



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Time and Date

10.30 am on Thursday, 22nd January, 2026

Place

Coombe Abbey Park, Coombe Visitors Centre

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**

2. **Declarations of Interests**

3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)

a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th of November, 2025.

b) Matters Arising

4. **Safeguarding Children's Partnership Yearly Report** (Pages 7 - 54)

Briefing Note of the Director Children and Education.

5. **Holiday Activities and Food Programme** (Pages 55 - 60)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education.

6. **Work Programme** (Pages 61 - 66)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

7. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 14 January 2026

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is

Asher Veness Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Birdi, B Christopher (By Invitation), J Gardiner, S Hanson, Jackson (Co-opted Member), S Jobbar, L Kelly (Chair), M Mutton, S Nazir, E M Reeves, K Sandhu (By Invitation), P Seaman (By Invitation), R Thay, A Tucker and Vohra (Co-opted Member)

Public Access

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Asher Veness

Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 27 November 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor L Kelly (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor R Thay
Councillor A Tucker

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mr Vohra

Other Members: Councillor B Christopher (Deputy Cabinet Member for
Children and Young People)
Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and
Skills)

Employees (by Directorate):

Children's Services and
Education H Bedford, F Parklen, R Sugars, A Whitrick

Law and Governance G Holmes, T Robinson

Apologies: Councillor P Seaman
Mr D Jackson

Public Business

20. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

21. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 16th of October 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

22. Child Friendly Cov

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Children and Education which provided an update on the progress of Child Friendly Cov –

the city's commitment to make Coventry the best city in the UK for children, young people and their families to live and grow up in.

Attached as an appendix to the briefing note was the presentation in which officers summarised the following key points:

- Aspirations of the program and the 5 key objectives.
- Partnership and co-production.
- Child and young person voice and influence – One Big Voice Survey.
- Safe spaces.
- Safe spaces and young inspectors.
- No more knives tour.
- Child friendly Cov summer fest.

In considering the briefing note and presentation, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- The effectiveness and visual impact of the Safe Spaces stickers and the online resources available to young people.
- Statistics on the footfall and use of the Safe Spaces and attempts to improve and expand the offer to other providers and areas outside of the city centre.
- The provision for out of hours Safe Spaces and the vetting procedures for staff without checks and balances becoming a barrier for available spaces.
- The One Big Voice Survey being shared with private schools and alternative provision.
- Child feedback through the One Big Voice Survey.
- Widening the inclusion of schools across the city for Child Friendly Cov activities.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) notes the progress of Child Friendly Cov.

23. **Children in Care Pledge**

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Children and Education outlining progress made against the pledge for children in care and care leavers.

Officers began the presentation (attached as an appendix to the briefing note) by highlighting that the pledge was designed by children. Specifically, it focused around 7 key statements ranging from safety, physical, mental and emotional health, service and education accessibility, happiness, the quality of social workers, and inclusion and identity expression.

In considering the briefing note and presentation, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- The negative impact of changing social workers and the benefit of advocates and independent visitors to making long term connections with children in care and care leavers.

- Children in care being fast tracked for CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) where necessary and the service provided by the crisis team.
- Cooperation with the NHS and the ICB as they restructure.

The Board thanked officers for their presentation and recognised the importance of their work throughout all of children's services.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) notes the current progress made against the pledge for children in care and care leavers.

24. **Children Absent from Education**

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Children and Education which provided an overview of the statutory requirements and approach taken in Coventry to children who are absent from education.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor K Sandhu, prefaced the officer's presentation by recognising the wide-ranging but vital subject matter and the need to convey the Council's responsibilities and those of parents in an area where the law has changed recently.

The presentation attached as an appendix to the briefing note covered the following key areas:

- Statutory Guidance
- Education Partnership Priorities 2025/26
- Definition of children absent from education
- Responsibilities and staffing
- Strategic Approach
- Attendance
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and Suspensions
- Behaviour Pathway
- Education other than at school (EOTAS)
- Elective Home Education (EHE)

In considering the briefing note and presentation, the Board asked questions, received responses and discussed a number of matters as summarised below:

- Increasing non-attendance since the pandemic, despite a slight decrease in non-attendance in the past year, and the safeguarding issues surrounding EHE.
 - Recognising working within the legal requirements of EHE and how increasing non-attendance may be due to an increase in non-attendance policies and data capture efforts.
 - Praise for Coventry's rigorous child protection efforts despite non-attendance challenges.
 - Tools such as visiting and inspecting homes and the EHE register.

- Engaging parents despite difficult non-attendance circumstances especially with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children having to attend doctor's appointments during school hours.
 - Adapting the Council's guidance scheme to allow for reasonable adjustments.
- The persistence of non-attendance 5 years on from the pandemic and shifting the focus on younger children to school readiness.
- The pupil referral process for suspensions and exclusions – changing from the extended learning centre to the CAPA (Corrective and Preventive Action) centre to deliver statutory provision but also reduce the trauma of school exclusions.
- The nation-wide trend of exclusions – CAPA utilising a new graduated model to turn the curve on exclusions leading to problems later on in life and recognising bad behaviour as a need not being met.
- School uptake of the attendance support offer and the traded service.
- Relationships with partner organisations such as the Home Office to track non-attendance when children leave the country.
- Supported preventative placements for temporary exclusions which when successful can lead to permanent managed moves.
- Difficulties caused when relationships breakdown between parents and schools and the effect this has on the child's attendance.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2):

1) Considered the slides attached at Appendix 1 to the Briefing Note.

2) Agrees to create two Task and Finish Groups to investigate:

- **Elective Home Education (EHE) (Councillors L Kelly, M Mutton, and S Nazir)**
- **School Attendance (Councillors M Mutton, J Gardiner, and Mr G Vohra)**

25. Work Programme

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted.

26. Any Other Business

There were no items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.50 am)

To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 22nd January 2026

Title: Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Yearly report

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To brief Scrutiny Board 2 on the Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CSCP) yearly report in relation to activity of the CSCP April 2024-2025.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:

- 1) Consider the information provided concerning the outcome and progress in 2024/25.
- 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Working Together 2023 states that, 'Safeguarding Partners must jointly report on the activity they have undertaken in a 12-month period. That reporting should be transparent and easily accessible to the families and professionals. The focus of these reports should be on multi agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence and improvement.'
- 3.2 Reports must include what partnerships have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- 3.3 Safeguarding Partners should make sure the report is widely available. A copy should also be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- 3.4 The report is published and can be found attached at Appendix 1. It is also available online here: [cscp-yearly-report-2024-to-2025](#)
- 3.5 The CSCP had 3 priorities for 2024-25:
- Neglect
 - Exploration
 - Making the system work

4 Highlights

- Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has had a robust response to the new requirements under Working Together 2023 including the Lead Safeguarding Partners, the Independent Scrutineer and the engagement of Education.
- Quality assurance activity is showing improved recognition and response to neglect.
- The response to children affected by serious youth violence and exploitation identified as strong in the Joint Targeted Area inspection continues to improve.
- Early help in Coventry is strong, and this supports the identification of children requiring support at the earliest opportunity.
- Over 2500 practitioners have attended Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership training, webinars and learning events.
- The Safeguarding Together Action Group (STAG) is now made up of 210 frontline practitioners across 100 agencies and continues to grow, ensuring that key messages get to the frontline.
- The partnership is committed to making Coventry a place where children and young people feel valued, supported and enjoy themselves and this is delivered through the Child Friendly Cov initiative.
- 'Your Voice Matters' the young people's group supports children and young people to have a voice. Work has been undertaken to ensure that their views are acted upon.
- Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership continues to be much more responsive to emerging issues rather than sticking to a planned programme of work. An example of this is the audit in relation to the Working Together 2023 health check.

