



**Darlington
Safeguarding
Partnership**

Protecting Children and Adults

Annual Report

2022-2023



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1. Introduction

Foreword by Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Independent Scrutineer

Welcome to our annual report covering the work of Darlington Safeguarding Partnership for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report provides an overview of the year's multi-agency safeguarding activity and reflects the hard work and dedication of all our partner agencies as they've worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs across Darlington.

The year continued to be shaped by the impact of COVID-19 and the national safeguarding context has been an evolving landscape as services continue to adapt with many organisations facing national recruitment challenges. The lasting legacy of lockdown continues to affect the lived experiences of our children, young people and vulnerable adults in Darlington, with greater numbers of adults finding themselves in hardship as the cost-of-living crisis continues. The current landscape is challenging, and is likely to remain so, impacting on the children, young people and adults we work with, as well as practitioners who provide support and services.

There was significant organisational change during the year with the introduction nationally of Integrated Care Boards in September 2022. During this time, health agencies continued to maintain their commitment to both regional and local partnership working.

We saw a positive Local Authority Ofsted inspection in October 2022 which highlighted that children in need of help and protection in Darlington receive a good service. The inspection highlighted multi-agency Strategic Partnerships are highly effective with a strong multi-agency response being delivered to children through well-established and effective relationships with key agencies. The inspection highlighted that the quality of the support and care provided to children in care and care leavers is outstanding.

There is much change ahead as we move through consultations in response to the government's Stable Homes, Built on Love publication and a new iteration of Working Together to Safeguard Children along with the implementation of Local Authority Adult Regulatory Inspections. We will continue to remain focused on ensuring local multi-agency safeguarding practice remains effective for our children, young people and adults with care and support needs during any changes that may result from new legislation.


We consider the Partnership to be a mature and effective safeguarding partnership but recognise the many challenges we face and will strive to ensure we provide support and guidance and ensure that agencies continue to work together to keep children, young people and adults with care and support needs safe in Darlington.

Finally, we recognise the work of colleagues across our partners agencies and beyond, who work tirelessly to help keep children, young people and adults with needs for care and support safe from abuse and neglect. Working together effectively is the real strength of the partnership.

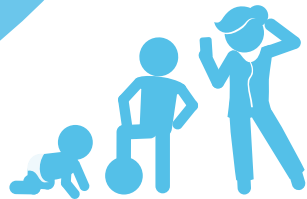
Ann Baxter Independent Scrutineer	James Stroyan Group Director for People Darlington Borough Council	David Ashton Detective Chief Superintendent Durham Constabulary	Jean Golightly Director of Nursing and Quality North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board Tees Valley
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2. Local Picture

Darlington Borough Council is a Unitary Authority in the North East of England which covers 76.3 square miles. Darlington is part of the Tees Valley city region.



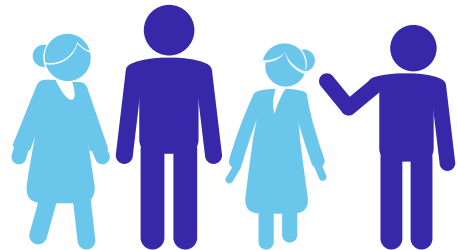
As of 2021 Darlington has a population in excess of **107,000** individuals who live in around **45,475** households.



Children and young people under the age of 25 years make up **28%** of the population, the number of children and young people under the age of 18 living in Darlington is **22,627** which equates to **21%** of the current population.



The number of people aged over 65 years old in Darlington is estimated at **21,700**



In terms of ethnicity, the 2021 Census reported 94.4% of Darlington's population as White and **5.6%** from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

The Health of People in Darlington is varied compared with the England average and **20%** of children live in low income families.



In County Durham and Darlington the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community form the largest single ethnic minority group, the proportion of Darlington residents who identify themselves as GRT (2021 census) is **0.3%** which is three times higher than the national average.

Overall, comparing local indicators with England averages, life expectancy for both men and women is lower. The health of people in Darlington is varied, about 20% of children live in low income families.

3. How we have worked this year?

Whilst this report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023, it includes some references to work already started which continued into the year under review, along with the new work which has commenced and which will continue beyond April 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a lasting effect, bringing challenges for services both in terms of maintaining frontline workforces along with significant financial pressures. Despite this, the Partnership maintained a relentless focus on protecting vulnerable children, families and adults across Darlington.

Poverty and the cost of living crisis continues to be a challenge for children and families living in Darlington, which can impact significantly on their wellbeing. These additional pressures may increase the risk of abuse, homelessness, mental health problems, domestic abuse, neglect, self-neglect and substance misuse and all partner agencies have a role to play in ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults continue to be safeguarded.

The Partnership's vision is for 'Darlington to be a place where children and adults can live their lives safely' and its aim is to understand what is working well in its collective safeguarding practice and identify what needs further development to ensure arrangements are effective and coordinated.

New governance arrangements have been developed with a focus on reflection and practice improvement and the Statutory Safeguarding Partners now meet three times a year to ensure they have a collective oversight of safeguarding arrangements. The Chairs of the subgroups submit executive reports to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners on the key themes, practice issues and actions along with the narrative needed to ensure the Statutory Safeguarding Partners are provided with the oversight and assurance required.

The Partnership re-established the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group, which had not met since the start of the Pandemic. The group consists of the key strategic safeguarding leads from a wide range of agencies and the first meeting focussed on the successes and challenges in safeguarding the Darlington population throughout the pandemic, some of those challenges included recruitment and retention, the impact of new regulatory inspections and how to address groups such as organised crime groups which have a significant impact on services.

The sub-groups continue to drive forward the work of the partnership and through understanding those themes and trends we are better able to understand the priority areas of focus and details of the work outlined below.



Snapshot of activity from Sub-Groups

- **Children’s MASH Operational Group**

This sub-group continued to have oversight on Front Door practice and a number key themes were identified including complex mental health, domestic abuse and harmful sexual behaviour. The group developed Harmful Sexual Behaviour Guidance to support professionals to approach and respond to this area of safeguarding confidently.

The group continues to discuss specific multi-agency practice issues raised by agencies or identified in the weekly referral meetings to determine how they can be addressed collectively. The group spends time focussing on key learning points from national reviews including the Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson reviews, to understand whether Darlington is compliant with the learning and recommendations.

- **Adult Operational Group**

The group continues to have oversight of performance data to obtain an understanding of the changing landscape and key themes coming through contacts and referrals. The group highlighted an increase in the incidence of adult self-neglect in this period through performance data and following learning identified through learning requests into the Partnership. The group is taking forward key pieces of work through a multi-agency task and finish group to look at the self-neglect issues and will be reviewing its practice guidance and developing tools and pathways to aid practitioners.

The group continues to monitor those settings in the Executive Strategy Process and discuss significant provider concerns and has revised its guidance in relation to the Process to provide professionals with a framework for dealing with serious safeguarding concerns on a multi-agency level.

- **Learning and Development Group**

The group continued to receive referrals for learning requests which do not meet the criteria for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) or Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR). there were five learning request referrals received during the year (4 adult and 1 child). Details of these are outlined in section 8 of the report.

During this period the group continued to address work which had continued from the previous reporting year, including the development of briefing documents following the learning from reviews undertaken in the previous year relating to child criminal exploitation/harm away from home, parental mental health and complex mental health issues; these are outlined in section 8 of the report.

The sub-group set up a task and finish group following findings from two adult reviews in response to the increasing concerns involving self-neglect. Self-neglect and hoarding can be complex and challenging areas for practitioners. A task and finish group was established to understand what is needed to support practitioners, including a revision of the self-neglect practice guidance; developing a risk assessment tool and self-neglect pathway and determining the training and resources needed to support frontline practitioners. This work will progress into the next reporting year.

- **Quality Assurance and Performance Management Group**

The group continues to have oversight of multi-agency performance data and operational information. Robust data and operational oversight of Children's multi agency performance is well embedded, however there is a considerable amount of work to be done with regards to Adult Safeguarding. This will be a priority for the QAPM group into the next reporting period.

The two operational groups (Child and Adult), provide an overview of any emerging trends and patterns to ensure that any themes or emerging risks can be identified at an early stage and reported accurately to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners.

