

Cumbria Safeguarding
Children Partnership



C S C P

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25



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Foreword from Lead Safeguarding Partners

Welcome to the final Annual Report for Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP), covering the period from 1 April 2024 - 3 March 2025.

The report reflects the partnership's collective endeavour and responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Cumbria.

Over the last two years, there has been considerable change to guidance and legislation that has influenced the work of the Pan Cumbria Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partners.

On 15 December 2023, the Government published [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. This statutory guidance sets out what organisations and agencies, who have functions relating to children, must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England. The 2023 edition of the guidance replaced Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Alongside the Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance, the government published The [Children's Social Care Framework](#), which tasked local areas to embed both Working Together to Safeguard Children and the new Framework for Children's Social Care. Part of this, was for leaders to review their arrangements and identify reforms to comply with statutory guidance.

As a result of the publication of Working Together to Safeguard Children in December 2023, the Cumbria Lead Safeguarding Partners undertook a review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and agreed that as of 1 April 2025, the Pan Cumbria arrangements would cease, and two new place-based partnerships for Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness were implemented. The arrangements for each new partnership were published in April 2025 and can be found here: [Cumberland](#) and [Westmorland and Furness](#).

Each of the new partnerships are working to update and develop practice compliant with guidance and legislation. However, this Annual Report provides evidence that safeguarding remained a priority for all partner agencies, during this time of transition.

Thank you to all partners and their dedicated front-line staff for their support and steadfast commitment to safeguarding all children in Cumbria. The new place-based partnership arrangements will provide the opportunity to further strengthen multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.



Andrew Seekings
Chief Executive Officer
Cumberland Council



Sam Plum
Chief Executive Officer
Westmorland and Furness
Council



Darren Martland
Chief Constable
Cumbria Constabulary

Sam Allen
Chief Executive
North East North
Cumbria ICB



Sam Proffitt
Interim Chief Executive
Officer
Lancashire South Cumbria
ICB

Cumbria Context

Within Cumbria, there are two unitary councils:

- Cumberland
- Westmorland and Furness

For Health, Cumbria is covered by two Integrated Care Boards (ICB):

- North East and North Cumbria ICB
- Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB

The geographical footprint of the two ICBs and the two new councils are not coterminous.

Cumbria Constabulary are the Police Force covering the whole of Cumbria.

Cumberland

Cumberland is much more sparsely populated than the national average, but it has both rural and urban centres and includes the districts of Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland.

7.9% (14 out of 177) of Cumberland's Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) sit within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England. These communities are located across the whole of Cumberland, with seven being in Allerdale, four in Carlisle and three in Copeland (Source: IMD 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019).



Children and Young People in Cumberland

Cumberland has a population of **276,876**, of which **56,911** children are aged 0-19 (20%)

In 2024/25, the Cumberland Safeguarding Hub received **10,595** referrals

2903 (27%) transferred to Children's Social Care

The top 3 Referrers were:

1. Police 32%
2. Health 18%
3. Education 16%

The top 3 Referral Reasons were:

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Neglect
3. Concerning Behaviour

As of 31 March:

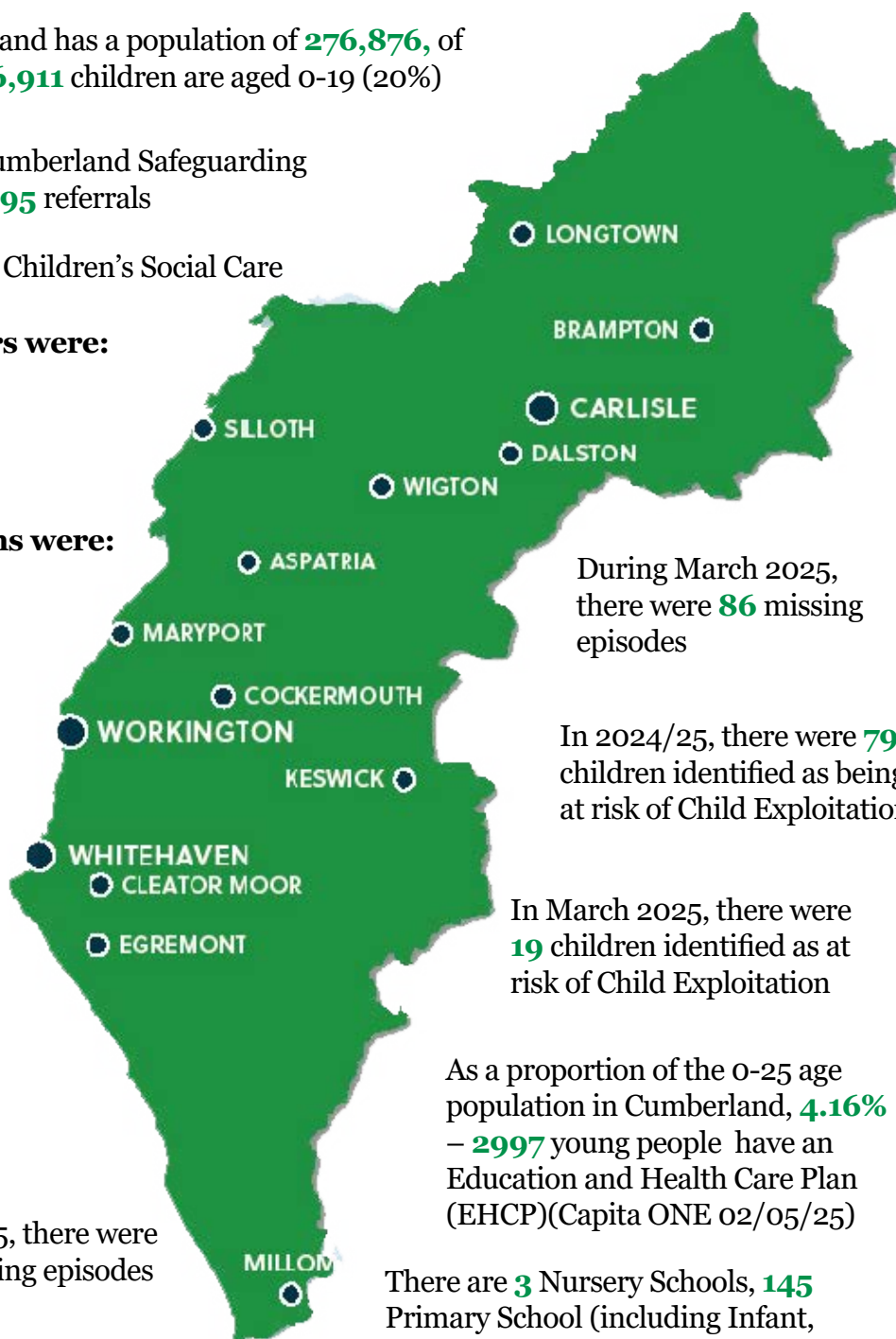
263 children are supported with a Child Protection Plan

