recommendations.
- Oversight of BSCP's compliance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework 2023, providing assurance that local arrangements reflect current statutory requirements.
- Oversight of the partnership's response and progress against the Families First partnership programme, ensuring changes reflect and meet the needs of local communities.
- Review of multi-agency audit processes and contribution to the development of a revised quality assurance framework, strengthening the Partnership's ability to evidence impact, monitor improvement and identify emerging areas for scrutiny.
- Review of the BSCP dataset to support assurance regarding performance, emerging themes, areas of risk and priorities requiring further scrutiny or escalation.
- Review the progress made against the scrutiny activity of Barnsley's response to wider harms outside the home.

I have undertaken two themed scrutiny activities during the reporting period. These activities have provided more detailed independent assurance in priority areas, enabled triangulation of evidence from a range of sources, and identified learning to inform development, quality assurance and practice improvement.



Evaluation of the effectiveness of child protection processes

The activity undertaken during this reporting period focused on core group meetings and the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency child protection planning. This identified evidence of sustained improvement since the previous review of Initial Child Protection Conferences, including examples of strong multi-agency practice, committed professional engagement, and tenacious work across services that contributed to improved safety and outcomes for children. Areas of good practice included the efforts of child protection chairs to support parental participation, improved attendance by professionals at key meetings, and strong examples where children's voices were heard and acted upon, resulting in more effective and child-centred plans. The review provided areas for development to further strengthen practice. Three key recommendations were: to strengthen the participation and influence of children within child protection processes so their views are consistently heard, recorded, and acted upon, to improve the effectiveness of core groups by ensuring the right professionals attend, contribute, deliver actions, communicate effectively, and escalate concerns where progress is not being made and to ensure child protection conferences and plans are consistently focused on risk, impact, and proportionate outcomes, with robust challenge where agencies are not fully engaged or accountable. The recommendations have been accepted, and implementation is being led by the Audit and Performance sub-group.

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

Barnsley's review of the National Panels "I wanted them all to notice", protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment, resulted in the establishment of a specific sub-group to ensure processes, procedures and practice are robust in this area of practice.

Scrutiny activity reviewed children subject to child protection planning under the category of sexual abuse. The review considered the quality of multi-agency responses, assessment, information sharing, child protection planning, core group activity, safety planning and evidence of management oversight. Findings were triangulated against the National Panel report and the emerging learning from the Joint Targeted Area Inspections. The review found examples of good practice across all partners, demonstrating timely assessment, multi-agency engagement and effective specialist input. Areas for development included; providing training to strengthen professional curiosity and confidence to enable practitioners to move beyond reliance of direct disclosure to proactively seek evidence of abuse, providing children with safety plans that are clear, accessible and tailored to their needs, and ensuring the non-abusing parent is well supported and responsibility to protect is not disproportionately their responsibility.

These findings have been fed into and received by the sub-group and informed the development of the strategy and action plan.

In my role as Independent Scrutineer, I have observed first-hand the commitment, energy and determination demonstrated by leaders, managers and practitioners across Barnsley. Their collective focus on safeguarding and supporting children is evident.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the business unit, whose work is essential in supporting the effective delivery, coordination and governance of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Future Planning for 2026/2027

- Deep dive audit into neglect and informing the neglect strategy
- Lead reviewer for a local learning lessons review
- Contributor to the BSCP Conference on Neglect
- Scrutiny activity and oversight of the implementation of the Stronger Together model (Families First Partnership)
- Contribution to the section 11 audit

Child Sexual Abuse in a Intrafamilial Environment

This work focuses on children identified as being at risk of, or experiencing, child sexual abuse within the family environment. It is delivered in coordination with the Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup to support a consistent partnership approach to addressing harm both within and beyond the home.

Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse

Recognising children as victims in their own right and strengthening the partnership's role in the local response to domestic abuse, in line with the priorities identified from the Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategic review.

Neglect

Strengthening the recognition, assessment and response to neglect, with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people living in neglectful circumstances and reducing the long-term impact on their lives.

Contextual Safeguarding

Developing a robust and coordinated partnership response to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation and other harms occurring outside the home.

Reforms/Families First Programme

To build a stronger, more resilient community where families are supported, valued and able to reach their full potential.

How and why, we chose our priorities



As a partnership, in March 2025 we reviewed our safeguarding priorities for the year, shaped by our understanding of the experiences of children and young people in Barnsley and by the evidence of where we can make the greatest difference. These priorities are shared across agencies and provide a strong foundation for constructive challenge and mutual accountability.

Neglect

In Barnsley neglect is continued to be the most frequent reason for referrals to the Integrated Front Door and over 45% of Barnsley's Child Protections plans are due to neglect. We recognise there is a clear distinction between poverty and neglect and that both are major adverse childhood experiences in young people's lives that can affect their futures.

Our aim is to ensure that the early recognition of neglect and improved responses by all agencies reduces the number of children living with chronic neglect and those who need statutory intervention thereby reducing harm and improving children's outcomes.

ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

- A multi-agency audit was completed during Quarter 2, identifying strengths in practice alongside areas for further development. The recommended areas for improvement have been incorporated into a multi agency action plan, which will be monitored through the Neglect Subgroup.
- The neglect screening tool was developed and rolled out to practitioners across the workforce to support early identification and reflection on concerns relating to neglect.
- The subgroup has progressed the development of a shared Neglect Toolkit for use across partner agencies, supporting greater consistency in approaches, resources and practice. The toolkit is nearing completion and will be rolled out next year.
- Work has been undertaken to strengthen data collection in relation to neglect, leading to a revised approach with partners and that aligns with our South Yorkshire partnership arrangements.
- The subgroup has maintained a focus on dental neglect, with positive partnership activity including the sharing of resources, raising awareness of referral pathways and supporting community-based work through public health teams.
- Education Welfare service joined the Neglect Subgroup, strengthening the focus on educational neglect as an emerging theme and has become the chair of the subgroup for next year.
- The partnership continues to promote and deliver training in the use of Graded Care Profile 2 tool with an additional new trainer from the 0-19 service to co-deliver.



IMPACT AND EVIDENCE:

- Health and social care partners have feedback through subgroup activity that the neglect screening tool is shared within safeguarding supervision and used within referrals made to the Integrated front door- demonstrating practitioners are recognising and responding to early identification of neglect
- The involvement of the Education Welfare service has strengthened the subgroup's focus on educational neglect and will support continued development of this priority next year.
- A programme of briefings and workshops was delivered to practitioners to share learning from the neglect audit and promote practical tools, including the Graded Care Profile and neglect screening tool, to support the recognition of and response to neglect in practice to front line workers.
- The total number of staff trained in graded profile 2 during this last year (01/04/2025- 31/3/2026) is 113
- Improved data arrangements are strengthening partnership oversight of neglect and supporting alignment with wider South Yorkshire partnership approaches which we will continue to build on over the coming year.

WHAT THE DATA IS TELLING US

In 2025/26, there were 156 police investigations relating to child neglect, an increase of 32% from 118 in the previous year. This rise may, in part, reflect improved identification and recording of neglect following targeted district training delivered to police officers.

At the end of March 2025 104 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan due to neglect, compared to 135 in the previous year. While this reduction is encouraging, it also reinforces that neglect remains a significant and ongoing safeguarding concern and continues to be a key priority for the partnership.

Graded Care Profile training was delivered six times during this year, attended by 113 practitioners. This has helped to improve professional understanding of neglect and strengthen practitioners' ability to identify, assess and respond to concerns at an earlier stage.

Future Plans for 2026-2027

- The Neglect Strategy will be refreshed with partners to streamline the current approach and strengthen links to practical resources and tools for practitioners.
- The Neglect Toolkit will be launched by autumn 2026 to support consistent practice across the partnership.
- The subgroup will continue to focus on the impact of neglect on children's lived experiences, supported by a planned neglect conference in September 2026.
- Independent scrutiny activity will include a deep dive following the multi-agency audit, using a "day in the life" methodology to better understand the impact of neglect on children's daily lives.
- Neglect training will continue to be delivered, with a renewed focus, through the multi-agency trainer, on children's lived experiences of neglect.
- Continue to address the impact of neglect on children's health, those missing in education and risks of harm outside the home following on from neglect multi agency audit actions.



Contextual Safeguarding

We recognise that some children and young people are at risk of harm through relationships in their communities, schools and online spaces. These are contextual safeguarding risks, which sit outside the family home. Across Barnsley preventative work and awareness-raising work continues in line with our Contextual Safeguarding Strategy.

Our aim is to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation and harm beyond the home. We want assurance that effective governance and strategies are in place, and that children and families feel safer in their communities. This is supported by multi-agency investment in the BSafe team and the Vulnerable Adolescents Hub. `



ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

- Established the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Framework to respond to exploitation, serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and missing children.
- Developed and implemented a Gold, Silver, Bronze MACE governance structure, with Silver MACE which went live October 2025. The partnership manager sits within the Silver MACE to identify any trends or areas that can support the wider work of the partnership.
- Continued the co-allocation model with Children's Social Care, with BSafe providing specialist support and consultation.
- Began developing a Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) pathway for children at risk outside the home.
- Developed an updated draft contextual safeguarding strategy through consultation with partners and a multi-agency workshop in October 2025.
- Completed a thematic health review in May 2025 of children previously open to BSafe.
- Established a dedicated virtual school link to BSafe, with representation at MACE, Daily Brief and other key meetings.
- Established a Transitional Safeguarding steering group to review transition arrangements across children's and adults' partnerships.
- Held a whole service event in October 2025 with Dez Holmes to raise awareness of transitional safeguarding
- Worked with partners across Safer Barnsley, Police, Education, BYouth and the voluntary/community sector to shape the proposed 4-tier delivery model.
- Delivered police-led workforce development on intelligence sharing, including what intelligence is and how to submit it.
- Developed and delivered a four-tier contextual safeguarding training programme (levels 1–4) across the partnership
- Embedded mapping more fully into BSafe practice and introduced a Child and Family Assessment for contextual risk in MOSAIC
- Delivered training for regulatory services and taxi drivers in September 2025 in response to the Casey Review.

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

- Strategic oversight of contextual safeguarding has strengthened through clearer governance, improved accountability and escalation routes, supported by the new Bronze, Silver, Gold MACE structure, which provides clearer line of sight from frontline practice to senior leadership. Children are more likely to receive a co-ordinated multi-agency response, with risks discussed and managed at the appropriate level.
- Workforce development and the introduction of a virtual school link have strengthened partner awareness of contextual risk and improved education planning and reintegration support.
- Transitional safeguarding work is improving links between children's and adult services, reducing delays and supporting better continuity of support into adulthood.
- Thematic and deep dive audits have identified practice gaps and strengthened understanding of where early recognition, prevention and diversion need to improve, supporting more targeted multi-agency responses.
- Police-led intelligence training has improved the quality and timeliness of submissions, while embedded mapping has strengthened understanding of children at risk, linked adults, locations and patterns of harm.

WHAT THE DATA IS TELLING US

There were 458 children reported missing to the police in 2025/26, a 14% decrease from 533 in the previous year. This reduction reflects the significant work undertaken by partnership agencies to identify vulnerabilities early, provide targeted support to children and young people, and reduce the factors that can contribute to missing episodes.

Return Home Interviews help keep young people safe following missing episodes. Through conversation, information sharing and intelligence gathering, the service identifies wider risks, early help needs and other vulnerabilities to young people who may otherwise be unknown to services. 95% of children were offered a Return Home Interview (RHI) with acceptance rates remaining consistently strong at over 80% in the last reported quarter. Practitioners continue to pursue engagement where interviews cannot take place within 72 hours, supporting meaningful conversations with young people.



Police CSE investigations increased by 11%, which reflects the positive impact of partnership activity, awareness raising and training to improve the identification of children at risk of exploitation.

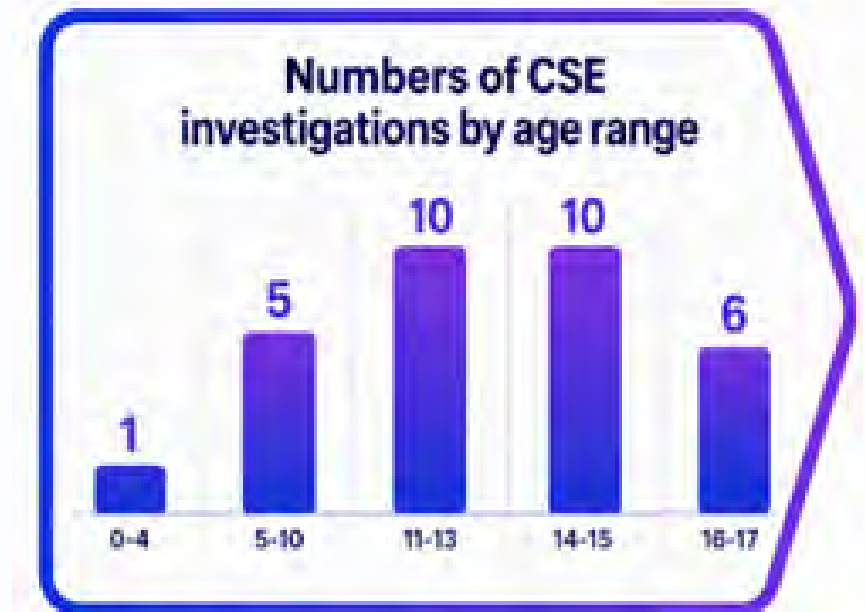
The majority of CSE investigations involved girls (73%). Most investigations related to children aged 11–15, highlighting adolescence as a key period of vulnerability. However, cases were identified across all age groups, demonstrating the importance of early identification and ongoing practitioner awareness which the partnership which we will build on over the coming year.