The group had oversight of the mapping exercise undertaken to understand service provision in Darlington following the national review of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. The group was assured that Darlington is in a good position and already compliant with the recommendations of the review, but it was recognised there are areas of practice that need strengthening.

Towards the end of the year the group proposed a time limited task and finish group should review the Organisational Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit (Section 11) arrangements, this work will carry over into the next reporting period.

- **Strategic Child Exploitation Group**

The group continued to monitor the strategic response of partner agencies in tackling the incidence of children missing from home, care and education and the reduction of child exploitation in Darlington and County Durham.

It was assured, following the local authority Ofsted Inspection in October that Darlington children identified as missing and exploited are well supported and robust risk assessments are reviewed through multi-agency meetings.

The group was sighted on the learning points from a review the Partnership undertook in 2021/22 in relation to criminal exploitation and harm away from home. The review focussed on how agencies could work differently and highlighted the need to look outside the traditional core group of partners to strengthen partnership working and the involvement of parents and identified a number of measures to address this which will be monitored by the group.

- **Child Death Overview Panel**

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) oversees all deaths of children under the age of 18. There have been 8 deaths in this reporting period and all of these were subject to a Child Death Review. CDOP works closely with the Partnership to highlight any emerging themes and issues and learning from child death reviews that require further consideration. CDOP completes a Bi-Annual Report which provides a summary of activity carried over a two-year period, the report will be published in the next reporting period.

Partners are mindful of how the groups have evolved over the year, implementing innovative and new ways of working as a result of which the Partnership developed its Strategic Plan. Work is progressing and the plan will be finalised and published in the new reporting year with a focus on the following safeguarding principles:

- Partners work collaboratively to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Partners achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and adults with needs for care and support
- Partners work collaboratively to strengthen existing practice with a focus on a 'whole family approach'
- Partners challenge and hold one another to account effectively
- Partners improve safeguarding practice
- Learning is promoted and embedded across the partnership
- Information is shared effectively to ensure timely decision making
- Early identification of 'new' safeguarding issues and emerging threats

Priorities for 2023-23

National and local reports identified the significant increase in child exploitation as communities emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns which were still in place at the beginning this reporting period. National reports also identified the impact the Pandemic had on the care and support of older people, including those with needs arising from self-neglect and hoarding. As a result, these two areas became the main priority and focus throughout 2022-23.

What we did/are going to do:

Exploitation

- Committed to improve awareness to obtain a better understanding of how young people become involved in exploitation in the first instance
- Agreed to look beyond the usual core group of practitioners to strengthen partnership working and consider the role community safety and enforcement services have in identifying young people who may be at risk
- Implemented daily multi-agency missing meetings to discuss those children missing from home over past 24 hours
- Implemented twice weekly check in meetings to respond to current issues and opportunity to share information
- Involve parents at the earliest opportunity if willing to engage, if not adapt a different approach to intervention
- Agree to review the Child Exploitation Matrix to remove victim blaming language
- Launched the Early Intervention Exploitation Panel which will focus on places and potential forming of groups who may be at risk of being drawn into criminal exploitation

Self-neglect

- Established a task and finish group to take forward key pieces of work
- Revise current practice guidance to include examples of positive, flexible approaches of engaging people who are self-neglecting
- Consider the development of Mental Capacity Act Guidance to support practitioners working with individuals who are reluctant to engage with services
- Consider the development of risk assessment tool and self-neglect pathway
- Consider establishing a multi-agency risk escalation meeting to manage complex cases
- Training - consider what learning needs to feed into multi-agency training

The Independent Scrutineer and Chair

The independent scrutineer/chair continues to ensure there is a clear focus on seeking assurance on the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and ensures safeguarding partners and relevant agencies are challenged and supported in their roles to work collaboratively to meet the safeguarding priorities identified by the partnership.

The independent scrutineer chairs meetings of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group and encourages and facilitates an open culture of mutual, respectful challenge and support.

4. Partnership Governance and Structure

The Partnership revised its governance arrangements in 2022/23 and set out the role and responsibilities of the sub-groups. The sub-groups engage in the safeguarding priorities and explore the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. The groups continue to review their work including reviewing terms of reference, membership and roles and responsibilities of members. A wide range of organisations are represented on the Partnership groups and includes senior lead, details are outlined in Appendix 2.

<p>Statutory Safeguarding Partners Group - Chaired by Independent Scrutineer</p>	<p>The Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Independent Scrutineer meet three times a year and have a strong collective oversight of all safeguarding arrangements to ensure fulfilment of statutory obligations.</p> <p>The Partners commission the strategic and operational groups to ensure the priority areas of the Strategic Plan are delivered and ensure effective scrutiny arrangements are in place. The Chairs of the groups provide an overview on progress and evidence that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are effective.</p>
<p>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group - Chaired by Independent Scrutineer</p>	<p>This multi-agency group meets three times a year and has a wide membership of key strategic leads from agencies.</p> <p>Meetings are themed and focus on local and national safeguarding priorities and areas identified through data, audits and reviews. The Chairs of the Strategic sub-groups provide an overview of current priorities and ongoing activity to inform the discussion.</p>
<p>Quality Assurance and Performance Group (QAPM) - Chaired by Head of Service, Darlington Borough Council</p>	<p>This is a strategic group which meets four times per year and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding work across partner agencies and commissioned organisations.</p> <p>The group has responsibility for audits and monitoring safeguarding data to be assured that both child and adult safeguarding systems are robust, effective and identifies areas for improvement to share with the Learning & Development Group.</p>
<p>Learning and Development Group (L&D) - Chaired by Detective Inspector, Durham Constabulary</p>	<p>This is a strategic group which meets four times per year and is responsible for oversight of learning and improvement, multi-agency training and learning opportunities, policy and procedure to improve outcomes for children and adults.</p> <p>It has governance responsibility for all reviews undertaken, reviewing the learning outcomes and suggested recommendations for improvement. It establishes process for dissemination of learning and identifies any training need requirements.</p> <p>Any improvements identified through reviews are taken forward and shared with the Quality Assurance & Performance Management Group.</p>

