

Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report



2020/2021

Foreword

It is a privilege for me to introduce the Annual Report for the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2020/21. It has been a year of unprecedented challenges for all the partners agencies involved in safeguarding the children and young people of the city.

The pandemic has continued to exacerbate vulnerabilities, and this has inevitably led to an increase in demand for services.

We have seen pressures in the system around online abuse, mental health and wellbeing and incidences of neglect, all of which require a partnership response if long-term sustainable solutions are to be found.

The Annual Report provides an overview of these and other issues faced, the outcomes experienced and an assessment as to whether the partnership has made a difference.

There remains more to be done in 2021/22 and beyond, and the immediate future continues to be shaped by the pandemic. Our priorities reflect the need to put children at the heart of what we do, and it is essential we listen and respond to those children and their families.

The safeguarding partnership has responded positively throughout this period demonstrating commitment, flexibility and innovation.

Southampton has a strong partnership at both the strategic and operational levels, and I am confident that we will see further improvement in the services provided for the children of the city.



Derek Benson
Independent Chair

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Introduction

The role of the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)

Nothing is more important than the welfare of children¹. The Children Act 2004 (amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) placed new duties on police, clinical commissioning groups and local authorities to make arrangements to work together and with wider partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. In Southampton this has created a strong alliance between the three safeguarding partners, working with and wider agencies in the city.

The work of the SSCP is overseen by Derek Benson, Independent Chair, and undertaken by a team hosted within Southampton City Council Children's Services. The three safeguarding partners in Southampton are:

- Southampton City Council Children's Services – Rob Henderson, Executive Director for Children's Services & Learning
- Hampshire Constabulary – Simon Dodds, Superintendent & District Commander
- Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group – Matthew Richardson, Deputy Director of Quality & Nursing – Southampton

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by *Working Together 2018* as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

About this Annual Report

This Annual Report captures the work of the SSCP as a result of the safeguarding arrangements in place in Southampton, including learning from reviews, and an analysis of how effective the arrangements have been in improving outcomes for children and families in the city. This report also looks at the impact of the partners' work together.

The impact of Covid-19 on us all, cannot be underestimated, but particularly on children who are vulnerable. This report begins with a section dedicated to the impact of COVID-19 and the response by services working with children and families.

The focus in Southampton is learning and impact, and as such this report follows the Covid Impact and Response with Learning from Reviews and the improvements that this has brought about and closes with background information on the demographics of Southampton and governance arrangements.

¹ [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

COVID-19 - Impact & Response

Following the Prime Minister's "stay at home" in March 2020, processes were put in place to assess children's vulnerabilities/risks, ensuring appropriate levels of contact and service were maintained in partnership with schools, early years and post-16 settings. This included our children known to be most vulnerable and those with emerging vulnerabilities and risks. These processes were further refined during each lockdown, with mechanisms for checking in with families and schools during this time, which were shared between the Children and Learning Service (including our integrated Early Help Service), schools and settings and Hampshire Constabulary. A focused partnership response to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children safe and ensuring the right children continued to attend school, were contacted, seen and supported.



The early stage of the pandemic saw a reduction in referrals to MASH. As schools opened to more children referral rates returned to more usual levels and have subsequently increased. The HIPS Section 11 'Keeping Children Safe Organisational Self Audits' displayed themes correlating to the pandemic such as recognising the rise of concerns about mental health, child to parent

violence, domestic violence and neglect during the pandemic and the resultant pressure on services.

The safeguarding partners and independent chair have met regularly to consider risk factors around COVID-19, including the ways that Government restrictions and lockdown affected the children and families and the settings/services supporting them. This allowed for problem solving, collaboration and the timely sharing of information. The safeguarding partners continue to meet regularly. The flexibility of the agenda in these meetings, focused on safeguarding matters, allows for problem solving in a safe environment and has supported effective partnership working.

The SSCP were able to respond to some of concerns and challenges raised in this meeting, sending information to partners and practitioners about various areas of safeguarding practice, including Neglect, Domestic Abuse, Child Exploitation, Abusive Head Trauma and Safer Sleep.

Across partner agencies there has been much learning regarding virtual working and where this may add value and where it does not. This has resulted in a more flexible offer to children, young people and families. Partnership meetings have moved to being virtual and this has been generally viewed as positive and is likely to remain at least partly virtual.

Training largely moved from face to face to virtual sessions. A few training sessions entirely suited to being face to face were put on hold, but the majority have been reviewed and placed online either through e-learning or a webinar platform. This has meant attendance at safeguarding training events has been maintained and for some services has increase engagement through ease of access.

In June 2020, the SSCP conducted a survey regarding learning points for partners from operating during the early stages of COVID-19. This survey considered the positive aspects of remote working for professionals with regards to certain meetings concerning children:

- Strategy meetings
- Professional meetings
- Discharge planning meetings
- Child Protection Case Conferences
-

Core staff involved with the care of the child can be present at the meeting and share information more easily. It also gives colleagues the opportunity to have access to computer systems and significantly reduce travelling time. This has not been the same experience for children and families as we know face-to-face meetings are generally more appropriate, essential and preferred. This has left a need to develop a hybrid model which can be flexibly used.

The caveat is the clear view that not all multi-agency working should be virtual and there is the benefit of face to face working that can allow for deeper exploration of areas, increased awareness of risk factors and is beneficial in relationship building. We know that work with children and families clearly must have a component of face-to-face work in order to effectively safeguard children.

Services have flexed and reviewed delivery models to ensure vulnerable children and families are supported, this has been seen in relation to all partner and relevant agencies. The multi-agency safeguarding workforce has continued to support children and families, with a recognition from senior managers of the impact on staff of a quick change to often complete remote working, different working practices and the resultant impacts. It is recognised face to face and/or frequent contact and support is important to us all, opportunities for colleagues to step away from their work, reflect together and build relationships with each other remain important for the work we do.