The number of Abduction Orders served by South Yorkshire Police in Barnsley increased by 75% this year, highlighting a proactive approach to disrupting exploitation and safeguarding children vulnerable to CSE and CCE.

In 2025/26, 8 crimes were recorded in Barnsley involving a child victim where Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) concerns were identified. Numbers have remained relatively stable throughout the year. However, CCE is recognised as a potentially underreported crime type, with concerns not always identified or recorded, meaning the true extent of exploitation may be greater than reflected in recorded crime data.

Future Plans for 2026-2027

- Finalise and launch the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy
- Continue to strengthen the Gold, Silver, Bronze MACE process, including reviewing effectiveness, attendance, decision-making and escalation.
- Progress the Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) pathway so there is a clearer safeguarding response for children experiencing extrafamilial harm.
- Develop ways to involve young people with lived experience in shaping services, sharing learning and supporting prevention work
- Continue to improve education planning for children at risk of exploitation, particularly around exclusions, NEET, reintegration and SEN/EHCP consideration.
- Further strengthen transition pathways post-18, including the all-age exploitation approach and links with adult services.
- Implement and review the new Missing meeting (MAPP) for children with the highest missing risk.
- Complete and implement the multi-agency contextual safeguarding data dashboard to improve oversight of trends, hotspots and vulnerable groups.



Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse

Within the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership, we recognise that children and young people are not simply witnesses to domestic abuse, but victims in their own right. Our aim is to ensure they receive timely, tailored support that responds to their individual needs, supports recovery, protects wellbeing, and helps them feel safe and empowered. This priority area is aligned with the Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP), which brings together professionals across Barnsley who work with children and young people affected by domestic abuse, with the shared purpose of:

- Ensuring stakeholders understand the legislative change and work together across agencies to review and assess current support for children affected by domestic abuse in Barnsley
- Work together to consider joint commissioning options where a particular issue is identified
- Share good practice across the borough and provide service updates to ensure all partners are informed about current and planned support for children and young people.
- Develop a clear understanding of, and map, the support available in Barnsley for children and young people who are causing harm within their families or in their own relationships.
- Provide reports and updates to the BSCP Operational and Business Group and wider partnership meetings

ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

- Completion of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Review, with key findings and recommendations informing system change to driving improvements in pathways, coordination and multi-agency responses across safeguarding, health, education and the voluntary and community sector.
- A multi-agency partnership workshop was held in December 2025, where partners collectively agreed that children and young people (CYP) should be a core strategic priority for the Domestic Abuse Partnership going forward.
- Establishment of a dedicated CYP Focus Group to strengthen system leadership, oversight and delivery, ensuring alignment with the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Great Childhood Ambition.



- Improved identification of children and young people as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, supported by strengthened data, intelligence and ward level analysis across safeguarding, Early Help and education pathways.
- Funding secured for a domestic abuse IDVA co located within the Integrated Front Door, strengthening early identification, risk assessment and multi-agency response where domestic abuse is a factor.
- Recruitment of a new Domestic Abuse Lead IDVA post, co located within Children Young People Teams in Children's Social Care, to strengthen the identification of risk, improve safeguarding outcomes for children and families, and embed domestic abuse expertise within the wider multi-disciplinary response.
- Ongoing implementation of Safe and Together principles across children's social care and partner agencies, embedding child centred and perpetrator focused practice and strengthening work with non-abusive parents.
- Recommissioning of the Inspire to Change perpetrator programme for adults, ensuring continuity of behaviour change interventions to reduce domestic abuse risk and improve safety for partners and children.
- Recommissioning of the Level Up behaviour change programme for under 18s displaying harmful behaviours, supporting early intervention and preventing escalation into adult perpetration.
- Review of MARAC and Multi Agency Domestic Abuse arrangements to improve alignment, thresholds, governance and consistency with wider safeguarding pathways for children and families.
- Development and agreement of the refreshed domestic abuse campaign Safe Steps, strengthening early help, accessible routes to support and child friendly, trauma informed messaging for families.

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

- Earlier identification and more timely responses to domestic abuse affecting children and young people have been achieved through strengthened Integrated Front Door arrangements and closer alignment with safeguarding, Early Help pathways and the Domestic Abuse Service.
- Children and young people are being seen and supported sooner, with quicker safeguarding responses through IFD triage and daily Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse (MADA) meetings.
- Continued access to trauma-informed therapeutic support delivered by Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) has helped children and young people better understand and process their experiences of domestic abuse, alongside wider family safeguarding responses, with group-based work reaching more children than planned.

- An increased focus on perpetrator behaviour changes, through recommissioned adult and under-18s programmes, is helping to reduce risk and create safer home environments for children.
- A clear system shift has taken place, with children increasingly recognised as victims in their own right rather than witnesses to abuse.
- Support has become more trauma-informed and relational, reflecting young peoples expressed need for consistency, trusted adults and emotionally safe spaces; feedback indicates that young people value regular check-ins, face-to-face contact and support from practitioners who understand the context behind their behaviour.
- Feedback gathered through structured engagement activity and the partnership workshop directly shaped the decision to prioritise children and young people within the Domestic Abuse Partnership and local strategy.
- The establishment of the CYP Focus Group is embedding lived experience into service design, commissioning priorities, workforce development and communication activity.
- Targeted engagement delivered by The Youth Association has helped shape the domestic abuse vision and ambition statement, strengthening young people’s influence at a strategic level.
- The Youth Association’s Street Voice provides an ongoing mechanism for continuous consultation, ensuring lived experience informs strategy, commissioning and service improvement.
- The Youth Association has been delivering their Future Man programme at Barnsley College throughout 2025 and College report seeing a positive impact the course has made to male students.
- **Feedback from Barnsley College “Having positive male role models in a youth work capacity regularly on site has been incredibly valuable as it has allowed our male learners to understand more about the manosphere and the impact of negative attitudes towards women.”**
- Young people were actively consulted in the development of the Safe Steps campaign, and their feedback has also informed findings and service review activity within the domestic abuse review, ensuring lived experience shapes learning, messaging and improvement.

IDAS DATA REPORTS
(APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026)

	Number of Children Supported
Children and Young People IDVA	84 children supported 1:1 aged between 7-18 years
Helping Hands Programme (31 group programmes have taken place across	157
Children and Young People IDVA (Young Persons Violence advocate/advisor)	55 Young people supported 1:1 aged between 16-25 years
Health Relationships group work	64 young people have been supported

The average monthly number of domestic abuse investigations where at least one child was present in the household increased from 142 in 2024/25 to 195 in 2025/26. While this rise may partly reflect improved identification and reporting, it highlights the continuing impact of domestic abuse on children and families and reinforces its importance as a key safeguarding priority for the partnership.

There were 805 arrests linked to domestic abuse incidents involving a child in the household, representing an arrest rate of 49%. This reflects the significant work undertaken by police to disrupt abuse, protect children and victims, and reduce the risk of further harm.

The partnership continues to offer domestic abuse training commissioned by IDAS and 275 practitioners accessed training during the year, helping to strengthen awareness, identification and responses to domestic abuse.

Future Plans for 2026-2027

- Children and Young People (CYP) priorities will be formally embedded within the refreshed Domestic Abuse Strategy, launching in June 2026, ensuring they shape delivery, governance and accountability throughout 2026–2029.
- The CYP Focus Group will lead the implementation and ongoing monitoring of CYP related priorities, providing sustained oversight, scrutiny and constructive challenge.
- DAP is currently developing a comprehensive Power BI dashboard that will feature a detailed profile of domestic abuse. This dashboard aims to provide insightful and actionable data to better understand the scope and patterns of domestic abuse cases. By integrating various data points and visualisations, we hope to offer a clearer picture to inform decision-making and enhance support services.
- Development of a new performance and reporting framework for the Domestic Abuse Partnership. The new indicators are broken down into seven key areas including a specific child and family’s dataset.
- Work will continue and discussions are taking place regarding the integration of Operation Encompass across Early Years settings, recognising the importance of safeguarding the youngest children impacted by domestic abuse.

Case Study from IDAS

An 11-year-old young person received tailored support from an IDVA to improve her emotional wellbeing during a challenging period for her family. The intervention focused on helping her understand and manage feelings such as anger and anxiety, while building confidence, resilience, and practical coping skills. Support included work around emotional regulation, safety, self-care, healthy relationships, boundaries, sleep, and grounding techniques.

As a result, she developed greater self-awareness, improved emotional regulation, and increased confidence in managing difficult situations. Both the young person and her mother gave positive feedback, with her mother highlighting how much her daughter enjoyed the sessions and valued the support received.

Child Sexual Abuse

This year, the partnership established a new subgroup focused on strengthening the identification of, and response to, children and young people who have experienced, or are at risk of, child sexual abuse within the family environment. This is a new priority for the partnership and has provided a dedicated forum to develop, review and maintain strategies, processes and resources that support effective multi-agency practice.

ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

- Secured a collective commitment across partner agencies to improve the identification of, and response to, child sexual abuse, including from agencies that do not work directly with children. This has supported the development of a new multi-agency subgroup and a Joint Targeted Area Inspection group during the year.
- Increased awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse in Barnsley for children, families and practitioners. This included new training opportunities delivered by the multi-agency trainer and Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS), alongside a one-day conference in November led by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, attended by more than 160 delegates.
- Began developing a stronger understanding of the child sexual abuse data profile locally, regionally and nationally, including the impact on children, families and communities and the data currently held by individual agencies.
- Undertook a multi-agency audit in Quarter 3, with the learning and recommendations used to inform the subgroup's work plan and future priorities.
- Developed a Child Sexual Abuse Directory of services and training available locally and nationally to support practitioners in their direct work with children and families.
- Began developing a Child Sexual Abuse Strategy to provide the partnership with clear guidance and direction in its response to supporting children and young people in Barnsley. The strategy is due to be launched in autumn 2026.



IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

- BSARCS have continued to be a commissioned provider to provide therapy, therapeutic wellbeing support and independent sexual violence advocacy to children across Barnsley who have been impacted by sexual harm.
- Joint investigation training with colleagues from health, police and social care is underway to strengthen joint working and shared practice.
- Key messages have been shared through primary care communications, e-learning and local training to strengthen awareness and practice across health settings, including GP practices.
- Specialist “Ask the Question” training has been delivered by BSARCS, with a practice lead programme underway involving 18 multi-agency representatives.
- Child sexual abuse awareness has been embedded into induction arrangements for new starters within children’s social care, including through the mandatory training framework.
- An outcome sheet is being developed for child protection medicals to support medics to record the types of harm identified, including child sexual abuse. This will help improve the capture of information relating to current and historical abuse, including cases progressed through SARAC.
- The Disabled Children’s Team has completed specialist Makaton training, supporting staff to use appropriate language with children who have communication difficulties.
- Imprint software has been rolled out within the Disabled Children’s Team, enabling staff to access communication tools via laptops during direct work with children.
- Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has developed alternative communication tools, including visual boards, to help children express concerns. These were developed with the learning disability nurse and support improved communication with children who may find it difficult to verbalise their experiences.
- Strengthened data collection through children’s social care mosaic system whereby further information is collected if known around the type of abuse and the perpetrator information.

WHAT THE DATA IS TELLING US

- Online offending accounted for 21% of child abuse offences recorded in Barnsley. This has remained consistent with the previous year's data, demonstrating the ongoing prevalence of online-facilitated abuse.
- In Barnsley, females were around three times more likely to be victims of sexual offences than males.

- Child victims of sexual offences reduced from 479 to 431 this year, reflecting encouraging progress and the potential impact of early intervention and safeguarding activity.
- A Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership audit deep dive completed in January 2026 reviewed child sexual abuse within Barnsley. The findings reflected national trends, with most perpetrators being male (91%) and known to the victim (84%).
- BSARACS training data tells us they have provided 32 specialist training courses across the year which has included delivery to 283 professionals

BSARCS has supported 245 children over the last year which includes:

- 25 children who were looked after children
- 7 children who are subject to child protection planning.
- 36 children who were subject to child in need planning.
- 27 children who were open to targeted early help services.

Future Plans for 2026-2027

- Finalise and launch the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy.
- Establish a Champions group to support practitioners, strengthen leadership across agencies and provide a safe network for raising concerns relating to child sexual abuse.
- Continue to develop workforce training to build practitioner confidence and knowledge, with a particular focus on the early years sector.
- Continue with the actions and learning from the multi-agency audit and embed into the work of the partnership across the year

Case Study from BSARCS

Child A was referred to BSARCS following a disclosure of sexual harm experienced around six months earlier. During this time, parents noticed a decline in Child A's mood and wellbeing. Child A was experiencing trauma symptoms including flashbacks, nightmares, poor sleep, anxiety, isolation, low mood, difficulty focusing in school and feeling overwhelmed.

The allocated worker built a trusting relationship with Child A, enabling them to talk at their own pace about the impact of the harm. Support included psychoeducation for Child A and parents, strategies to manage emotions, nightmares and flashbacks, and work around healthy relationships. The worker also met with Child A and school to help staff better understand Child A's needs and provide appropriate support. Although support is ongoing,

Child A is now using grounding techniques and a sensory self-care toolkit to regulate their emotions. They report improved sleep, fewer nightmares and flashbacks, and greater confidence in managing difficult situations. School has adapted its approach by providing regular check-ins, a safe space and a trusted adult, which has helped Child A engage more effectively in learning. Parents have also reported improved mood and more meaningful engagement with family life.

Reforms/Families First Programme

The reforms programme is now embedded within our safeguarding partnership governance structure to oversee the effective delivery of the Families First Programme in Barnsley. Aligning with the Stronger Together Partnership (operational group) the group provides accountability for the strategic direction and implementation of the programme across the partnership and facilitates collaboration with our stakeholders and partners to champion this transformation programme.

ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

- The partnership established and mobilised Stronger Together: Putting Families First, creating the foundations for a more joined-up, earlier help offer for children, young people and families.
- Governance arrangements, workstreams and accountability have been strengthened across Family Help, Integrated Front Door linkage, Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) and Family Networks, supporting clearer oversight and delivery across the reform programme.
- Co-design activity has progressed with the Family Help model and Integrated Front Door linkage, with a focus on simplifying access to support, reducing duplication and improving families' experience of moving through services.
- Partners developed strengthened knowledge on the pre-birth multi-agency approach, supporting earlier identification, assessment and planning for unborn babies and their families where risks are emerging during pregnancy.
- Programme governance and task-and-finish groups improved shared oversight, escalation routes and action tracking, helping partners maintain momentum and respond to emerging risks and barriers.
- Work to develop Targeted Early Help data activity and Families First dashboard has strengthened the partnership's ability to understand demand, monitor progress and support evidence-led decision making.
- Emerging learning from local and national reviews, practitioner reflection and participation routes have been used to shape pathway redesign, workforce development priorities and success measures for 2026–27.



IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

- During 2025–26, the partnership progressed the development of the Family Help model and Integrated Front Door linkage. This work is helping to create a clearer, more consistent route into support, with the aim of ensuring children, young people and families receive the right help at the earliest opportunity.
- Reform activity across the year has focused on reducing duplication, improving information sharing and designing pathways that are easier for families and practitioners to navigate. This supports a more coordinated response across the continuum of need and will help families avoid repeating their story to different services.
- The strengthened pre-birth multi-agency approach is supporting partners to identify risk earlier in pregnancy and coordinate assessment and planning around the unborn baby and family. This provides an opportunity to intervene earlier, reduce crisis-driven responses close to birth and support safer planning.
- Embedding stronger multi-agency oversight through programme governance, workstreams and task-and-finish groups have strengthened shared accountability, escalation routes and action tracking. This has improved the partnership's ability to maintain momentum, identify barriers and respond collectively to emerging risks.
- Targeted Early Help data activity and the development of Families First dashboarding are improving the partnership's ability to understand demand, identify patterns and monitor progress. This is supporting more evidence-led decision making and will strengthen impact reporting during 2026–27.
- Quarterly monitoring and finance certification have supported partnership assurance and national programme requirements. This has helped partners maintain oversight of delivery, identify system constraints and strengthen reporting processes as the programme develops.
- Family voice and lived experience are being built into the reform programme through co-production, engagement activity, practitioner learning and structured feedback routes. This is helping partners better understand how children, young people and families experience support.
- Multi-agency workshops have considered what helps families to engage, what creates barriers and how front door contact can feel for families. This learning is informing the design of pathways that are more accessible, joined up and responsive.
- Partners have agreed to gather sensitive feedback from families involved in the pre-birth cohort, including families affected by domestic abuse and substance misuse. This will help ensure the specification, pathways and success measures reflect the experiences of families receiving support.
- The programme is using evidence from local and national reviews, practitioner reflection and established participation routes, including Family Hubs Parent/Carer Panels, Byouth and SEND participation. This broadens the evidence base and helps ensure reform activity reflects a range of experiences.

Future Plans for 2026-2027

In 2026–27, implementation will move into the next phase, aligned to the Department for Education's Year 2 Families First Partnership operating model. This will focus on embedding Family Help arrangements, strengthening front door decision-making, developing multi-disciplinary Family Help teams, progressing MACPT delivery, and increasing the use of Family Group Decision Making and Family Network support.

The partnership will continue to use delivery expectations, monitoring indicators and local evidence to test progress, identify barriers and ensure reform activity is improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Audit and Performance Subgroup



The Audit and Performance Subgroup established this year to support continuous learning and improvement across the safeguarding partnership. It provides oversight of safeguarding performance data, workforce training, and the implementation of policies and procedures, while seeking assurance from partner agencies that learning from national reviews, safeguarding multi agency audits and assurance activity is embedded in practice. During the year, the subgroup brought together the previous policy and workforce subgroup and LSCPR subgroup into one bimonthly meeting structure, following a partnership review of its subgroup effectiveness and partnership attendance. As a result, this has allowed for a more streamlined governance arrangement within the partnership reduced duplication and strengthened the subgroup's focus on coordinated assurance, shared learning and improvement.

ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED:

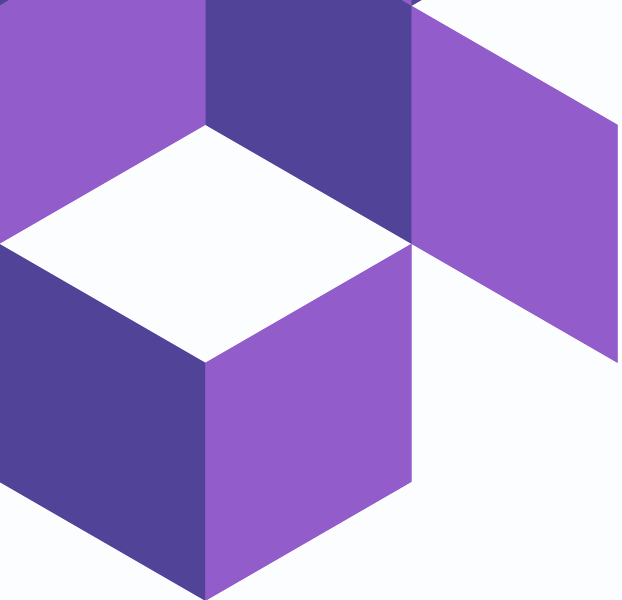
- During 2025–26, the Partnership delivered a quarterly multi-agency audit programme aligned to its priority themes, including domestic abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse within the family environment and elective home education. Audit findings were reviewed through the subgroup, enabling partners to identify strengths, good practice, shared learning and areas for improvement across the safeguarding system.
- Learning from each audit was shared through briefings disseminated across partner agencies and published on the Partnership website. This year, the Partnership also introduced “Audit to Action” training to help practitioners translate audit findings into practical changes in frontline safeguarding practice.
- The BSCP has also strengthened its use of performance data and indicators linked to partnership priorities. While progress has been made in developing a clearer multi-agency data narrative, further work is needed to improve assurance, identify gaps and risks, and strengthen scrutiny of the performance scorecard. The appointment of a BSCP Audit and Performance Officer will support this development during 2026–27.
- The subgroup also had brought together shared learning from single-agency quality assurance activity, including feedback from SEND, the 0–19 Public Health Nursing Service and Children's Services. Bringing this information together has helped partners develop a broader understanding of practice across the safeguarding system, identify common themes, avoid duplication and support more joined-up responses to children and families.

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

- Multi-agency audits during the year identified clear strengths in safeguarding practice, including timely referrals, early intervention, improved information sharing and more coordinated responses to risk. The introduction of MADA has strengthened shared understanding and supported earlier safety planning in domestic abuse cases.
- Audit activity also evidenced effective multi-agency planning in response to neglect, with stronger use of referrals, coordinated child protection activity and a shared focus on attendance, mental health, home conditions and the child's lived experience. Practice was further strengthened through culturally sensitive assessment, consideration of family history and appropriate escalation where concerns increased.
- The subgroup also reviewed the Partnership's training offer and recognised the progress made in strengthening frontline safeguarding practice. To build on this learning, the Partnership will increase engagement with strategic and managerial leaders so key safeguarding messages are understood, reinforced and embedded across services. A safeguarding learning event for managers is planned for 2026–27 to share learning from quality assurance activity, training and audits, and to support continued improvement across Barnsley.

FUTURE PLANS FOR 2026-2027

- In 2026–27, the Partnership will deliver a safeguarding learning event for strategic leaders to strengthen organisational and system-wide responses to recurring themes from quality assurance activity and local and national reviews. The event will support leaders to reflect on current practice, consider how effectively services are responding to identified challenges, and agree actions to embed learning and improve safeguarding practice across Barnsley.
- Audit activity highlighted areas where practice can be further strengthened. In 2026–27, the Partnership will continue to oversee delivery of audit recommendations, monitor their impact and support improvements to become embedded in frontline practice.
- The Partnership will strengthen how children and young people's voices are used to inform scrutiny, learning and improvement. Working with the Independent Scrutineer and Byouth, we will develop a model for meaningful young person engagement that can be embedded within partnership arrangements.
- The BSCP will continue working with partner agencies to strengthen the quality and interpretation of performance data. This will support clearer assurance, improve understanding of safeguarding themes and risks, and ensure the performance scorecard remains relevant, insightful and aligned to partnership priorities.



Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Between April 2025 and March 2026, 6 cases were reviewed within Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) meetings with the objective of understanding the circumstances and causes of child deaths to inform future prevention efforts. Of these 6 cases, 1 was female and 5 were male. Regarding the age of death, 50% occurred within the first year of life.

The ethnicity of all 6 of these cases was white and the place of death was as follows: home (1) Hospital (2) and PICU (3). There were no neglect or abuse concerns highlighted in any of the cases. A learning disability was identified in 50% of the cases.

In the period April 2025 and March 2026 there have been sadly 11 Deaths. (This number constitutes the deaths that occurred during April 2025 and March 2026 and not the cases reviewed within Barnsley CDOP).

Age Group	Number of Cases
First year of life	6
Aged 1-4	1
Aged 5-9	2
Aged 10-14	1
Aged 15-17	1

Since the beginning of this year, there has been two deaths where initial findings suggest these will be classed as Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI). Both of these deaths had identified modifiable factors, and work is continuing across the partnership to promote safeguarding in first year of life agenda with a variety of work happening around this topic area.

In response to an increase in suicide deaths during 2024-2025 a thematic review of ten deaths of young people aged 14–19 between 2020 and 2025 has also been undertaken to inform future learning and improvement activity. Led by Barnsley Public Health, the review seeks to identify common themes and wider learning beyond the coronial process. The resulting recommendations will be progressed through the work of the safeguarding partnership over the coming year.

In addition to its core case review activity, CDOP has undertaken further analysis of specific thematic practice issues and relevant national learning. This has included use of the National Child Mortality Database report on child deaths resulting from falls from height to support engagement with housing leads and the development of a coordinated action plan. This work has strengthened the identification and prevention of housing-related risks within the home environment and prevention of any future deaths by taking into account the lived experience for the children and young person and informing and working together with housing leads to look at risk, vulnerability and potential opportunities for earlier support or intervention.

It should be recognised, however, that thankfully Barnsley numbers are low. Consequently, we are looking to strengthen our role in working with partners across South Yorkshire to identify regional trends and identify where action can be taken to prevent further deaths.

Education Representation at the Integrated Front Door (IFD)

The Education Representative role within the Integrated Front Door (IFD) has become embedded as a permanent full-time post, demonstrating the partnership's continued commitment to ensuring education is fully represented within safeguarding decision making. This role provides a vital link between education settings, children's social care and wider multi-agency partners, ensuring that relevant education information is available at the earliest point to support timely, proportionate and well-informed decisions for children and families.

Over the past year, the role has strengthened communication between education and safeguarding partners, improved feedback to schools and settings, and provided a clearer route for advice, consultation and information sharing. This has supported greater shared understanding of thresholds, roles and responsibilities across the safeguarding system. The impact of this strengthened education presence is reflected in improved referral quality and more effective screening at the IFD, helping to ensure that concerns are directed to the right level of support and reducing unnecessary escalation where needs can be met earlier.

The role has also improved partnership oversight of vulnerable groups, including children who are electively home educated, children with SEND, and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). This has strengthened the partnership's understanding of emerging safeguarding themes linked to neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation, substance misuse and mental health.

As the role continues to develop, it provides valuable insight into recurring themes, emerging needs and workforce development requirements. This intelligence is helping to shape future practice improvement, strengthen partnership working and ensure education continues to play a central role in safeguarding children and young people in Barnsley.



“The role enhances communication between those in an educational setting and the IFD. We know that good communication is crucial to safeguarding children effectively and good information gathering is vital in that process. We also know that good partnership working relies on good relationships and support, all of which Kirsti absolutely provides in the IFD. What Kirsti provides leads to better outcomes for children and families within Barnsley and is an important and much needed role.”



Education Welfare Service

During 2025–2026, the service strengthened attendance, inclusion and safeguarding practice through the “Every Child in School Every Day” plan. This work focuses on improving attendance, reducing exclusions, supporting children missing education and elective home education arrangements, and promoting inclusive practice for children with SEND. As a result, primary attendance has rose to 94.87%, above the national figure of 94.8% and secondary attendance has improved to 90.39%.