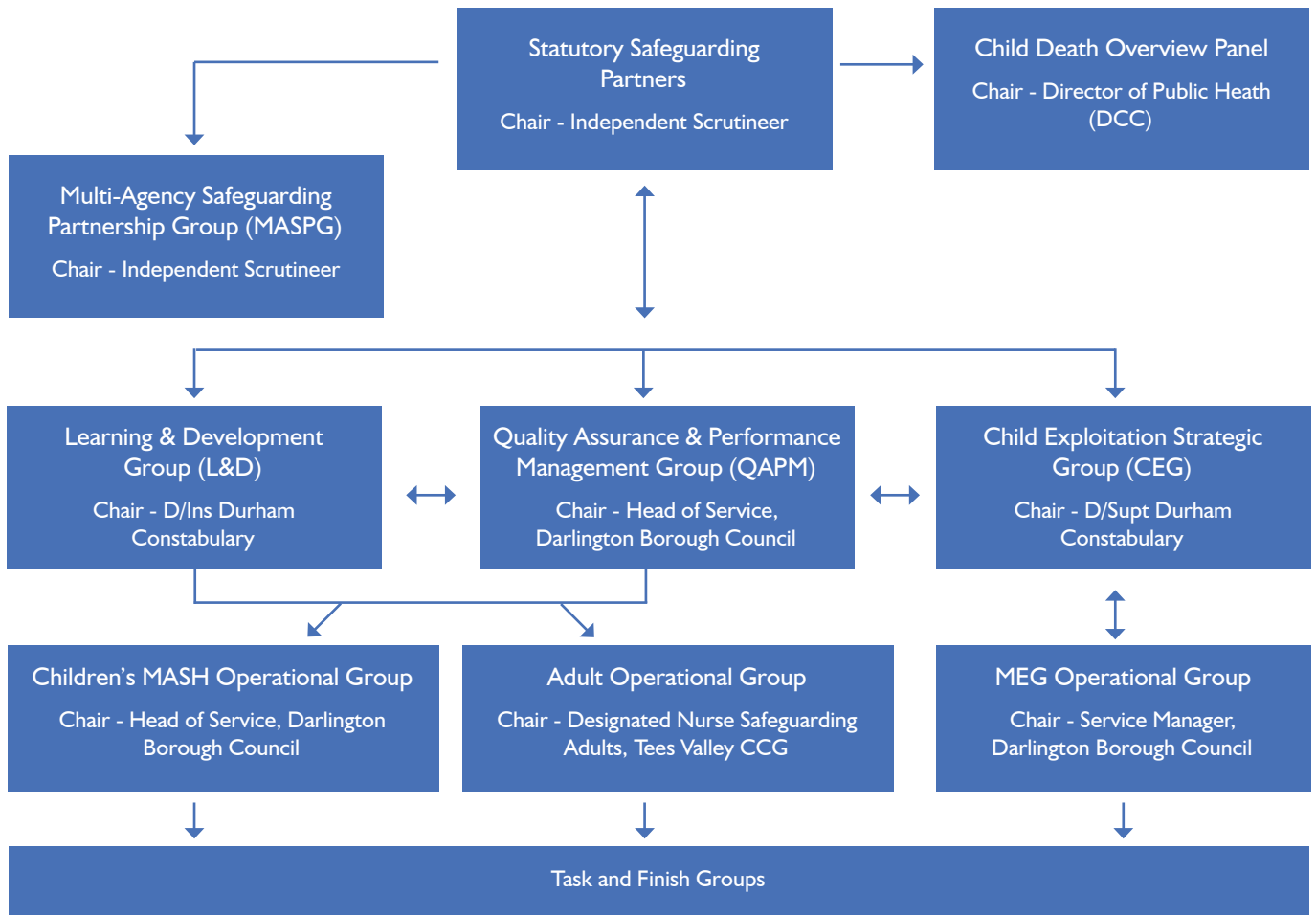
<p>Child Exploitation Group (CEG) - Chaired by Detective Chief Superintendent, Durham Constabulary</p>	<p>This is a strategic group which meets four times per year and is responsible for overseeing, monitoring, evaluating and improving responses to tackle children missing from home, care and education and for the reduction of child exploitation across County Durham and Darlington.</p> <p>The group ensures the action plan is delivered and monitors data and intelligence to better understand the picture of exploitation across County Durham and Darlington</p> <p>It directs the multi-agency response towards prevention, early identification and intervention.</p> <p>An operational group oversees individual cases of children at risk of exploitation in Darlington with a purpose to prevent, disrupt and deter individuals or groups who seek to exploit, abuse and harm children.</p>
<p>Adult Operational Group - Chaired by Designated Nurse for Safeguarding, Local Commissioning Group (Interim basis)</p>	<p>This is an operational group that meets eight times per year and is a multi-agency group with shared responsibility for safeguarding service delivery to safeguard adults with needs for care and support.</p> <p>The group's purpose is to ensure all agencies are able to fully contribute and fulfil their safeguarding roles and responsibilities and that any barriers to this are identified and actions taken to resolve any issues.</p> <p>The group will identify key themes or practice challenges through monitoring performance data and operational practice issues and develop appropriate actions to respond to them.</p> <p>Any trends or areas of concern will be shared with the Quality Assurance & Performance Management and Learning & Development Groups by exception.</p> <p>The Group has responsibility for issues relating to provider concerns and those settings who are in the Executive Strategy Process and monitor responsiveness to any identified issues and actions.</p>
<p>Children's MASH Operational Group - Chaired by Head of Service, Darlington Borough Council</p>	<p>This is an operational group that meets monthly and is a multi-agency group with shared responsibility for safeguarding service delivery to safeguard children and young people. The group promotes effective communication between all partner agencies contributing to operational management and functioning of the Children's Front Door.</p> <p>The group's purpose is to ensure all agencies are able to fully contribute and fulfil their operational safeguarding roles and responsibilities and that any barriers to this are identified and actions taken to resolve any issues.</p> <p>The group will identify key themes or practice challenges through monitoring performance data and operational practice issues and take them forward within multi-agency focussed sessions and develop appropriate actions to respond to them.</p> <p>Any trends or areas of concern will be shared with the Quality Assurance & Performance Management and Learning & Development Groups by exception.</p>

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) - Chaired by Director of Public Health

Child Death Overview Panel arrangements are undertaken cross border with Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Panel continues to review all deaths of children as required in Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance (2018) with an aim to identify learning to prevent future deaths.

The National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) gathers information on all children who die in England and shares the learning so that improvements can be made to save children's lives in the future.

Partnership Governance Structure



5. Partnership Activities and Interventions

Safeguarding Children

In terms of safeguarding children, there was a 24.6% increase on contacts into the Children's Door compared to the previous period. In terms of safeguarding concerns, significantly more contacts were made by hospitals, the Building Stronger Families Service and relatives than in the previous reporting year.

There have been many more complex issues and referrals of a complex nature made to Children's Social Care due to issues such as parental mental health and substance misuse, which are impacting on children. There was an increase in repeat referrals, mainly involving children's mental health and family dysfunction. It has been found that there is often a lack of joined up working between partner agencies in such instances, and if the assessment does result in Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan, then the opportunities to work with partners and parents and children is often missed.

Other themes which have been identified in 2022/23 include an increase in Early Help Assessments in comparison to the previous year. School nurses also identified an increase in issues related to Type 1 diabetes in children, which can be problematic for children looked after in the care system at the point of transition to adulthood.

Harm outside the family home continues to be an increasing concern. Following the remodelling of the Children's Front Door in 2020, to ensure the right service is provided swiftly to children and their families, it was recognised there was need to improve support for children who go missing and are at risk of exploitation and as a result the Missing and Exploitation Team was formed and now sits within the Front Door service.

The Children's Social Care weekly review meetings continue to provide a high level of management oversight and challenge to decision making at the Front Door and is the mechanism for highlighting emerging themes and trends. This is about 'shared ownership' of the data to get to the crux of safeguarding issues and also focus on safeguarding data in 'live time'; whilst this was initially set up in house within the local authority it was recognised there are significant benefits in extending this to partner agencies to help them see what is done with the referrals and how decisions are made along with providing some understanding of the themes and trends to take learning back to their own organisations.

Safeguarding Adults

In terms of adult safeguarding there has been a significant increase in the total number of reported concerns that progressed to a strategy meeting in this reporting period. The areas of abuse remain consistent with Neglect & Acts of Omission, Physical Abuse and Emotional and Psychological abuse being the highest categories.

There are some specific pressures and gaps in the understanding of safeguarding procedures with some providers, particularly private hospitals which apply their own policy and procedures when making referrals. The local authority has implemented proactive engagement to support these providers and meet with them to discuss threshold criteria.

There continues to be an increase in self-neglect as a reported category of abuse, this is being seen as a national issue and is a consistent theme in many Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and can often be linked to alcohol and substance misuse. Self-neglect and hoarding can be complex and challenging areas for practitioners. An adult who self-neglects may not always be at a level of risk which warrants adult safeguarding arrangements to be initiated and it is therefore imperative that agencies work with the adult and each other to try and prevent individuals who self-neglect from getting to a point where it is deemed that safeguarding processes or a type of enforcement required to protect them.

The Local Authority commenced a safeguarding project to review adult safeguarding processes and approaches and how data is collated and reported into the partnership.

The project is also reviewing how referrals are submitted and the local authority is considering moving to a telephone referral system which is a more efficient way of taking and screening referrals; this would also mirror the system operated by Children Services. This should help identify themes, patterns and safeguarding issues which cut across both children and adults safeguarding, improving the 'whole family' focus in Darlington, looking at early identification and prevention in terms of issues relating to adults to prevent an adverse impact on children further down the line.

Work is also ongoing to improve the quality of professional safeguarding practice in order to further embed 'Making Safeguarding Personal' and to make sure that the voice of the person is captured and that safeguarding processes ensure that a person feels safe, is listened to and placed at the heart of decision-making.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is implementing regulatory inspections of local authorities in the provision of adult social care in the next reporting period. A peer review of adult social care was conducted which looked at performance data and a number of recommendations for multi-agency adult safeguarding were identified to support the local authority in being inspection ready.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Network

The Durham and Darlington Anti-Slavery network was established in April 2022 and is funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Its purpose is to coordinate a response to modern slavery and human trafficking and increase support for victims. The group meets monthly and includes representatives from the Darlington network. Whilst numbers in Darlington appear to be very small, it was agreed data needs to be collated to have a full understanding of this issue in the Darlington locality.

