



Annual Report

July 2021 - July 2022



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

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1. INTRODUCTION FROM OUR STRATEGIC LEADERS

In November 2020 we formed a single Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership to deliver a system that protects children, especially the most vulnerable. Protecting, safeguarding and ensuring the wellbeing of children are complex tasks that can only be successfully achieved by agencies working together in a coherent and effective manner.

This is the first Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report, reflecting on the 12-month period up to the end of July 2022. This year has been one of establishing and embedding the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within Stoke-on-Trent. The report recognizes the progress the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership has made throughout the year and sets out our commitment to address the challenges that remain in 2022-23 and beyond.

Working Together 2018, requires safeguarding partners to publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. This report set out what we have done as a result of the arrangements, including child safeguarding practice reviews and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. This helps to bring transparency for children, families and practitioners about the multi-agency safeguarding activity undertaken.

The Strategic Business Plan was approved in December 2021 and is effective from 1st Jan 2022 to 31st March 2025 allowing time to embed and evaluate the impact of the priorities. The plan will be reviewed annually, providing the opportunity for the plan to be dynamic and responsive to emerging local needs. Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to safeguarding all children and everybody that comes into contact with our children has a role to play in keeping them safe.

The statutory accountable officers for the Safeguarding Children Partnership are:

- Jon Rouse, City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council,
- Chris Noble, Chief Constable Staffordshire Police and
- Peter Axon, Chief Executive Staffordshire and Stoke on-Trent Integrated Care Board.

They have delegated the day-to-day leadership to the Safeguarding Executive.

The Safeguarding Executive Board



Lisa Lyons,
Director of Children and Family Services, Stoke-
on-Trent City Council

Jennie Mattinson,
Temporary Assistant Chief Constable,
Staffordshire Police



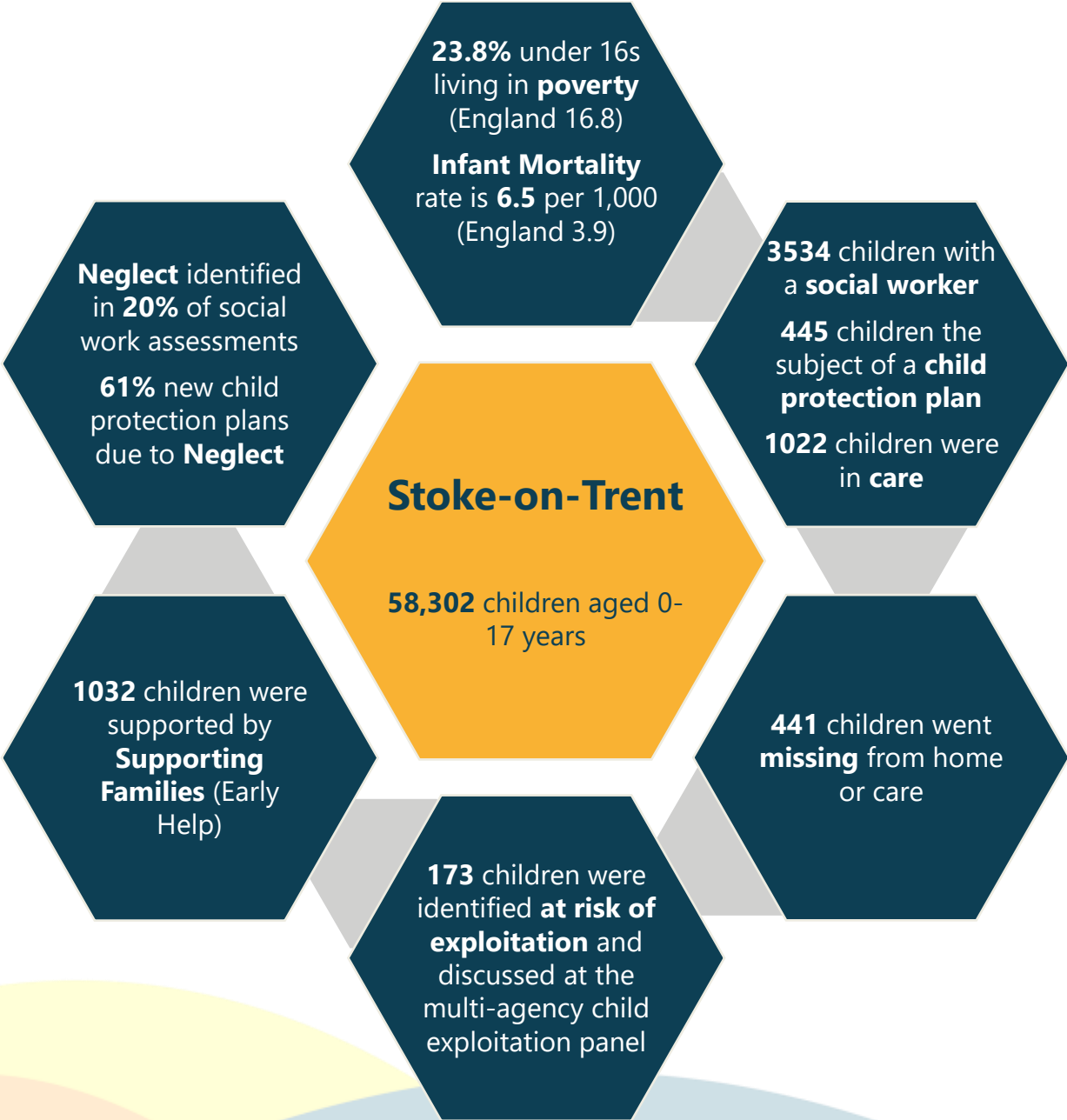
Heather Johnstone,
Chief Nursing and Therapies Officer,
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
Integrated Care Board