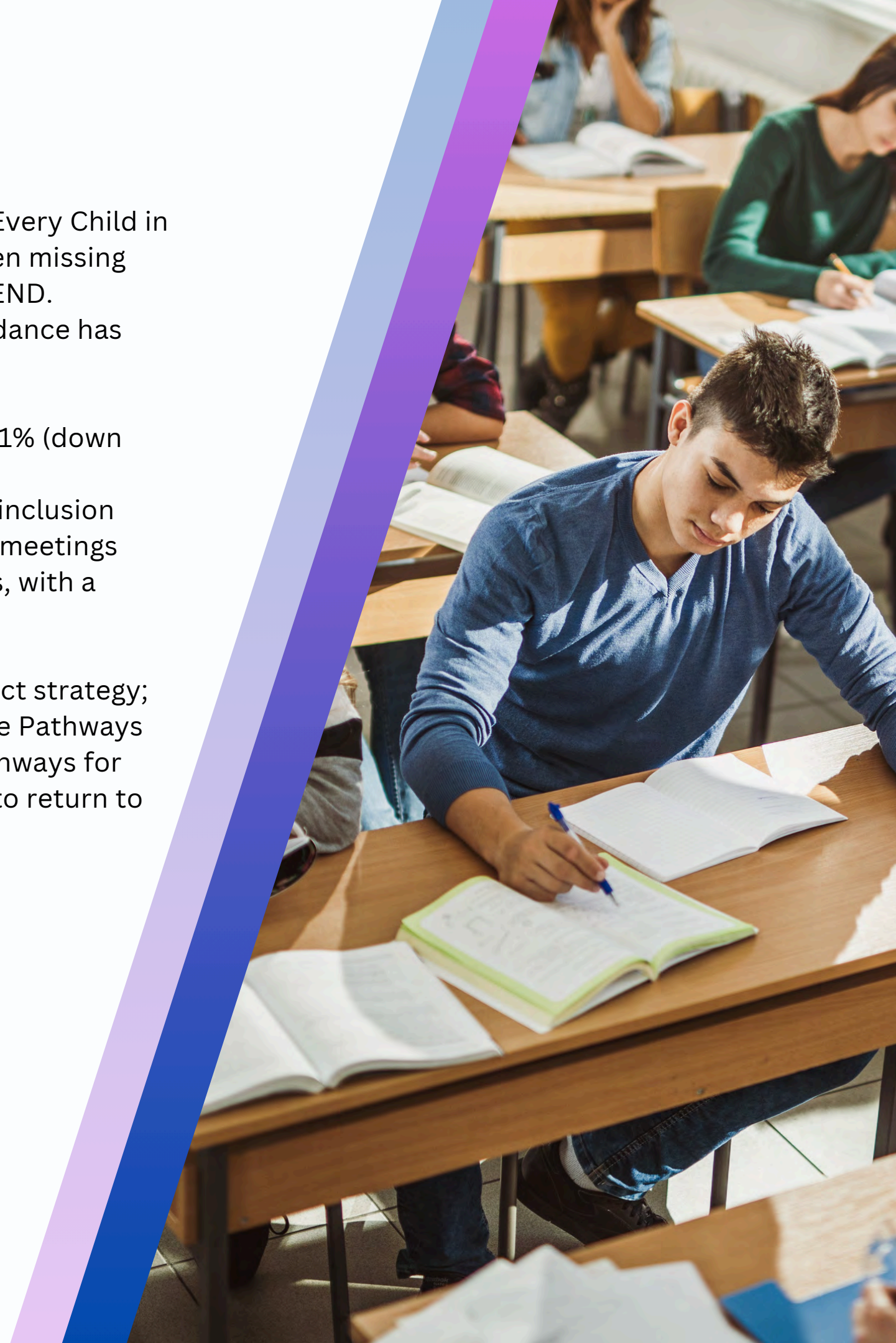
There has also been a reduction in persistent attendance with primary persistent attendance reduced to 12.1% (down 3.34%) and secondary persistent attendance reduced to 25.84% (down 3.84%). The service has improved outcomes for children and young people by identifying risk earlier, strengthening inclusion and supporting children to remain engaged in education. This has included the delivery of targeted support meetings with 511 pupils (42%) from across all schools showing improved attendance following targeted interventions, with a focus on severely absent pupils and those with EHCPs.

Work has also included embedding the Education Neglect Pathway in line with the wider safeguarding neglect strategy; and strengthening multi-agency working through Early Help, SEND, health and schools, including Attendance Pathways and Early Intervention Panels. Our service has also developed multi-agency reintegration and transition pathways for excluded pupils and maintains robust oversight of Elective Home Education (EHE), supporting 189 children to return to school and preventing EHE for 146 families between September 2025 and May 2026.



Primary attendance has rose to 94.87%, above the national figure of 94.8% and secondary attendance has improved to 90.39%.

We have strengthened tracking systems for children missing education and elective home education cohorts with improved oversight, while safeguarding scrutiny has been maintained for children with Child in Need or Child Protection plans who are electively home educated. Shared data, RAG-rating and professional challenge have also strengthened multi-agency accountability across the partnership. We work closely with our safeguarding partners and as a result Education Neglect is now established as a safeguarding partnership priority, supported through the Neglect Sub-Group and next year our service will be a co-chair for the neglect subgroup.



Virtual School

The Virtual School has continued to strengthen support for vulnerable cohorts through a range of targeted initiatives aimed at improving educational engagement, attendance and outcomes.

To enhance safeguarding and accessibility, the Virtual School clinic has been extended to operate at twice a week. These sessions provide accessible drop-in support and advice for professionals, families and carers of children in care, previously looked after children, children in kinship care, and those subject to child protection or child in need plans.

Support for post-16 learners has also been expanded through the extension of Pupil Premium Plus funding, enabling access to additional academic support, tutoring, learning materials, equipment and services that promote participation and achievement with planned activities this summer. A new research initiative, Curious Minds Barnsley, has also been launched. Led by the Virtual School in partnership with two university researchers, the project is exploring the emotional needs of children and young people across these cohorts and identifying ways to reduce barriers to educational success.

The Virtual School also continues to provide robust oversight of children at risk of exclusion. A Harms Matrix meeting, incorporating Motional, is held following every school suspension involving a child in care to review the child's needs, identify removable barriers, and coordinate appropriate support. This work has contributed to a significant reduction in suspensions and helped more children remain in school. In addition, the Virtual School Headteacher chairs weekly attendance review meetings to monitor all children with attendance below 95%, ensuring that oversight, support and multi-agency planning are in place where concerns are identified. These actions are having a positive impact, including reduced suspensions, improving attendance, and encouraging early indications of positive outcomes for students sitting examinations this summer.

The voice of the child remains central to this work. All children are offered the opportunity to participate in student voice activity three times each year, and a mandatory Personal Education Plan target ensures that children's views directly inform planning and support. This is reviewed termly as part of ongoing oversight and improvement.

School Alliance

Attendance, elective home education and school exclusions continue to be key priorities for the Alliance. Work is underway with academy trust CEOs to strengthen inclusive practice across schools. The Alliance is working alongside the Education Welfare Service and schools to identify pupils who require additional support.

The Early Intervention Panel provides targeted multi-agency support for pupils experiencing high levels of suspension, with resources directed to areas of greatest need. Data is used to inform both service delivery and constructive challenge, helping to ensure an appropriate and proportionate response. The views of children, young people and families are also gathered at the point of exclusion and elective home education. This feedback is used to influence system improvement, inform discussions with leaders, and support the development of shared principles for inclusion.

Barnsley Schools Alliance is also a key member of the Barnsley Partnership's Executive Business Group, contributing to the delivery and progression of partnership priorities.

BARNSLEY COLLEGE

Over the past year, Barnsley College has strengthened its safeguarding offer through partnership work with South Yorkshire Police, BSCP, Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board and specialist services. This has supported targeted awareness activity across key safeguarding themes, including knife crime, drugs, hate crime, Prevent, exploitation, harassment, online safety and emotional wellbeing.

This work has increased students' awareness of local risks, safer choices, reporting routes and available support. Evidence from surveys, tutorials, safeguarding logs and incident reporting shows improved confidence among students to recognise risk and seek help when needed.

Staff confidence and consistency have been enhanced through mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training, DSL development, drug awareness, educational neglect training and active engagement in safeguarding sub-groups, including transitional safeguarding work.

Over 1,700



students accessed safeguarding, health and wellbeing support, including advice, crisis intervention, emotional regulation, one-to-one support, early help and statutory pathways, helping young people remain safe, supported and engaged in learning.

Targeted pastoral and safeguarding support has helped students feel safe, listened to and well supported, contributing to improved resilience, wellbeing, attendance, retention and engagement for those receiving additional help.

Student voice is captured through an array of methods such as learner surveys, learner forums, course representatives, the Student Union, one-to-one pastoral meetings, targeted inclusion forums and safeguarding processes, including the dedicated 'voice of the learner' section within concern forms. Feedback from students has informed improvements to pastoral support, communication, wellbeing provision, equality and diversity activity, inclusive practice and wider student experience, ensuring services respond to young people's lived experiences.



Children's Social Care

In 2025/26, Children’s Social Care received 6,521 contacts into the Integrated Front Door, a reduction of 23.2% from 8,495 in the previous year.

39% of these contacts progressed to referral, demonstrating that a consistent proportion continued to meet the threshold for statutory social care assessment and intervention.

Over the past year, the Integrated Front Door has continued to strengthen early support through the introduction of new roles and the co-location of services within the local police station. This includes roles such as a benefits adviser and domestic abuse worker based within the service, helping families to access timely support and reducing the need for referral into statutory intervention where appropriate.

The recent Integrated Front Door Health Check highlighted a number of strengths, including effective multi-agency working, clear application of thresholds, timely decision-making, strong MADA arrangements, and Signs of Safety-informed practice, all supported by robust management oversight.

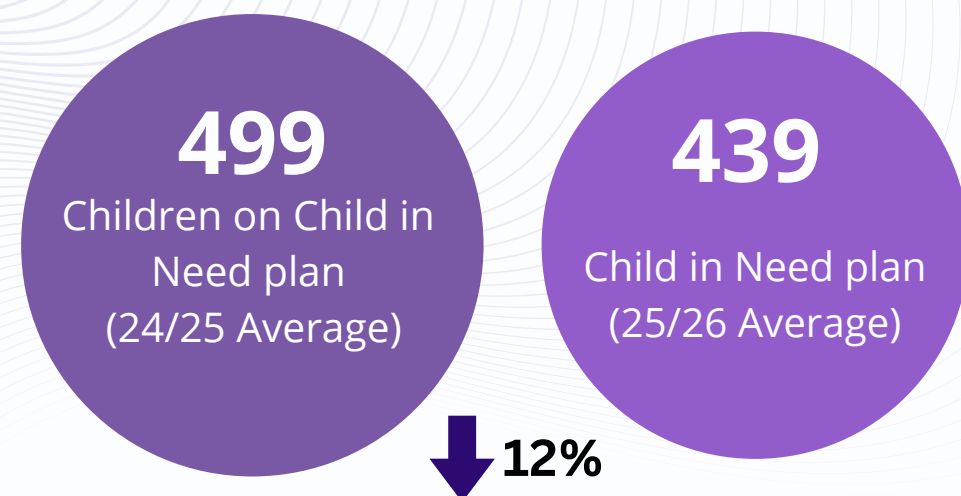
Looking ahead, children’s social care will continue to strengthen practice by improving how the child’s voice is captured at the front door and further developing dashboards and tracking arrangements to evidence outcomes more effectively. These developments will support the continued embedding of a conversation-based Front Door model, enabling earlier dialogue with partner agencies and helping to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time.



Children in Need

- At the end of March 2026, 442 children were subject to a Child in Need plan, a reduction from 471 at the end of March 2025. As shown below, the number of children on a Child in Need plan remains broadly consistent throughout the year. This stability reflects effective practice within Children’s Social Care, supporting appropriate escalation into, and step-down from, statutory social care involvement.
- The average number of children subject to a Child in Need plan reduced by 12%, from 499 in 2024/25 to 439 in 2025/26. This reduction reflects the continued strength of work across Children’s Social Care and Targeted Early Help to ensure that children and families receive timely and proportionate support at the right level of need. Practice has been further strengthened through the use of the Signs of Safety model, embedded family network meetings, and child-centred review processes.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2024/2025	525	472	526	471
2025/2026	441	406	467	442



- Parental domestic abuse was recorded as an assessed factor in 30% of Child in Need cases, while child sexual abuse was identified in 4% of cases. Partnership working has continued to focus on strengthening early identification, assessment and response to these forms of harm. Ongoing social care representation at partnership subgroup meetings supports effective multi-agency working, shared oversight and a more coordinated approach to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Child Protection

- The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans varies throughout the year and remains in line with national trends. As at 31 March 2026, there were 299 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, compared to 288 in the previous year.
- There has been 367 child protection plans successfully ended in this period following a reduction of risk and increased safety for young people and 377 new protection plans have commenced. Alongside this there has also been a positive reduction in the proportion of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, falling from 23% in 2024/2025 to 16% in 2025/2026
- Neglect and emotional abuse continue to be the primary reasons for children being placed under child protection plans. Efforts have been made across the partnership to implement the Neglect Strategy through the partnership priorities which addresses educational neglect and wider contributing factors. Focused work this year has also included work with the partnership audit and performance subgroup on improving attendance at core groups and conferences with additional training and support. This approach ensures that appropriate individuals and services participate, and a balanced assessment of risk and protection is achieved to ensuring the right decisions are made for children and young people.
- There is a concerted effort in the service to ensure that the child's voice is heard. Conference chairs ensure that the child's voice and their lived experience is at the centre of all conferences with the development of child friendly child protection plans and share these with children to ensure they understand the concerns and what support is in place to protect them.





Children in Care (CIC), Children Looked After (CLA) & Care Leavers

- At the end of March 2026, there were 410 looked after Children in Barnsley, whilst this has been a slight increase from the previous year, work has continued to focus on the promotion of permanency planning through Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders and the rehabilitation homework completed when it has been assessed positively for children and young people to return to parent's care.
- Greater use of the Public Law Outline process is ensuring that care proceedings are used in circumstances when only necessary and in supported with the development of the edge of care service.
- Following a follow-up visit by the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, social care and its partners were recognised for the significant progress made in strengthening its care leaver offer. The visit highlighted strong leadership, strengthened corporate parenting arrangements and a clear commitment across the council and partners to improving outcomes for young people leaving care.
- Key strengths included improved Corporate Parenting Board membership and accountability, adoption of protected characteristic status for care leavers, co-chairing of the board by a care leaver, and increased dedicated support through Care Leaver Experts, additional Personal Advisers, a dedicated Independent Reviewing Officer and a central Hub for partner support.
- The wider care leaving offer has also improved, including access to digital equipment, stronger housing options, enhanced support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, development of a CAMHS offer up to age 25, manageable caseloads and a strengthened offer for care leavers aged 21 to 25. Care leavers reported positive relationships with Personal Advisers, good communication and greater awareness of the local offer.