North East Region SAR Champions Network:

Darlington participates in the North East Regional SAR Champions Network, which meets quarterly. The purpose of the network is to identify regional and national themes, develop good practice in the submission of Safeguarding Adult Referrals (SARs) maintain a regional SAR library and share learning from SARs.

In 2022/23 the network developed the North East regional SAR library and developed a quality marker checklist for the completion of SARs to improve the quality of submissions and information sharing to assist decision making.

The network monitors regional and national SARs to identify themes, for example fire deaths and the deaths of care experienced young people up to the age of twenty-six years, to identify specific learning and good practice and share the learning by means of the SAR reports and briefing documents.

North East Regional Fire Task and Finish Group

Darlington has joined the regional Fire Task and Finish Group which has an action plan with aims to increase fire risk awareness and partner referrals to the fire service and increase awareness of risk factors including mobility issues, memory problems clutter, hoarding and emollient cream. They are also looking providing information leaflets, to influence reviews on fire safety and look at national initiatives. County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service has rolled out the "eyes wide open" training to partner agencies for staff who go into peoples' homes who may be able to spot risks relating to fire.



Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse concerns continue to be one of the top five reasons for contacts into the Children's Front Door. During the period April 2022 to March 2023 305 children had been affected by domestic abuse in the family home.

To understand the local picture, the Partnership has oversight of the Operation Encompass Protocol which addresses shortcomings in the early sharing of information with schools to enable them to provide proactive support to children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse.

The Partnership has oversight of the 4Kids project, which was launched in response to a concerning rise in numbers of children becoming looked after where the main causal factor was a background of parental domestic abuse. The service, which sits in the children's front door, supports families who would not ordinarily be visible to services through other processes, as they fall outside the usual thresholds and criteria of statutory involvement and may have declined consent to offers of support.

In relation to adult safeguarding, there were 50 reported concerns where domestic abuse was the reported category of abuse for the 2022-23 period, 12 progressed to a strategy meeting.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Darlington Safeguarding Partnership continue to work together to raise awareness and reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse across the Darlington locality. There are a number of multi-agency groups which support operational services and oversee Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse Network (DASAN) is a frontline, operational network with wide representation and local knowledge of service users views and experiences. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) is a multi-agency strategic group with responsibility for supporting Durham and Darlington local authorities in meeting their duty under Part 4 of Domestic Abuse Act 2021, ensuring victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation and wider domestic abuse services. Work is ongoing to forge better links into the Safeguarding Partnership.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The Partnership is aware of the measures in place to address the violence against women and girls agenda. Darlington was successful in obtaining funding to support this agenda to help women and girls feel safe on the streets of Darlington. Durham Constabulary undertook a survey which found that women felt significantly less safe in the evening when out in their neighbourhood or town centre. The funding has been used to fund a range of projects to increase safety in public spaces and raise awareness within schools and community groups.

Housing and Homelessness

2022/23 continued to be a challenging and busy year for Darlington Borough Council housing teams and partner agencies. The service has seen an 84.5% increase in people being accommodated in emergency accommodation. The local authority continued to carry out the monthly and annual rough sleeper counts with colleagues across the region to ascertain how many individuals were sleeping rough through the North East on a specific night. In 2022-23 35 rough sleepers were identified.

In 2022/23 1842 individuals presented to the Housing Options Service for advice regarding homelessness, 74 were victims of domestic abuse. There has been an increase in victims of domestic abuse and people with mental health needs requesting housing, along with people who have multiple complex needs and dual diagnosis, but who are nevertheless deemed to have capacity. As a consequence two practitioners have been appointed within the housing options team to support these individuals.



6. Snapshot of effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Darlington

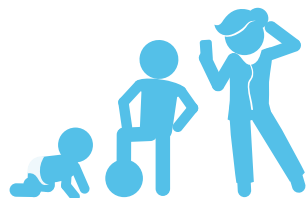
Ofsted Inspection

In October 2022 Ofsted carried out a full inspection of Local Authority Childrens Social Care, which highlighted that children in need of help and protection in Darlington receive a good service. The inspection highlighted that multi-agency Strategic Partnerships are highly effective, with a strong multi-agency response being delivered to children through well-established and effective relationships with key agencies. The inspection highlighted that the quality of the support and care provided to children in care and care leavers is outstanding and this is reflected in the extent to which they feel cared about, valued, listened to and taken seriously. The Ofsted inspectors reported that children's experiences of social care have improved significantly since the last inspection in 2018.

Child Safeguarding

The multi-agency Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance provide a framework for all organisations to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Darlington.

The below provides a snapshot of safeguarding concerns and the outcomes achieved during the year;



8393 contacts into the

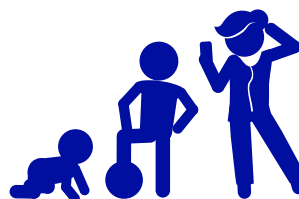
Childrens Front Door.

Of these, **820** were

referred to Building Stronger

Family Service and **1033**

referred to children's social care



265

Children in need

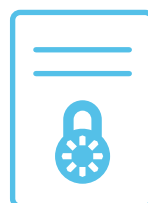


478 (917 children)

Strategy Discussions started

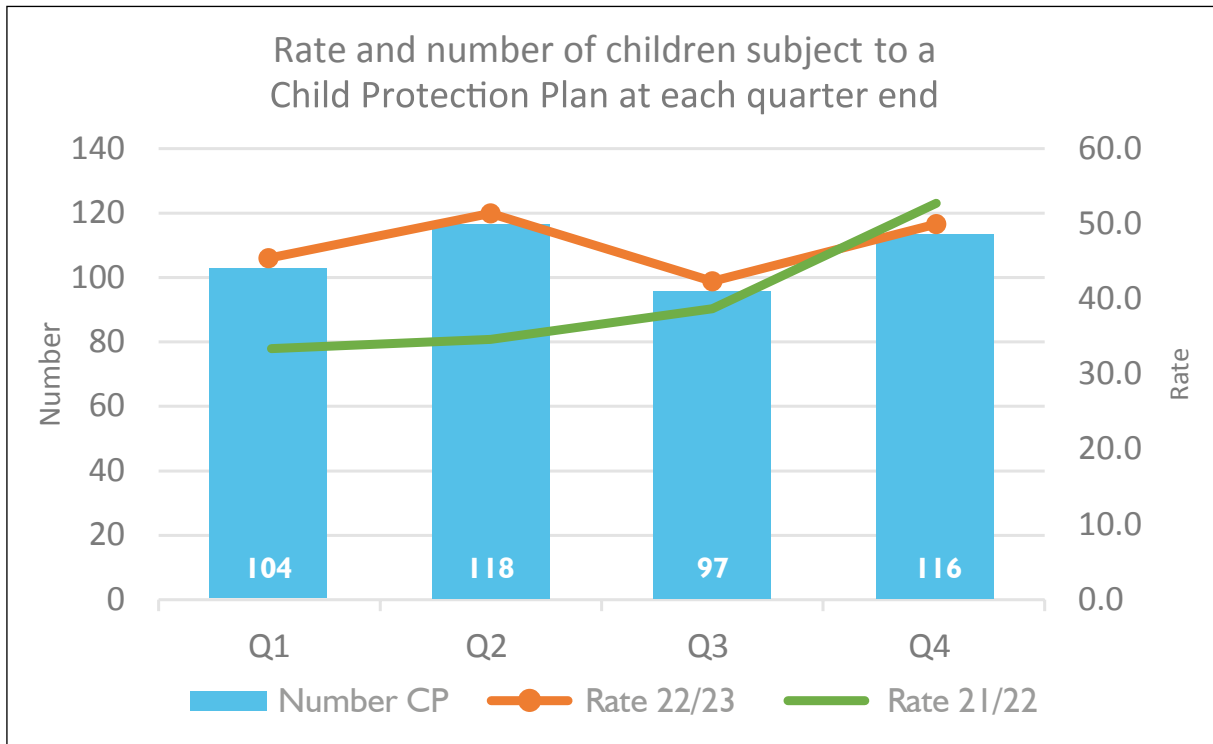
74.7% progressed

to a section 47 enquiry



131 children had a child protection plan started.