5. Priorities for 2025-2026

5.1 Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has a three-year Business Plan in relation to:

- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Making the system work

Report Author(s):

Name and Job Title: Rebekah Eaves, Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Adults Board Manager

Telephone and E-mail Contact: Tel: 024 76976827 or e-mail
Rebekah.eaves@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.



■ Annual report 2024-2025



Contents

	Page
Introduction from the Lead Safeguarding Partner meeting	3
About Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership	4
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership structure and governance	5-7
Independent Scrutiny	7-8
Engagement of Education	8
Area Profile	9
Case Study 1	10
Feedback from Children and families	11
Child Friendly Cov	12-13
Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	13
Progress against priorities	14-22
Case study 2	23
Quality assurance	24-30
Case study 3	31
Workforce Development	32-35
National reforms	35
Case study 4	36
Financial contributions	37
Engaging frontline practitioners	37-39
Case study 5	39
Workforce	40-41
Future planning	42-45
Conclusion	45

Introduction from the Lead Safeguarding Partners

We are delighted to present this year's yearly report on behalf of the three Lead Safeguarding partners namely:

- the Chief Executive of Coventry City Council.
- the Chief Executive of Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board.
- the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police.

We want Coventry to be the best place for children and young people to grow up in and our Child Friendly Cov initiative is a campaign to ensure that Coventry is a child friendly city - a place where children and young people feel valued, supported, safe and enjoy themselves.

We continue to keep children at the centre of our thinking and delivery at all levels. We have been working hard across the year to promote professional curiosity across our multi -agency workforce to ensure that the lived experience of children is recognised and responded to.

We hope that you find this report useful in understanding the partnership's work and celebrating some of the successes. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people working with children, young people and their families in Coventry and without their dedication and care these successes would not be possible.

About Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership is responsible for putting arrangements in place for agencies to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children and young people in Coventry.

Our vision is to work in partnership to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm and neglect and that their welfare is promoted.

Our values are:

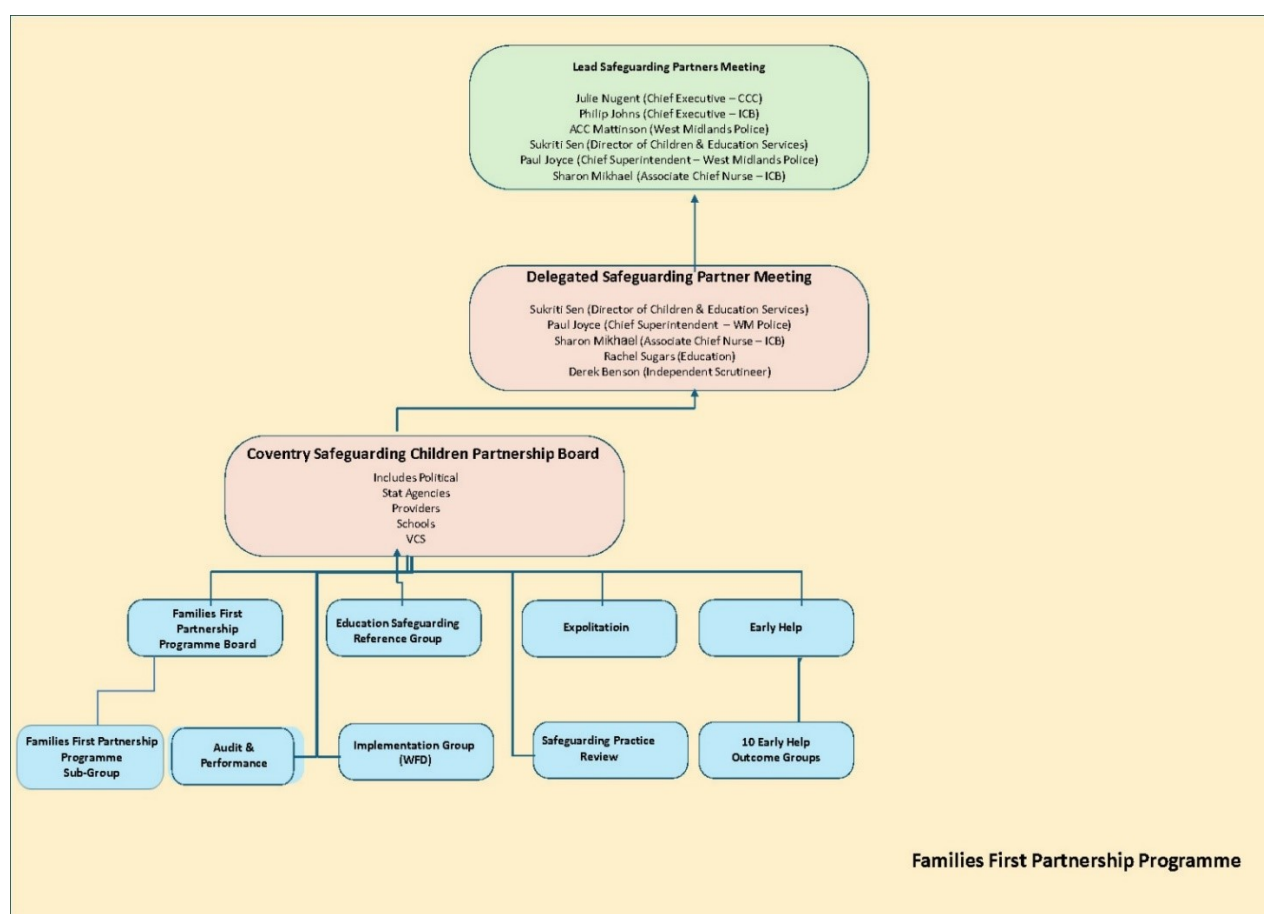
- To put children, young people and their families at the heart of everything that we do.
- To ensure that partners work together to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- To recognise and share examples of good practice so that these can be replicated in other areas.
- To be innovative and to try new approaches to continuous improvement.
- To be open and honest about barriers that may be preventing improvement so that we can collectively agree how these may be overcome.
- To ensure that poor practice is challenged appropriately to ensure that it leads to improvements in the system.
- To ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right service, at the right time, in the right way.

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership recognises the importance of the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in everything that we do. We recognise that individuals still experience racism, discrimination and inequality in society. This impacts the physical, mental, emotional, economic, social and spiritual health of our communities. Therefore, as a partnership we are determined to seek out, call out and tackle racism, discrimination and inequality.

This report comes in line with the requirement in Working Together 2023 for, 'Safeguarding Partners to jointly report on the activity that they have undertaken in a 12 month period'.

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Structure and Governance

Following the updated requirements in working Together 2023 the Safeguarding Partners have reviewed and updated the structure of the partnership. The full new arrangements were published in December 2024 and can be found here: [cscp-arrangements-2024](#). The intention is that these arrangements will be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis to maximise the impact that the arrangements have for children, young people and their families in Coventry. The full structure can be seen below:



Lead Safeguarding Partner meetings

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership is currently piloting a local and regional approach to Lead Safeguarding Partner meetings with other West Midlands areas.