Fostering

The service maintains a strong network of around 130 foster carers who provide love and care for our children in care population at a time when they need this the most.

These families offer a range of support, including permanent (long-term) placements, short-term care, and respite care for disabled children. Additionally, Barnsley has a number of Mockingbird hubs a model designed to deliver enhanced support and stability for fostering families. Each hub has one experienced foster family who become the 'hub home'. They provide support, social events and respite care for a handful of 6-8 'satellite' foster families. Training and support continue to be offered over the past year with cohorts of foster carers successfully completed THRIVE training- an intensive in house course building skills, knowledge and aptitudes for foster carers in therapeutic parenting.

Looked After Designated Officer (LADO)



The Barnsley LADO service continues to strengthen and embed effective arrangements to safeguard children from harm over the past year. The LADO duty system and referral pathway is now well established and effectively overseen within the Safeguarding Team, with the Child Protection Conference Chairs now undertaking LADO duty responsibilities and having a dedicated business support officer to support the service.

A significant development during the latter part of the year has been the introduction of Power BI, enabling LADO data to be managed electronically and supporting more robust oversight, reporting and analysis.

The LADO has adapted its approach to partnership engagement; a briefing video has been developed and shared across the partnership. This resource is available online and provides an accessible alternative to support continued awareness and understanding of LADO arrangements.

The demand for the LADO service has remained high, with 550 contacts received between April 2025 and March 2026. This represents a reduction from 609 contacts in 2024-2025, although referral activity has increased, with 249 referrals received compared with 198 in the previous year. This shift indicates continued partner engagement with the LADO process and the importance of timely advice, threshold application and safeguarding oversight where concerns are identified.

Multi-agency LADO audits have continued to provide assurance about the quality and effectiveness of practice. During the year, 18 LADO case files were audited, with 13 graded as good.

Positive findings included evidence of persistence in progressing safeguarding activity, effective information gathering from partner agencies, clear and timely advice to employers, appropriate challenge where safeguarding concerns were identified, and consistent application of thresholds with clear rationale for decision-making.

The service has continued to strengthen its focus on ensuring that the voice of the child is central within the allegations management process. The LADO role supports assurance that children’s accounts are accurately captured, whether this is undertaken by the employer, police or social worker. There has also been an increased emphasis on ensuring that children and young people receive age-appropriate feedback about the action taken in response to allegations or concerns, helping to promote transparency, understanding and confidence in the safeguarding response.

	Advice (Tier 1)	Referrals (Tier 2 and 3)	Total number of contacts
2023-2024	371	144	515
2024-2025	401	198 (54 Tier 2 and 144 Tier 3)	609
2025-2026	301	249 (144 Tier 2 and 105 Tier 3)	550

South Yorkshire Police

South Yorkshire Police continued to play a central role in helping the partnership understand, identify and respond to key safeguarding risks for children and young people in Barnsley. Quarterly performance reports aligned to BSCP's strategic priorities provided partners with a clearer picture of child exploitation, child sexual abuse, neglect, online harm and domestic abuse. This strengthened multi-agency oversight, supported earlier identification of emerging themes and helped partners target activity where children and families were most at risk.

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation

Police data shows a reduction in the number of children reported missing from home, decreasing from 533 to 458 children, a 14.1% reduction over the last year. Over the same period, the number of Abduction Notices served in relation to child sexual and criminal exploitation increased from 9 to 16, representing a 77.8% increase. This demonstrates a stronger use of disruption activity to protect children from exploitation and harms outside the home and supports in the contribution to the reduction in children going missing. Missing episodes remain an important indicator of vulnerability, and the data alongside the daily partnership working continues to support the partnership to identify children at risk and respond earlier. The police also continue to jointly chair the contextual safeguarding subgroup, and this will continue into next year

Joint training has strengthened the partnership's contextual safeguarding training offer by police officers delivering the Level 4 disruption element. This supports practitioners to better understand how disruption powers and enforcement activity can be used alongside wider safeguarding responses to reduce risk and protect children from exploitation.

Neighbourhood policing teams have further contributed to prevention activity through an education initiative with schools on vape-related dangers, linked to concerns about drug use in schools, particularly ketamine and illicit vapes. This has helped raise awareness among children, education staff and partners about emerging risks and supported earlier conversations about harm and safety.

Online Harm

In 2025/26, 333 online crimes involving child victims were recorded, an 18.4% reduction from 408 the previous year. While this reduction is positive, online harm continues to be a significant safeguarding concern. Police data supports partners maintain oversight of digital risks and reinforces the need for prevention, education and early intervention with children, families and practitioners.



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse incidents reported to South Yorkshire Police increased by 25.6%, rising from 4,314 to 5,418. The proportion of incidents involving a child in the household also increased from 40% to 44%, highlighting this as a continued priority for the partnership.

Despite the increase in reported incidents, arrests linked to domestic abuse where a child was present remained broadly consistent, with 805 arrests compared to 800 the previous year. This demonstrates sustained enforcement activity, and continued police focus on situations where children are exposed to domestic abuse.



Neglect

Child neglect investigations increased from 118 to 156, a 32.2% increase. This reflects improved identification of neglect concerns and enhanced recording practice following targeted South Yorkshire Police training. As a result, the partnership has a more accurate understanding of neglect in Barnsley, supporting earlier recognition of harm and more informed multi-agency responses to children's lived experiences.

Child sexual abuse

431 child victims of sexual offences recorded in 2025/26, a 10.0% reduction from 479 the previous year. Although this shows a reduction in recorded offences, child sexual abuse is often hidden and underreported. Working alongside other partner intelligence this supports to build a fuller understanding of risk and to ensure that children who may be experiencing abuse are identified and protected.

Over the year the police have carried out targeted enforcement and disruption activity involving local hotels with the BSafe service known as Operation Make Safe. This demonstrates how intelligence and learning are being translated into practical safeguarding activity to disrupt risk environments and strengthen protection for children that may be at risk of harm or exploitation.

Police also strengthened practitioner knowledge of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by delivering multi-agency training to professionals across Barnsley. Training delivered by South Yorkshire Police supported practitioners to recognise indicators of FGM, understand referral pathways and respond more confidently to protect girls and young women from harm.



Probation

During 2025/26, the Probation Service in Barnsley has continued to make a significant contribution to the partnership's shared aim of keeping children and families safer. Throughout the year, probation has worked closely with safeguarding partners to strengthen the identification, assessment and management of risk where children may be affected by domestic abuse, parental offending, serious violence, substance misuse or wider family complexity. This has included improved information sharing, escalation, contribution to multi-agency safeguarding processes and continued engagement in forums such as MAPPA, helping to ensure that risk is considered collectively and protective planning is more coordinated.

A key highlight during the year has been the continued implementation of improvement activity following the HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection in October 2024. This identified deficits in assessment, risk management and service delivery, and has driven a comprehensive programme of local, regional and national reform. The Yorkshire and the Humber Quality Improvement Plan has strengthened governance, communication and accountability, while enhanced management oversight, reflective supervision and increased use of RCAT (Regional Case Audit Tool) and CCAT (Court Case Audit Tool) audits have supported greater consistency in assessment, planning and risk management.

Court quality assurance activity has supported more informed sentencing decisions, while ongoing audit and management oversight are helping to embed learning and strengthen the quality of safeguarding practice over time.

The impact of this work is beginning to be seen through clearer practice expectations, stronger defensible decision-making and a more explicit focus on children within adult probation casework. Targeted training on safeguarding, domestic abuse, risk of harm and professional curiosity has supported practitioners to better identify where children may be living with risk, instability or harmful adult behaviour.

There is now an increased emphasis on professional curiosity and the child's lived experience within adult-focused casework. Practitioners are being supported to ask not only what risk an adult presents, but what that risk means for children in the household or wider family network. Although probation does not routinely capture the direct voice of children and young people in the same way as children's services, safeguarding enquiries, partner information, case discussions and multi-agency forums provide opportunities to understand what daily life may feel like for children affected by domestic abuse, offending, conflict or instability. This has helped bring children more clearly into view and supports earlier safeguarding conversations, more timely information sharing and stronger contingency planning where risks are identified.

Overall, this year has demonstrated a clear trajectory of improvement, with local improvement activity, regional quality frameworks and national reform contributing to stronger partnership working and better-informed multi-agency responses for children and families across Barnsley.

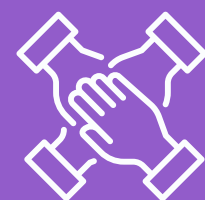


Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Safeguarding Team has continued to make a strong contribution to the work of Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership during the last year. The service has focused on strengthening safeguarding practice, improving assurance and governance arrangements, and ensuring children and families are better protected through timely identification of risk, robust assessment, and effective multi-agency working.

A key area of progress has been the development of a standardised Child Protection Medical documentation pack, aligned to Royal College Paediatrics Child Health (RCPCH) guidance and the principles of Working Together. This has improved the quality, consistency and reliability of safeguarding records, supporting clearer assessment of injuries, stronger multi-agency decision-making and more effective use of evidence within legal processes. The work has also strengthened professional confidence and helped ensure documentation is clear, proportionate and court ready.

The Safeguarding Team has further improved governance and assurance through enhanced oversight via the Safeguarding Steering Group and the introduction of structured reporting aligned to CQC Safe and Well-Led domains and JTAI Lines of Enquiry. This has supported a clearer understanding of safeguarding activity, risk, quality and improvement across the Trust, while ensuring safeguarding remains visible at both strategic and operational levels.



Children and young people benefited from earlier identification of safeguarding concerns and more timely referrals to support services.

Children and young people have benefited from earlier identification of safeguarding concerns, more timely referrals to Children's Social Care and partner agencies, and improved access to safeguarding advice and supervision for frontline staff. Training delivered across children's, maternity and adult services has strengthened staff confidence in recognising, responding to and escalating concerns. Clearer escalation pathways and guidance tools have also promoted professional curiosity, constructive challenge and improved safeguarding responses.

The service has continued to embed trauma-informed and child-centred practice, recognising the impact of abuse, neglect and adverse childhood experiences on children and families. The voice of the child is captured through clinical interactions, safeguarding assessments and reports, and learning from complaints, compliments, patient experience processes, audits and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. This learning has been used to refine safeguarding processes, strengthen documentation and improve the Trust's response to children lived experiences.

Partnership working has remained a core strength. The Safeguarding Team has actively contributed to BSCP subgroups, co-led improvement activity relating to intra-familial child sexual abuse and participated in social care reform workstreams. Collaboration with Health Visiting, Police, Social Care, Sexual Abuse Rape Crisis services and wider partners has supported more joined-up responses for children and families and strengthened shared learning across the safeguarding system.

NHS South Yorkshire ICB - Safeguarding Pregnancy and the First Year of Life



This year, NHS South Yorkshire ICB (Barnsley Place) continued to strengthen its work with partners to improve the safety and wellbeing of babies during pregnancy and the first year of life. Through training, awareness raising and system-wide collaboration, the partnership has supported earlier help, clearer messages for families, and stronger multi-agency practice.

Activities Include:

- Delivered multi-agency training on safer sleep, ICON and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) to foster carers, social workers, children's social care staff, Twenty Four Seven staff, and newly qualified paediatric nurses.
- Strengthened consistent, evidence-based safeguarding messages across services so families received clearer advice wherever they accessed support.
- Supported awareness campaigns through radio features, public messaging and community partnerships with Barnsley Football Club, Barnsley Premier Leisure, Barnsley Libraries and The Glass Works.
- Hosted the South Yorkshire FASD Summit in May 2025, raising awareness of FASD and leading to the creation of a South Yorkshire All-Age FASD Steering Group.
- Worked with professionals and people with lived experience to increase focus on earlier identification and support for children affected by FASD.
- Developed and promoted regional resources including an alcohol in pregnancy animation, an e-learning package, a South Yorkshire information leaflet, and a recorded webinar for social workers.
- Strengthened partnership working and extended the reach of key prevention messages, particularly within more vulnerable communities.

Impact on Children, Young People and Families

- Parents and carers received clearer, more consistent advice on safer sleep, infant crying and alcohol use in pregnancy, helping them make safer decisions and access support earlier.
- Targeted campaigns and community engagement helped key safeguarding messages reach families who may be less likely to engage with services, including those experiencing deprivation.
- A South Yorkshire safe sleep audio campaign achieved a 99.45% listen-through rate, showing strong public engagement with prevention messages.
- Increased demand for bespoke training strengthened professional confidence and supported a more joined-up approach, so families were more likely to hear the same key messages across services.
- A repeat multi-agency audit in July 2025 showed improvement in the delivery of safer sleep, ICON and alcohol use in pregnancy messages within maternity and 0–19 Public Health Nursing Services, while also highlighting the need for further work within Children's Social Care.
- Local data shows encouraging early impact, including improved recording of FASD in GP practices and better documentation of antenatal alcohol exposure in maternity discharge information.
- There were no recorded cases of abusive head trauma during the reporting period and one case of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy, a reduction from the previous year, suggesting positive progress in reducing risk for babies and young children.
- The voices of children and families shaped this work. At the South Yorkshire FASD Summit, a young person affected by FASD and their adoptive parent shared their experiences, reinforcing the importance of early identification, clear pathways and practical, non-judgemental support.
- Parents and carers of children affected by FASD also helped shape system development through awareness raising and lived experience, helping services become more responsive to family needs.