116 subject to a child protection plan at end of March 2023



Risk Factors associated with Child Protection were due to:			
Neglect	Emotional Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
52%	27%	17%	3%

Building Stronger Families

The Early Help Service, now known as Building Stronger Families (BSF), provides coordinated help for children and families with a range of needs through an early help assessment or targeted programmes. There were 1650 Early Help Assessments opened in this year, of these 223 were initiated by an external agency.

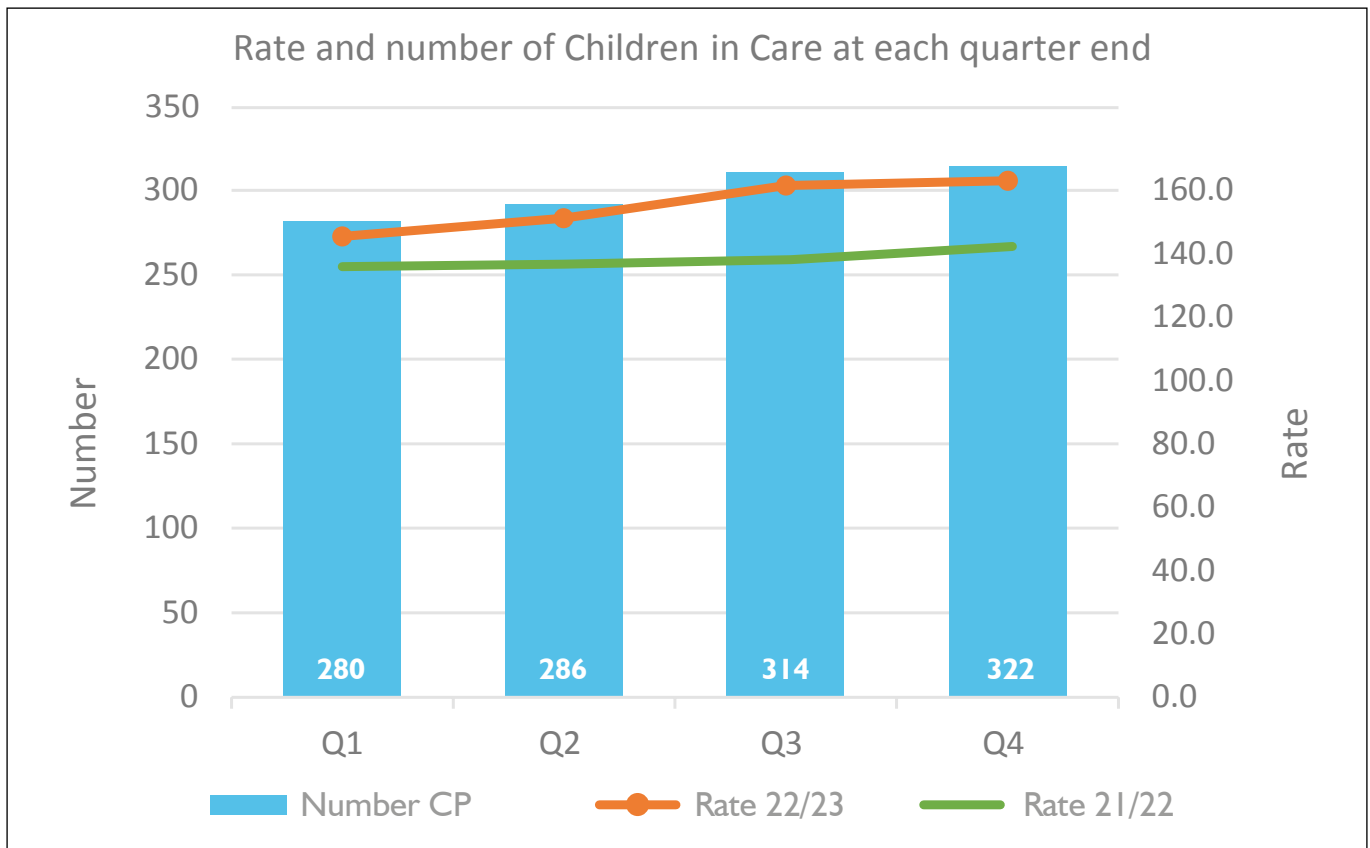
Keeping Families Together

The Keeping Families Together team works with young people aged 10-16, their aim is to support children and families to remain at home, while it is safe to do so. At the end of March 2023, there were 14 families open to the Keeping Families Together (KFT) team, involving 27 individual children.



Children Looked After

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are recognised nationally as one of the most vulnerable groups. The number of Looked After Children (LAC) by the local authority at the end of March 2023 was 322 (142.3 per 10,000), of these 17 were unaccompanied asylum seekers.



Care Leavers

The Local Authority has a 'Staying Put' policy and there are currently 11 young people accommodated under this arrangement. In Darlington 96% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation by the end of 2022-23 and the percentage of care leavers (aged 19-21) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 20%.

Young People Engagement and Justice Service (YPEJS)

The number of young people identified as First Time Entrants (FTE) being referred to the YPEJS increased from the previous year. At the end of March 2023 there were 34 young people (29 Males and 5 Females) who were FTEs.

The YPEJS had 61 young people (46 Males and 15 Females) referred to the service for pre-caution disposals, there has been a 90% success rate in terms of young people not reoffending.

Transition to Adulthood

When a young person reaches the age of 18 they are legally an adult under SEND and Leaving Care statutory guidance, however children's services continue to retain responsibility to ensure the right package of care is provided through the transition to adulthood.

Education attendance

Spring data indicated there was a 7.2% overall absence across all education settings, compared with 7.3% nationally. The estimated absence rate was highest in secondary schools (14.7%), followed by special schools (14.2%), and primary schools recorded the lowest absence rate (7.5%). In 2022/23, 22.3% of pupils were estimated to be “persistently absent” (defined by the Department for Education as missing 10% or more of possible school sessions or around 19 days per academic year).

The Vulnerable Pupil Panel is a multi-agency panel the aim of which is to avoid children disengaging from education due to any cause. Since the Panel was created in 2019 to respond to an increase in rates of exclusion, the Panel has seen a reduction in permanent exclusion and persistent absences.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

There are effective measures in place for the monitoring children who are in Elective Home Education. A full time EHE Advisor is responsible for maintaining the EHE database, supporting parents and ensuring evidence of suitable education is being provided. The number of children EHE remains fluid and the EHE advisor continues to support schools when children don't return at the start of the new academic term.

Home visits continue to take place and those children who are identified as not receiving appropriate education receive a visit every 3 months. As of 31 March 2023 there were 253 children registered on the EHE database, of these 103 were from GRT community, Darlington has a higher than average GRT population, the EHE advisor works closely with the GRT Education Service.

Children Missing from Home, Care and Education

The total number of children who went missing from home or care during 2022/23 was 246 with 90.7% of these children being offered a return home interview (RHI) and 51.2% of children engaged in their RHI. Of these young people, Children in Care (CiC) continue to dominate the number of missing episodes.

The total number of children missing from education (CME) for 2022/23 were 72, three of these children left the UK and have not been traced, although Border Force confirmed they have left the Country.



Exploitation of children and young people

Multi-agency work around child exploitation continues to be coordinated through the Missing and Exploited Operational Group and Strategic Child Exploitation Group (CEG). The partnership continues to obtain an understanding of the risks posed to young people as they grow and become influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside the family home such as, their community, peer groups or online.

A multi-agency Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker (CEVT) continues to be used across Darlington and County Durham to track and identify those children at high risk of exploitation. Children are scored based on the level of risk and continues to be monitored by the CEG. The average score was 71.5, with a range of 50 to 90, which is a decrease on the same period last year, across Durham and Darlington. Of those children on the tracker in May 2023, (numbers are fluid), 15 children were linked to a Child Sexual Exploitation crime and 9 linked to a Child Criminal Exploitation crime and 5 linked to county lines.

Designated Officer and Managing Allegations

The Designated Officer is employed by the Local Authority and is responsible for the oversight of the management of allegations against employees who work with children and may have harmed or pose a risk of harm to children. In 2022/23 the Designated Officer service received a total of 273 contacts in respect of potential allegations. This represents a 15% increase on the number of contacts received in 2021/22 and is the highest number of yearly contacts ever recorded. Of the 273 contacts, the main category for referral was allegations of physical abuse and the largest referring group and largest allegation by staff group is Education. This is in line with the data from previous years and is reflected regionally and nationally.