Family feedback during the pandemic

"We couldn't have done so well if it wasn't for our superstar health visitor. I didn't think I'd need as much support as I do but she's been a lifesaver for us! She really went above and beyond what I would think is asked for her and she wasn't even originally my health visitor."
Parent's feedback on Health Visitor during Covid

"I liked the games. I made friends and had a good time."

Child's feedback on Sure Start family day on 17 June.

"Sure Start have been amazing in this lockdown world. That was amazing, funny, original so appreciated."

Parent's feedback following Sure Start family activity and support 'jungle day' on 17 June.

"Having the virtual support has been a lifeline."

Parent's feedback on virtual group(s) for families, co delivered with volunteers, for those impacted by domestic abuse.

Learning from Reviews

Case Reviews and Learning

In line with Working Together 2018 the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership commissions Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Under transitional arrangements, Serious Case Reviews commissioned by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) are being completed. The reviews published during this year were commissioned by the LSCB.

Reviews are a key method of gaining learning from when services could have been better for a child and their family. The recommendations from reviews drive action to address the issues and ensure that services improve in future. Recommendations are monitored by the Serious Incident Learning Group on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Full details can be found [here](#)

Freddie (published August 2020)

This Serious Case Review focussed on neglect and harmful sexual behaviours and the review examined the barriers to keeping Freddie safe. Several lessons were highlighted for the partnership, which included the need for child protection planning to have pace and purpose to prevent drift and less effective multi-agency working.

There is now training for the multi-agency workforce in respect of Child Sexual Abuse within the Family Environment, and this will continue in 2021/22.

Clare (published November 2020)

This Serious Case Review was commissioned following Clare's death in 2018. Several themes were identified for the partnership, including parental discord, domestic abuse, impact on children and disguised compliance and hostility towards professionals, male partners in the family environment and the importance of listening to children.

The SSCP now commission Sandstories training to support multi agency practitioners where there are concerns about disguised compliance. An [Unidentified Adults Toolkit](#) has been produced to help raise awareness of the need to be curious about the background of male partners. Agencies have demonstrated the training provided to their staff about Domestic Abuse and the impact on children.

The SSCP have updated and refreshed their Learning from Reviews Briefing which can be found [here](#)

The Serious Incident and Learning Group on behalf of the safeguarding partners commissioned two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in 2020/21.

Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements

Safeguarding Practice Improvement Group

The Safeguarding Partnership Improvement Group (SPIG) works to ensure that that learning from reviews and audits results in practice development and improvements to outcomes for children in Southampton. The group also focusses on priority themes agreed by the SSCP at the start of each financial year. This year the priority theme was Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment and Early Help information was reviewed as provided to Ofsted for the focussed visit. Progress against themes for last year (Neglect and Mental Health) were also revisited to ensure progress. The group has oversight of Keeping Children Safe (section 11) audit work and links to Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth; drawing out themes to present to the SSCP Board annually. Lastly, the group reviews data on priority themes and quality assures activities on behalf of safeguarding partners to ensure that services work effectively to safeguard children.

Priority Theme: Child Sexual Abuse in a Family Environment (CSAFE)

SPIG auditing activity confirmed that CSAFE remains one of the most hidden, secretive and challenging types of abuse, remaining particularly difficult for children and young people to disclose and for professionals to identify. The subject has been highlighted in the Clare and Freddie reviews this year. A SPIG audit was conducted in October 2020 that identified the following areas for improving practice:

- The voice of the child must be heard throughout investigation (impact of virtual contact) and the child kept at the centre of all work
- The need to link together isolated incidents (increasing the use of chronologies)
- Effective supervision/management oversight specific to CSAFE cases
- Accuracy of recording
- Understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and parental childhood trauma
- Increased and improved Information sharing between agencies & professionals feeling confident in doing so
- Promoting/ signposting practitioners to online resources
- The need for a comprehensive training offer

Areas of effective practice were also identified:

- Use of Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) for storing safeguarding information enables schools to transfer electronically
- Children's medical needs were met
- Positive information sharing between Emergency Department & Children's Services

In response to this (and the Freddie case review which centred around CSAFE):

- A specialised multi-agency training day has been devised by the Child Protection Advisor in partnership with a multi-agency team including the SSCP, SCC Children's Services Training, Police and Health providers. This training is currently run online and helps practitioners identify and respond effectively to CSAFE. It is open for anyone working with children and families to attend. The training has also been reviewed by the Centre for Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse who supported its development.
- In addition, there is now more structured specialist supervision and support to practitioners working with children and families where CSAFE is known or suspected. This includes a focus on the importance of chronologies and genograms in understanding what risks may be

present for a child. This is led by the Child Protection Advisor from the SCC Children and Learning Service.

Priority Theme: Early Help

This theme was assessed using the Early Help position statement produced by colleagues in Children and Learning Services.

Locality based data will be used to improve the understanding of need, particularly in areas of deprivation.

It was noted the Early Help Hub have identified areas which require a stronger Early Help offer to encourage schools to refer in. All Sure Start centres are linked into Early Help and majority of them are based in the most deprived areas in the city.

It was noted there has been an increase in the number of children and families moving to early help from children's social care which is positive.

Early help services supported work with vulnerable children and families during lockdowns and since the Early Help Hub was introduced in July 2019, there has been a 25-30% increase in new referrals and families receiving support.

It was agreed that awareness raising and understanding of the Early Help hub and their offer is required. In addition, a greater understanding of the multi-agency work force of early help activity outside of the Children and Learning Service, such as Sure Start and other services and settings.

The Safeguarding Improvements Practice Group will continue learning from thematic audits in the future. The areas that have been agreed for the deep dive audits in 2021-22 are Domestic Abuse and Neglect, both of which have been highlighted as areas of continued importance for the partnership during the pandemic.