The local Lead Safeguarding Partner meeting is made up of:

- The Chief Executive of Coventry City Council
- The Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board
- The Assistant Chief Constable of West Midlands Police.

Across the 12 month period the Lead Safeguarding Partners for Coventry are meeting as a local group on 3 occasions during the year but are also meeting as a regional group to include: the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police, 4 Integrated Care Board Chief Executives, 7 Local Authority Chief Executives, 7 Independent Scrutineers and 7 Business Managers to try to identify possible themes where resources can be pooled to maximise impact. The Lead Safeguarding Partners meeting is the group that leads and drives the changes that the government have set out. Lead Safeguarding Partners speak with authority, take decisions and commit their agencies in terms of policy, resourcing and practice matters.

The Lead Safeguarding Partner group is established, robust and effective, with a clear commitment from partners to review and improve working methods, building on strengths and innovation within the strong partnership relationships that exist. The Lead Safeguarding Partner is responsible for holding their own organisation to account, on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements. They are responsible for discharging their own statutory duties. The Lead Safeguarding Partner is the high-level, over-arching local governance partnership that primarily focuses on safeguarding systems, performance, and resourcing. The Lead Safeguarding Partners are jointly responsible for the proper involvement and oversight of all relevant agencies, and act as a team, as opposed to a voice for their own organisation alone. The Lead Safeguarding Partners hold responsibility for the implementation of recommendations and learning from serious incidents, local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, although elements of monitoring these can be delegated.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners meeting

The Lead Safeguarding Partners have appointed the following Delegated Safeguarding Partners:

- The Director of Children's Services and Education (Coventry City Council)
- The Chief Superintendent Coventry Policing (West Midlands Police)
- Associate Chief Nurse of Safeguarding (Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board).

The Strategic Lead for Education and SEND and the Independent Scrutineer are also part of this group.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners meet on a monthly basis. The Designated Safeguarding Partners act as a team to focus on driving improvement in practice, delivering the safeguarding priorities, delivering high quality rapid reviews and safeguarding practice reviews, delivering appropriate multi- agency training and professional development, engaging relevant agencies, ensuring effective communication across the partnership and identifying emerging issues. They also put into practice any decisions made by the Lead Safeguarding Partners.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners meeting is chaired by the Partnership Chair which for 2024-2026 is the Associate Chief Nurse of Safeguarding for Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board.

Subgroups

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership also has 6 subgroups to deliver the work of the partnership:

Safeguarding Practice Review subgroup- this subgroup oversees the process for conducting rapid reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews as well as ensuring that high quality and timely Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Audit and Performance subgroup: this subgroup oversees a multi-agency dataset as well as thematic audits and quality assurance visits to understand the effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration and the impact for children, young people and families.

Implementation subgroup: this subgroup oversees workforce development as well as any implementation activity in relation to statutory reviews and audits.

Exploitation subgroup- this subgroup leads on the development and implementation of the Exploitation Strategy: [Exploitation – Coventry City Council](#)

Early help subgroup- this subgroup leads on the development and implementation of the Early help strategy. [Early Help Strategy 2023-2025 – Coventry City Council](#)

Families first Partnership Programme Board- this subgroup leads on the implementation of the Children's Social Care reforms.

Safeguarding Education Reference Group – this subgroup leads on ensuring that there are 2-way processes in place between CSCP and Education to support education to have effective safeguarding systems in place and identify any emerging issues.

Independent Scrutiny

The purpose of Independent Scrutiny is to drive continuous improvement in safeguarding Coventry children. In Coventry the delivery of independent scrutiny is partly filled by the Independent Scrutineer role. Scrutiny also exists within all levels of the partnership and practitioners at all levels have a desire to ensure that safeguarding practice is constantly improving, to protect children and young people across the city. Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has a Quality Assurance Framework and activity undertaken under this framework will also support an understanding of the effectiveness of the partnership. An additional lens is provided by external inspections including Joint Targeted Area Inspections and ILACS.

A range of mechanisms support the Independent Scrutineer to carry out the role including but not limited to:

- Performance dataset
- Multi-agency audits
- Rapid reviews and Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Quality assurance visits to key areas

- Visits to Your Voice Matters, Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership young people's group and seek the views of parents/carers
- Attendance at key partnership meetings
- Focus group.

In early 2025-2026 the Independent Scrutineer will be looking at progress against the Joint Targeted Area Inspection recommendations

Engagement of Education

Coventry benefits from a strong and embedded education partnership approach with formalised communication channels and planned systemic engagement with Headteachers. Across 2024-2025 this engagement has been strengthened to include:

- The Lead Safeguarding Partners regard all schools (including independent schools, academies, alternative provision and free schools), further education colleges, early years providers, and other educational establishments in Coventry as relevant agencies.
- The Director for Children's Services and Education sits on the Executive Board and is one of the delegated safeguarding partners.
- The Safeguarding Reference group is a mechanism for educational settings to feedback about their responsibilities under Working Together 2023 and keeping Children Safe in Education, ensuring good engagement with the CSCP, identifying emerging issues and disseminating local and national learning.
- The Safeguarding Compliance in Education Officer will hold regular Designated Safeguarding Leads meetings to provide updates in respect of changes to national and local policy, changes in process and local safeguarding intelligence.
- All frontline practitioners from educational settings will have access to the Safeguarding Together Action Group STAG to receive the latest update from the CSCP and encourage two-way information sharing.
- Educational settings are able to escalate any issues to Board through a highlight report.

Area Profile

Population growth

From 2011 to 2021 Coventry's population grew by 8.9% from 317,000 to

345,300

This is higher than both the overall increase for the West Midlands of 6.2% and 6.6% for England



The latest mid-year population estimate (2022) for Coventry's population is

355,600

Coventry is a diverse city **60%**

of school children are from a non-white ethnic minority group in 2023/2024.



Up from 47% in 2015/2016. This compares to 39% in England.



The life expectancy at birth of the average person in Coventry is



77 years for males



and 82 years for females

(2020-2022). However, this masks significant health inequalities across the city. The inequalities in life expectancy between the most and least deprived quintile of Coventry, 2020-2021 is 10.2 years for males and 7.5 years for females.



The latest data for 2022-23 suggests that

28% Coventry children aged 0-15 live in relative low-income families

compared with 20% nationally and 25% in the West Midlands region.



The percentage of Coventry neighbourhoods that are amongst the 10% most deprived in England reduced from 18.5% to 14.4% between 2015 and 2019

Based on this measure, Coventry ranked 64th nationally in 2019 (with 1st being the most deprived), an improvement in ranking 46th in 2015

71,894
of the city's population were children and young people aged under 28

237,928
(66%)
were of working age 18 - 64

50,880
(14%)
were aged 65 and over



Coventry is a young city with a median age of

35
years

compared with a national average of

40 years

Case Study 1

Background

Peter is a 16-year-old accessing the Youth Justice Team via Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust. Peter struggled with education and is awaiting a neurodevelopmental assessment. He has a supportive family but no contact with his biological father and was not previously known to Police. Peter began using cannabis at 14, eventually selling drugs to peers and accumulating debt. Peter was physically assaulted on multiple occasions and was further threatened with violence to himself and his family. He was groomed and coerced into drug trafficking in London, and consequently arrested with crack cocaine and heroin.