South West Yorkshire Partnership Teaching NHS Foundation Trust (SWYFT)

During 2025–2026, the safeguarding team strengthened clinical practice through specialist advice, training, supervision and attendance at professional and multi-disciplinary meetings.

Safeguarding supervision is well used across key Barnsley services, including Children’s Therapy, Epilepsy, Immunisation, CAMHS and Perinatal services, strengthening reflective practice, risk identification and timely safeguarding responses.

Overall, this work has supported a more knowledgeable workforce, safer practice and improved lived experiences for children and young people in Barnsley accessing SWYPFT services.

A range of safeguarding resources and briefing papers were developed, reviewed and promoted through the Trust’s safeguarding intranet to support statutory safeguarding responsibilities. These included resources relating to CP-IS, perplexing presentations and fabricated or induced illness, child sexual abuse, neglect strategy toolkits, the safeguarding advice line and Prevent.

Audit activity commenced to review the quality of referrals into children’s social care, providing assurance and identifying learning to support improvement. Safeguarding adults and children induction training was also redeveloped for face-to-face delivery, with extended sessions enabling case-based learning, reflective discussion and a stronger focus on professional curiosity.

The annual safeguarding conference, delivered in October 2025, focused on sexual abuse and intra-familial harm. Contributions from specialist voluntary and community sector partners increased awareness of sexual violence and strengthened staff understanding of effective safeguarding responses. Feedback from the event was positive.

The voice of the child has remained central to safeguarding practice within SWYPFT and is embedded through policy, training, practice guidance and supervision. The Think Family approach continues to support practitioners to consider children’s lived experiences, with services using a range of tools to capture children’s views. This includes the Perinatal Service’s “My Baby and Me” passport-style document, which helps practitioners identify and understand babies’ needs. Service users and families have also contributed to service development through community stakeholder events, helping to shape services and strengthen the Trust’s safeguarding offer.

80%+

safeguarding children
training compliance
was maintained
across all training
levels throughout
2025–26.



It provided assurance that
staff are equipped to
recognise and respond
effectively to
safeguarding concerns
involving children, young
people and families

0-19 Public Health Nursing Service

The 0–19 Public Health Nursing Service has strengthened partnership working across Barnsley during 2025–2026, supporting earlier identification of risk, improved information sharing and more timely safeguarding decision-making.

Key highlights of work includes:

- Earlier identification through the universal offer. Antenatal, new birth and mandated reviews via health visitors and school nursers supports earlier recognition of vulnerability, including domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health, neglect and hidden harm enabling timely Early Help or safeguarding intervention to be offered to families before concerns escalate.
- Improved Early Help and step-up/step-down arrangements. The service provides continuity for children moving between Early Help and statutory safeguarding, supporting timely escalation where risks increase and continued oversight when children step down from statutory intervention.
- A stronger domestic abuse response. Practitioners used health and school nursing contacts to identify domestic abuse earlier, share relevant health intelligence and ensures children’s needs are informed multi-agency risk assessment and safety planning.
- Effective multi-agency information sharing. Regular contributions to strategy discussions, child protection conferences, core groups and multi-agency panels ensured health intelligence informed assessments, strengthened risk analysis and supported effective safeguarding planning.
- Voice of children and young people: Children’s views are captured through health reviews, school nursing contacts, drop-ins, targeted interventions, safeguarding assessments, Early Help work and reflective supervision. Recording is reviewed to ensure children’s experiences of home, school, friendships, wellbeing and safety inform risk assessments and support plans.
- Learning, audit and assurance: Participation in partnership audits, thematic reviews and learning events has strengthened internal guidance, training, escalation and recording. Learning from the multi-agency Elective Home Education audit also informed improvements to the service’s EHE pathway.

The data below demonstrates the number of children and families supported across universal, targeted and specialist input through delivery of the Healthy Child Programme during 2025–2026.

Activity	2025–2026 Data
Antenatal contacts	1,877
New birth visits	2,277
6–8-week reviews	2,305
8–12-month reviews	2,308
2–2.5-year reviews	2,605
Early Help assessments initiated by the service	204
Early Help assessments where 0–19 were the lead	96
Early Help offers declined by families	53

Best Start In Life: Family Hubs

During 2025/26, Barnsley's Family Hubs, have continued to strengthen the local early help offer for children, young people and families. The evidence demonstrates a growing, accessible and increasingly integrated system of support, with Family Hub membership reaching 23,745 by March 2026 and families engaging through a consistent core offer, extended opening hours, digital access, outreach activity and targeted parenting support. This has enabled more families to access help earlier, reduce barriers to support and receive coordinated multi-agency responses before needs escalate.

Partnership working has remained a key strength across the Family Hub network. Collaboration through Community Early Help Delivery Groups, community forums, SLT and SMT meetings, hot-desking arrangements and co-location has supported stronger relationships between Family Hubs, Social Care, Targeted Early Help, 0–19 Health, midwifery, schools, nurseries, the voluntary and community sector, DWP, housing and other partners. This has improved information sharing, strengthened referral pathways and supported earlier identification of need. Initiatives such as Bed for Babies, Welcome to the Family Hub referrals and outreach provision have helped families access timely and appropriate support, including universal services, Early Help Navigation, Targeted Early Help, Social Care and the 1001 Days Team where required.



1001 Day Team

The 1001 Days Team has provided targeted early intervention for families during pregnancy and the first two years of a child's life.

The team has worked with 90 families and received 99 referrals, with 70 families allocated for direct work. Almost half of referrals involved families already subject to safeguarding arrangements at the point of referral (49%), and 45% related to pregnant families, enabling earlier antenatal intervention.

Assessment outcomes show anxiety reducing by 32.8% and low mood by 35.5%, while relationship satisfaction with partners increased by 5.8%.

Case Study from the South Family Hub

The family initially engaged with South Family Hub through a 0–19 Health Drop-In, where additional support needs were identified. An Engagement Practitioner (EP) introduced the family to the hub’s core offer and ongoing support.

Over the following months, the parent attended Play and Learn, SEND groups, and holiday activities. Emerging parenting challenges led to the completion of an Early Help Assessment, with joint working between the EP and Health Visitor. Practical support, including a food parcel and assistance engaging with the DWP, was also provided.

Throughout the intervention, the EP maintained regular contact, attended a Family Network Meeting, and delivered a group nurturing parenting course which the parent attended and alongside additional sleep support. Close partnership working ensured timely responses when concerns arose, including a Health Visitor home visit.

By January 2026, the parent had completed the nurturing course, showed consistent engagement with groups, and reported improved confidence and parenting skills. The EP involvement has now closed, with the EHA remaining open under the Health Visitor and moving towards closure. The support provided successfully prevented escalation to Integrated Front Door.

Feedback from Parents

“Facilitators were great leading us through the programme. Talking about their experiences enhanced the content of the course and created a great environment to learn as a group”

“It’s a useful programme. Things may not always work for families but trying doesn’t hurt. Somethings might work and somethings might not. Overall, it’s good programme especially knowing there’s other parents in same shoes as you”

“I came to the family hub in crisis and left feeling a weight had been lifted, thanks to staff support and kindness”

“This has given us much more in the toolbox for ourselves and the kids and given me confidence in my parenting”

Early Help Assessment (EHA)

An Early Help Assessment (EHA) is a way of identifying a child or family's needs early, before problems become more serious. It brings together the family and relevant professionals to understand:

- ✓ what is working well
- ✓ what the worries or needs are
- ✓ what support the child, young person or family would benefit from
- ✓ who is best placed to help
- ✓ what actions need to happen and by when

The aim is to make sure families receive the right support at the right time, without needing to move into more specialist or statutory services unless that becomes necessary.

Over the last year Early Help activity remains significant, with 4,180 children and young people subject to an open Early Help Assessment during 2025/26.



1030 children were subject to a closed EHA with desired outcomes met



1207 Early Help Assessments have been closed in 2025/26



2152 children were subject to a closed EHA in 2025/26



1083 children have been subject to a new instigated EHA in 2025/26

EARLY HELP NAVIGATION

Early Help Navigation has supported families to access the right help at the right time, including families with SEND and families accessing support through Barnsley Hospital. During the year the team received 256 contacts, relating to 502 children, for navigation support. A further 769 people were supported through Barnsley Hospital with signposting, information and advice. The offer has expanded to ensure all new families entering the Autism assessment pathway are offered an early help conversation while awaiting assessment.

The impact of the navigation service includes:

- Families are supported to navigate and connect with Barnsley services and referral processes to access timely and effective Early Help.
- Holistic family assessments support a seamless step up into targeted and statutory services
- Increased access to Family Hubs Services, including parenting programmes.
- Workforce development within partner agencies and stakeholders by providing training, service updates and support.
- Deliver training across hospital staff teams to increase knowledge and services of Early Help and family hubs in the community and increase referrals.
- Deliver parenting programmes at Barnsley Hospital including 2 x Welcome to the World and 3 x Talking Teens. The team are also liaising with specialist medical departments to tailor and offer delivery for families with specialist circumstances such as Talking Teens for parents with teenagers living with long term health conditions.





Targeted Early Help

Within Targeted Early Help (TEH) we have worked hard on ensuring that families receive the right support at the right time.

We have identified a link worker for all educational establishments, from Early Years setting through to Primary, Secondary, Post 16, as well as special and alternative provisions. This support is tailored to the needs of the setting and has expanded to now include support in relation to Early Help Assessments to ensure that families are offered support at the earliest level of intervention.

We have strengthened our team within the Integrated Front Door, with the embedding of the Targeted Response Team into the front door, ensuring that where there are immediate safeguarding concerns, a worker is identified and the family are visited within 24 hours to assess need and identify the most appropriate service to support the family.

The TEH Practice Standards have been reviewed, and a Case Management Guide developed for Frontline Practitioners, as well as a case management guide specifically for managers to ensure consistency. As a service we have embedded both restorative practice and signs of wellbeing across all our work. This, alongside the above practice standards and case management guide ensures that the voices of all the family members are heard, with plans developed with families. In cases where there is escalation, we are confident that this is the right support to keep young people safe, and the conversational approach ensures that the family's strengths and needs are consistently discussed. The step up/down process between Social Care and TEH is now firmly embedded, with Team Managers completing the consultations on a locality basis, to ensure that the right information is received to ensure the right actions are completed with the family.

Direct work is an important part of TEH and, within the intervention all young people are spoken to away from the family home (where appropriate to ensure their voice is heard and considered as part of the intervention.) This is completed by either the Targeted Early Help Support Practitioner or a trusted member of the professional network, feeding into the Early Help Assessment and subsequent action plans. Audit work is completed monthly where one of the KLOE's is in relation to direct work with children, and both parents and young people are invited to give feedback on the intervention completed by the service. This, in turn, is analysed to ensure the service is offering the right support both individually, as a team and as a wider TEH service.

“

“Miss Rachel as named by my daughter, has been an absolute pleasure to have supporting me through such a challenging time. She has listened without judgement and has helped and supported me so much with my confidence and determination in correcting the problems I was having. She has always acted very friendly and professional and has been a fantastic support. I couldn't tell her how grateful I was on our last appointment because I knew I was going to cry so I just allowed her to leave without properly thanking her for the help and support she has given me”

”

Byouth

In 2025, the BYouth Service (formerly Targeted Youth Support Service) redefined their core offer to provide help and support at an earlier stage, working more closely with schools to identify issues that require a more targeted approach whilst making youth services more openly available for more young people. This shift in focus has helped to align service activity with the vision set out by Government in the National Youth Strategy and the redefined statutory duty (507b) to ensure ‘sufficiency of personal and social development opportunity that support young people’s wider well-being’.

Team	Individual young people	Attendances	Participation rate	Anonymous attendances by young people who do not want to be identified
Communities Team (Youth Centres, Detached and	2,102	17,245	41.20%	2,499
Participation and Inclusion	294	961	24.50%	3,220
Youth Work in Schools Pilot	1,090	5,683	38.30%	3,211
Service Total	3,486	23,889	37.10%	8,930



Youth Work in Schools Pilot – Great Childhood Ambition (GCA)

One of the most significant achievements over the past year has been the Youth Work in Schools pilot. As part of Barnsley's GCA programme, BYouth has led this initiative to test how youth work embedded within schools can improve behaviour, attendance and wellbeing, while providing wraparound support for young people. The model connects school-based support with community-based youth work, giving young people access to familiar, trusted adults in both settings. Youth workers build relationships that extend from school into the wider community. In schools, they provide support through themed lunchtime drop-ins, enrichment activities and targeted group work based on identified needs and the National Youth Work Curriculum. Outside school, teams offer twilight, centre-based and detached youth work in the places young people choose to access support. For those whose attendance suggests a need for more holistic help, the BYouth mentoring programme provides one-to-one support from a youth worker.

The Youth Work in Schools pilot is less than twelve months into mobilisation but already we have seen impact such as: Attendance improvements, with one school having its highest average overall attendance in four years. Over 4000 students across the schools have participated in enrichment, targeted / issue based group programmes where schools have identified a level of additional need and in one to one mentoring programmes to address holistic needs that are impacting on a young person's ability to attend school. Visible and self-reported evidence from young people on increased confidence, motivation and behaviour amongst students who have participated. Parents / carers and teachers have feedback that they have seen visible improvements in young people in particular in self confidence, motivation and an expanded positive peer network that the programme has introduced them to.

Over 300 young people regularly access support on a weekly basis through drop ins, enrichment, targeted and one to one support. Planned work continues over the summer for targeted support for young people from primary feeder schools whose attendance was cause for concern on transition to secondary school. This includes summer booster activities, targeted sessions, youth club provision and lunch time drops in once in secondary school.