2019/2020 Priority Themes

Last year's priority themes of Child & Adolescent Health and Neglect were also revisited. [The i-Thrive](#) model is currently being used to develop a new system-wide approach to the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people in Southampton. This recognises the broad contribution of partners. This work has been impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and is planned to continue in autumn 2021.

Neglect was a priority theme for last year and remains a priority for the partnership. It was revisited by SPIG this year through a practitioner survey which showed a continued need to promote the new SSCP Neglect Strategy and Guidance for Practitioners (formerly known as the Neglect Toolkit). The SSCP continue to provide workshops to promote and explain the Strategy and Guidance. A [Spotlight on Neglect briefing](#) was also released to partner agencies and published on the SSCP website. In 2021/2022 the SSCP will lead a review and refresh of the Neglect Strategy and Practitioner Guidance.

JTAI Dry Run

The SPIG also conducted a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) dry run on the subject of Child Exploitation in November 2020.

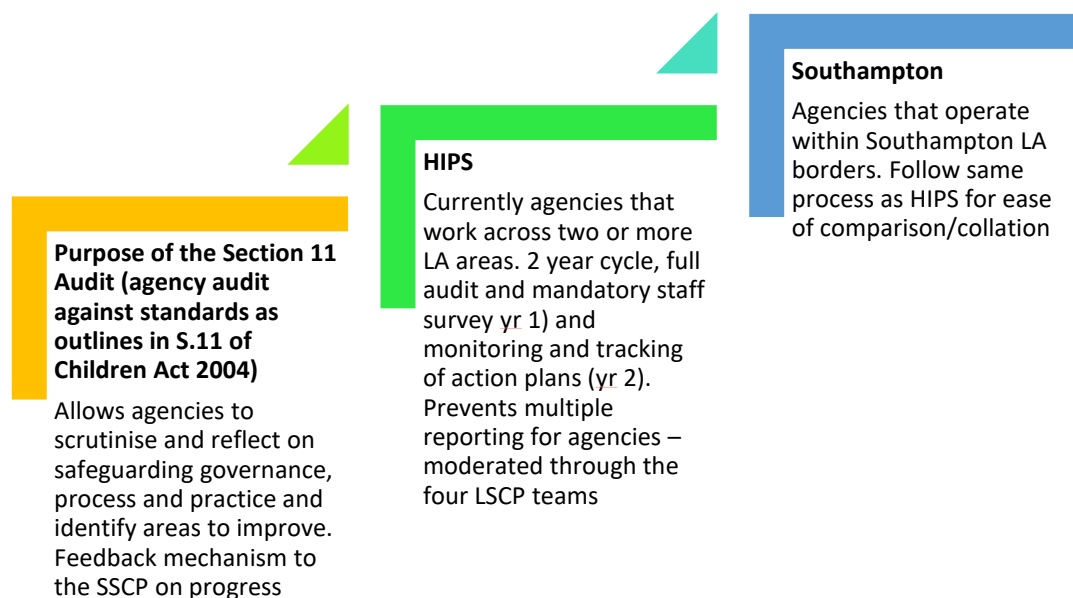
The process and findings of the agreed JTAI dry run in relation to Child Exploitation are detailed below. This allowed the partnership to clarify where strengths and areas for development lie in terms of JTAI readiness.

Colleagues' willingness to engage in this work during the pandemic and related pressure was very much appreciated.



HIPS Keeping Children Safe (Section 11) Audit

In February and March 2021, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton co-ordinated the Keeping Children Safe (Section 11) Audit for agencies that work across two or more local authority borders.



Section 11 audits enable agencies to scrutinise their governance arrangements, processes and practice and identify improvements. They also enable agencies to show areas of good practice and provide feedback to Safeguarding Partnerships on progress and barriers to partnership working.

The process was endorsed by the HIPS partnerships and reflects a two-year cycle of self-assessment (year 1) followed by monitoring and tracking of action plans (year 2). The focus for 2020/21 was to re-visit the safeguarding standards through completion of a new self-assessment tool and a mandatory staff survey (year 1).

The audit tool for 2020 was reviewed and slimmed down to ensure that the standards remained relevant and that the process took account of system-wide pressures due to COVID-19. The Tool was sent out on 14 October 2020 with an extended completion date of 4th January 2021. A staff survey was sent out across the HIPS areas during this period. Take up of the staff survey this year was universally very low and though understandable in the context of pressures on the system at this time.

Strengths of the 2020/21 Section 11 Audit process were identified as:

- The process was well planned enabling SCP managers to review all self-assessments from agencies covering two or more HIPS areas in one panel day.
- A standard letter format was used to populate with individualised responses to send to agencies, and this ensured a standardised approach to feedback.

The were some areas highlighted for improvement in future audits:

- There is a need to revisit with agencies the purpose of the Section 11 self-assessment and how it might benefit agencies in better safeguarding children, preparing for inspection and action planning for improvement.
- Revise instructions given out to agencies for completion of the self-assessment to encourage greater self-reflection and evidence in responses.
- Whilst some responses were very detailed and identified further areas for development which were captured in the action plan, some contained no evidence of impact in their answers.
- Some responses had no completed Action Plan, even where there were a number of standards either partly in place or not currently in place. Action Plans are a key part of the Section 11 Audit cycle and are effective when detailed with SMART targets for improvement.

There were some common themes across the HIPS areas:

- A need to improve knowledge and understanding of thresholds/Continuum of Need documents
- A need to increase in practitioners taking a Family Approach to safeguarding
- A need to improve understanding of Early Help across the workforce and for practitioners to take a proactive approach to securing/providing Early Help services
- A need to increase awareness of additional vulnerabilities that children with disabilities and those with English as an additional language may face, that require consideration when seeking to assess their safety and wellbeing

All services reported a rise in needs (such as from increased mental health issues, domestic abuse, child to parent violence and neglect) following COVID-19 and some areas articulated their response to these and showed some innovative practice.