Support Process

After arrest, Peter was supported by the Youth Justice Team during police bail. He was identified as a victim of exploitation (NRM) and had a Pre-Sentence Report submitted to prevent a custodial sentence. Peter received a Youth Rehabilitation Order with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (YRO with ISS) as an alternative. He also engages with specialist support for drug use and mental health.

Outcome

Peter is serving a high-intensity community sentence focused on rehabilitation and preventing reoffending. He attends all appointments and is receiving ongoing support to address his vulnerabilities and build a fresh start.

What went well

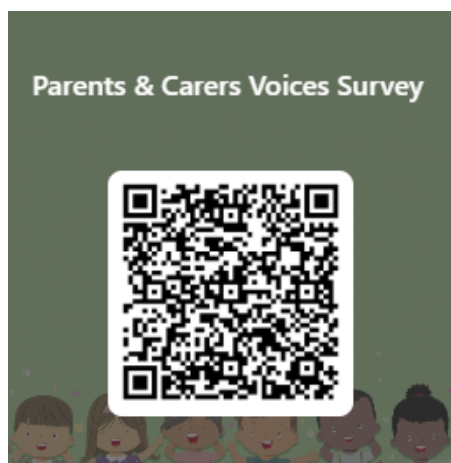
- Early identification of exploitation and vulnerabilities acknowledging Peter as a victim.
- Effective collaboration between Youth Justice and specialist services for drug use and mental health.
- Peter's commitment to attending appointments, including early morning sessions.
- Use of community-based sentence to avoid custodial sentence and support rehabilitation.

Feedback from children and families

The CSCP recognise that a key method to learning and practice development is talking directly to children, young people, families and parents.

Implementing and endorsing an initiative called 'Your Voice Matters' across the partnership, has been integral to listening to the voices of children and their thoughts, feelings and experiences of living in Coventry. The CSCP pride themselves on having rich and meaningful conversations with children and young people about their safety, safeguarding and where they can go for support. By utilising the platform of 'Your Voice Matters', members of the partnership have been able to create change and improvement to the City. For example, a number of children of young people voiced that they would like more places in the City that they knew and were guaranteed to be safe for whatever they needed. As a result of this, and through partnership working Safe Spaces was born. More information around this can be found [here](#).

The CSCP have also created a platform for parents in Coventry to provide anonymous feedback on the safety of their children within the City. This is known as 'Parents & Carers Voices' which consists of a handful of questions to understand and reflect on how parents and carers feel regarding Coventry, their children's safety and their knowledge on accessing support. Please see QR code below to complete the online survey.





Child Friendly Cov

Child Friendly Cov is a campaign to ensure that Coventry is a child and young person friendly city - a place where children and young people feel valued, supported and enjoy themselves. Over the past year significant changes that matter the most to young people, haven taken place. Including, promoting health and well-being to expanding recreational opportunities and ensuring their voices shape the city's future.

Child Friendly Cov Pledges



Child Friendly Cov used seven priorities to reflect on progress over the past year. Positive steps and changes that link to these priorities can be found below:

- Promoting a health city is directed by the One Big Voice Survey feedback, we are committed to providing activities and projects that support young people's physical and mental well-being.-A CAMHS commissioned, collaboratively produced website.
- The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme continues to offer a variety of support and activities to support health and wellbeing.
- Pupil Parliament was held at the University of Warwick and included some discussions about reducing fossil fuel use.
- Low-carbon measures introduced at Godiva Festival.
- Ed Sheeran's Music Foundation launched in Coventry with Ed Sheeran spending time with young people.
- The No More Knives project is being introduced in four secondary schools this year.

- Safe Spaces Initiative launched in 2024 and continues to expand across the city.
- Family Hubs are raising awareness of their services by engaging families in locations including McDonalds. Over 4 days, 550 people engaged with the campaign.
- ‘A Conversation With’ sessions enabled young people to meet leaders and discuss key issues and influence practice and change.
- Coventry Rocks continues to highlight the city’s cultural attractions.

To find out more about Child Friendly Cov and the key work that’s being undertaken please click [here](#) or visit: <https://www.childfriendlycov.co.uk/>

Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected.
- the child has died or been seriously harmed.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners are responsible for the delivery of high-quality and timely rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews following notification of a serious child safeguarding incident.

Coventry Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is committed to ensuring that agencies understand the events leading up to a serious incident and the ways in which they can better work together to protect children in the future.

Coventry is signed up to the West Midlands framework for undertaking rapid reviews, following notification of a child safeguarding incident, and local safeguarding practice reviews.

Coventry Safeguarding Children’s Partnership did not publish any Local Child Safeguarding Practice reviews in 2024-2025.

Progress against priorities

Neglect

What's working well?
There is evidence of improved recognition and response to neglect from multi agency audit activity.
The rates of Children in Need (CIN) and Children in Care due to neglect have remained relatively stable compared to the previous year. Approximately 38% of all Child Protection (CP) plans were categorized under neglect. Benchmarking data for 2023/24 indicates that Coventry continues to report lower rates of children on CP plans due to neglect than its statistical neighbours, the West Midlands region, and the national average.
Early help in Coventry is strong. Early help services are delivered through a collaborative effort involving various agencies, organisations, and teams within the early help partnership. This strong partnership working allows children impacted by neglect to be identified at the earliest opportunity.
The Partnership have undertaken various workforce development activity over the years to assist practitioners with the early identification and understanding of neglect. As a result of this, the Partnership have facilitated multiple learning events and conferences which can be found here , with the most recent even taking place in January 2025.
Coventry Children's Services has been using Rethink formulation to address repeat Child Protection plans.
The NSPCC have completed a Graded Profile 2 Implementation review which identified that Coventry is now at full implementation stage in relation to the Graded Profile 2.
Graded profile 2 trainers are developed, and this is allowing training to be rolled out.
The ICB has continued to facilitate the roll out of ICON. This has taken longer due to competing priorities including the implementation of electronic patient records at UHCW. However, the majority of midwives/neonatal nurses and other relevant Health staff are now trained and able to deliver the key ICON message to parents/carers
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust offer supervision to staff providing reflective opportunities for the signs and indicators of neglect to be discussed and acted upon.
System work across education is raising awareness, and helping practitioners in education to navigate the system helping to ensure the right early help support is

provided to children and families at the right time. This will help to reduce levels of neglect by ensuring problems are identified and responded to earlier.

Since August 2024, Probation has successfully embedded a co-located Probation Service Officer (PSO) within the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This collaboration has enabled Probation to consistently meet their targets for requested checks, actively participate in strategy meetings and enhance joint working practices. The Probation Service Officer, alongside the MASH Manager, has also delivered targeted training to both Probation and Children's Services teams across the area, ensuring a unified and cohesive approach to child safeguarding

West Midlands Police have adopted the AWARE principles when dealing with children and young people;

- Appearance
- Words
- Activities and behaviours
- Relationship Dynamics
- Environment

These principles provide officers with a range of considerations to fully capture the voice of the child, record the lived experience of children and identify hidden vulnerability.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust Safeguarding Team provides Level 3 training for all clinical staff who work with children and young people. The Safeguarding team are currently delivering a Neglect Level 3 training package, this is a face-to-face session and feedback has been positive. Following attendance at this training staff are able to recognise the signs of Neglect, understand the importance of a quality safeguarding referral and the significance of early intervention. The training empowers staff to utilise 'professional curiosity' and supports staff to take appropriate action.