2. OUR PRIORITIES

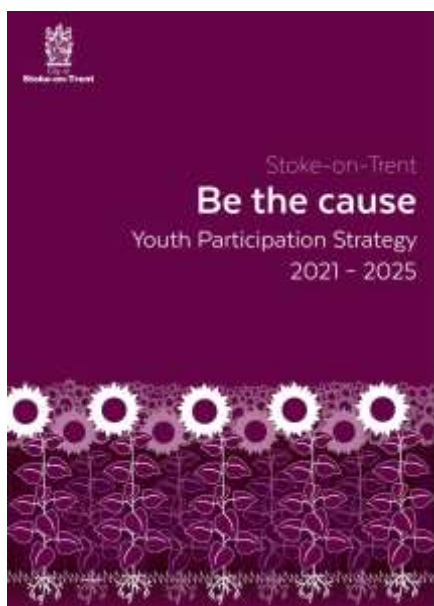
Within our business plan we have set out our priorities in three categories; strategic, practice and assurance.



3. STOKE-ON-TRENT SAFEGUARDING CONTEXT



4. ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



In 2021 the Stoke-on-Trent Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Board launched the **Be the cause Youth Participation Strategy** [Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Youth Participation Strategy 2021 | Stoke-on-Trent.](#)

There are three phases of delivery which include the initiation of the city-wide approach to participate, followed the development and widening of the youth participation offer.

This approach aims to develop services which better respond to and meet the needs and priorities of children and young people in the city.

Within the strategy the Safeguarding Children Partnership is named as one of the multi-agency forums that will work as part of the co-ordinated city-wide approach to youth participation so that we can gather the views of young people and use these to shape responses and services.