The SSCP will complete the process of our local Keeping Children Safe (Section 11) self-assessment from March 2021.

Schools Safeguarding Audit

In addition, the SSCP received the report of the schools safeguarding self-evaluation. Despite COVID-19, 100% of schools across Southampton successfully returned the self-evaluation in the Spring term, marking the first full return. Many positive discussions follow up meetings, reviews and actions have resulted from the review of the information we have some city-wide education specific actions as a result outlined below.

Some of the aspects for development have been brought to the fore by COVID-19 and remote learning, increased focussed work on safeguarding, and prevalence of incidents requiring response within schools. It has enabled some staff to be diverted at times into safeguarding work. However, this has led to pressures when delivering live lessons as the greater return of pupils has occurred and the incidents remain. The requirement to support pupil well-being alongside staff well-being is high. Some of the benefits of the past year have included remote meetings, which have enabled school staff to attend with less disruption to teaching at times. Schools are indicating that they can support some of these remote meetings continuing into the future, if possible.

The impact of COVID- 19 has meant that schools and education settings have had to shift focus a number of times; firstly, during lockdown 1 to provide care to vulnerable pupils in line with the Department for Education and the school's own definitions. Over time, the focus has gradually shifted back to learning. However, safeguarding has remained a central focus, with schools continuing to work well with professionals and escalate concerns where necessary, amending policy and process where required.

In-school checks were limited by COVID 19 and some have taken place remotely. Checks on training continued during the pandemic, and support around finding resources or training has also been given.

Occupation of virtual learning opportunities during the pandemic, including remote training and e-learning – has remained strong for staff and governors. This is likely to remain a part of practice moving forward, with blended learning approaches becoming more frequent.

Workforce Development

The SSCP adapted to the changes brought about by Covid-19 and shifted to online delivery for almost all its training. This section shows the training that has taken place and includes feedback from attendees and an analysis of areas for improvement next year.

Weekly Wednesday Workshops

This popular format allows busy practitioners to take part in brief lunch time learning sessions on Wednesdays (although days are flexible!) The sessions generally run for 1 hour and cover a wide range of topics. They enable practitioners from a wide variety of agencies to come together and the online format has allowed more practitioners to attend as there is no need to travel. Workshops were run on the following subjects:

- Neglect – including the Strategy and Practitioner’s Guide
- The role of LADO
- Private Fostering
- Fabricated and Induced Illness
- Exploitation from the perspective of the Child
- Allegations against Foster Carers
- Online Safety Introduction
- Online Safety – Your Digital Footprint
- Bruising Protocol
- Reducing Parental Conflict
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Criminal Justice Liaison

“Great. It’s useful to meet people more personally and so much easier to have discussions. This could be made more interesting by varying the participants in breakout rooms for different tasks so I can talk to more people.”

Practitioner Feedback

“A chance to take time out, reflect on my practice and the online format it so much easier to attend”



“This training was challenging but thoughtfully delivered, with real insight into how CSAFE happens and how to respond if I’m concerned”

Practitioner Feedback

Child Sexual Abuse in a Family Environment (CSAFE)

This training was developed in response to recommendations from the Adam & Anna Serious Case Review (published 2019), the Clare and Freddie Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews (2020) and the SPIG audit work around CSAFE. The training content was developed by a multi-agency team and led and run by the Children’s Services Child Protection Advisor in partnership with a consultant expert in CSAFE. Two training days have taken place so far, with more dates planned regularly throughout the year. The second session gained greater traction than the first, with 43 attendees in total and an average evaluation score of 4.7 out of 5.

HIPS Webinars

The SSCP works in partnership with the neighbouring areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth and this includes delivering training. In 2020/2021 training took place across the HIPS areas on the following topics:

- Missing, Exploited and Trafficked webinars x 3

- Harmful Cultural Practices - Female Genital Mutilation
- Harmful Cultural Practices - Breast Ironing
- Harmful Cultural Practices - Honour Based Abuse/ Forced Marriage
- Introduction to Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief
- The new Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF)
- Modern Slavery
- Child Exploitation from a Health Perspective

"It was a good introduction but a longer video with more information would have been great".

I had never heard of breast ironing before. The workshop was really well led despite it being virtual"

"XX and XX are very knowledgeable and have a good way of presenting. Pleasant to listen to and very thought provoking"

Half-Day workshops

"The information provided by Dr XX was very informative and thought provoking and everything was explained very clearly."

SSCP run half-day workshops on a regular basis, however a number of these were unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic. However, half day training took place on the Bruising Protocol in December 2020. This training was devised by Named Doctors across the HIPS areas. This training was well received, with an average evaluation score of 4.8 out of 5.

Safeguarding Level 3

The SSCP also continue to offer Safeguarding Level 3 training via two separate full days' training in either **Identifying Needs – Early Intervention and Making a Referral**, and **The Child Protection Process** with practitioners able to choose which is most relevant for them (or attend both). Refresher half day sessions for both days are also offered. This training is delivered by an external training company, and there was impact by Covid 19 until July 2020, when training recommenced with refresher training for both subjects offered. Virtual full-day training recommenced in October and December 2020, with further refresher training being offered in November and March.

"Very worthwhile for new employees and to confirm CP planning."
The Child Protection Process participant

"Easy to listen to and delivered well."
Identifying Needs & Making a Referral participant

Areas for improvement

The shift to virtual training has brought both positive and negative impacts. Practitioners have praised the ease of attendance, importance of bitesize learning (Weekly Wednesday Workshops), and the eliminated travel time in attending.

There have however been an increased number of 'no shows'. This has been an issue in past years and the SSCP Business Team have considered options to encourage attendance, for example invoicing non-attendees. It was felt that this was not a viable option. Unfortunately, non-attendance prevents other interested participants from attending, and trainers have expressed disappointment at running a session for an unexpectedly small audience.