A multi-agency Neglect Toolkit has also been developed and recently reviewed to assist professionals in their understanding of and ability to identify neglect. The toolkit contains case studies, links to further resources and details of what actions can be taken. Additionally, young-person friendly resources have also been created and shared to Partners across the city. To find out more please click [here](#).

Probation have 100% compliance with child safeguarding training for all staff. Training consists of e-learning and classroom training. Neglect is part of this training.

Coventry College reports both internal work within the college and positive relationships with partners has led to good identification of neglect.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust Safeguarding Team offer safeguarding supervision to statutory case holders and on an ad hoc basis. Reflective supervision can assist practitioners to articulate and evidence their thoughts and observations.

GP safeguarding Leads and safeguarding Co-ordinators have received updates/training on professional curiosity.

The Integrated Care Board continues to tackle health inequalities. Following the principles set out in the Integrated Care Board Health Inequalities Strategy. One aim is to improve the access, experience and outcomes of healthcare provision including prevention.
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has created an online exploitation training package that has been completed by 440 individuals between 2024-2025.
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnerships Trust deliver a suite of training packages. This includes an All-age Neglect Training package, that covers signs and causes of neglect and includes the longer-term effects of adverse Childhood experiences around the science of the infant brain developments transition into adulthood.
Areas for development
To build on the positive work undertaken by the hubs and develop Family help
Continued workforce development is needed to support practitioners with the identification of neglect across all agencies.
Continue to develop outcome and impact measures for Graded Profile 2
Continued roll out of ICON across primary care.
Continue to assess how intersectionality impacts on access to services.
Consideration of the recommendations in the pending National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Neglect report to inform our partnership response to Neglect.

Exploitation

What's working well?
Serious Organised Crime and Exploitation daily meeting. Offering support and input on each child or young person discussed.
The Child Exploitation and Missing group is attended by partners from Police, Children's Services, Health, Probation and Education. Strong attendance at this group allows for robust multi agency information sharing and decision making in relation to identified victims, offenders and locations.
<p>Operation Makesafe</p> <p>West Midlands Police launched Operation Makesafe in December 2024. Operation Makesafe is a national campaign to raise awareness of child exploitation in the hospitality sector.</p> <p>The campaign aims to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential victims and ensure an effective safeguarding response.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work together with business, to upskill staff and protect vulnerable children from exploitation. • Provide public reassurance and effective preventative measures. • Enhance public safety and confidence. <p>It's designed to help business owners and their employers to identify potential victims of child exploitation and, where necessary, alert police officers to intervene prior to any young person coming to harm.</p> <p>The ICB have worked with UHCW and Health across the West Midlands to improve the data available regarding injuries sustained due to serious violence. This contributes to the dataset analysed to inform the serious violence duty local response.</p>
<p>2024-2025 saw a significant reduction in missing episodes and children involved in those episodes; this is representative of efforts to prevent, intervene and disrupt missing episodes and evidences the impact of partnership work to reduce frequent missing episodes for children through missing triage and missing strategy meetings.</p>
<p>West Midlands Trauma Vanguard continues to be hosted by Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board offering a suite of support activities for young people who have experienced trauma and adversity. The data indicates 400 young people have accessed the service across Coventry and Warwickshire.</p>
<p>A multi-agency transitions panel has been established to look at support that is needed as children affected by exploitation transition into adulthood.</p>
<p>Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership has delivered exploitation training to 669 practitioners across 2024-2025.</p>
<p>My Tomorrow Campaign and Safer Spaces were highlighted by Ofsted as examples of best practice in tackling child exploitation.</p>
<p>Education representation on Child Exploitation Missing Operation Group offering insight and progress on education inputs and responses needed from schools.</p>
<p>Health agencies have worked together to devise a shortened version of the Exploitation indicator tool for health a partners in Acute and Community settings to support identification of children and young people affected by Exploitation.</p>
<p>West Midlands Police have completed a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) problem profile resulting in a 4P CSE action plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare - To develop multi-agency intelligence to enhance understanding of threat & risk, to establish strong multi-agency systems & processes and to promote effective joint partnership working to tackle CSE. • Protect - To reduce the impact of CSE on the local community and to work with partner agencies to safeguard young people at risk of CSE. • Pursue - To actively explore criminal prosecutions and civil interventions in order to proactively disrupt people engaging in child sexual exploitation. • Prevent - To prevent people from engaging in criminal activities linked to CSE and to prevent young people being exploited. This is achieved by raising

awareness amongst the local community, young people, parents/carers and professionals.
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust deliver a suite of training packages including an Exploitation package for Children and Adults with aims of recognising vulnerabilities/ risk factors in children and adults who may have been exploited.
South Warwickshire Foundation Trust have a Named Nurse for Exploitation, the Trust expects that this practitioner is involved in all the relevant meetings that they are required to attend and share health information as appropriate to ensure children and young people are safeguarded.
West Midlands Police has recently changed its policy in relation to missing children where any under the age of 14 are automatically regarded as high risk regardless of the circumstances of them going missing.
Exploitation training delivered by a cross-agency team for all school Designated Safeguarding Lead's in May 2025.
Experts from West Midlands Children and Young Person service (SARAC), Partner and Networking Officer for West Midlands for Children and Young people (Panahghar) and One Big Voice (Safe Spaces) have attended Champions Safeguarding Group in Health to present information in relation to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) with a focus on policies procedures and referral processes.
Exploitation week was promoted throughout Primary Care with resources shared.
There is a commissioned St Giles practitioner in 3 Coventry schools working with children affected by Child Exploitation.
Practitioner guidance for Child Sexual Exploitation was issued in March 2025 to support HMPPS practice in managing perpetrators convicted of child exploitation to improve awareness and drive up the quality of risk management with this cohort.
Language matters focuses on the impact of language and how this can affect victims and communities. This guide has been shared across the partnership.
SWFT's Health Exploitation Navigator is co-located within the dynamic multi-agency Horizon Team. The Health Exploitation Navigator works collaboratively with Social Workers, Police Officers, and Youth Workers by collating, interpreting and presenting a detailed analysis of relevant health information from a range of NHS systems, both locally and further afield which will contribute to triage, risk assessment and outcome decisions. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable children and young people by supporting and signposting professionals working directly with exploited children across the partnership is a core function of the Health Exploitation Navigator role. A recent workstream has focused on ensuring Health Agencies are alerted to children/young people working with Horizon.

West Midlands Police Schools Intervention and Prevention Officers are heavily involved in supporting Young people within both Primary and Secondary Schools, in Coventry.

Areas for development?

To develop our approach to working with children and young people in relation to online safety.

Training to embed the health Exploitation tool.

To continue to develop our approach to drawing in intelligence from the local community to better understand the locations where children and young people are targeted for the purposes of exploitation.

National Referral Mechanism's to be discussed in initial Multi Agency Criminal Exploitation meeting (MACE) prior to submission with all professional's views considered.

The partnership needs to understand and address disproportionality in response to serious youth violence and exploitation particularly in relation to Black boys.

Making the system work

What's working well?

Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support

- A four-tiered CAP Graduated Model of Support has been successfully developed and implemented, aligned with the Government's SEND and Alternative Provision reform strategy, enabling timely, needs-based interventions for vulnerable children and young people.
- The establishment of a Multi-Agency Referral Panel has improved Multi-Agency collaboration and ensures robust oversight of referrals and placements, with safeguarding, and individual needs at the centre of every decision.
- Schools now have structured pathways to access early intervention and targeted support, helping to reduce exclusion risk and keep children within safe, monitored environments.
- The redeveloped CAP Framework allows for the safe use of unregistered providers, with a rigorous quality assurance process that ensures safeguarding standards and Ofsted compliance.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Health advisor is employed to review, analyse, and interpret health records. Over the last year a health advisor was employed by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust with forensic Mental

Health experience. This has complemented the team skill mix with support in understanding the impact of mental health and medication prescribed.
Children's Services had five Children's homes rated as good in 2024. There is also an ambitious residential homes expansion programme to increase the number of Children's homes from 5 to 9 by 2026 to support the challenges of sufficiency of residential homes for children unable to live in the family environment.
Coventry Children's Services have strong offer to care leavers in custody and care leaver parents which has recognition at a national level.
Coventry Family Valued is a practice approach that brings consistency in our work with children that is both relational and restorative.
SWFT's Safeguarding Link Group Meetings are held monthly via MS Teams. The aim of the Safeguarding Link Group Meeting is for short sharp messages to be relayed which can be taken back to "frontline" teams for information sharing. The Link Group supports the dissemination of messages and encourage their teams to utilise the Safeguarding Information Library and share Lessons Learnt.
Our family hubs and start for life offer- 204, 896 people have accessed Family hub activities including 28,710 who have accessed Start for Life offer in the first 1001 days.
Safeguarding Co-ordinators are employed in most GP Surgery's as a point of contact for Partners where there is a need to share or gather information to safeguarding children.
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust hold Safeguarding Champions meetings on a quarterly basis to include guest speakers from a variety of services. To date Coventry and Warwickshire Trust has 119 Safeguarding Champions. All communication is sent via Trust bulletins on a fortnightly basis.
GP practices and midwifery have worked together to improve communication pathways and attendance at MDT meetings within GP practices.
The Children's Services Domestic Abuse Training Programme was recently reviewed and updated by the CSCP Training Officer, and Domestic Abuse Programme Manager. As a result of this a new training offer is underway for the Partnership
South Warwickshire Foundation Trust has two Nurses currently working within the Coventry Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This facilitates the safeguarding of our children/young people through partnership working, sharing of relevant information and contributing to multi- agency analysis/decision making. The Trust also contributes to the regular audits of cases within the MASH. This allows for all Partners to look to improve practice within MASH. The Safeguarding Children's Lead also attends the MASH Subgroup. In addition, the quality of Health Assessments provided to MASH by the Nurses is peer reviewed to ensure high standards do not reduce.

The CSCP have been involved in the launch and on-going development of the Professionals Network website, facilitating a central point for resources and partner organisations.

South Warwickshire Foundation Trust Safeguarding Team review the quality of all MARF Safeguarding Referrals submitted to Coventry MASH. The effectiveness of Children's Safeguarding Referrals depends on their capacity to provide Childrens Social Care with essential information to make informed decisions about a child's needs and take appropriate actions. Incomplete or substandard information can lead to inadequate decisions, potentially jeopardising the child or resulting in overly intrusive interventions. Therefore, it is imperative for Health Professionals to meticulously and accurately complete referral forms to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and young people under their care. SWFT Safeguarding Team provide training on completing these referrals and support individuals/teams to improve the quality of referrals submitted.

Areas for development?

Continue to develop to implement Coventry Family Valued across the partnership to support a strengths-based way of working with children and families.

Continue to benchmark activity against the findings of National Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel reports.

Continued strengthening of use of the Early Help module and the early help digital offer.

Ongoing training and capacity building for school staff and Alternative Provision providers to confidently implement and access the graduated model, with safeguarding as a core priority.

The partnership needs to continue to raise awareness of safer spaces with children, young people and communities.

Continue to seek ways to address local and national challenges regarding sufficiency and the cost of providing homes for children in care across the spectrum of kinship, fostering and residential homes, particularly for complex children.

Continue to balance demand whilst balancing cost efficiency targets.

Continue to develop our partnership approach to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion including anti-racist practice.

Ongoing focus on involving fathers and extended family members to maximise strengths and resources that exist for that exist for children and young people within their family networks.

Strengthen professional curiosity to further enhance the quality of assessments, ensuring they consistently provide the best possible understanding of children's lived experiences, relationships and needs.

Case study 2

Greater understanding of Serious Youth Violence in the Emergency department



Background: the Safeguarding team have been receiving data for all 16-17-year-olds attending the ED since July 24, a member of the team reviews these attendees to identify any safeguarding concerns and if the appropriate pathways have been followed. From these reviews the following themes emerged, Children in Care (CiC), Mental Health, assaults and documentation. A lack of Professional Curiosity was also identified.

Purpose: following the Safeguarding Team reviewing attendances for 16–17-year-olds and the latest Care Quality Commission visit, areas have been identified within the Emergency Department regarding safeguarding children. A report will be produced quarterly to identify areas of concern and actions to support staff and the department. Action Plans will be created as required.

Data collection highlights:

- *Safeguarding assessment documentation not being utilised by staff.*
- *Professional curiosity was not demonstrated during attendances to the Emergency Department.*
- *Children in care attendance not shared with Children in care team.*
- *It was identified that 10 children who has attended had been victims of assault. Documentation on these was found to not be clear and professional curiosity was not used.*



Quality assurance

Multi Agency Thematic and Statutory Audits and Learning Reviews

Multi-agency audits provide a valuable means of identifying strengths and areas of good practice alongside key lessons for improvement; having a systematic auditing process in place allows the CSCP to monitor the quality of practice and target areas that require further development., evidence best practice, and provide effective challenge to all partners.

The Audit & Performance subgroup delivered a planned programme of audit activity which focused on statutory audits (Section 11 and Section 175/157) and thematic audits, chosen by the Partnership linked to the priorities, in response to identified areas of concern or as a result of inspections or Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The annual audit programme was discussed and agreed by the A&P Subgroup before any audits commenced.

Thematic audits follow the same general framework with bespoke Key Lines of Enquiry based on the theme, designed to encompass a multi-agency approach, allow for triangulation of data, review the effectiveness of practice, and capture the legal requirements of all agencies in supporting and protecting children.

Child Sexual Abuse

In 2021, the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) commissioned a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) concerning Child T. This was prompted by concerns about the multi-agency response and investigative process after Child T presented at hospital with injuries suggestive of potential sexual abuse. There was a delay between the child's presentation and the completion of a forensic medical examination for sexual abuse. As a result, the critical forensic window for gathering evidence was missed.