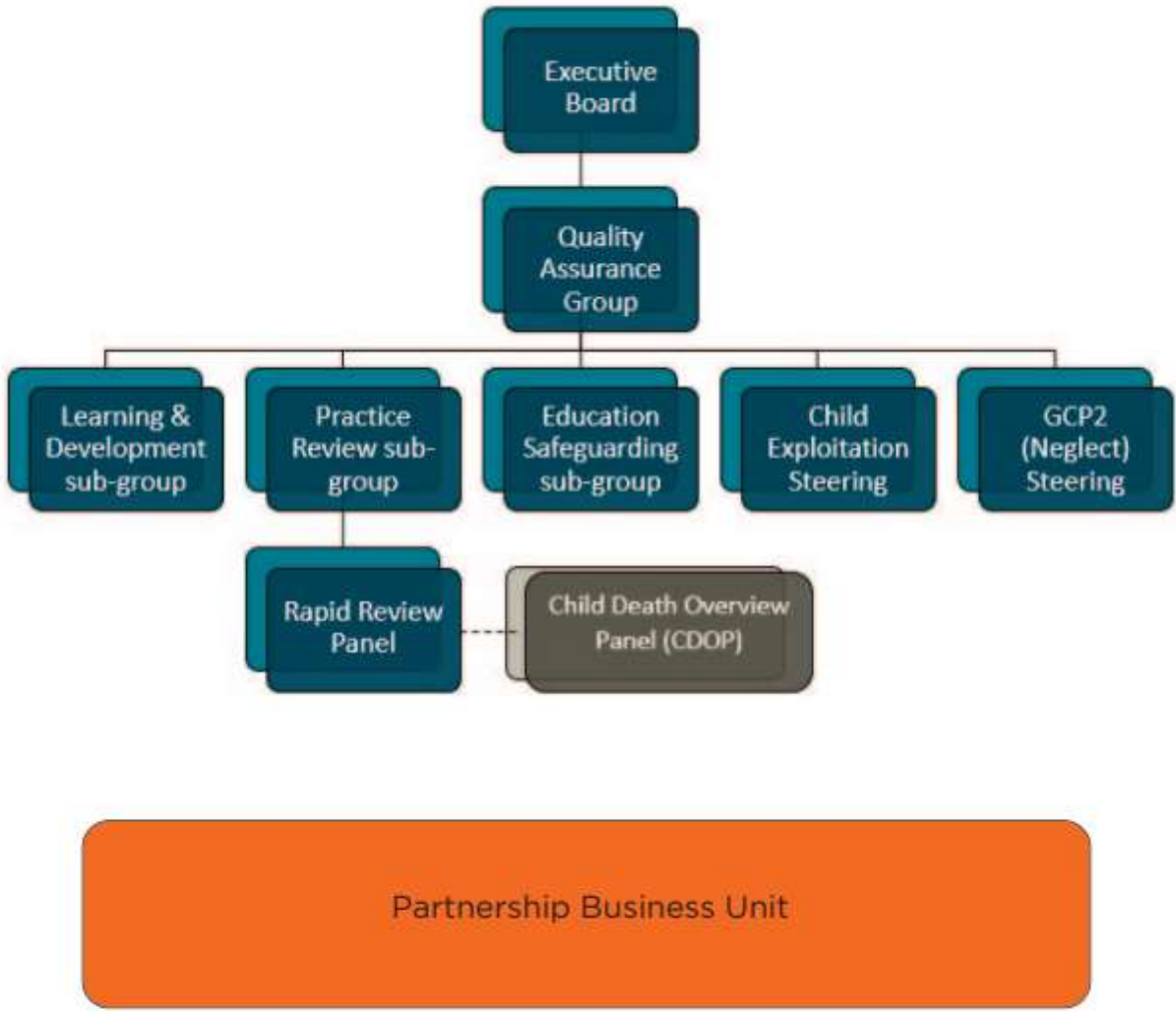
In Stoke-on-Trent there is a well-established children in care council and care leavers forum which are actively involved in questions about service delivery and design, with young people generously sharing their lived experiences to improve what we deliver. School councils are up and running across Stoke-on-Trent, offering young people a powerful and impactful role in shaping their education.

We are looking at other ways we can link with existing youth groups and forums to gain the views and experiences of children and young people in relation to safeguarding.

5. HOW ARE WE DOING AS A PARTNERSHIP

Effective partnership arrangements

We have developed our strategic governance and have our meeting structures in place. We have established our Executive Board which consists of senior representation of our strategic partners and our Independent Scrutineer.



The Quality Assurance Group, Learning & Development Subgroup and Review Subgroup are well attended by partners including the voluntary sector. The chairing responsibilities are shared across our Strategic Partners.

We are in the process of establishing our Education Safeguarding Subgroup to strengthen the work with representatives from the various sectors of education.

We are strengthening the links with other partnership boards within the city. The business managers from the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Health and Well-being Board,

Community Safety Partnership and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership meet on a quarterly basis to facilitate communication and a better understanding of the work going on in the different partnership groups. We have developed our partnership website [Home \(stoke.gov.uk\)](http://Home.stoke.gov.uk) to provide information and to act as a repository for resources.

Development and implementation of a Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework

We have developed and started to implement our Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework. Our framework utilizes a range of quality assurance mechanisms to enable ongoing analysis of practice and performance to promote organisational reflection to drive improvement in outcomes for children and families.

We have appointed an Independent Scrutineer to support implementation of the new arrangements through impartial challenge and advice. The Independent person scrutinises local child practice review decisions, monitors and, where appropriate, challenges progress against the delivery of the partnership's business plan. Independent scrutiny is critical to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the Partnership arrangements, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

We have coordinated the safeguarding audit¹ for education establishments within the city. In addition to providing assurance of the safeguarding arrangements in place within school and education settings the safeguarding audit has also enabled us to provide support to establishments where required and will also inform our multi-agency training programme, for example, response to child-on-child abuse training.