The shift to online training has meant some upskilling for trainers in using the technology available and engage with their participants over online training. There have also been some issues with technology and a member of the SSCP team has attended sessions to provide support to trainers. Both issues are expected to much improve as trainers become more accustomed to training online.

It has proved more difficult to gather feedback forms after training session.

Looking to the future it is likely that face to face training will resume for some sessions, and while online training continues for the majority of the sessions, a level of expertise will continue to develop to negate the initial issues with running training online. There is also the possibility of developing training with a blended approach so that those who prefer face to face sessions can do so.



The SSCP is keeping a watching brief and gauging feedback regarding duration of training, as some participants express a wish for more information and more time dedicated, whereas others favour shorter learning sessions as they fit in with busy schedules.

Further Work to Improve Safeguarding

The SSCP has also been engaged in project work this year to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children. This has concentrated on themes that have arisen during the pandemic.

ICON was launched in Southampton in February 2021 and aims to reduce head trauma in young babies. SSCP has worked in conjunction with the other HIPS areas to produce information for parents and professionals in coping with infant crying. An information leaflet is available [here](#) and there is a [ICONcope](#) website with a wealth of information for parents & professionals [here](#).

Unborn/Newborn Baby Protocol

Revised and updated for 2021, the HIPS Unborn/Newborn baby protocol sets out how to respond to concerns for unborn babies with an emphasis on clear and regular communications between professionals working with the pregnant person and their family where risk is identified. Unlike many safeguarding situations the antenatal period gives a window of opportunity before the baby arrives for practitioners and families to work together to form relationships, identify protective factors as well as risks and vulnerabilities, and agree multi-agency safety planning for the unborn baby.

This multi-agency protocol provides a robust framework for responding to safeguarding concerns and safety planning by practitioners working together, with families, to safeguard the baby before, during and following birth. This protocol applies across Hampshire Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

The latest version of this protocol now includes a number of updates and new tools to assist practitioners in utilising the UBB protocol. The protocol can be found [here](#).

New Child Criminal Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework

Work has taken place in the HIPS Partnership, to create a new Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool to replace the Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool, for completion as soon as any form of Child Criminal Exploitation is suspected. The purpose of this is to take a more holistic approach to the various forms of Child Criminal Exploitation, of which Sexual Exploitation is one. Members of the HIPS areas have created new CERAF which is available [here](#) and training has been run by the MET Hub in partnership with HIPS colleagues for Southampton practitioners to familiarise them with the new tool. There is also information available on the HIPS Procedures website [here](#).

There is also a [video tutorial](#) available for colleagues about how and when to complete a CERAF.

HIPS Child Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan

The workload of Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership is largely focused on tackling the safeguarding issues surrounding child exploitation, both from a criminal and sexual perspective (Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation), as detailed below in the HIPS Child Exploitation poster released in April 2020.



During 2020-2021, the HIPS Child Exploitation Group published the [HIPS Child Exploitation strategy](#), which covers Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton from 2020 until 2023. There are five key objectives that have been identified as part of the HIPS Exploitation Strategy, including the following:

- Scrutiny and Oversight
- Understand and Identify
- Prevention
- Intervene and Support
- Disrupt and Bring to Justice

Local safeguarding partnerships will be responsible for delivery of the new Child Exploitation strategy through local delivery plans. During 2020-21, HIPS Child Exploitation group revised updated and released the new Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework, which supports the continuous focus of community partnership information forms (CPIs).

HIPS Child Exploitation Strategic Group continues to receive support from Youth Commission for Hampshire & Isle of Wight. They continue to support the engagement of young people in the area with regards to gaining stronger clarity and understanding of Child Exploitation through The Big Conversation.

Safeguarding in Transitions Framework produced by 4LSAB & HIPS is currently under development and is expected during 2021-22, responding to the gaps in young adults over the age of eighteen and moving into adulthood, who had previously been vulnerable. This will also be inclusive of young adults who have faced risks of sexual and criminal exploitation

HIPS Child Exploitation group works collaboratively with issues such as missing children, modern day slavery, and the use of national referral mechanism. HIPS are also currently developing the Lurking Trolls campaign, a set of resources aiming to keep children safe online, was planned for release this year. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been pushed back to 2021-22. With regards to the MET section of the Child Exploitation delivery plan, this is featured in a subgroup of the SSCP and has been discussed in an email briefing received by the children's partnership in March 2021.

To conclude, the above areas have been discussed with Southampton Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and the delivery plan has developed alongside the planning for the Young Person's Service which aims to be operational during 2021-22.

For Southampton, the local delivery plan is in place and reports are made to the SSCP on a six-monthly basis on progress. The learning from the Liam Child Safeguarding Practice Review (publication 2021/22) is reflected within this. In addition, the learning from the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review is also incorporated and the local Missing Exploited and Trafficked team led a review of practice against the recommendations in this review. This was shared with both the SSCP and HIP Child Exploitation Strategic Group.