540 children are supported with a Child in Need Plan

455 are Cared for Children

95 children looked after placed in Cumberland from other local authorities

In 2024/25, there were **1018** missing episodes



During March 2025, there were **86** missing episodes

In 2024/25, there were **79** children identified as being at risk of Child Exploitation

In March 2025, there were **19** children identified as at risk of Child Exploitation

As a proportion of the 0-25 age population in Cumberland, **4.16%** – **2997** young people have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)(Capita ONE 02/05/25)

There are **3** Nursery Schools, **145** Primary School (including Infant, primary and junior), **19** Secondary Schools, **2** Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and **3** Special Schools

Westmorland and Furness

Westmorland and Furness is the third largest local authority area in England and Wales by land area, but is sparsely populated. Westmorland and Furness includes the districts of Eden, South Lakeland and Barrow in Furness.

8.3% (12 out of 144) of Westmorland and Furness' LSOAs sit within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England. These communities are all located within Barrow (Source: IMD 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019).

Children and Young People in Westmorland and Furness

Westmorland and Furness have a population of **228,187**, of which **43,456** are children aged 0-19 years (19%)

In 2024/25, Westmorland & Furness Safeguarding Hub received **5,831** referrals

1179 (20%) transferred to Children's Social Care

The top 3 Referrers were:

1. Police 21%
2. Health 19%
3. Education 17%

The top 3 Referral Reasons were:

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Neglect
3. Contact Dispute

As of 31st March:

193 children are supported with a Child Protection Plan

347 children are supported with a Child in Need Plan

255 are Cared for Children

159 cared for children placed in Westmorland and Furness by other Local Authorities

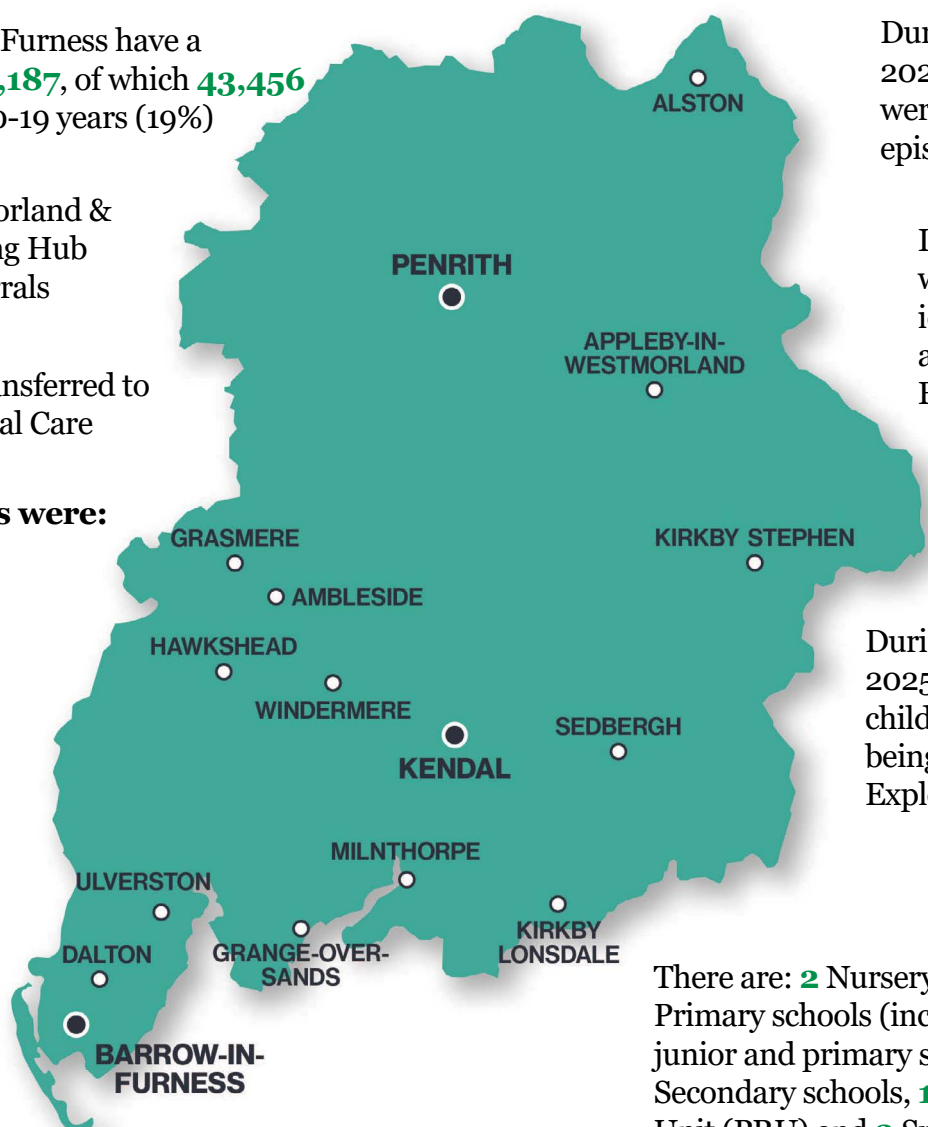
During March 2025, there were **68** missing episodes

In 2024/25, there were **119** children identified as being at risk of Child Exploitation

During March 2025, there were **30** children identified as being at risk of Child Exploitation

There are: **2** Nursery schools, **122** Primary schools (including infant, junior and primary schools), **20** Secondary schools, **1** Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and **3** Special schools

As a proportion of the 0-25 age population in Westmorland & Furness, 4.4 % have an EHCP – **2471** young people (SEN2, January 2024)



About Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership

The CSCP is a statutory multi-agency partnership, which has led the safeguarding arrangements across the whole of Cumbria and has been supported by a small business unit.

The partnership provides the safeguarding arrangements which safeguarding partners and relevant agencies use to work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify and respond to the needs of children in Cumbria, commission and publish Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and provide scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

At the centre of the arrangements is a commitment that the voice and lived experience of the child is at the heart of all partnership activity.