Adult Safeguarding

The multi-agency safeguarding adult procedures and guidance provide a framework for all organisations to work together with the person at risk, to support them to be safe from abuse, neglect or self-neglect and is underpinned by the six Care Act Principles. The below provides a summary of safeguarding concerns and the outcomes achieved.

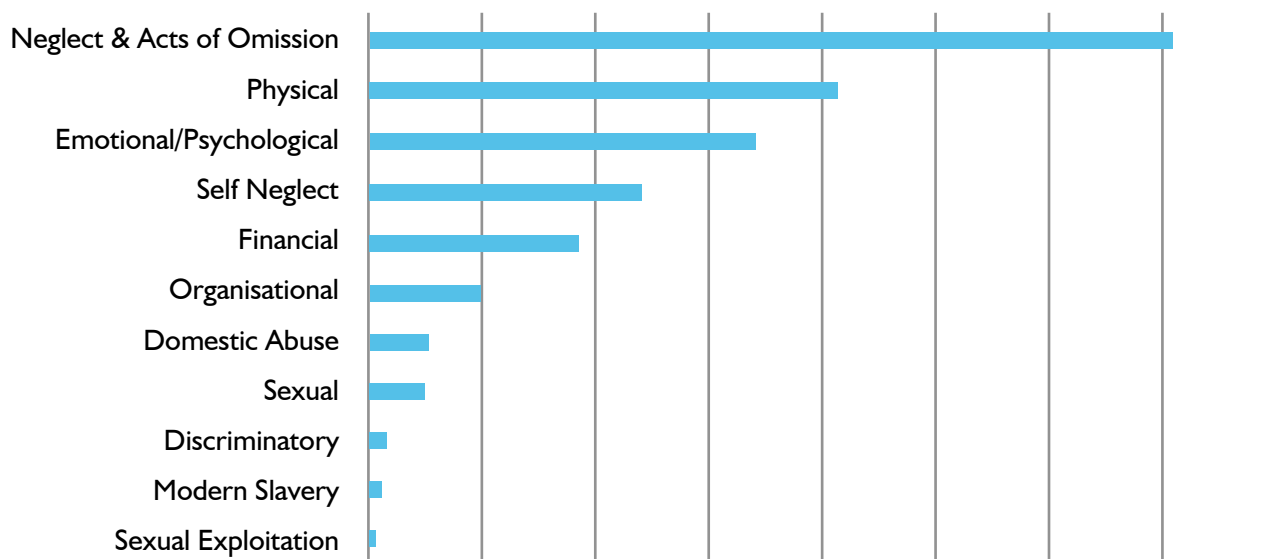
<h3>What is a Safeguarding Concern?</h3> <p>A report made to the lead agency for the safeguarding process to raise a concern of adult abuse and neglect</p>	<h3>What is a S42 Enquiry?</h3> <p>The Care Act 2014 (Section 42) requires that each Local Authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and or neglect</p>
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69% of individual, family representative or advocate involved at point of referral

45% of individuals providing own view

Types of Abuse: Section 42 Enquiries



The top areas of abuse for S42 enquiries continue to be neglect & Acts of Omission (27%), Physical (22%), Emotional (14%) and Financial and Self Neglect (11%)

Location of abuse:

Own home	In the Community	Supported accommodation	Care Home Nursing	Care Home residential	Hospital Acute	Hospital Mental Health	Hospital Community	Public Place
32.4%	0.8%	2.5%	4.09%	32%	7%	11.1%	0.82%	1.6%

Person or organisation alleged to have caused harm



Executive Strategy Process

Executive Strategy processes are held to address all concerns and issues relating to suspected organised or institutional abuse or neglect of adults.

	Number of settings
2021-22	3
2022-23	4

All four of the settings in Executive Strategy Process in 2022-23 were removed during this period as assurance was provided that they had made improvements and had safe practices in place and all regulatory action had been completed. The Partnership's Adult Operational Group has responsibility of monitoring those settings who are in the Executive Strategy Process.

7. Continuous improvement and raising awareness of safeguarding

Communication and Engagement

The voice of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and their families is at the heart of all partnership activity. The Partnership recognises it is a constant challenge and that practitioners need to understand the lived experiences of children and young people, adults and their families. Where possible the Partnership will involve families in learning reviews and information and from such engagement it is possible to develop best practice.

Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is applicable to all agencies and aims to develop a person centred and outcomes focussed approach to adult safeguarding. In Darlington MSP and the involvement of service users or their representative in safeguarding enquiries is measured from the outset and is evaluated as part of the safeguarding process. In 2022/2023, 70% of cases consistently involved the individual (or their representative or advocate) in the safeguarding enquiry. The partnership continues to seek assurances that the principles of MSP are embedded within partner agencies and continues to develop customer engagement processes to help inform the Partnership's work.

Independent Chair Engagement

The Independent Scrutineer continues to meet with relevant agencies of the Partnership and attend meetings such as primary and secondary education forums, Child and Adult Scrutiny Committees, Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership to talk about current issues and themes and what is working well and what needs to change relating to current safeguarding arrangements.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP) website, briefings and newsletters

The DSP continues to use a variety of communication methods to share information to a wide range of different audiences. The Partnership website continues to be a key forum to provide key safeguarding messages to practitioners and to the wider public as well as useful information and resources to support those working with children and adults.

Partnership website - www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk

The partnerships quarterly newsletter continues to communicate and raise awareness of safeguarding and helps to keep in touch with all our agencies to provide information, signposting and guidance to those working across child and adult services.



Social Media

Whilst the Partnership does not have its own social media platforms, it regularly requests partner agencies promote key safeguarding campaigns throughout the year on their own social media platforms. Awareness of key safeguarding campaigns

The partnership continues to raise awareness of safeguarding issues by sharing details of key national safeguarding campaigns throughout the year which included, Safer Internet Day in February and National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day in March along with Safeguarding Adult Week in November where it offered a programme of events to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.

Learning and Development

A key priority is to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of abuse remains the focus of learning and development activity. Practitioners working in both universal and specialist services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect and to share that information and provide children and adults with the help they need. To be effective, practitioners need to continually develop their knowledge and skills. The Partnership is committed to delivering a high quality inter-agency training programme to support professionals, volunteers and the independent sector.

The standards are monitored through the Learning and Development sub-group and this ensures there is quality and consistency of single and multi-agency training through initiatives such as training needs analysis (TNA), peer evaluation, quality assurance and the pre and post course evaluation process. The programme is updated to ensure the lessons from learning reviews are reflected as well as identifying the local needs of the multi-agency workforce.

Following a change to the delivery of training during the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this had on face to face training, a programme of e-learning and virtual training has been developed and embedded.

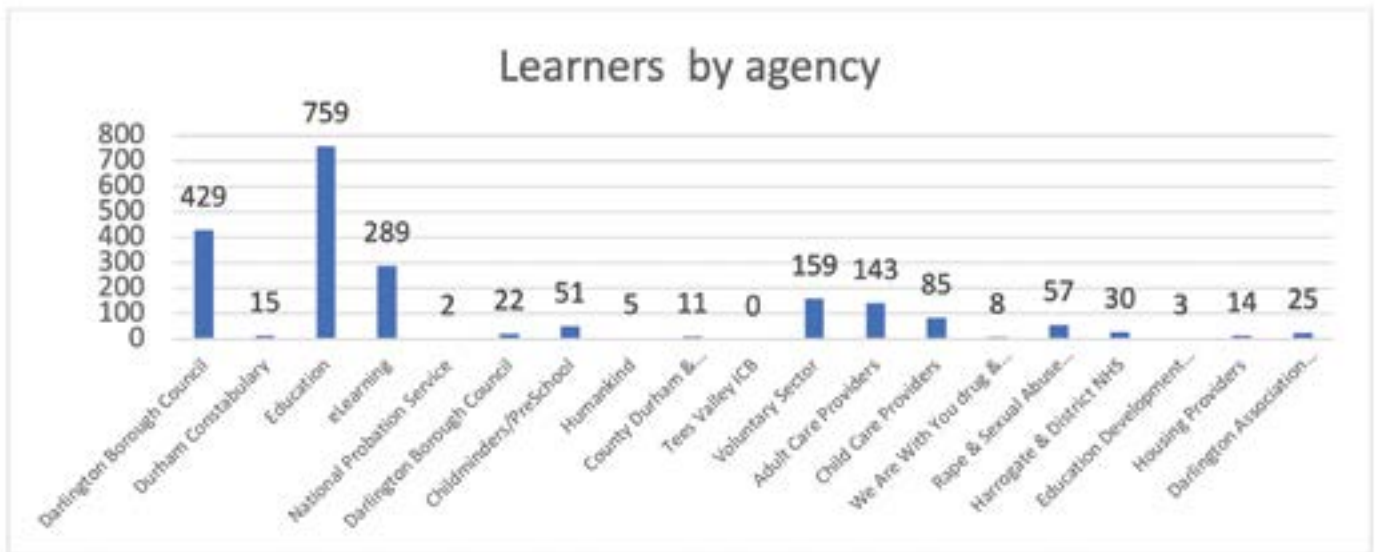
What did we achieve?