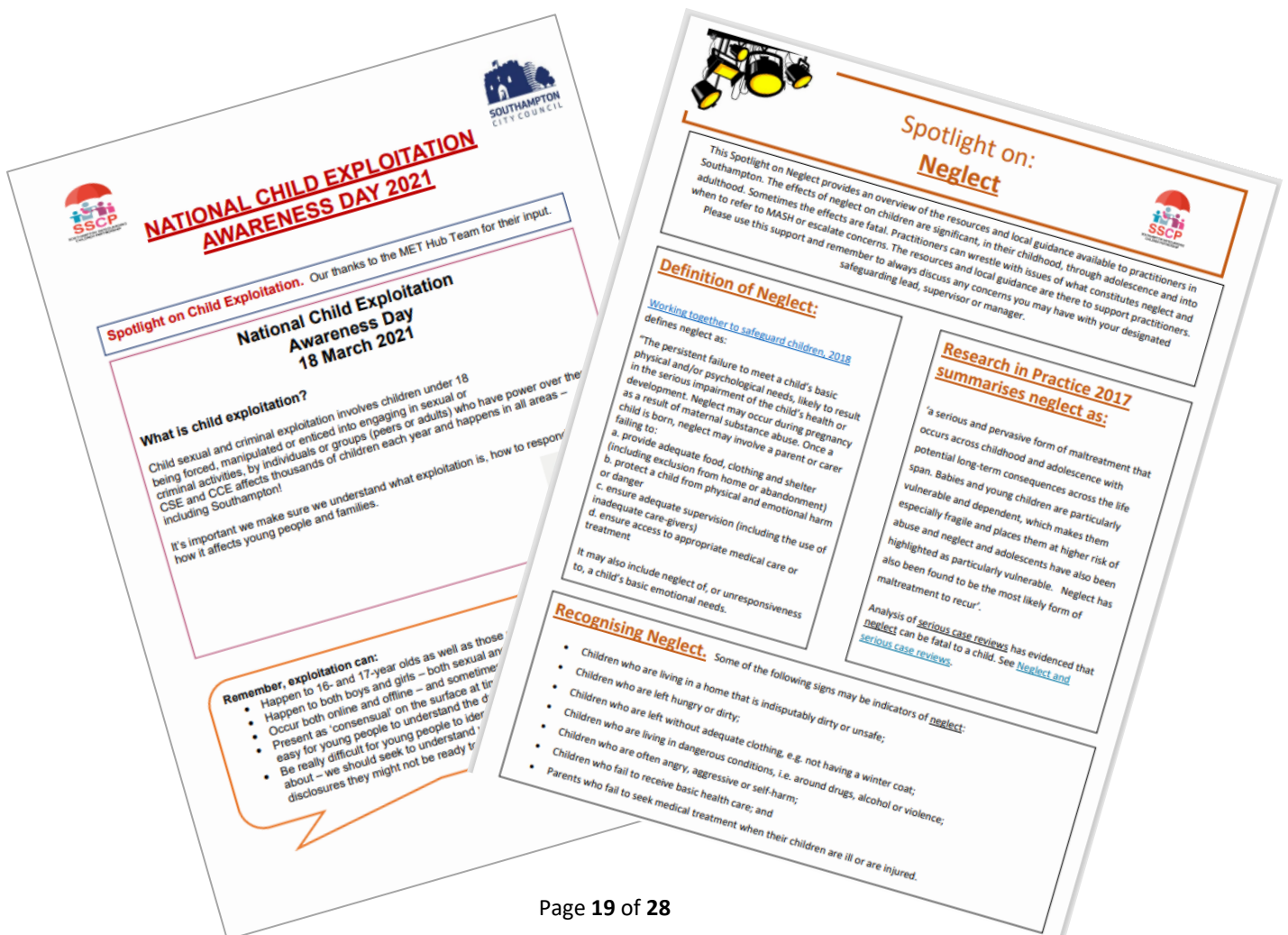
On behalf of HIPS Partnerships, Southampton SSCP produce the HIPS Child Exploitation Newsletter which can be found [here](#).

‘Spotlight On’ briefings

The HIPS Safeguarding Partnerships produce regular briefings to highlight changes and promote awareness and understanding of key policies. The ‘Spotlight on’ briefings are short summaries of the key points for practitioners and are available on the HIPS website and circulated to teams in each Partnership.

The ‘Spotlight On’ briefings produced in 2020/2021 are available via the links below.

- [Safer Sleep](#)
- [Neglect](#)
- [ICON](#)
- [Child Exploitation](#) (Child Exploitation Awareness Day 2021)



Financial Planning

Funding was provided by SSCP partners as follows for 2020/2021:

Agency	Contribution
Southampton City Council	£101,546
Southampton Clinical Commissioning Group	£42,025
Hampshire Constabulary	£16,600
National Probation Service	£1,522
Community Rehabilitation Company	£1,638
TOTAL	£163,331

Membership

The SSCP Board is made up of members from the following organisations:

Agency	Position
Independent Chair	Independent Chair
Southampton City Council	Executive Director of Wellbeing (Children & Learning)
Hampshire Constabulary	Superintendent and District Commander
Hampshire Probation	Director of Portsmouth/Southampton LDU
Community Rehabilitation Company	Director of Portsmouth/Southampton
City Clinical Commissioning Group	Director of Quality and Integration/Executive Nurse
NHS England (Wessex)	Director of Nursing
University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust	Director of Nursing and Organisational Development
Solent NHS Trust	Operations Director (Children's Services)
Southern Health Foundation Trust	Director of Children and Families Division & Safeguarding Lead
South Central Ambulance Service	Assistant Director of Quality
CAFCASS	Senior Service Manager
Voluntary & Community Sector	SVS – Southampton Voluntary Services
Legal Services	Solicitor (Child Care)
Health providers	Designated Nurse & Designated Doctor
Principal Social Worker	Principal Social Worker
Public Health	Director of Public Health
Cabinet Member for Children's Services	Lead Elected Member
Children & Learning Services	Cross Phase Advisor
SSCP Business Unit	Partnership Manager
SSCP Lay Member	Lay Member

Structure

The structure for the SSCP and its relation to the work across the HIPS areas is as follows:



Context for Southampton - data

Southampton has a total population of 252,900 residents. 20.5% of the population are aged under 18, and 13.4% of the population are aged 65 or over. 14.1% of the population are from a black or minority ethnic (BME) population, and 22.2% of the population described themselves as non-white UK (i.e. not white British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish, or Welsh) at the last Census (2011). This compares to a BME population of 14.6% and a non-white UK population of 20.3% for England as a whole. 2.3% of the population report that they cannot speak English well or at all.

The Indices of Deprivation (IMD, 2015) combine a range of economic, social, and housing indicators to provide a measure of relative deprivation, ie they measure the position of areas against each other within different domains. A rank of 1 indicates highest deprivation. Southampton is ranked 47 out of 152 Local Authorities in England on overall deprivation and is ranked 74 out of 152 local authorities on income deprivation.