This Annual Report sets out the impact of the work undertaken to address the partnership priorities, which are:

- Safeguarding adolescents from risks and harms outside the home
- Improving responses to neglect
- Embedding learning to improve practice

The partnership vision “Working together to keep Cumbria’s children safe” was the commitment to the following shared values, which underpinned all partnership activity:

- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- Practitioners from all agencies working with adults and children work together and share information effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.
- The lived experience and the voice of children and young people is listened to and acted upon at all times.
- A ‘Whole-Family’ approach is understood and implemented by all practitioners across the Partnership.

Cumbria’s arrangements have been delivered through a Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSP) Group, although in its infancy, a Delegated Safeguarding Partners Group and a wider Partnership Group, which included relevant agencies, and a number of sub-groups.

The previously published arrangements for the pan Cumbria Partnership can be found via the link below: [Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements 2024/25.](#)

Lead Safeguarding Partners

The LSPs who were responsible for the arrangements in Cumbria are the Chief Executive Officers from the following organisations:

- Cumberland Council
- Westmorland & Furness Council
- Cumbria Constabulary
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care
- North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

This group has met as a Cumbria regional footprint with further work being undertaken to ensure LSPs meet their statutory responsibility, as set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) are as follows:

- Cumberland Council - Director of Children & Family Wellbeing
- Westmorland & Furness Council - Director of Children's Services
- Cumbria Constabulary - Assistant Chief Constable
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care - Chief Nursing Officer
- North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board - Director of Nursing and Quality (North)

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners are chaired by Martin Birch, Director of Children and Family Wellbeing, Cumberland Council.

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

The CSCP Board membership includes the statutory partners, as well as other 'relevant agencies'.

In Cumbria, this includes representatives from education, health, local authorities, criminal justice and the voluntary sector. CSCP Board membership is shown at Appendix A.

The CSCP Board developed, implemented and monitored an Annual Business Plan, agreed priority actions against core business, and directed the sub-groups in delivery of the plan.

Partnership Sub-Groups

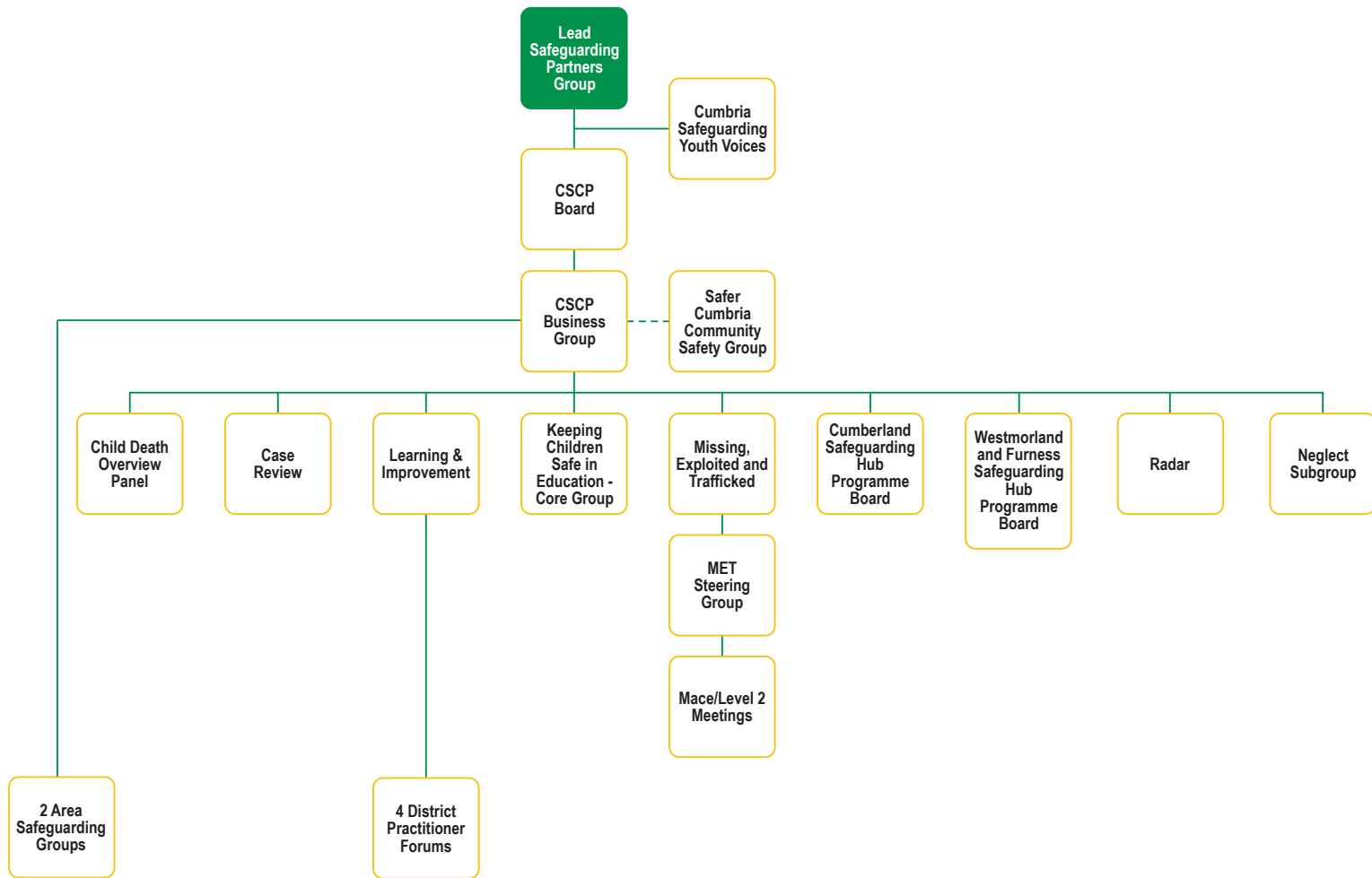
The CSCP was supported to deliver its priorities through a number of countywide and Local Authority area-based partnership sub-groups:

- Learning and Improvement (county-wide)
- Case Review (county-wide)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group (Local Authority Area Based)
- Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children (county-wide)
- Safeguarding Hub Programme Boards (Local Authority Area Based)
- Children's Radar (county-wide)
- Area Safeguarding Groups (Local Authority Area Based)
- Neglect Sub-group (county-wide)
- Radar

The governance of the Cumbria Child Death Overview Panel also sits with the CSCP.



Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure



The Partnership Business Priorities

In the final year of the Pan Cumbria arrangements, the partnership continued to seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements across the partnership were effective in keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect, whilst also embedding learning from practice.

The priorities from 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025 were:

Priority 1 - Improving the Response to neglect

Priority 2 - Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the family home

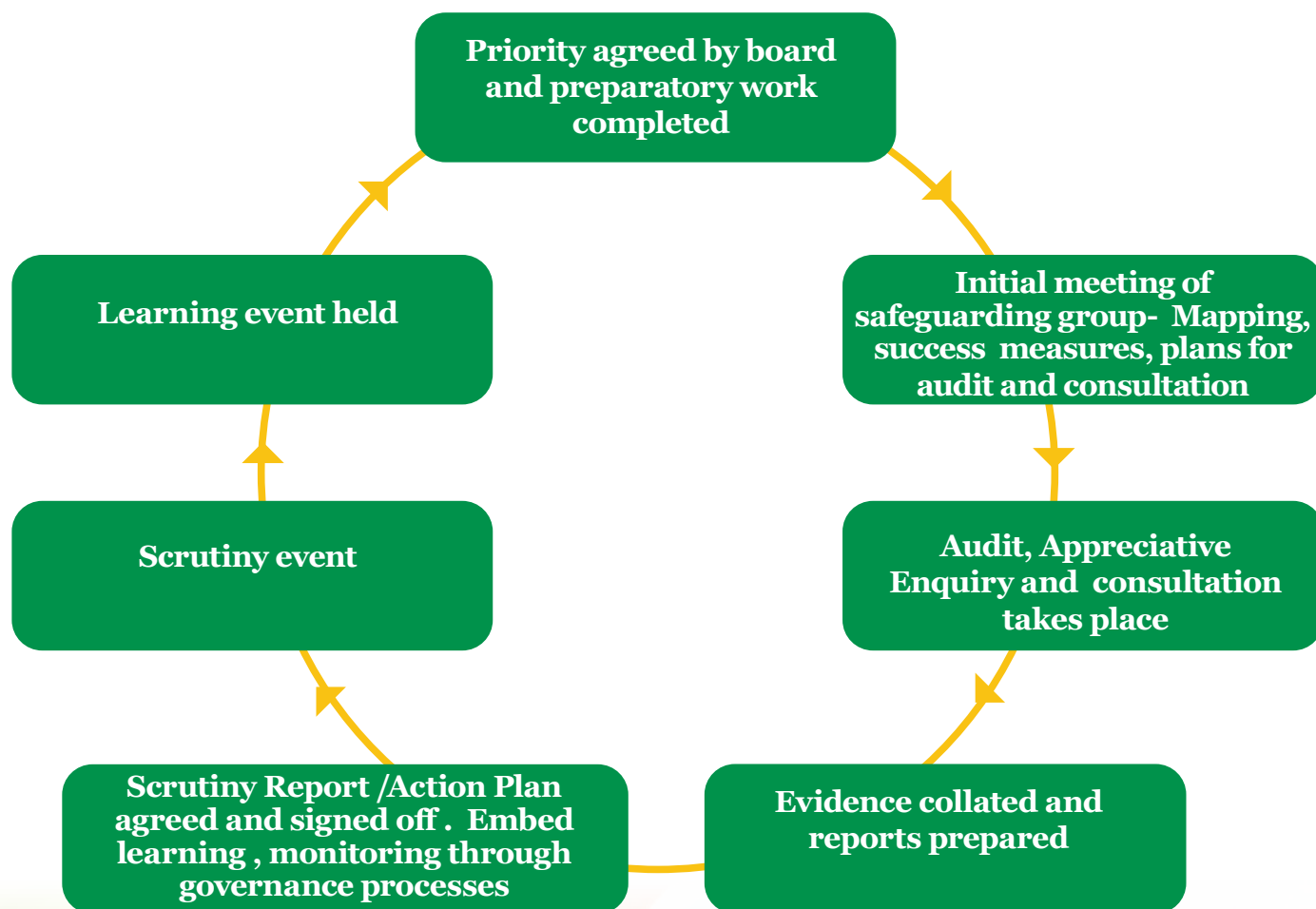
Priority 3 - Embedding Learning from Practice

The oversight, delivery and testing the impact of identified improvement work is undertaken within a number of sub-groups, where the groups consider and reflect a range of information from a variety of sources. The sub-groups consider frontline challenges and successes and makes recommendations to improve multi-agency working for each of the priorities.

As part of this work, the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework assesses the impact of the work against the three priorities.



The Process to Improve Practice



Year in Review

The Safeguarding Partnership has engaged in a range of activity during 2024/25, detailed within this report, which has contributed to ensuring that children and young people are more effectively safeguarded.

The CSCP has delivered a programme of multi-agency training to partners during the past year, and this has involved feedback from participants to demonstrate the impact upon their practice and changes made to improve safeguarding.

The independent scrutiny function is particularly focused on measuring the impact of the partnership's collective work in relation to the agreed business priorities and, ultimately, focused on the impact of the partnership, on outcomes for children and young people locally.

Communication with partner agencies continues to be strong, with monthly Safeguarding Newsletters, 5-minute briefings and Practitioner Forums, which provide information on latest safeguarding practice developments, new legislation, research findings, and safeguarding training opportunities and reaffirms key messages.

Independent Scrutiny

Following Local Government Reform, the CSCP agreed to maintain a Pan-Cumbria Partnership to ensure robust multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were maintained, whilst the new local authorities, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness, transitioned into their new structures and recruited to key posts. This worked well to maintain a clear focus on multi-agency safeguarding practice and drive improvements across all agencies. The positive inspection outcomes across all agencies, but particularly the two new local authority children's services, who were rated as Good, provides evidence of the impact of partners' collaborative work.

The review of the MASA led the partners to decide to move to two new place-based partnerships, mirroring the two new local authority footprints. Given my knowledge and experience of Cumbria, and extensive experience as a scrutineer, I would concur that this is the most effective way to ensure closer oversight and scrutiny of practice, effective tracking and measurement of impact and enable partners to highlight and drive safeguarding improvements.

The Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) decided to maintain a Pan-Cumbria LSP group; however, they will need sufficient time and clear lines of governance and accountability, in order to meet their statutory responsibilities across both partnerships, and to ensure the gains facilitated by the partnership split are not lost. Equally, there needs to be clear LSP and DSP oversight, to ensure there is sufficient partnership funding and resource in place to facilitate and support the work of the two new partnerships.