We have commenced our safeguarding audit for other organisations²; initial findings are included on page 15.

We have developed a multi-agency training programme which is delivered by expert practitioners from across the local partnership. More information about this can be found on page 19. The learning from local and national reviews is incorporated within our multi-agency training programme and emerging themes used to shape the courses offered.

We have agreed our performance framework and work is underway to populate it. This has a range of data core children's social care data with a multi-agency lens. It will also include information and analysis in relation to the practice and assurance priority areas and other key areas of focus such as prevalence of children experiencing domestic abuse.

¹ Sections 157 and 175 of the 2002 Education Act

² Section 11 of The Children Act (2004)

Multi-agency response to Child Exploitation

We have started our first scrutiny process in relation to the multi-agency response to child exploitation.

Child exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

There is a joint Child Exploitation Strategy for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and the Joint Child Exploitation Task Group lead the implementation and delivery of the strategy. There are links in representation between the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Child Exploitation Task, Steering and Operational Groups.

Across the partnership there is a risk factor matrix (RFM) which includes all elements of child exploitation. Children who are assessed as having a medium or high risk are discussed at the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel. Commissioned services and support for children who are identified as low risk of Child Exploitation are in place. The multi-agency practice guidance and Risk Factor Matrix are available on the Safeguarding Partnership website.

A multi-agency Child Exploitation tracker and dashboard have been developed to provide insight, help identify trends and emerging issues and have a better understanding of the risk factors affecting children at risk or who are being exploited.

Awareness and identification of child exploitation are incorporated into our Level 1 and Level 2 Safeguarding Training. Specific training to tackle child exploitation is being developed. A workforce development workstream has been established as part of the Child Exploitation Task Group.

Neglect

In Stoke-on-Trent, neglect is a key factor in 61% of child protection plans that commenced in 2021-22 and it is the most prevalent reason that children enter the care of the local authority. We have developed our Neglect Strategy and a range of tools.



Jointly with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board we have been implementing the NSPCC Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2). This is a strengths-based approach which supports practitioners in the identification of neglect. It helps to inform decisions about next steps, additional support needs of families and encourage positive changes. 'Train the train' champions have been trained and have been delivering single and multi-agency training.

Whilst there is an increasing number of practitioners being trained to use the tool the number of completed assessments being reported is still relatively low. There is still work to fully embed the use of the tool in practice and understand the impact and improved outcomes for children and families.

Safeguarding young children aged 0-2

Learning from a case review, we have reviewed the bruising in non-mobile babies guidance and published this on the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership Website [Resources \(stoke.gov.uk\)](https://www.stoke.gov.uk/resources) and we are implementing ICON training.



Regular training sessions covering ICON (Babies Cry You Can Cope) [ICON - Babies cry you can cope - Advice and Support | ICON \(iconcope.org\)](https://www.iconcope.org) and non-accidental injuries in children under 5 are delivered by the Designated Doctor to raise awareness across the partnership.

Missing

In Stoke-on-Trent during the last 12-months, 441 children went missing from home or care. To assist partners in providing a robust response the missing from home or care protocol is in place. This was jointly developed by Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local

Authorities and Staffordshire Police and was refreshed at the beginning of 2022. The protocol reflects current practice guidance and the duties of individuals to ensure that children who go missing are safeguarded. The following safeguarding principles should be applied:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- Locating and returning the child to a safe environment is the main objective.
- The views of the child and parent/carer should always be taken into consideration.
- Understanding the circumstances of the child going missing and seeking to reduce the risk of further missing episodes is key.

<https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10/staffordshire-stoke-on-trent-missing-protocol-jan22.pdf>

Child Mental Health

There is national and local recognition of the need to increase mental health support for children and young people, in particular early access to prevent escalation of the impact of trauma.

We will seek assurance and evidence of effective safeguarding in relation to child mental health and suicide prevention from statutory safeguarding partners, joint commissioners, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Integrated Care System Transformation Board.

Serious Youth Violence

The Stoke-on-Trent Community Safety Partnership is the statutory body responsible for implementing a strategy to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse in the city. Preventing children, young people and vulnerable adults from exploitation, by addressing serious violence, substance abuse and modern slavery is one of the priorities within the Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023. [Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Safer City Partnership Strategy 2020 - 2023 | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

Whilst the Community Safety Partnership is leading on addressing serious violence it remains an assurance priority for the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership.