- The Partnership continued to provide an extensive multi - agency programme of virtual courses delivered via Teams and bespoke face to face sessions:
 - o Core courses for Safeguarding Adults and Children at Levels 1 (awareness) and 2 (Managing concerns) which are in line with the Care Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.
 - o Level 3 specialist courses to reflect national and local priorities
 - o A variety of E-Learning and workbook options to compliment the virtual training offer.
- 116 virtual courses were delivered via Microsoft Teams.
- There was an even split between Adult and Children's Safeguarding training.
- There were 1,822 attendances recorded for the training.
- 318 people completed E-Learning workbooks
- Development of new courses to reflect the impact of the Domestic abuse Act 2021 and Keeping children Safe in Education 2022.
- Development of podcasts to provide information around key messages in respect of Safeguarding Children and Adults.



Evaluation and Assessment

It is recognised that assessment of learning is necessary to measure both the quality of training and to evidence the impact on practice and how the training is contributing to improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce. The trainer continues to request delegate feedback on the quality of training and feedback continues to be positive. The chart below outlines the attendance by partner agencies during the period April 2022 - March 2023.



Development of Policy and Procedure

Enabling continual improvement and learning for partners and practitioners is important to the Partnership. The ongoing review of policies, procedures and practice guidance documents is essential to support front line practitioners with both prevention, early intervention and awareness raising. There is a clear timeline for the revision of policy and procedure, which is monitored through a policy revision schedule.

The Learning and Development sub-group continues to provide a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to safeguarding practice through the development, review and updating of policies and procedures for use by professionals across the partnership. All revisions are undertaken in consultation with partner agencies and who are expected to disseminate and implement within their own organisations. All documents are published on the DSP website.

During 2022/23 the following were developed, reviewed and revised by the Partnership:

- Revision to Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Procedures
- Revision to Safeguarding Adult Review Procedure and referral form.
- Development of Harmful Sexual Behaviour Practice Guidance and Protocol
- Revision to the Adult Executive Strategy Process - Responding to serious concerns
- Supported the launch across the region of a short film to raise public awareness of self-neglect and what can be done to support those experiencing self-neglect.
- Developed an organisation directory of key safeguarding contacts across child and adult services working in Darlington to support practitioners in understanding who to contact.
- Refreshed the Information Sharing Protocol.

8. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews

During 2022/23 period, the Partnership received its first serious incident notification (March 2023) which is being taken forward as a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR); the findings and learning from this review will be published in the next reporting period. The Partnership did not undertake any formal Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) in this reporting period.

The Partnership recognises there is a continual need to improve and raise awareness of processes to clearly set out organisational responsibilities for dealing and responding to serious incidents. Both the LCSPR and SAR Procedures were revised to enable agencies to not only submit a referral if they believed the criteria for a LCSPR or SAR were met, but also to refer a Learning Request, when it was felt there was specific learning to be explored in how agencies worked together, but the circumstances did not meet criteria for a formal review.

The number of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) or Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) in Darlington continues to remain low, it is recognised Darlington is a very small local authority area. The Partnership has however, seen an increase in the submission of learning request referrals, which may be as a consequence of the revision to procedures.

There were six referrals received during the reporting year a slight decrease on the seven referred in the previous year. They included the LCSPR as outlined above, three were deemed to meet the criteria for a learning request (2 Adult and 1 Child) and referred into the Learning & Development Group, two taken forward as Local Learning Reviews (LLR) (1 child and 1 adult), one adult case as an audit and the remaining two addressed through other processes.

Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Procedure and Safeguarding Adult Review Procedure

There were a number of local learning reviews ongoing from the previous reporting period which were carried over to enable the learning to be disseminated, these included:

- **Mental Health** - A themed learning review following three cases where parental mental health was identified as a significant factor and there appeared to be no recognition of the impact or risk this had on the children in the family home. The review highlighted the absence of a 'whole family approach' including consideration of wider family issues. A further case which highlighted concerns in how agencies responded to a child who had complex mental health needs and the challenge in finding suitable accommodation due to her needs.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation/ Harm away from home** - the review highlighted that practitioners sometime failed to recognise harm which occurred away from the home and there were issues in respect of information sharing, agencies failing to work together, poor use of language, failure to engage parents and a lack of professional curiosity.
- **Adult Self Neglect** - two reviews, following two separate incidents which identified two individuals with needs for care and support who died and self-neglect was subsequently highlighted as an issue. The findings relate to mental health and the adults' reluctance/non-compliance with services offered over a period of time. There was a presumption of capacity however lack of any formal capacity assessments being undertaken in respect of care and support and treatment along with a lack of legal oversight relating to capacity and Court of Protection.

Parental Mental Health and Safeguarding



Learning Lessons Review Briefing Parental Mental Health and Safeguarding

Parental Mental Health and Safeguarding

Living in a household where parents or carers have mental health problems does not necessarily mean a child will experience abuse or negative consequences. Many children whose parents have mental health problems go on to achieve their full potential in life, particularly if their parents receive the right support at the right time.



However, there is a risk that parental mental health problems can impact negatively on children. All types of mental health problems can vary in severity. The impact on children depends on the parent or carer, their circumstances and the support they receive.

Babies of mothers who experience perinatal mental illness are at an increased risk of being born prematurely with a low birth weight. Post-natal depression can affect parents and carers bonding with the baby and can have a negative impact on the baby's intellectual, emotional, social and psychological development.

In older children the impact of parental mental health problems include a risk of developing behavioural problems, being required to take on a caring role and increased stress and anxiety. In the most serious cases children may suffer abuse or neglect from a parent or carer with a mental health problem and parental mental health problems are frequently present in cases of abuse and neglect. The risks to children are greater when parental mental health problems exist alongside domestic abuse and parental substance misuse.

For further information and guidance see [NICE: Parental Mental Health](#).

The Background of the Review

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership undertook a review in 2022 to understand and develop learning from three child safeguarding cases, two came in as learning request referrals to the Learning and Development Group, the third case was highlighted through a multi-agency audit undertaken by the Children's MASH Operational Group. Whilst none met the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, it was evident that there was learning to explore.

In all three cases, parental mental health was a significant factor and there appeared to be no recognition of the impact or risk this had on the children in the family home. The reviews highlighted the absence of a 'whole family approach' including consideration of wider family issues. Agencies appeared instead to focus on the concern of the moment and did not always consider the daily lived experience of the children. Whilst agencies received information, there was a lack of information sharing and there was not a holistic response.

1

Child Criminal Exploitation/ Harm away from home



Learning Lessons Review Briefing Child Criminal Exploitation/ Contextual Safeguarding

What is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?

Criminal Exploitation is abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. Coercions may take the form of debt bondage, physical or sexual violence, grooming, and other forms of intimidation. Individuals may not know they are being exploited but the presence of power imbalance and disadvantage weighted against the individual, highlights the risk.



What is County Lines?

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in transporting illegal drugs from one area to another, using dedicated mobile phones. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons.

What is Contextual Safeguarding/Harm Away from Home

Contextual Safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people.