In my role as Independent Scrutineer, I continued to chair the CSCP Board over the last year, with a real scrutiny and assurance lens. The partnership had a detailed assurance schedule, and agencies are increasing in confidence in asking questions and challenging reports and presentations. The quality of assurance reporting and evidence has been generally good and an open and interactive dialogue has continued, to ensure well triangulated evidence is presented that focuses on impact. I have directly reported progress and any areas of concern to the CSCP DSPs regular meetings and there is evidence that issues raised have led to improvements.

What is the purpose of Independent Scrutiny?

Independent Scrutiny should:

- Provide independent, rigorous and effective challenge to partners across all necessary areas of safeguarding practice.
- Provide assurance and support evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of multi-agency arrangements in safeguarding children and young people.
- Help drive continuous improvement, including the embedding of learning to improve practice

In respect of more in-depth scrutiny, I have continued to use the scrutiny model laid out in the CSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework. I believe the methodology used, provides a particularly robust, evidence-based scrutiny process that puts children, young people and their families' voices and experiences at the centre. It also brings a 'doing with', rather than a 'doing to' approach, where the detailed analysis is presented to senior operational leads at a scrutiny event, and young scrutineers work alongside me to bring challenge and facilitate the identification of improvements. I believe this model has helped drive real improvement across the partnership and has particularly supported the good results highlighted in single-agency inspections.

This year, I presented the findings from the scrutiny process last March focussing on exploitation, which included a detailed report identifying both the good progress made and areas for improvement, as detailed later in this section. The action plan developed was presented to the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked sub-group, the CSCP Board and to DSPs and LSPs and there is close oversight of progress on identified actions. There needs to be a continued drive to maintain progress in all areas in the new partnerships, particularly given significant changes in personnel across all agencies. It will be particularly important to ensure progress on the areas identified by our young scrutineers, especially the areas highlighted from their sessions with young people across Cumbria, that evidenced the need for intensive focus to help and support young people to understand and maintain healthy relationships.

I also led the scrutiny process in March 2025, to evaluate the multi-agency work to improve the response to and safeguarding of children at risk of neglect, following the launch of a new CSCP Strategy and new tools. The overarching findings and impact is outlined on page 14-15, but it was particularly encouraging to see some of the impact the new Neglect Strategy and Toolkit was having on practice and how it was supporting practitioners in their work with children, young people and their families. The place-based action plans drawn up as a result of the scrutiny event, will need to be overseen by the respective partnerships during 2025/26. Both new partnerships need to maintain a strong focus on improving the response to neglect and ensuring the necessary performance data is in place to provide assurance on progress. Given the findings from scrutiny, and outcomes from inspections, it is encouraging that both areas have agreed to maintain "improving the response to neglect" as a key business priority.

I have also ensured the partnership have maintained a focus on "embedding learning from practice", one of the CSCP's agreed business priorities and an area subject to detailed scrutiny in 2023. As Scrutineer, I have also been involved in identifying learning from Rapid Reviews, publishing learning from a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, following the outcome of a criminal trial, and holding agencies to account on progress to embed the thematic learning from previous reviews and scrutiny.

I have continued to provide oversight and scrutiny of Rapid Reviews to ensure accurate learning is identified and thresholds for Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are appropriately applied. Whilst this necessitated further challenge to DSPs to ensure repeat learning was being addressed, there was evidence of improvement action being taken, including the planned facilitation of local thematic learning events. I will continue to scrutinise the impact of learning on practice in the new partnerships.

The two new partnerships will commence in April 2025 and will need to ensure some of the strong collaborative relationships and progress on key priorities is built upon, to ensure effective safeguarding practice, and real impact for children and young people and their families. I look forward to working independently with both new partnerships to continue to provide scrutiny and maintain a focus on improving outcomes.

Evidence of Impact Following Scrutiny Findings:

- Improved safeguarding support to education providers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), including supervision, with early evidence of more appropriate referrals to children's social care
- Extensive improvements in Early Help through the development of new practice models, with evidence of focus on early intervention where harms are outside the home
- Evidence through detailed scrutiny, that the Child Exploitation Strategy and investment in both areas in specialist Contextual Safeguarding Teams has led to improvements in practice in addressing risks and harm outside the home
- Evidence that the CSCPs action plan to address the findings from scrutiny has brought improvements to practice, and the fact there have been no circumstances that met the criteria for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- Evidence though further scrutiny of practice involving neglect, that the launch of the new Neglect Strategy and Toolkit is leading to more focussed work, a child-centred approach and improved outcomes for children and their families

Lesley Walker - Independent Scrutineer, Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership

Business Priority - Improving Responses to Neglect

Following the launch of the CSCP Neglect Strategy in September 2023, the partnership implemented a Neglect Sub-group, and all agencies involved in the group developed individual Agency Action Plans that detailed how they would roll out and embed the use of the Strategy and Day in my Life Toolkit. Progress on implementing the Action Plans have been reported into the group. The partnership continued to develop a Scorecard, to be able to better measure the identification of neglect and support where children are suffering neglect.

As described in the Independent Scrutiny Section, in order to evaluate the impact of partners' work to improve the response to, and safeguarding of, children at risk of neglect, a detailed analysis was undertaken involving audits, data, questionnaires, feedback from children and young people and their families, practitioners feedback and real practice examples. The triangulated information and analysis was presented at a Scrutiny Challenge Event in March 2025, led by the Independent Scrutineer.



Celebrating Impact

There was much to celebrate with good evidence of effective multi-agency work to roll-out the new Neglect Strategy and Toolkit, and triangulated evidence that practitioners have found it helpful in working with children and families where neglect is a significant issue. Moreover, the audits, the sample of parents spoken to and the direct feedback from young people to IROs, highlighted that where the tools are used, there is evidence of more focussed work, a child-centred approach and improved outcomes for children and their families.

Families said they got help when they asked for or needed it and there is a real sense practice had really moved on

Parents reported that understanding their child's lived experience motivated them to make positive changes in their family

Where the Day in My Life Tool is being used, evidence was that this improved focus of the assessment and child protection planning

Where tool is used, children and young people had a clearer understanding of concerns in their family, the detail of their plan and ability to clearly articulate the changes that occurred as a result

Using the tool in every day practice takes away the stigma of neglect and it becomes about focussing on children's needs

Health Decision Making Tool is helping health professionals to better identify neglect and evidence their concerns and support decision making

Agencies were repeating the tool to assess impact and improvements

Overall, there was evidence of real impact, but there is a recognition there is more work to do to ensure a consistent and effective response to neglect by all agencies. Also, that a whole system collective response is required to impact on neglect, focussed on early intervention and prevention, which will include creative and effective implementation of Government Reforms, alongside innovative local responses.