As part of its National Anti-Violence Tour the Knife Angel visited Stoke-on-Trent during April 2022. The Knife Angel is a stunning contemporary 27ft, 3.5-ton sculpture of an angel made out of 100,000 confiscated knives received from 43 police forces across the UK.



Whilst the Knife Angel was in Stoke-on-Trent there was a programme of supporting activities including workshops and youth education to embrace the powerful message of the Knife Angel. Almost 1,000 school children visited the Knife Angel statue with their school. Alison Cope, anti-violence campaigner who lost her son Joshua to knife crime in 2013 visited secondary schools in the city and spoke to Year 9 pupils about those dangers and her lived experience, engaging around 4,500 children. The New Vic 'Stealing Dreams' performance engaged more than 3,000 children. Almost 200 knives were deposited in the amnesty bins during April 2022.

Early Help

Getting the right level of help to children and families at the right time and as early as possible can prevent long term harm and abuse. This starts with universal services, such as schools, primary health services and the police. Families needing 'more help' may need to access other services too. There are a range of services in Stoke-on-Trent who can help families to thrive for longer by providing short term support when needs arise.

The Stoke-on-Trent Early Help and Prevention Strategy sets out the approach to ensuring that effective early help and support is available to children and families in Stoke-on-Trent. A copy of the strategy can be found here: [Stoke-on-Trent Early Help and Prevention Strategy](#)

The Supporting Families Service is Stoke-on-Trent City Council's early help service and was redesigned during 2022. The service delivers the national Supporting Families Programme and is responsible for the co-ordination of Early Help support across the city.

Supporting Families comprises the following functions; Family support Service, Parenting Support, School Support, Effective Practice Development, Young Carers Assessment, Participation of children and young people, advice and guidance through Family Advisors and supervised family time.

6. REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY

Annual safeguarding audit of schools and education providers

Section 175 of the 2002 Education Act requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools and further education colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Section 157 of the 2002 Education Act and the Independent School Regulations 2003 convey the same responsibilities on all other non-maintained settings.

All education settings within the city were asked to complete a section 175/157 audit to provide the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership assurance that these statutory functions are fulfilled. The audit covers safeguarding information for all staff, management of safeguarding, safer recruitment, allegations against staff and child-on-child abuse. 70% of primary settings, 66% of secondary, 75% of special schools and 59% of alternative providers completed the audit.

Initial findings are:

Training on how to respond to child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment was identified as an area for development across some schools.

Schools in the primary sector identified the need for support in providing guidance to staff in relation to preventing youth violence, gang involvement and county lines.

Also identified as an area to strengthen was schools needing to be more familiar with the Stoke-on-Trent Early Help Process

In response resources were developed, led by the PHSE co-ordinators to support education providers to deliver quality PSHE education around criminal exploitation and County Lines. These age-appropriate resources aimed at primary and secondary aged children were shared with schools.

Since the audit was completed the Supporting Families Service redesign has concluded and support for schools is a key priority within this. Training is provided to schools by locality based Effective Practice Co-ordinators. Every school and post-16 setting is supported by a dedicated Family Support Worker. Practice Development Forums will provide networking and practice development opportunities are provided on a half termly basis on a locality footprint. Family Advisors are the first point of contact for families accessing children's centres/Family Hubs. Further information can be found in the Supporting Schools document.

<https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11/introduction-to-supporting-schools-v20-web.pdf>

Annual safeguarding audit of organisations (Section 11) (see appendix 1)

The Children Act (2004) places on a statutory footing the obligation for named agencies and individuals to co-operate to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Section 11 of the Act makes clear to whom this duty applies and indicates that they must make arrangements for ensuring that: 'their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The 'Section 11 Audit' allowed the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership to be assured that agencies placed under a duty to co-operate by this legislation are fulfilling their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Initial findings are:

Assurance was provided in the domains relating to leadership and management, safer recruitment, complaint and whistle-blowing as it was reported that the minimum standards were exceeded.

All agencies had written policies, though one agency reflected that they are not always directly referenced within case recording.

Aspects of multi-agency information sharing were identified as an area for development from some agencies, though the minimum standards were being met.

Listening to children and young people and utilising their feedback to influence their work was the domain where agencies from all three partner sectors identified that there was a need to strengthen this area.