Impact data and testimonies from young people, teachers, school staff and parents provide evidence that the youth work in schools pilot is having a positive impact, specifically:

- 79% of students feel more engaged with school as a result of Youth Work in Schools activity
- 38% of young people have improved their attendance at school
- 92% have stronger relationships with staff and teachers
- 85% have increased self esteem and confidence as a result of the programme
- 89% of students feel calmer, happier and safer following intervention and support

BYouth Communities Team

The core community Youth Work team has launched a new group-based offer, replacing the previous Early Help casework model. The BYouth offer includes five six-week programme modules:

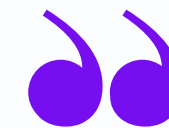
- Exploitation Awareness
- Resilience, Confidence and Courage
- Substance Misuse Awareness
- Online Safety and Risk
- Healthy Relationships.

These programmes provide earlier support and issue-based discussions with schools before concerns become entrenched. Further modules will be developed in response to school and young people's identified needs, in line with the National Youth Strategy.



“It's nice to come into this room... and feel like everything else goes away.”

“My anger issues have decreased”



Youth Voice And Participation

Through the Voice and Participation Team, young people's views have helped shape local understanding of the key issues reflected in the National Youth Strategy, including their worries, concerns and priorities for change. These insights will inform Youth Council campaign priorities for 2026/27.

In early 2026, the BYouth Voice and Participation Team facilitated the biannual Youth Council elections. More than 10,500 young people voted through schools, college and other education settings. Barnsley's new Youth Council will lead local and regional campaign activity on good work, emotional health and wellbeing, keeping young people safe, trusted adults, and friendships and relationships. These priorities will be reflected in the revised Children and Young People's Plan.

Through the Youth Voice and Participation Network, BYouth has contributed to the redesign of young people's mental health services, working with Public Health and other partners to support access to the right help, from the right professional, at the right time. Engagement with young people has been facilitated through youth voice structures in schools and community settings, and this work will continue over the next year.

Through the Care 4 Us Council, BYouth has worked with children's social care partners to use the lived experience of children and young people to improve service delivery, including Independent Reviewing Officer arrangements, Future Directions and Tenancy Ready programmes. This work will be reflected in the annual Care 4 Us report to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Youth Voice and Participation Team has also supported the creation of Independent Voices, a new group representing the views of Barnsley's care leavers. The group will link with Care Leaver Ambassadors, who will help champion services for children in care and care leavers.

During 2025/26, a review of advocacy and children's rights for children in care was undertaken to ensure young people know how to access advocacy support, raise concerns or make a complaint. A new child-friendly complaints procedure was developed with the Customer Feedback Team and Care 4 Us Council. Advocacy practice standards were also revised and shared across the workforce to strengthen awareness and embed referral pathways. The Independent Visitor service has been expanded through Edge of Care investment. Eighteen new independent visitor volunteers are ready to be matched with children and young people in care, providing long-term befriending relationships and supporting greater stability in their care experience. Evidence from this work will inform future decisions about sustaining the expanded offer beyond the initial 12-month period



“

“My IV will listen to me and make sure I'm okay with the activities that we do. She is really good at making sure that she will visit me when I am free.”

“She is kind and I love to see her, we laugh with each other and have good times. They are really creative and they will make sure you are having a great time with whatever you do with them.”

”

BMBC Public Health Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) Subgroup

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) Subgroup, a multi-agency partnership led by BMBC's Public Health Department, has delivered a range of important developments during 2025/26 to strengthen support for children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing across Barnsley.

Key highlights:

- Developed and delivered whole-school, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary emotional health and wellbeing training within secondary school settings, reaching 650 staff in total. Young people from a number of voluntary and community organisations contributed their lived experience to the training, ensuring the content was grounded in the voices and experiences of children and young people. This training will be delivered to two further organisations in 2026.
- The Public Health-led young people's group, Just Us, made up of young people aged 13–22 from Chilypep, the Youth Association and YMCA, worked alongside artist Tony Wade, BMBC Public Health and Barnsley Civic to produce an exhibition focused on emotional health and wellbeing. The exhibition, titled “Expressing the Walls in My Mind”, was displayed in the Sadler Room at the Cooper Gallery in Barnsley from January to March 2026.
- A new out-of-hours emotional wellbeing support line was secured for Barnsley children and young people, and their parents and carers. Night Owls launched in August 2025 as a single point of access overnight listening service, available from 8pm to 8am, 365 days a year.
- In 2025, 24/7 text support was also launched for anyone struggling to cope. Delivered through a partnership between NHS South Yorkshire and the digital service Shout, powered by the charity Mental Health Innovations, the service offers free and confidential support at any time of day or night by texting the word ‘EYUP’ to 85258.
- The Connecting Hearts and Minds newsletter continues to be circulated monthly to professionals, sharing information and updates on emotional health and wellbeing. Engagement has remained strong, with open rates well above the national average for internal newsletters.
- The Emotional Health and Wellbeing training directory for professionals continues to be published annually and circulated to education settings. The directory also includes information about training available for parents and carers. The impact of the directory will be explored further during 2026/27.



Chilypep

Chilypep (the Children and Young People's Empowerment Project) continues to provide support for the emotional wellbeing of young people aged between 11-25 years as HOME (Helping Our Mental 'Ealth)

Over the past year HOME continues to provide an open access, non-judgemental and safe space for young people who may be experiencing challenges with their mental health, wellbeing, relationships, school, identity, safety or wider life circumstances. The service has supported young people through direct one-to-one work, group-based support, advocacy, safeguarding intervention, partnership working and opportunities for young people to influence local services.

HOME works closely with social care, schools, colleges, CAMHS, health, Public Health, police, voluntary sector partners and community services to ensure young people are heard, safety plans are shared and support continues across settings.

Key highlights:

- HOME received 527 referrals for young people, with anxiety, low mood, stress, school and relationships the most common presenting issues.
- The service supported 65 safeguarding incidents involving 47 young people, including safety planning, referrals and attendance at multi-agency meetings.
- New 16+ provision, including Pathways to Work and Peer Connector activity, supporting confidence, wellbeing, training, volunteering and employment pathways.
- Funding was secured to launch Girls@HOME from April 2026, providing safe space, advice and mental health support for young women aged 16 to 25.
- Young people co-produced resources, campaigns and events, including hate crime resources, the Human Library, Barnsley Town Hall takeover and International Men's Day activity.
- HOME has improved young people's safety, confidence, connection and access to support through trusted relationships, early help and practical advocacy.
- 114 young people set personalised goals; average positive improvement scores increased from 3.32 to 6.87.
- Over 92% of young people rated HOME as good or excellent.

Young people's voices are listened to and have help shape service design, campaigns and decision-making locally and nationally.

Work over the past year has included:

- Young people contributing to the Fund the Hubs campaign, supporting continued Early Support Hub funding for 2026/2027.
- Feedback led to changes in the Pride LGBTQ+ offer, creating separate age-based groups for ages 11 to 15 and 16+.
- Young people co-produced mental health resources and creative work, including Beyond Reflection #We're in this Together and Expressing the Walls in my Mind.
- Barnsley Young Commissioners influenced work on health champions, crisis support, hospital standards and the national Child Poverty Strategy.

Case Study from Chilypep

SG has been attending several groups at HOME using them as a social space to connect with others and to explore their gender identity. During a session they disclosed to a worker that they had experienced sexual assault multiple times throughout childhood and adolescence by the same perpetrator, who had recently moved back into their home. This was not reported at the time but had a significant impact on their home life, mental and physical health.

Chilypep immediately supported SG to report the assaults to the police and social care with particular concern about the perpetrator being back in the family home. The situation had exacerbated SG's poor mental health leading to suicidal thoughts and self-harm, so we also joined up with their counsellor from MIND to create a suicide safety plan. We also connected with Barnsley college, accompanying SG to a meeting to share the safety plan and ensure that the wellbeing team there could support them and provide a daily check in space.

The Project Worker from HOME supported SG with the police report, as well as going with them to meetings at the police station to give their statement, and organised future meetings at Chilypep, a safe space for them, to discuss the case with the investigations officer. Similarly, they met their social worker at Chilypep for meetings. We supported them to talk to their parents and encourage collaboration with social care for the safety of the whole family as there was a younger sibling in the household too.

We continued to offer this young person a weekly 121 check in and use of the HOME space when we are open as they identified it as a place where they feel completely safe and can switch off. They also continue to attend our groups to socialise and gain support from peers as well as guided activities. We supported them to contact their GP and ensure their mental health safety plan was shared with all those who could help. This joint up approach between mental health services, social care, college, the police, their GP and their family made sure this young person was heard and their experience was followed through by all professionals, and ongoing mental health support was in place.

Berneslai Homes

Berneslai Homes has continued to make an important contribution to safeguarding children and young people across Barnsley through regular liaison with Children's Social Care, effective use of the Integrated Front Door, and strong working relationships with schools, police and wider partner agencies. Keyworkers' regular contact with families, including direct one-to-one work with children and young people, has enabled them to build trusted relationships, identify risk, and share meaningful information to support safeguarding decision-making.

Having a visible presence within local communities provides an important route for identifying and sharing information about children and families who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability. Through a range of roles across the organisation, staff are able to contribute valuable contextual safeguarding insight, support early identification of concerns, and strengthen multi-agency responses. This demonstrates the positive impact of housing services has as an active safeguarding partners and the value of trusted relationships in helping children and families to be safer.

Keyworkers also use professional curiosity and their knowledge of families' circumstances to recognise and respond to indicators of neglect, including through participation in neglect deep-dive case studies. Their ability to combine support with appropriate housing enforcement has helped children and young people to live in safer, more stable and habitable home environments, while also contributing to core groups, social care plans and wider multi-agency safeguarding responses. The impact of this work can be seen through timely safeguarding responses and improved understanding of children's lived experiences.

A keyworker developed a trusted relationship with a young person through sustained one-to-one and whole-family support. This enabled the young person to disclose a serious domestic incident, which was immediately escalated through safeguarding procedures. Information was corroborated with school staff, shared with Children's Social Care and police, and a strategy meeting was held within 24 hours. This resulted in action being taken to remove the young person from an unsafe environment.



Multi Agency Audits & Assurance



Over the past year, the partnership has continued with embedding its Quality Assurance Framework sitting alongside the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Barnsley.

The partnership has been supported by BMBC Children's Service Assurance Service alongside appointing a fixed term audit and performance officer to support the delivering of the activities set out in the framework: namely including a multi-agency audit programme and the partnership multi-agency data which feeds into the audit and performance group.

An audit schedule has been developed for 2025/2026 with safeguarding partners in completing regular multi agency audits based on key lines of enquiry linked to our priority themes: domestic abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse within the family environment, and elective home education.

These audits have identified a number of strengths in multi-agency working, including:

- Early intervention and timely referrals, supported by the introduction of MADA, this has improved information sharing, strengthened understanding of shared concerns, and enabled early safety planning. (domestic abuse)
- Co-ordinated multi-agency planning, leading to prompt child protection actions and a shared focus on neglect, school attendance, mental health, and improving home conditions. (neglect)
- A child-centred approach to direct work, using creative tools and resources to help children understand safety and relationships. (child sexual abuse)

Over the next year, the Partnership will focus on:

- Developing workforce knowledge, skills and practitioner confidence across the Partnership, aligned to the agreed safeguarding priorities.
- Improving the voice of the child and strengthening child-centred practice. Audit activity highlighted the need for continued support to ensure the child's voice is consistently captured, including non-verbal children and children with disabilities. Work is already underway across agencies to improve direct work techniques, develop child-friendly safety plans, and ensure children's lived experiences are clearly reflected in assessments and plans.
- Strengthening multi-agency information sharing, coordination and accountability. A recurring theme across audits is the need to improve the timely sharing of documentation and ensure action plans clearly define roles and responsibilities. Work is already progressing through the development of best practice guidance, the implementation of the Families First Programme to strengthen multi-agency working and alignment with multi agency child protection teams and the development of a single assessment across family help and the use of AI technology to support improved oversight and follow-up.

The partnership has strengthened its approach to sharing learning from multi-agency audits, ensuring practitioners across all roles are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence. The newly developed 'Audit to Action' training sessions have helped translate audit findings into targeted training, support and development activity, providing practitioners with practical guidance, tools and resources to strengthen practice.

Building on this progress, the partnership has also identified areas where practice can be further strengthened. During the coming year, the appointment of a permanent Audit and Performance Officer will enhance capacity within the business unit and support the continued implementation of quality assurance activity, including progressing audit recommendations, monitoring improvement actions and evaluating their impact. This work will be further supported by strengthening the partnership's performance data scorecard, improving how information is captured, analysed and used to evidence progress against partnership priorities in the year ahead.

Learning from Reviews

The partnership continues to undertake regular review and assurance activity informed by both the national and local safeguarding landscape. This work provides valuable insight into how organisations work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare, while identifying opportunities to strengthen multi-agency practice and shared learning.

Assurance Activity- Sara Sharif

During 2026, BSCP undertook assurance activity in response to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review concerning Sara Sharif. Safeguarding partners were asked to assess their practice against the six key areas of learning identified within the review. This provided an important opportunity for the partnership to reflect on how these themes are being embedded within local agency practice, identify areas of strength and consider any further learning or improvement activity to be taken forward collectively.

Areas of strong practice identified across agencies:



Learning Identified

Where areas for further development have been identified, these will be embedded within the partnership's recommendations and progressed through the work plans of the relevant sub-groups. Future areas of focus include:

- Strengthening partner's understanding of the family justice system, particularly the use of supervision orders and their role within effective multi-agency working.
- Improving practitioner confidence in identifying coercive control and recognising patterns of perpetrator behaviour.
- Increasing awareness of educational neglect and its links to elective home education.
- Strengthening information sharing between professionals to support earlier identification of risk and more effective coordinated responses.