The recommendations have been agreed with a key priority being that each new partnership has a robust dataset in place that facilitates the evaluation of agencies' response to neglect. It is recommended that each new partnership should undertake further testing and audit to provide assurance of continued improvement of the response to neglect.

Business Priority - Embedding Learning to Improve Practice

Learning and Improvement Sub-group

One of the priorities of the CSCP is “Embedding Learning to Improve Practice” and ensure there is the availability of safeguarding training.

The Learning and Improvement Sub-group is in place “to ensure that the CSCP fulfils its obligations, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023,” *“to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice”*. The group is responsible for the planning, co-ordination, commissioning and evaluation of high-quality multi-agency training to the children’s workforce, and the sub-group also helps influence the content of training and education resources.

Through the oversight of the Workforce Learning and Development Plan by the Learning and Improvement Sub-group, there has continued to be a focus on the ‘Embedding Learning to Improve Practice’. Training has been delivered which is from learning from reviews; this has included the impact of domestic abuse, especially non-fatal strangulation and suffocation, and parental substance misuse on risks to children, including use of prescription medication. Also, the importance of a detailed impact chronology in understanding risks and potential harm.

The sub-group review and strengthen policies and procedures, in the light of learning from quality assurance and scrutiny work and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, to ensure their effectiveness and application. Through this Learning and Improvement Sub-group, both face to face and virtual training options have been delivered to continue to embed learning.

25 Training Events

6769 eLearning courses completed

800 practitioners attended either virtual or face to face learning events

E-learning has continued to remain a popular medium for providing basic level safeguarding training. In August 2024, the CSCP commissioned and implemented Virtual College as their provider of e-learning. There are currently five e-learning courses available for practitioners to undertake.

Basic level safeguarding e-learning is the most popular course; in eight months, 4239 practitioners/ staff working with children completed this course. The impact of having this provision across the county has been that there is significant access to basic safeguarding e-learning, including services such as taxi companies who provide transport to children. This provides a consistent delivery across the county to a wide range of practitioners.

The second most completed course, with 924 practitioners having undertaken it, is Radicalisation and Extremism.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Level 3 Safeguarding Training specific for the DSL role within agencies was provided virtually, via Microsoft Teams. Following practitioner feedback, which showed a preference for face to face, a strength of the partnership over the past year has been the return of the face-to-face delivery by a Multi-Agency Training Pool for this course. The training was reviewed to include emerging learning themes and included input from the Multi-Agency Training Pool.

Examples of the impact of this delivery can be seen below:

“Good level of content and informed delivery.”

“I have only done online level 3 before, and I will only be doing to face to face from now. So much better.”

“I am really glad that Neglect and Attachment are part of your training. It’s really great.”

“I am new to the role, and I felt the course was very informative.”

“Great range of professions to discuss things with.”

“We got the opportunity to reflect and network with other professionals and this has given me an opportunity to grow professionally.”

In understanding the impact of the training, there were actions that practitioners identified they needed to implement:

“Following on from the course, we are going to reflect on our practice and introduce DSL meetings, due to us having a number of DSLs in our setting.”

“Use recommended parent resources in my role for Early Help support.”

“There were several things I will take away with me, including the use of language.”

It is evident that reinstating the delivery of face-to-face training by the Multi-Agency Training Pool has been positive. Practitioner feedback can be seen below:

“Trainer was very well informed”

“Delivered by knowledgeable and experienced trainers”

“Good to be led by someone with a wealth of knowledge”

“The facilitator gave examples from their own practice to illustrate”

Embedding Learning - The Role the Practitioner

The **Practitioner Forums**, which are open to anyone who works with children and young people, provide an opportunity to develop common practice across Cumbria. The forums support practitioners to learn from each other and understand each other's roles and responsibilities and what local provision is available in Cumbria. The partnership has listened to feedback and, as a result, the delivery of the forums are both virtual (Allerdale, Copeland & Millom and Barrow & South Lakes) and face to face (Carlisle and Penrith). During the year, five forum meetings were held in each area, with over 500 practitioners attending the meetings. Feedback has been positive, with practitioners saying when they attend the forum meetings, they value the opportunity to hear relevant and up to date safeguarding advice, along with services available to support the children, young people and families they work with. To further improve these meetings, it would be good to get more practitioners from children's social care from both local authorities to attend.

The dissemination of information via monthly newsletters and 5-minute briefings has continued as a priority. Over the last year, there have been 25 5-minute briefings/newsletters published, which have covered a range of topics. Briefings have linked to local learning, such as Safer Sleep, ICON Week, Safer Internet Day, updates on legislation such as Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, the new arrangements for the two new partnerships and where processes have changed within each local authority. Newsletters include an 'In the News Section'.

The impact of these communications has been reported that managers have utilised these briefings to enable reflective practice within their teams. Board members have reported that they share CSCP information and described how some teams have dedicated learning time. Evidence has been seen where partner agencies have used the communications to further cascade within their own communications.



CSCP Business Priority - Safeguarding Adolescents from risks and harms outside the home

Missing, Exploited and Trafficked

The CSCP's Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) Sub-group has multi-agency strategic oversight of Child Exploitation (CE) in Cumbria. This group has been chaired by the Police, it met on a quarterly basis and had representation from across a range of agencies. There is a monthly MACE meeting, which feeds into the MET Sub-group.

As outlined within the Independent Scrutiny section of this report, scrutiny was undertaken in the reporting year 2023/24 on this business priority. The CSCP MET Sub-group have continued to have oversight of the Pan Cumbria Action Plan and county wide approach to CE, following this scrutiny work. There has been a continued drive to ensure frontline practitioners have appropriate training which can be seen in the training section. Following feedback from practitioners, and as part of awareness raising linked to National CE Day, the CSCP delivered a training session on Trauma, Exploitation and Offending, which was delivered by Dignifi and had over eighty participants. Feedback was extremely positive, with comments being:

“Thank you for using your lived experience to help me (and everyone) lead with the best practice we can.”

“I’ve worked with so many children that I wished had someone like you (Sosa Henkoma) to show them they can have a positive outcome.”

“This brings home the impact of exploitation for children and the importance of ensuring we really listen to what children and young people are telling us about their experiences.”

“This has shown the importance of keeping the channels of communication open between young people and adults/professionals.”