Managing Allegations against people who work with children

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) supports the wider community and organisations working with children in handling allegations where children may have been harmed.

A LADO referral is made in circumstances whereby an adult who works or volunteers with children is alleged to have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, behaved towards a child in a way that indicated they may pose a risk to children or behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children

In Stoke-on-Trent, there were 196 referrals to the LADO in 2021-22, an increase compared to the previous year (131 in 2020-21). The lower numbers in 2020-21 may have been contributed to by Covid lockdowns.

Referrals are received from a range of statutory, independent and voluntary agencies. The education sector make up the largest group with just under 40% of the referrals received.

Allegations of physical abuse is the largest category with around 40% of the referrals.

Of the 185 enquiries which were concluded during the year, for 28% the allegations were substantiated. There were 13 referrals to the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) or regulatory body.

Child Death Overview Panel

The deaths of all children under the age of 18 are reviewed by a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). CDOP is a multi-agency panel whose main purpose is to learn from these deaths in order to try and prevent future deaths. The CDOP makes recommendations and reports about the lessons learned to those responsible at a local level. Locally there is a joint Child Death Overview Panel between Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

During 2021-22, there were 34 deaths of those aged under 18 reported in Stoke-on-Trent, an increase compared to 2020-21 (19 children) and 2019-20 (23 children). Deaths of boys has consistently accounted for over half of all notifications.

The neonatal age group (0-27 days) has the highest number of deaths followed by the 28-364 days age group.

Of the deaths across Stoke-on-Trent eight were categorised as unexpected. Modifiable factors identified include; smoking, unsafe sleeping environments, alcohol and substance use and poor mental health.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is looked after by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more in their home. Children who are privately fostered may be living with extended family, such as great aunt or cousin or with a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. However, a child living with close relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or a step parent will not be privately fostered.

Where a child is privately fostered Children's Social Care should be notified. A social worker will visit the home and speak to the child and carer to ensure the child is safe, carry out background checks and make sure support is being provided.

During 2021-22 there have been an average of four children privately fostered at any one time, with six children starting to be privately fostered and seven children ceasing to be privately fostered over the 12-month period. The number of children privately fostered remains low and make up less than 1% of the children who have involvement with a social worker.

In August 2021 the private fostering arrangements within Stoke-on-Trent were the subject of internal case audit to consider compliance with the processes and the quality of practice. It was identified that the majority of visits were taking place within the prescribed 6-weekly timescales, children were spoke to alone, their voice was evident in recording and carers were made aware of the support that was available to them. There were some areas for development identified which led to actions such as flow chart and guidance being shared across the social work teams, webinars undertaken with GPs and designated schools leads.

It is recognised that the number of children identified as living in private fostering arrangements within Stoke-on-Trent is low and unlikely to be a true reflection therefore more work is required to raise the awareness of what private fostering is and what should happen if practitioners working with children or within the general public become aware of a private fostering arrangement.

Learning from rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews

If a child dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect then a notification is made to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. A rapid review then takes place to gather facts, identify immediate learning and determine whether a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review is required. If a Child Safeguarding Practice is deemed necessary it should identify improvements to practice and consider potential national learning to try to prevent future harm or deaths.

Since the establishment of the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership there have been seven rapid reviews. Learning from these reviews identified the need to review and update the practice guidance in relation to bruising in non-mobile babies. Professional challenge was also identified as an area for learning and a review of the Professional disagreement and Escalation Policy was undertaken. Any appropriate learning from reviews should be incorporated into the Suicide Prevention Strategy which is being developed. As with many of the national reviews professional curiosity was also identified as an area of learning and the recommendation that it is incorporated within the multi-agency training is being taken forward.

7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Through the support of our expert partners we have developed and delivered a multi-agency training programme. The courses offered over the last 12-months included:



Delivery of training has been predominately online. However due to feedback from course attendees some courses are moving back to face-to-face delivery. The multi-agency training programme is delivered by expert practitioners from across the partnership, the breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise of local practitioners continues to be evident from both the content and the positive feedback following the training via the course evaluations. Evaluation of training has shown that there is an increase in knowledge and confidence from the training sessions. Below is some of the feedback.

I feel more aware and confident on the subject and able to identify the early signs of being at risk.

Using the knowledge I have acquired I will look for signs where I can safeguard the young people in my care

A better understanding to the different levels of need and when to refer.