26.5% of pupils attending nursery and primary schools and 28.5% of pupils attending secondary school in Southampton are eligible for and claiming free school meals. This compares with 17.8% of pupils attending nursery and primary schools and 18.9% of pupils attending secondary school for England as a whole.

52.2% of children in Southampton achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C in 2015/16 (academic) including English and Maths. This compares with 57.7% for England. Among pupils eligible for free school meals, 31.5% achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths in 2014/15 (academic), compared to 33.3% nationally. 4.9% of working age people in Southampton are unemployed, compared with 5.2% for England overall. The median gross weekly wage for employees living in Southampton is £602.2. This compares with an England wage of £613.3².

Indicators of Outcomes for Children

The SSCP considers a multi-agency dataset containing some key performance indicators for outcomes for children as well as the quality of local provision. It enables the SSCP to understand the impact of its work, and that of services, including changes for example where transformation projects take place. Tracking and analysing local data also allows the SSCP to understand the impact of changes or demand on one part of the safeguarding and child protection system to another. Data is analysed by the Safeguarding Practice Improvement (SPI) Group through two deep dive thematic audits. In 2020/2021 a thematic audit took place in relation to Child Sexual Abuse within the Family Environment. This allows key data to be brought together with other sources of information including the experience and views of children and young people and practitioner views. This provides a focused analysis of key issues to be highlighted to the SSCP and identifies activity to improve.

To follow is a summary of annual data for some of these key measures.

² LG Inform [An Overview of Health and Wellbeing in Your Area | LG Inform \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

Rate and number of Children in Need

	2019/2020				2020/2021			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Rate per 10,000 of Children in Need at end of period (including Child Protection (CP) / Looked after Children (LAC) / care leavers) at end of period	552	565	507	466	460	443	442	425
Number of all Children in Need (CiN) (including Child Protection (CP) / Looked after Children (LAC) / Care Leavers / Children in Need (CiN) in Early Help (EH) teams) at end of period	2778	2874	2577	2367	2339	2250	2247	2159

The rate of children in need based on 10,000 population of children under 18 is a key measure of the needs of children's needs in Southampton and the services and support required. Simply, it can be used as a broad indication of whether children and their families are receiving the right help at the right time and can be indicative of the success or otherwise of early help intervention and support locally. During 2020/2021 it can also be indicative of line of sight to children and young people who may be in need of safeguarding. The impact of COVID pandemic may be apparent in this reduction over time.

Children in Need Referrals

	2019/2020				2020/2021			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of new referrals of Children in Need (CiN)	1556	1630	1106	1030	900	1009	1168	976
Rate of new referrals of Children in Need (CiN) per 10,000 (0-17 year olds)	309	321	218	203	177	198	230	192

There has been a reduction from QTR 2 2020/2021 in the number and rate of new referrals of children in need. The OFSTED focussed visit in May 2020 stated that Social Workers in the MASH provide a timely and proportionate response to concerns raised about children. OFSTED pointed to the reduction positively as they noted children had been undergoing unnecessary child protection enquiries, assessment and becoming the subjects of child protection or child in need plans far more than in most other local authorities.

Child Protection

Where there are child protection concerns (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm) the local authority social care services must make enquiries to decide if any action must be taken under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. This is an essential area of the child protection system. 2020/2021 showed a peak in number of enquiries started in quarter 3 this reduced again in quarter 4. To some extent the peaks and troughs mirror the impact of COVID -19 regulations with dips following stay at home advice and increases when more children return to school. It is of note that Southampton remains significantly higher than our statistical neighbours and considerable work is ongoing to focus on this. This is part of the Children and Learning Service Improvement Plan.

Transformational work is underway in relation to Early Help, services for Young People and the roll out of a practice framework for Children and Learning staff.

Rate of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started per 10,000

Indicator	2019/2020			2020/2021				Statistical Neighbour	England
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Number of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started	545	426	362	385	354	463	385	358.3	330.6
Rate of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started per 10,000 children 0-17	107	84	71	76	70	91	76	55.7	41.8

Number and Rate of Children with a Child Protection Plan

Indicator	2019/2020				2020/2021				Statistical Neighbour	England
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at the end of the month, excluding temporary registrations	333	419	479	417	407	393	399	313	350.3	338.9
Rate of children with Child Protection Plan (CPP) per 10,000 (0-17 year olds) at period end	66	82	94	82	80	77	78	62	52.6	42.8

2020/2021 has seen a decrease in the number and rate of children with a Child Protection Plan which remains higher than statistical neighbours. The rate can be seen to diminishing significantly from Q3 to Q4. This remains an area of focus for the partnership and the children and Learning Service Improvement Plan. The SSCP continued to receive assurance reports on the progress of child protection work throughout 2020/2021.

Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale

	2019/2020				2020/2021				Statistical Neighbour	England
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescales (based on count of children)	45.7%	50.3%	61.8%	53.8%	86.0%	69.9%	40.7%	67.5%	81.0%	78.0%

The percentage of Child Protection Conferences held within timescales has remained lower than statistical neighbours and has been impacted by a variety of factors including the COVID-19 Regulations. This is an area of focus for the Children and Learning Service Improvement Plan. The Child Protection Co-ordinators worked hard to move conferences online during the early stages of the COVID -19 pandemic. There has been recognition that while attending conferences virtually is not ideal for most families it can enable effective and regular attendance of some professionals who may otherwise find it hard to attend at times. A hybrid model is being used.