“Reminded me how we need to listen to young people, more than just want they have done but the reasons behind behaviours and how our language affects young people.”

A priority from the scrutiny findings has been to increase the use of the Vulnerability Checklist, and ensure practitioners know how to make appropriate referrals. Not only has the checklist been reviewed, as agreed through scrutiny findings, but training has also been delivered to support practitioners on the checklist completion. To ensure there is impact of this work, further auditing will be undertaken in each of the new partnerships.

From the work on benchmarking against the Research in Practice Tackling Child Exploitation Principles the opportunity for parents to attend CE meetings has been implemented and there is positive feedback. Parents have commented that *“my son needs this intervention, and I am glad it is being addressed at an early stage”*.

Recent Ofsted reports have identified good practice in *“when children present with risks linked to exploitation, information and expertise are shared by co-located specialist police and child exploitation workers to inform decision-making”*.

Another positive has been the employment of Education Safeguarding Advisors by both Local Authorities. These advisors now attend the MET sub-groups. This brings a valuable link to Education Settings across the county.

Next steps: The two new safeguarding partnerships have agreed that they will continue to have a county wide Child Exploitation Strategy and have MET Sub-groups. Action plans will be developed based on each local authority footprint and the priority for 2025/26 is to ensure the strategy is reviewed and refreshed. Each new partnership's MET sub-group have agreed they will come together annually.

Section 11/175 Audit

As set out in Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023, Section 11 places a duty on a range of organisations, agencies, and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 outlines the duties of local authorities, maintained schools, and further education institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These legislative provisions place a legal duty on agencies and education providers to ensure that they have effective arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In February 2025, the partnership undertook a combined Section 11/Section 175 audit to assess organisations compliance with Section 11 and 175. This process was also used to identify the multi-agency workforce training needs.

Across the county, there were 483 audits completed. The information within the audits pertaining to each new partnership area has been shared for each partnership to evaluate the levels of compliance and confidence and develop next steps from the findings as part of their new arrangements.

Initial positive impact and feedback of the audit can be seen below:

“This questionnaire has been helpful in consolidating our behaviours and practices around safeguarding and is an important part of review, but it has been very time consuming.”

“Helpful to identify needs.”

“It is good for highlighting areas of improvement and showing us where we are doing well.”

“A great way to analyse our current practice and identify areas for development to include in our action plan.”

“Detailed, thorough and an opportunity to reflect and ensure that our practice in school to safeguard all children is of the best practice and standard.”



Where there was negative feedback, which related to the actual audit tool, comments can be seen below:

“Provide more information about the questions/length of the audit, to allow organisations to be better prepared when completing the audit”.

“It would have been helpful to know how long the questionnaire was before starting & approximately how long it would take.”

“Some of the questions have been open to interpretation and would have benefited from a briefing in person ahead of completing in order to ensure a consistent response.”

It is expected that each new partnership will undertake further quality assurance to moderate responses and agree further action and support. This will need to include improvements to the actual audit tool for subsequent audits.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)/Case Review

The Case Review Sub-group, chaired by North East and North Cumbria ICB's Designated Doctor for Safeguarding, has the responsibility for overseeing the commissioning of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews for cases that meet the criteria set out in Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Chapter 5 in the subsequent Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

During 2024/25, two Rapid Reviews were undertaken to consider if individual cases met the criteria for an LSCPR and highlight any learning. Neither of these reviews met the criteria for an LSCPR. A Learning Review was also held, which was a positive step to learn from circumstances that could lead to practice improvement.

In June 2024, the CSCP published the LSCPR Leo, following the death of a child in October 2021. Key learning themes from the published LSCPR and reviews are:

- The need to involve and assess fathers and identify any strengths or risks they bring to parenting.
- The importance of the effective provision of early help services.
- Recognising the impact of parental misuse of prescription and non-prescription drugs.
- Ensuring fathers and male care givers are fully involved in all assessments.
- Feeding difficulties as a trigger to harm.
- The importance of following 'was not brought' procedures.
- The need to identify and meet the needs of care experienced parents.
- When stepping down from child protection to child in need plan, any outstanding needs should form part of the child in need plan.
- The need to proactively seek information in relation to parents where there is an identified history or current concerns about their mental health, alcohol or substance misuse.
- The need to strengthen the initial response to domestic abuse concerns, by both the police and children services.

The CSCP Case Review Group ensure that Single Agency and Multi-Agency Action Plans are completed, and learning is disseminated from these reviews.

Child Death Review and Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Child Death Review partners, the Local Authorities and ICBs, for Cumbria hold the responsibility for the delivery of the Child Death Review Process, as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The CDOP is multi-agency with differing areas of professional expertise. This process is undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident in Cumbria. The governance for CDOP in Cumbria has continued to be via the CSCP.

The purpose of the Child Death Review Process is to try to ascertain why children die and put in place interventions to protect other children and prevent future deaths, wherever possible.

The process intends to:

- Document, analyse and review information in relation to each child that dies, in order to confirm the cause of death, determine any contributing factors and to identify learning arising from the process that may prevent future child deaths
- To make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified which may prevent future deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- To produce an Annual Report on local patterns and trends in child death, any lessons learnt, and actions taken, and the effectiveness of the wider Child Death Review Process
- To contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve learning from Child Death Reviews

The Child Death Review information in this report covers the 2023/24 reporting year, as the 2024/25 report had not been signed off at the time of this Annual Report's publication.

2023/24

- Like the previous reporting year of 2022/23, a total of 18 children residing in Cumbria were reported to have died in 2023/24
- In looking at the child gender, 11 children were male and 7 children were female who died.
- During 2023/24, a total of 24 cases were reviewed and signed off for that reporting year. All except one case were historical cases, where the death occurred prior to April 2023. Delays in 2023/24, were due to both challenges in accessing adequate information and other statutory processes. This has been identified as an issue nationally.
- During 2023/24, 6 CDOP meetings were held, and cases were reviewed by the panel to see if there were actions that could be taken to prevent other deaths.
- In learning from child deaths, information to practitioners has been provided in the form of briefings on water safety, safer sleep and accident prevention.

Next Steps - In 2025/26, the business function of CDOP will continue to be provided by the Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership, as the CDOP Coordinator is employed by Cumberland Council, but the panel will remain county-wide.

It is unique that the CDOP sits within the governance of the safeguarding partnership. This will be reviewed with the key partners during 2025/26.