Knowledge to deal with allegations within time scales and confidence in referring

Greater awareness of types of abuse and understand why people remain in unhealthy relationship. How to work with victims safely. Importance of safety planning

I understand the process of managing allegations and what the main causes of concern would be.

I work with lots of parents with mental illness- this training will help me identify and recognize when a parent maybe experiencing struggles through how the child may present in school and will allow school to provide an early intervention

recognising what is Harmful Sexual Behaviour and what is age appropriate.

This will be used as a discussion point with the Safeguarding Team at school. In addition, this will also be shared and discussed further with our wider safeguarding team.



In June 2022 we supported the first Festival of Practice in Stoke-on-Trent. The Festival of Practice saw 500 practitioners across Stoke-on-Trent access over 29 training events during the week-long event.

The aim of the week was to cover identified key themes from across Children's and Family Services and

Adult Social Care and commission key training that was in line with the strategic improvement plan and priorities of the safeguarding boards.

There was also a goal to build upon our multi-agency relationships, working in partnership with Staffordshire University, Staffordshire Police, Keele University, Combined Health Care and third sector partners. By working in partnership, we intended to offer multi agency learning that is crucial to the experience of our children, young people and their families and carers in Stoke-on-Trent. The training was open to our foster carers also, supporting them to access training and promoting their role.

The commitment of partners to deliver multi-agency training has been excellent. We were fortunate enough to draw upon the knowledge of local practitioners such as the Designated Doctor for Child Safeguarding North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent CCG's, as well as those further afield, including practitioners from Cardiff University. This provided invaluable expertise in the subjects delivered and ensured learning was within the local context, as well as offering insight into the wider context.

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS

(summary from Simon Westwood, Independent Scrutineer)

In preparing my scrutiny report I used an adapted version of the six steps to scrutiny³. The Safeguarding arrangements in Stoke on Trent are in place but require some further development. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development with suggested actions for the Partnership to consider. My report was presented at the Executive on the 16th September 2022.

The three statutory partners recognise that there is still work to do to be fully assured that the safeguarding children partnership works effectively alongside other partnerships: for example, the safeguarding adult board; community safety partnership; children and young people board (a sub group of the health and wellbeing board.)

Business managers for the partnerships have met and are scheduled to meet quarterly to align agendas, share information and streamline reporting.

The statutory Published Arrangements have been agreed by the safeguarding partners and identify relevant agencies, but implementation and engagement with some is still needed.

All safeguarding partners are engaging with safeguarding children information sharing and staff training protocols. The published arrangements specify that the partnership business unit are designated data controllers on behalf of the partnership.

There is still work to do to improve the use of relevant data to review the impact of safeguarding initiatives on desired outcomes for children. Data from statutory partners is reflected in the draft core data set. This is still heavily weighted to the local authority. Outcome statements/Key Performance Indicators which set standards expected are still to be finalised.

Learning from local and national reviews is being cascaded and used to improve outcomes for children, their families and community. This has been integrated into training and briefings e.g. the bruising to non-mobile babies and escalation policies have been revised.

An audit is still needed to evidence the integration of learning from case reviews into practice, policy and training.

³ 'Adapted from Pearce, J (2019) Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding children arrangements. Institute of Applied Social Research, Luton, University of Bedfordshire'.

The three partners are still to agree a process for developing, reviewing and future funding of the Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements including case reviews. The current budget includes funds for case reviews.

The wider safeguarding children partnership requires development to include further engagement with all education providers, the voluntary and independent sector and strengthen the involvement of community groups.

The core mechanisms are in place for the three statutory partners to collect and analyse relevant data pertaining to safeguarding children.

Data is shared across the partnership and used to inform: an assessment of gaps in data, identification of priorities, and future safeguarding plans.

All safeguarding partners are aware of the notification, criteria and process for referral of cases for consideration for rapid and local reviews. Guidance is in place and this has been tested through referrals to the case review sub-group. All safeguarding partners are engaged with identifying and reviewing progress against the Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children priorities.

The necessary reporting and scrutiny processes are in place, with review of required outcomes and forward planning procedures. The Quality Assurance group provide an overview report, including key information from sub-groups, highlighting exceptions to the Executive.

Safeguarding concerns are communicated up to and down from the three lead partners via the sub groups and business manager.

A Quality Assurance Framework has been agreed. However a draft performance data set is still in development. The Executive has reviewed the performance data set and identified changes needed. Capacity and pace for analysis and audit is limited until a final staffing structure is agreed and implemented.