Looked After Children rate (per 10,000 children) and Number of Looked After Children

	2019/2020				2020/2021				Statistical Neighbour	England
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Number of Looked after Children at end of period	500	516	493	490	488	485	499	495	615.4	80080.0
Rate of Looked after Children (LAC) per 10,000 at period end	99	102	97	96	96	95	98	97	97.2	67.0

Southampton has moved closer to its statistical neighbours in terms of rate of looked after children per 10,000. Children placed more than 20 miles from the local authority boundary are an area of scrutiny for the SSCP. This was highlighted during the Child Safeguarding Practice Review in respect of Liam and the challenges for the multi-agency partnership to support children placed outside of the city in terms of information sharing and physical distance. The move to more virtual working has created opportunities for better contact to be maintained often via a means that children and young people may choose.

Children at risk of going missing

	2019/2020				2020/2021			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of Looked after Children (LAC) missing for 24 hours or more	14	18	15	16	11	17	13	10
Number of children open to the authority who have been missing at any point in the period (count of children)	243	198	208	221	171	214	200	193

The OFSTED focused visit in May 2021 noted that “most children who go missing participate in informative return-home conversations that assist professionals in understanding their peer associations and the serious risks to which they are exposed.”

Percentage of 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or whose activity is not known

	2019/2020	2020/2021
Percentage of 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or whose activity is not known	6.3%	7.6%

2020/2021 has seen an increase to the highest level since 2018. This is an area of focus within the Children & Learning Services transformation programme and will feature within the Young Person’s Services, particularly for young people who have multiple risks and vulnerabilities.

School Absences

This data covers school absences during the Autumn Term 2020 (September 2020 – December 2020). Schools remained open during the second lockdown which occurred during this period.

Primary Phase

- Southampton's Primary Autumn Term 2020 absence is below the Statistical Neighbour average for Authorised Absence and in line with the Statistical Neighbour average for Overall Absence.
- Southampton's Primary Autumn Term Overall Absence rates decreased from 4.3% in 2019, to 4.0% in 2020, a 0.3% decrease.
- Southampton's Primary Autumn Term Persistent Absence rate remained static at 11.5% between 2019 and 2020.

Secondary Phase

- Southampton's Secondary Autumn Term 2020 absence is above the Statistical Neighbour average for Overall (6.8%), Authorised (4.0%), Unauthorised (2.9%) and Persistent Absence (19.2%) by 0.5%, 0.2%, 0.4% and 0.8% respectively.
- Southampton's Secondary Autumn Term 2020 absence (Overall 6.8%, Authorised 4.0%, Unauthorised 2.9% and Persistent Absence 19.2%) have increased by 1.0%, 1.1%, 0.1% and 3.9% respectively when compared to the 2019 Autumn Term absence for Overall (5.8%), Authorised (2.9%), Unauthorised (2.8%) and Persistent Absence (15.3%).

Specialist Schooling

- Southampton's Special School Autumn Term 2020 absence is 0.3% and 0.8% below the Statistical Neighbour average for Overall Absence and Unauthorised Absence.
- Southampton's Special School Autumn Term Overall Absence rates increased from 9.7% in 2019, to 12.2% in 2020, a 2.5% increase.
- Southampton's Primary Autumn Term Persistent Absence rate increased from 27.6% in 2019, to 42.8% in 2020, a 15.2% increase.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

- The PRU overall absence decreased by 9.4% from 51.3% in Autumn 2019, to 41.9% in Autumn 2020. The Statistical Neighbour average for PRU Overall Absence also decreased from 35.2% in 2019 to 27.4% in 2020. The gap between Southampton's PRU Overall Absence and the Statistical Neighbour average for Autumn 2020 is therefore 14.5%.

Year R/4 year olds

- Southampton's 4 Year Old Autumn Term 2020 absence is 4.5%. This is a decrease of 1.5% from 6.0% in 2019. Southampton's 4 Year Old Autumn Term 2020 absence (4.5%) remains 0.2% above the Statistical Neighbour average of 4.3%.

Forward Look

In 2021/2022 the SSCP will continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, although a return to a “new normal” is developing. There has been considerable evidence of creative and flexible responses by partner agencies to ensure children are safeguarded in “lockdown”, with many children unable to physically attend school and significant pressures arising for families due to the pandemic.

Priorities 2021/2022 are therefore identified in this context as follows:

1. **Safeguarding practice improvements in priority areas for the SSCP; Neglect, Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding, Child Sexual Abuse**
2. **Ensuring learning, recommendations and actions from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and thematic audits are implemented and embedded.**
3. **Child Sexual Abuse – a new strategy, implementation plan and training for practitioners**

An overview of each priority, how it will be measured and when it is expected to be delivered is as follows:

What	Success measures	When
1. Review and refresh of the SSCP Neglect Strategy and Practitioner Guidance to recognising the Severity of neglect. Implementation plan to be in place	Revised strategy and documentation produced and ratified by SSCP	Dec-21
	Evidence informed tools in place to support the multi-agency workforce in identification and response to children and families where there are concerns regarding neglect	Dec-21
	Delivery of implementation plan include communication plan and training	Mar-22
2. Delivery of SSCP Child Exploitation Delivery Plan aligning with Destination 22 Children and Learning Services Transformation Programme – development of Young Person’s Service	Delivery of Safeguarding Adolescents Framework (multi-agency) inclusive of contextual safeguarding.	Mar-22
	Increase in use of Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework	QTR 3 21/22
	Safeguarding in Transitions Framework (18 plus) completed and implemented	QTR 4 21/22
3. Child Sexual Abuse strategy, implementation plan and awareness raising/training for practitioners.	HIPS Child Sexual Abuse Strategy ratified by SSCP	QTR 4 21/22
	SSCP implementation plan in place	QTR 4 21/22
	Increase in practitioner confidence and knowledge leading to increase in identification of child sexual abuse	QTR 2 22/23

This Annual Report was produced by the Southampton Safeguarding Partnership and particular thanks go to Shaira Ghoorun, Safeguarding Partnerships Intern and Natalie Johnson, Safeguarding Partnerships Co-ordinator.

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