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group

Following consultation with both the Cumbria Primary and Secondary Heads Associations in the previous reporting year, a refreshed Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group was developed to strengthen engagement with schools following our review of Working Together 2023 and issues highlighted by the independent scrutineer. The group is chaired by a Primary School Headteacher and there is representation from primary, secondary and further education colleges. In preparation for the split of the Pan Cumbria Partnership, this county-wide group split into two groups, one for Cumberland and one for Westmorland & Furness, to enable better working with education at a local community level to ensure policy and support is specific to the geographical location.

There are now Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Networks in some areas across the county, with development continuing to ensure there are DSL Networks county-wide and there is a two-way flow of information and to enable education to be involved at both a local and strategic level. There has been some visible impact of where networks have been established. This impact has included improved relationships between schools and children's social care, including joint working with the Lead Safeguarding GP to improve information sharing with schools.

From feedback within the DSL Networks, there was a request to have a whole day conference of training, rather than several separate events. The theme of the conference being to understand the safeguarding journey from a referral into the safeguarding hub to early help or social care, following the changes in the local authority, since Local Government Reform. There were presentations on Child Exploitation, PREVENT and Domestic Abuse.

A DSL conference was piloted and delivered in Cumberland in September 2024, with 92 attendees. Senior management, including the Director of Children & Family Wellbeing, and operational staff utilised this opportunity to meet DSLs.

Feedback highlighted that 54% of attendees thought the content of the conference was good, with 39% saying the content was excellent with comments, such as:

'Very informative. Good to find out about all the different departments'

'Everything was excellent - all relevant'

'Clarified lots of questions I had and provided up to date info'

'This left me feeling very positive. I think changes are being made for the better. As a busy Head, we need things to be a simple and effective as possible and this sounds like it's going in the right direction'

DSLs were asked what they would do differently within their school and some of the feedback is that:

'Review prevent risk assessment'

'More work around supporting families on Domestic Abuse'

'Supervision in a more formal manner'

'Make sure all policies are updated. Share info with staff'

'Went away with a solid action plan and *to do list*'

'Utilise a day in the life of better'

In exploring the impact of the conference, a number of schools have given feedback about their increased confidence in dealing with safeguarding concerns. Although the DSLs had asked for the event being a whole day, there was some feedback that that there was a lot to take in over one day.

Where there was negative feedback this was regarding organisational issues, such as being able to sit with staff, and size of the room. Attendees are keen that we ensure we keep them up to date with changes within children services.

Following the success of the conference, Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership have planned a further conference in September 2025 and Westmorland & Furness Council have a DSL conference planned for October 2025.

What has continued to be a success across both local authorities is the continued support to schools via the supervision in schools model.

Area Safeguarding Groups

The aim of the Area Safeguarding Groups was to bring the CSCP Board closer to frontline practitioners to drive practice improvement and learn from them. The groups consider a range of practice issues by facilitating multi-agency events, which triangulate evidence from a variety of sources, including audit and performance, and use this to challenge the practice of all agencies and support improvement. There are two groups, one for Cumberland and one for Westmorland & Furness. A performance scorecard for each of the sub-groups was reviewed regularly and some of the findings are looked at in other sub-group work. These groups have been involved in the evidence collating for the quality assurance scrutiny work, for both child exploitation and neglect, even though that scrutiny has been via other sub-groups.

The membership of these groups include key partners within each locality footprint and there has been several presentations from partners to ensure that practitioners understand what is available within their footprint. Presentations have been from Early Help, the SEND teams including EHCP plans, Sports Welfare and feedback from each local authority Ofsted Inspection. What can be seen from these groups is the learning and understanding of their locality including good practice and challenges that is taken back to their individual agencies.

North West Regional Improvement Programme

The Department for Education (DfE) has funded the North West Regional Improvement Programme Pilot. The pilot is an opportunity to break down some of the barriers to improving children's social care in the North West. The pilot has four workstreams, each led by a Director of Children's Services, and supported by a full-time workstream lead based within a North West council.

The workstreams are:

- **Partnerships**
- **Sufficiency**
- **Workforce**
- **Social Work Model**

The CSCP have been involved in the partnership workstream, which the objective of this workstream is to work with key regional partners to create a region-wide strategic forum to facilitate closer working and drive improvements to the broader practice system. It is to support local safeguarding partnerships to align with the new requirements in the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance.

Within the partnership workstream, there has been engagement activity, training opportunities which include the Voice of Education within LSCP arrangements, Assurance and Scrutiny Arrangements, Effective Scrutiny and Support and Evidencing Impact.

A priority piece of work that is particularly pertinent to Cumbria is the development of a data scorecard to support local, sub regional and regional analysis of partnership practice and impact on outcomes. This will support the work in Cumbria to improve data analysis for both new partnerships.

The Business Team

The Partnership Business Team have undertaken the management and support function of the Pan Cumbria Partnership. The small team have been hosted within Cumberland Council and included a Partnership Business Manager, a Partnership Officer, CDOP Coordinator and a part time Business and Planning Assistant.

Financial Arrangements

Budget Contributions 2024/25

Agency	Budget Contribution
Cumberland Council	£42158.00
Westmorland and Furness Council	£42158.00
Police	£42,158.00
Health	£50,589 North East & North Cumbria ICB £33,726.00 Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB
Total	£210,789.00

Next Steps

2024/25 has been a transitional development year in Cumbria. There continues to be discussion at DSP level regarding funding splits for the two new partnerships.

Revised multi-agency partnership arrangements came in to force from 1 April 2025, ensuring the requirements set out in Working Together 2023 are fully met. Both Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership and Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Children Partnership have published their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and will publish individual Annual Reports for the reporting year 2025/26.



Appendix A - CSCP Board Membership

Agency	Role
Cumberland Council	Assistant Director – Children and Families
Westmorland & Furness	Assistant Director – Children and Families
Cumberland Council	Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Inclusion
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board	Safeguarding Designated Nurse Children, Adults & Children Looked After
Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board	Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Children Looked After
Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust	Head of Safeguarding
CNTW Foundation Trust	Group Nurse Director
Public Health - Cumberland Council	Director – Public Health
Public Health – Westmorland and Furness	Director – Public Health
Cumbria Constabulary	Detective Superintendent
Cumbria Probation Service	Head of Probation Service Cumbria
Voluntary Sector Representative	Joint Chair Voluntary Sector Reference Group
CAFCASS, Cumbria	Service Manager
Keeping Children Safe in Education – Core Group	Chair/Representative
Cumberland Council	CSCP Partnership & Improvement Manager