Thematic Review

Towards the end of the year, the partnership worked with the Safeguarding Adults Board to consider learning from a thematic review jointly commissioned by the Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board and the Community Safety Partnership. The review examined the deaths of seven adults in Barnsley who had experienced multiple disadvantage. While none of the adults involved were care leavers, sadly, two were parents whose children were no longer in their care due to the impact of their adult vulnerabilities.

Learning Identified:

Strengthening the relationship between adult and children's services, ensuring that parents with emerging or identified vulnerabilities are referred to adult services at the earliest opportunity, where their needs can be assessed under the Care Act 2014.

Rapid Reviews

The Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) panel is responsible for arrangements for rapid and child practice reviews and that meet the criteria outlined in Working Together 2026. It develops action plans from completed reviews and explores themes and learning from local practice to consider policy, practice and system changes that support the protection of children in Barnsley. Subsequent learning and recommendations are overseen by the Operational and Business Group.

During the reporting period 1 serious incident notification met the criteria for a rapid review.

Child M- Rapid Review held in June 2025

Case summary Child M was a 4-month-old girl found having an unresponsive episode by her parents following a head trauma. Medical examination revealed multiple injuries with the likely cause being non- accidental injury.

Learning identified:

The information analysed within the rapid review identified the following emerging practice themes:

- Engaging Fathers in Practice the review highlighted opportunities for professionals to be more curious about the father, his role in parenting and emerging needs.
- Professional curiosity and professionals being more curious around the needs of both parents in caring for young children
- Messages around ICON did not appear to be shared consistently and importantly aims to prevent abusive head trauma in babies by helping parents know that crying is normal and where they can get support

The rapid review meeting concluded that the criteria for a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was not met. The National Panel agreed with the decision and felt that the review has captured the learning and BSCP to consider an action plan to disseminate the learning.

Update on learning and progress:

- A Public Health ‘Dad’s Engagement Group’ has been established and the 0-19 service utilises this group to progress work to identify mechanisms to include fathers in records and develop over time specific assessment tools for fathers to support a culture shift in practice
- Increased multi agency training offer to deliver training to practitioners on invisible men and professional curiosity and impact of training is started to be collated in terms of practice changes
- Learning briefings delivered to staff on professional curiosity and is a key feature within our quality assurance work
- ICB continues to strengthen messages on ICON and safeguarding in the first year of life (see further section of the report for further progress updates)

Child Safeguarding Practice Review

Following the sad death of a baby in December 2024, partners agreed that a joint child medical review with Leeds was required. Although Child G died in Leeds, they were a Barnsley child, and it was important that learning was considered across both local areas. Progressing the review has taken longer than anticipated due to a change of author and factors outside the partnership’s control; however, the final report and accompanying learning briefings are expected to be shared during 2026.

As the review has progressed, agencies have worked together to reflect on practice, systems and processes, and an action plan is already in place to support improvement. Progress will continue to be monitored through the relevant subgroup, with any additional learning identified and addressed through future partnership activity. This will include practice briefings focused on key themes, including perinatal mental health and safeguarding babies in the first year of life.

Section 175 Safeguarding Education Self-Assessment Audit

Key points / findings:

- 91 out of 93 schools completed the S.175, covering the 2024/25 academic year with the vast majority completing using the online platform with some education providers submitting their own safeguarding audit
- Leadership and Governance: Almost all schools maintain clear Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) /Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) structures, with regular governor oversight. The audit highlight inconsistencies in governor training particularly in primary schools where there is more of a frequent governor turnover
- Policies and Procedures All settings have up-to-date safeguarding and child protection policies, reviewed annually and are available on websites and in staff areas.
- Record Keeping CPOMS (or equivalent) is universally used for recording concerns, actions, and outcomes. Incidents are logged and analysed for trends, with actions taken as needed. CPOMS categories are used for bullying, harassment, and online harms.
- Professional Challenge: DSLs are confident in escalating cases where there is no improvement, using local authority escalation policies and Early Help surgeries.
- Staff Training: All schools confirm staff have read Keeping Children Safe In Education. DSLs maintain Level 3 training within required timeframes. Many schools use weekly safeguarding briefings or refreshers to update staff.
- Early Help: Staff are trained and confident in completing Early Help Assessments, with regular Family Network Meetings (FNMs) and timely sharing of paperwork with the Early Help Team.
- Multi-Agency Working: Strong links reported with social care, health, police, and other agencies, with regular attendance at multi-agency meetings.

- Voice of the Child: Children know who to talk to if they have concerns, with safeguarding posters, worry boxes, and regular pupil voice surveys. Regular pupil surveys and school council input inform policy and practice, with several settings developing or updating child-friendly safeguarding policies with pupil input.
- BSCP Priorities: All staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect and know how to report concerns. Good practice is in place in recognising children's vulnerabilities utilising local screening tools and police intelligence forms. Gaps in Grade Care Profiles training in some schools and some education settings indicate further confidence is needed in Domestic Abuse escalation tools.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing: Nearly all settings have a trained mental health lead, with access to external support (e.g., Compass Be, CAMHS) with safe spaces available for pupils needing emotional support, and staff are confident in identifying and supporting children with mental health concerns. Central and South areas report higher emotional wellbeing needs. Schools with large SEND cohorts showed increased complexity identified insufficient capacity for rising need.
- EYFS Compliance: All settings with Early Years provision meet statutory requirements for paediatric first aid, staff ratios, and safer eating practices

Following the Section 175 review, the partnership has produced an analysis report and shared the learning with partners and the School Alliance. This will support implementation of the recommendations and inform our work with education over the coming year focusing on:

- Improving education representation across partnership subgroups to ensure key information and emerging needs are shared effectively, with a clear process in place for communicating this to all practitioners across educational settings
- Work with schools to gather and use CPOMS data effectively so the partnership can monitor priorities, evaluate impact, and shape future activity
- Increase understanding and uptake of the multi-agency training offer, with a particular focus on Grade Care Profile, Domestic Abuse, and Early Help
- Increase visibility and understanding of partnership policies, procedures, and safeguarding topics by promoting these resources through the partnership website

Multi-Agency Training Programme

The BSCP Multi-agency Trainer develops and delivers a broad programme of safeguarding training and learning opportunities for practitioners working with children and families across Barnsley.

The overall aim of the training programme is to build a skilled, confident and knowledgeable workforce that can recognise, assess and respond effectively to risks facing children. Our training supports practitioners to:

- share common safeguarding values and principles
- work together effectively across agencies to meet children's needs
- develop a consistent understanding of abuse indicators, thresholds, procedures and referral pathways
- work collaboratively with parents, carers and families in a supportive but appropriately challenging way, while keeping the voice of the child central

COURSE BASIC AWARENESS OF SAFEGUARDING

"I just wanted to say thank you for so such an informative presentation. Working as MARAC admin there is plenty, I can apply to my work, and the information given has helped me understand the work that Children Social Care do, as well as giving me an insight into the processes. There is now meaning to Section 47, CIN & CPP plans. I found the course interesting and very well presented."

7. Multi Agency Training & Development



DELIVERY, IMPACT AND DEVELOPMENT

We use a blended delivery model, offering training through Microsoft Teams, e-learning and face-to-face sessions. Many courses are strengthened by contributions from partner agencies, including BHNFT, IDAS, BSARCS and Barnsley Place ICB, who help to deliver or co-deliver sessions.

The content and priorities of the training programme are regularly reviewed by the Audit and Performance Subgroup and the Multi-agency Trainer to ensure they continue to reflect emerging needs, local priorities and the changing safeguarding landscape.

This year, five new training programmes were introduced:

- Improving Family Engagement in Practice
- Working with Men: Risk or Resource
- Communicating with Children Who Have, or May Have Been, Sexually Abused
- What You Need to Know About Child Sexual Abuse
- Supporting Those Working with Families Affected by Child Sexual Abuse

During this period, the partnership also hosted a conference as part of Safeguarding Awareness Week in November on Prioritising Child Sexual Abuse, delivered by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, which was attended by over 160 practitioners. In addition, regional conferences were delivered on:

- Improving Cultural Competency: Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Better Outcomes
- Transitional Safeguarding

These conferences reflect the partnership’s ongoing priorities, as well as learning from national reviews and multi-agency audit activity, helping to further develop a confident and informed workforce

Training uptake in 2025–2026 has been positive, with 37 different subjects offered across the year. Although practitioner attendance has reduced compared with 2024–2025, this year reflects a more streamlined training offered by the partnership .In addition, some of our partners already deliver comprehensive in-house training, and also we are continuing to face the wider pressures from services such as workload demands continue to limit staff availability, which is frequently identified as a barrier to attendance. The most frequently attended courses include the Working Together To Safeguard Children and Young People, Graded Care Profile 2, Designated Safeguarding Lead Training.

	Practitioner Attendance
2023/2024	1836
2024/2025	3254
2025/2026	2265

To view our full list of courses, please follow this [link](#).

In response, the partnership has reshaped part of its training model. Since the start of the year, we have introduced a programme of Learn Together, Lead Together mini sessions. These 30-minute sessions provide practitioners with timely updates on the current safeguarding landscape and raise awareness of the tools and resources available to support child safeguarding practice. Topics range from inspection readiness to guidance on the neglect screening tool.

The training programme has also been strengthened through the introduction of From Audit to Action workshops. These 90-minute sessions give practitioners the opportunity to explore multi-agency audit findings in more depth, translating key learning into practical action for frontline practice. Each workshop focuses on one our safeguarding priorities, highlights areas for improvement, and supports partners to strengthen their safeguarding response.

OUTCOMES

There is also clear evidence from our multi agency partners that our activities are contributing to improved practice and better outcomes. For instance:

- Delivery of the Educational Neglect course has led to an increase in both the volume and quality of referrals to the integrated front door.
- Use of the Neglect Screening Tool has grown, supporting earlier identification of neglect.
- Training on attending Case Conferences and Core Groups in Barnsley has helped to improve attendance at these meetings.
- Practitioners who attend multi-agency training consistently report greater knowledge and confidence, particularly valuing the opportunity to learn alongside colleagues from other agencies. Many also go on to access further related training to strengthen their understanding and address gaps in knowledge.



“I have applied this learning by giving greater consideration to transitional risks in assessments, involving young people more meaningfully in planning, and working more proactively with adult services to ensure smoother transitions and reduce gaps in support.”

From Transitional Safeguarding Conference



“Improved my knowledge and skills as a manager when delivering supervision sessions... and the direct questioning that professionals should be using
From Conference: Impact on Child Sexual Abuse”



Reducing Parental Conflict

The Reducing Parental Conflict initiative is grant funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) focusing on helping parents raise children in an environment free from harmful conflict.

In Barnsley this is delivered by Building Stronger Relationships project delivering training to practitioners and developing pathways of early help support for parents and families.

Over the last year 400 practitioners have been trained and provided with resources to deliver support to families. An example of practice has been the joint delivery within secondary schools to strengthen understanding of parental conflict amongst educators and providing a holistic offer of support to families. Pastoral teams report to have an increase in confidence and motivation to address parental conflict directly with young people using practical resources available to them as part of the training.

A new reducing parental conflict pathway has been introduced for parents, supporting families who remain together but are experiencing ongoing, unresolved conflict.

Through a pilot partnership with Relate, this year 16 couples accessed specialist relationship counselling aimed at improving communication, reducing conflict, and strengthening co-parenting relationships.

Targeted support for parents experiencing separation, related conflict has been strengthened through the delivery of Triple P Family Transitions Programme which began in September 2025.

Outcomes from the programme have shown:

- ✓ A positive impact on child behaviour
- ✓ An improvement in parent- parent relationships and communication
- ✓ Improved understanding of how parenting relationships effects children
- ✓ Positive impact on parents' ability to recognise and handle difficult emotions.

Families also are able to access universal free online support courses via our virtual family hub. The outcome from families from accessing the support has resulted in the following feedback:



“I have learnt to take a step back and think before responding to the other parent, pushing my own feelings to the side and keeping things centred around the child their feelings and what is best for them”

“Take time to process, respond positively, do not put children in the middle. Stick to agreements. Children have many special people they love and care about and this should be celebrated”



The partnership has continued to strengthen its shared safeguarding arrangements, with partners working together to improve practice, respond to learning and maintain a clear focus on outcomes for children, young people and families.

Over the coming year, the Partnership will build on this progress by continuing to focus on its agreed priorities of neglect, children as victims of domestic abuse, contextual safeguarding, child sexual abuse within the family environment, and the delivery of the Families First reforms. This work will be supported by strengthened governance, scrutiny, quality assurance and a continued commitment to using evidence, performance data and the voice of children and young people to inform improvement.

We are committed to strengthening education as a strategic and equal partner within BSCP safeguarding arrangements and over the next year we will:



Identify Further key education stakeholders and map their current involvement in strategic safeguarding processes and partnership meetings.



Engage with schools, colleges and early years settings to understand barriers to involvement including training



Implement the agreed approach and evaluate its impact

Looking ahead, the Partnership will also focus on embedding learning from audits, reviews and scrutiny activity into frontline practice, strengthening professional confidence through multi-agency training and learning events, and improving how agencies work together to provide the right support at the earliest opportunity. By continuing to work collaboratively, constructively challenge each other and listen to the experiences of children and families, the Partnership remains committed to building a brighter, safer future for every child and young person in Barnsley.

9. How to contact us and Our Partners

Our sincere thanks go out to all of our partners who work tirelessly to protect and keep children and young people safe in Barnsley

If you want to be in touch with us
Email: BarnsleySafeguardingChildrensPartnership@barnsley.gov.uk