Contextual Safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr. Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire's *Contextual Safeguarding Institute*, recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Contextual Safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

The Background of the Review

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP) undertook a learning lessons review (LLR) following an incident in June 2021, the incident did not meet the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

The LLR was undertaken to explore lessons to be learnt to help understand how agencies can learn and act from this incident. Whilst it was determined the incident was significant it did not fit the usual parameters of a traditional review, traditional approaches have focused on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home. It was recognised there was a real opportunity to look at this incident through the lens of both safeguarding and community safety and to address the time that children and young people spend outside the home to understand the impact that organised crime, county lines and criminal exploitation is having on young people in Darlington and how agencies can work together to address and manage the risks going forward.

The focus of the review was not specifically on the incident but as a consequence of it, to understand how agencies could work differently as current services were not aligned to situations such as this case presented and a requirement to look outside the traditional core group of safeguarding practitioners.

1

Adult Self Neglect



Learning Lessons Review Briefing Self-Neglect

What is Self-Neglect?

Self-neglect is defined as covering a wide range of behaviours. A person may not be keeping themselves clean, neglecting to care for their own health or their surroundings, may refuse care or treatment for health and care needs, or could be hoarding various types of possessions to the point of being a risk. Self-neglect is a continuum of behaviours ranging from moderate to severe. It may be unintentional, such as not eating due to memory issues. Where self-neglect gets out of control, including an inability to avoid or control self-harm, it can lead to a high risk of death or serious harm to the adult involved and to others' health and safety. There is no standard definition of self-neglect, but the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance provides the following definition: "Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding".



Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) provides additional guidance on self-neglect

[Self-neglect as a sign](#)

Understanding Self-Neglect

Self-neglect is often defined across three domains:

- neglect of self and lack of self-care
- neglect of the environment
- refusal to accept help and support

What are the signs to look out for?

Neglect of self may include:

- poor personal hygiene/ dirty or inappropriate clothing/poor hair care
- poor diet leading to malnutrition or dehydration
- medical or health needs disregarded (for example refusing medication or treatment/refusing to allow access to health/and or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care
- alcohol or substance misuse

Neglect of Environment may include:

- unsanitary or dirty conditions which could result in serious harm to the individual or others
- hoarding
- situations which create a fire risk (for example hoarding)
- poor maintenance of property
- keeping lots of animals which are neglected
- vermin
- lack of heating
- no running water or sanitation
- poor management of finances (leading to utilities being cut off)



1

The key learning points and multi-agency actions and recommendations for learning have been incorporated into 7-minute briefings which have shared across the Partnership and will be covered within multi-agency training.

The themes from the two local learning reviews undertaken in this period include issues relating to multi-agency safeguarding processes and decision making, along with adult mental health and adult self-neglect, which has been a recurring theme. Key learning points were identified and several single and multi-agency actions and recommendations for learning were identified which are being addressed by the Learning and Development Group. Learning from good practice has also been embedded in the review process.

The Learning & Development Group commissioned a self-neglect task and finish group to take forward key pieces of work at the end of this reporting period. As a partnership we need to consider whether practitioners are recognising self-neglect and help understand what is currently in place and what are the gaps to support them in their work.

Expectations will be to:

- consider a revision to the self-neglect practice guidance, to include examples of positive, flexible and creative approaches to support practitioners in engaging with people who are self-neglecting
- to help understand the barriers organisations pose for those who consistently refuse support.
- the development of a self-neglect pathway and risk assessment tool to support decision making.
- to obtain a better understanding of when formal capacity assessments are undertaken and establish if a need to develop Mental Capacity Guidance.
- consider what training and awareness is needed and be included within multi-agency training provision.

This work will continue into the next reporting period.



What did we learn:

Safeguarding Practice Issues

The review highlighted child protection procedures are being followed which provides some assurance on multi-agency practice

The importance of ensuring GP information is available at strategy meetings when parental mental health is a concern

Improvements to information sharing - had appropriate information and timeline of events been available, this may have supported decision making

Practitioners demonstrated good professional curiosity

Home Environment Assessment Tool (HEAT) assessments are now completed and used by all 0-19 practitioners to identify early signs of neglect

Escalation processes to be addressed through supervision and training opportunities

Maternity Services - to ensure specialist safeguarding representation is available for multi-agency forums and maternity recording systems to be improved

Adult Self Neglect

The importance of conducting detailed mental capacity assessments of both decision making and executive functioning skills

Importance of effective multi-agency information sharing and joined up working - not working in silos

Enabling practitioners, by ensuring they have the skills and tools, to effectively manage and challenge individuals who may be reluctant to engage

Ensuring there is a good understanding of escalation processes

Importance of professional curiosity when working with individuals who are reluctant to engage in support to understand the reasons why

The importance of relationship building and gaining trust

Ensuring practitioners have a full understanding of the history behind the self-neglect

Practitioners to build relationships and consult with those who have good relationships with the adult

As a result of the learning from these reviews, the following guidance and tools were developed:

- Revision of Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Serious Incident Notification procedure.
- Revision of the SAR referral form to support Statutory Safeguarding Partners and the Learning and Development Group to make informed decision on type of review to be taken forward.
- Development of an organisation directory of key safeguarding contacts across child and adult services working in Darlington to support practitioners in understanding who to contact within agencies.

The Learning & Development and Quality Assurance & Performance Management Groups continue to work closely to ensure effective learning and change is embedded into frontline practice.

In October 2022, the Partnership shared a briefing around the learning from the National Reviews 'Star and Arthur'. The Children's MASH Operational Group agreed there was an opportunity to measure where the Partnership is with current service provision against the relevant local recommendations identified to understand if there are any gaps. The group was assured appropriate measures were in place and shared the findings with the Quality Assurance & Performance Management and Learning & Development groups which were satisfied with current service provision.



9. Looking Ahead

Looking forward to 2023/24 we will continue to develop our local response to the changes anticipated in Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance and from the government response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the national Child Safeguarding Practice along with the implementation of Local Authority Adult Regulatory Inspections.

The Partnership has identified a number of key areas of focus which it will set out in its Strategic plan to help keep children, young people, and adults with needs for care and support safe and protected from abuse and neglect and will be taken forward in 2023-24. The strategic priority areas of focus will include:

- Communication and involvement - Making safeguarding everybody's business and improving awareness of safeguarding across all communities and partner organisations
- Prevention and Early Intervention - enabling partners to work together to act early to protect those at risk of abuse or neglect
- Joint Working - ensure effective arrangements are in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect
- Exploitation - ensuring effective multi-agency response and intervention to protect those at risk of exploitation, in all its forms
- Adult Self-Neglect - ensure all partner agencies improve awareness and understanding of adult self-neglect to ensure early identification can be achieved

Appendix 1

Staffing and Budget

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is supported by the following staff within the Business Unit:

- Business Manager
- Development Officer/Designated Officer
- Multi-Agency Trainer
- Business Support Officer
- Part-time Analyst (seconded from Durham Constabulary)
- Part-time Information Officer

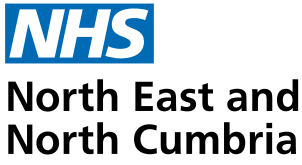
Contributions from Partner Agencies for 2021-22 period	
Darlington Borough Council	£115,493
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (Tees Valley)	£41,310
Durham Constabulary	£34,404
Schools Forum	£10,000
Darlington College	£1,600
County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	£16,973
Queen Elizabeth 6th Form College	£1,515
Probation Service North East	£1,846
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	£2,000
Training Income	£1,230
Total Revenue	£226,371

Appendix 2

Relevant agencies over and above Statutory Safeguarding Partner Organisations

- Darlington Local Authority - Housing, Public Health, Young Peoples' Engagement and Justice Service
- Health agencies - County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT), North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS)
- Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (DDFRS)
- Early Years Settings
- Education (Primary, Secondary, Further Education, SEN)
- Support organisations for issues such as Substance Misuse / Domestic Abuse / Sexual Exploitation / Sexual Abuse (SARC)
- Family Justice Board (FJB)
- Probation Service North East
- Voluntary and third sector organisations (including Healthwatch)
- Darlington Primary Care General Practices
- Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England (pharmacy, dentist and optometrists)
- Independent providers including private hospitals, children's homes, nursing and care homes, domiciliary providers
- Youth groups - e.g. sport, scouts, brownies
- Faith settings
- Minority Communities
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Chairs of other key local boards
- Representatives of other National Partners
- Darlington Partnership - which includes business and community organisations
- Coroner

This list is not exhaustive



DARLINGTON
Borough Council