As a result of the Child T SPR, a recommendation was made for CSCP's A&P subgroup to undertake a further audit to check progress against the areas of learning. By repeating the case file audit, which was undertaken as part of the SPR, allowed conclusions to be reached about the direction of travel and ensured that a picture of the current safeguarding practice in relation to the identification and response to child sexual abuse was evident. Based on the evidence available in the case files audited, the findings revealed that the response to and the management of children and young people experiencing or at risk of sexual abuse was generally good, but the quality of practice was not consistent and it was clear that some of the key themes and areas of learning identified during the Child T SPR were still present and would benefit from further development. Agencies who participated in this audit were encouraged to use the learning they identified as a basis to continually develop their safeguarding practice when responding to concerns about sexual abuse. Partners were responsible for ensuring their identified areas for improvement were addressed and their single action plans were completed within the specified timescales. A multi-agency action plan was also developed and implemented in response to the audit findings

Area for development	How have we responded?
Professional Curiosity	<p>The Implementation Subgroup reviewed and updated the CSCP One Minute Guide on Professional Curiosity and promoted this across the partnership.</p> <p>Primary Care developed a professional curiosity toolkit and shared this with members of the Implementation Subgroup for use within their own organisations.</p> <p>Curious practice will be featured as a section in the revised threshold document and associated training workshops.</p>
Strategy discussions	<p>The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) process flowchart is being reviewed and updated to ensure it was in line with recent guidance issued by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. This will be circulated to all MASH practitioners and Operational Leads across Children's Services to ensure that strategy discussions held due to concerns about child sexual abuse involve the relevant agencies and consultation with the SARC.</p> <p>The CSCP monitored the attendance of Mountain Healthcare and the SARC at all strategy meetings where potential sexual abuse is identified. This monitoring occurred quarterly.</p>
Awareness Raising	<p>The CSCP has promoted ongoing awareness across the partnership, including presentations from Mountain Healthcare at the Safeguarding Together Action Group, a forum for frontline practitioners.</p>
What difference has it made? (evidence of impact / practice improvement)	
<p>During a recent Rapid Review (June 2025) the panel were encouraged to see a robust response to concerns about possible sexual abuse evidencing impact and embedding of learning from the Child T SPR. There was clear evidence that the indicators of child sexual abuse were recognised and acted upon promptly. This was followed by effective collaboration between Mountain Healthcare, SARC, and other NHS services. A strategy meeting was convened immediately, and all relevant professionals were present at this meeting, including a clinician from Mountain Healthcare. The panel were also reassured to see that signs of both sexual and physical abuse were identified and addressed appropriately.</p>	

Working Together 2023 Self-Assessment Health Check

The Department of Education (DfE) developed a multi-agency planning tool to support Safeguarding Children Partnerships to complete a self-assessment health check to identify how close they are to meeting the requirements in the new Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 statutory guidance. The outcome of this self-assessment

indicated that the CSCP has strong, effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place with working practices that are consistently applied across the partnership. The consensus maturity level of the CSCP was 'Developed' meaning local arrangements are well-embedded, established, standardised and widely adopted. Hearing and listening to the voice of children, joined up partnership work and robust leadership and governance arrangements were clear areas of strength, however there were some areas that require further refinement, and some recommendations were made as a result of this piece of quality assurance work.

Area for development	<u>How have we responded?</u>
Engagement with fathers	Engagement with fathers is a golden thread throughout all multi-agency training and KLOE in all audit work. A scoping exercise was also carried out with partners to gain a deeper understanding into what pathways and knowledge are in place around the role of males and engaging fathers. The importance of engaging with fathers was also included in the CSCP Newsletter and DSL Briefing in September 2024.
Seeking the views of parents and carers	A Parent Survey consisting of 5 questions was developed and the Implementation Subgroup encouraged partners to proactively embed this initiative and development of work. The Parent Survey was launched and promoted at several different forums such as the STAG and Parent Strategy Group. The Implementation Subgroup continues to promote this and evaluate responses.
Lead Practitioners	The Early Help Strategic Group undertook work to upskill a wider range of practitioners from different agencies to be lead practitioners. The Audit & Performance Subgroup have started to gather data on Early Help assessments completed by partner agencies and partner agencies who act as lead practitioner.
Links to other strategic Boards and Partnerships	The 'Officers of the Board' meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss all recent reviews (Rapid Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews etc.) to identify any recurring/cross cutting themes and how to address them jointly.
Learning from reviews continually reinforced via training and learning and development activity	As part of the new arrangements the partnership is required to understand the aggregated learning themes from audits and SPR's. The CSCP Board Team created a table detailing the main learning from Rapid Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and audits and this will become a standing agenda item at Implementation Subgroup in terms of WFD activity. The Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework was updated, and all future audit ToRs will include a plan on how to share the learning (pre-recorded webinar/podcast, lunchtime learning, briefings at PDF and STAG, OMGs etc.) and QA activity to test the implementation of learning after a period of time. Learning from reviews became a standing agenda item at the Implementation Subgroup.
What difference has it made? (evidence of impact / practice improvement)	

The Early Help Assessment Co-Ordinators offered support to schools and the Early Help Strategic Group were encouraged by recent data that showed an increase in the number of schools acting as Lead Practitioner.

Serious Youth Violence Thematic Learning Review

In March 2024 inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on the theme of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence in Coventry. One of the findings of the inspectors was that the multi-agency partnership is at an early stage to better understand how disproportionality of risk from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation impacts on different cohorts of children within Coventry. They found that action had not yet been taken to understand or address agency approaches and outcomes for particular cohorts of children based on ethnicity and gender and particularly the potential for disproportionate responses to black boys.

In response to the findings from the inspection, during the last quarter of 2024/25, the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned an independent thematic learning review with explicit exploration of a cohort of six children's journeys through the lens of racial disproportionality. The terms of reference for the review also required that it covered Coventry Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPI), which are undertaken when a child or young person on the Youth Justice Service (YJS) caseload is involved (or is alleged to have been involved) in a safeguarding or public protection incident.

The review identified several key findings across the six children examined:

- Each case presented missed opportunities for early intervention (i.e. reachable moments), particularly in identifying vulnerabilities to child exploitation. Timely referrals to Horizon and earlier multi-agency responses are essential.
- A more trauma-informed approach is needed, with greater consideration of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as bereavement.
- The prevalence of neurodiversity among children involved in violent behaviour was notable. Nationally, delays in assessment, diagnosis, and support persist. Locally, prioritising assessments for children in the Youth Justice Service and those in care remains critical.
- There is a need to explore how ethnicity and cultural background may affect access to or perceptions of support services. Black and mixed-heritage boys and young men remain disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, with the disparity widening.
- This review aligns with existing research indicating that overrepresentation is driven by intersecting disadvantages — social and economic factors, educational outcomes, housing instability, and mental health challenges.

The review made the following recommendations:

Recommendations for the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership	
1.	The Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership should work with other strategic boards to develop a multi-agency dataset, which will allow a deeper understanding of the racial disproportionality in those children involved in serious youth violence and allow more detailed analysis to address the identified root causes of this.
2.	The Coventry Safeguarding Childrens Partnership should consider the National Panel report 'It's Silent: Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children'. It should also promote it across the Multi Agency Strategic Partnership Boards.
3.	The Coventry Safeguarding Childrens Partnership should consider how they influence all partners to consistently and accurately record the ethnicity of young people they support.
4.	The Coventry Childrens Partnership and wider boards with an investment in Serious Youth Violence should consider undertaking a piece of research to understand the view and perspectives of young black and mixed heritage children and young people both involved in the various stages of the criminal justice system.

The commissioning of this review by the Coventry Children's Partnership demonstrates a clear commitment to understanding and addressing ethnic disparities. It represents one of several steps being taken by partners to explore the issue of racial disproportionality more deeply. While the small cohort size limits the ability to draw definitive conclusions, the review has facilitated valuable discussion and reflection on how a more comprehensive understanding can be developed. The CSCP will be implementing the review's recommendations during 2025/26.