An independent scrutineer is in post and a wider scrutiny model is being tested against key areas set out in the business plan. Pace has been slower than intended due to lack of capacity in the Business unit.

A self-assessment of the MASH has been commissioned and the Governance should be to the Safeguarding Partnership.

Independent Scrutineers suggested areas for improvement

- **Partnership Arrangements**

Increase engagement with other Stoke-on-Trent partnerships and boards where they can support the Safeguarding Children Partnership priorities.

Enhance safeguarding arrangements for schools, colleges and early years providers.

Review arrangements for identifying safeguarding effectiveness through early help.

Strengthen the engagement with community groups.

The partnership to hold a focused event to review progress and impact of learning from local and national reviews.

Review and agree proportional shares for future budget plans and approve budget for 23/24.

- **Information, Analysis and impact on practice**

Refresh communications on the new website and through a newsletter.

Refresh information sharing messages and advice on consent to frontline staff across agencies.

Refresh outcome statements and impact measures.

Increase input of police and health data and improve analysis capacity so that the partnership has a multi-agency picture of activity relating to the agreed priorities.

- **Safeguarding Partners Line of Sight to practice**

Consider a spring 2023 conference to get practitioner and wider partnership members views.

Update a training needs assessment and survey frontline practitioners to understand how they have used new learning in practice. What has changed?

Survey a sample of children and parents in the safeguarding systems to gather views on what was effective in supporting them.

- **Additional Strategic Priorities to consider**

Review impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 on children affected with other key partnerships to ensure children as victims in their own right are safeguarded.

The Executive to consider outcomes and actions from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) self-assessments and include actions in the business plan for 23/24.

9. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT, THE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR 2022/2023

Effective partnership arrangements

Ensure alignment of strategic priorities across all the partnership boards in Stoke-on-Trent.

Child exploitation

Develop a multi-agency training programme that creates innovation in the system; to empower the partnership workforce to become more confident, and skilled, to recognise and respond to young people at risk of/ or experiencing child exploitation.

Neglect

Embed the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 to support the early identification of neglect and strengthen the performance and outcome framework to evidence the impact for children and young people. Develop and implement a Neglect/GCP2 communications plan to support the dissemination and embedding of the toolkits.

Plans for 2022/23

Now that the new website is live we are planning to increase the communication work of the partnership. We will launch our social media presence to widen communication channels to people who work with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity), parents, carers and the general public. We will circulate our regular newsletter across our partnership network.

We will use our communication channels to increase knowledge of our practice priorities areas, for example, spotting the signs of child exploitation, learning from reviews and also support raising awareness of subjects such as private fostering.

We intend to establish multi-agency practitioner forums to improve our engagement with family-facing practitioners. This will give us the opportunity to talk regularly to practitioners who work directly with children and their families, to hear what is going well, to share good practice and also hear what the challenges are and how we can make improvements.

We plan to speak with children and young people to understand their lived experiences and ensure their voice shapes future planning and services.

We are reviewing the capacity of the Business Unit to ensure there are the resources to support the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

We will undertake scrutiny in relation to Neglect.

10. KEY MESSAGES FOR READERS

This period has been about creating our new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, establishing our governance structures, agreeing our priorities and starting to deliver our business plan against them.

We recognise there is still work to do around communication with practitioners, children and young people and the general public. We need to fully embed the Quality Assurance Framework which will further support our assurance of the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.

11. CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership business manager can be contacted on 01782 234280 and e-mail address SSCP.Information@stoke.gov.uk

Information can be found on our website <https://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk>

12. ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD IN STOKE-ON-TRENT?

If so, you can call the **Children's advice and duty service (CHAD)** on **01782 235100** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm). If you need to contact us out of hours, then please call our emergency duty team on 01782 234234.

Appendix 1: Organisations as included in Working Together 2018

1. **Section 11 2004 Children Act** places a duty on:
 - local authorities and district councils that provide children’s and other types of services, including children’s and adult social care services, public health, housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services
 - NHS organisations and agencies and the independent sector, including NHS England and clinical commissioning groups, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts and General Practitioners
 - the police, including police and crime commissioners and the chief officer of each police force in England and the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime in London
 - the British Transport Police
 - the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies
 - Governors/Directors of Prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOIs)
 - Directors of Secure Training Centres (STCs)
 - Principals of Secure Colleges
 - Youth Offending Teams/Services (YOTs)