Statutory Audits

Section 11

The CSCP are required to complete an audit of all partner agencies in relation to their duties under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 on a biennial basis. This self-assessment reviews the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding children at a strategic level and assesses each organisation against standards based on the requirements laid out in Working Together 2023. This audit consistently provides assurance and evidence of good quality safeguarding practice by agencies working children and young people in Coventry which has continued again this year, with agencies reporting a high level of compliance with all standards and no obvious areas of development. There were many areas of strength within this audit to evidence that agencies are meeting their duties under S11; senior leadership, robust governance and accountability frameworks, safer recruitment procedures and multi-agency partnership work all scored highly. Partners were able to evidence their responses and rationale for their grading judgements with clarity and by providing examples and documents, therefore clearly providing assurance around their practice.

There were few areas overall in which agencies judged themselves as 'requires improvement' and agencies which identified a development need provided plans and assurances that this was being, or would be, implemented and provided set timescales as to when this will be completed by. Development for the Partnership should focus on strengthening person-centred areas of work - incorporating the voice of the child and ensuring children and young people are able to shape and influence partnership culture and practice.

The Audit & Performance Subgroup created a joint action plan for review after one year (midway point) to monitor the progress and impact of the recorded actions.

Section 175/157 School Safeguarding Audit

The CSCP undertakes an annual assessment of all schools in Coventry which reviews the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding children in relation to their duties under S157 and S175 Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 and Working Together 2023. This year's audit questions were updated to reflect the changes in KSCIE and learning from local and national reviews to ensure schools are compliant with the latest legislation and guidance.

There was a 100% completion rate this year, and the audit revealed that schools in Coventry are performing well and have effective safeguarding arrangements in place to keep children safe. All schools who completed the audit self-assessed as either Grade 1 (Outstanding) or Grade 2 (Good) in relation to their safeguarding arrangements demonstrating high levels of performance which offered a good level of assurance to the Partnership.

It is important for schools to use their self-assessment and the key learning from the audit as a basis to continually develop their safeguarding arrangements. All schools were able to generate an action plan to address any areas where improvement was required and will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the identified areas for improvement are addressed and their action plans are completed within the specified timescales. The Safeguarding in Education Adviser will work directly to support schools to improve and develop their safeguarding arrangements and provide assurance to the Partnership about progress being made regarding the identified development opportunities.

The Partnership will continue to monitor the impact of improvements schools make through future S175/157 school safeguarding audits.

Future Plans for the Audit & Performance Subgroup

The Performance Scorecard is a dynamic tool that will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with CSCP priorities. This ensures that the data collected continues to provide assurance that safeguarding practice is effectively improving outcomes for children across Coventry. Members of the Audit & Performance (A&P) Subgroup are committed to deepening their understanding of the data to better evaluate the impact of multi-agency work in key priority areas.

The CSCP will implement an audit programme focused on areas aligned with the Partnership's strategic priorities and emerging safeguarding themes. To enhance the current methodology, the Audit and Performance Subgroup will incorporate new approaches, such as Appreciative Inquiry, to gather meaningful feedback from frontline practitioners.

Previous audit findings will be revisited to assess whether improvements in practice have been sustained, reinforce key learning, and identify evidence of impact.

Case Study 3

Background:

Misty is a 17-year-old Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeker who arrived in the UK two years ago and was in foster care. Misty wanted to increase her independence and decided to move into supported accommodation when she turned 17. Misty discovered that she was pregnant and shortly after attended the sexual health clinic for an Early Medical Abortion (EMA). During her visit, she informed the nurse that she was in care. This then alerted the nurse to ensure that Misty had the right level of care. The clinic's safeguarding lead then arranged an Emergency Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting (EMDT). Due to Misty seeking support early on in her pregnancy, there was a time frame of a few weeks for a plan to be made.

What support was offered:

Misty's social worker contacted the new Children in Care nurse for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People who agreed to attend the EMDT and support where possible.

During the EMDT, it was agreed who will support Misty through the procedure and 48 hours after. This included her social worker and support worker increasing her care hours to ensure someone was with Misty for this duration.

The Children In Care Nurse also agreed to refer Misty to the Outreach team as part of the new sexual health service in Coventry.

The Outreach team then saw Misty shortly after the procedure (at a convenient time and place for Misty) and was able to offer Misty a confidential space to process what had happened and to think about the next steps for her sexual health.

The Children In Care nurse also saw Misty for a review appointment one month later to establish if there were any further health actions or support that Misty would like.

The outcome:

Misty had the procedure and was supported by the right professionals and at the right time.

What went well:

The immediate support that was given to Misty:

- The next day EMDT
- The sensitivity of the Sexual health clinic– ensuring that Misty has the right support before they arranged the procedure.
- The 48 hour care from social worker and care provider
- The ongoing support from the outreach offer from the Sexual Health Service.
- The availability of the Children in Care Nurse to ensure that she was able to offer her support at every opportunity.
- The MDT approach to Misty's care – The respect and understanding of everyone's role.
- Misty had her Statutory Review Health Assessment with the CIC Nurse who was already involved in her care.

Workforce Development

The CSCP deliver a programme of thematic, awareness and specialist multi-agency training and development opportunities. Our programme has been tailored and co-developed from partner agencies and organisations. The CSCP will regularly assess training gaps and implement a variety of training and awareness methods to ensure key messages are shared, this can be through a number of formats such as training, webinars, lunch & learns, e-learning or development of resources.

The CSCP promote and showcase throughout the city, providing all agencies or anyone working with children and families to increase their knowledge around key safeguarding skills and topics.

Please see below for annual attendance for each session:

Safeguarding Awareness E-Learning	482
Exploitation Awareness E-Learning	270
Domestic Abuse Awareness E-Learning	244
Reducing Parental Conflict E-Learning	80
Working Together to Safeguard Children	110
Domestic Abuse	64
Child Sexual Exploitation	65
Self-Harm & Safeguarding	63
Understanding Parental Substance Misuse	29
Right Help, Right Time	99
Understanding Child Exploitation	77
Child Sexual Abuse Awareness	13
Having Difficult Conversations with Children & Families	63
Management of Allegations (LADO)	118
Bitesize Trauma Informed Practice Sessions	206
Pathway to Change	68
Alcohol & Drugs Lunch & Learn	57
Five to Thrive	86

Learning Events:

The CSCP proudly offers multi-agency learning events that address emerging themes and identified gaps. This year, the CSCP has organised, facilitated, and hosted the following learning events.



Loan Sharks & Scams Intervention



Forced Marriage Awareness



Fire Safety



Understanding Child Neglect


In total, 382 practitioners and professionals have attended our individual learning events this year. The CSCP aims to host at 3 learning events per year to contribute to development.

Over 2,500 practitioners in total have attended our training, webinars and learning events!


Evaluating Impact:

Whilst the CSCP can evidence excellent feedback across the training programme, understanding the impact of training and resource development is also extremely important. As a result, we have hand-picked a number of delegates to feedback following their training to help us analyse the impact of training on practice and how this has resulted in better outcomes for children and families.

Working Together to Safeguard Children	
General Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The training was well presented all the speakers were very good gave good information and advice” • “The trainers were clearly very knowledgeable” • “The course was amazing, very insightful and eye opening to someone that is new to the brand of work. Amazing course and I would suggest anyone in any line of safeguarding work attends!”
Evidence of Impact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’ve become more confident in safeguarding!” • “The course has improved the quality of my MASH referrals!” • “I now feel confident & I will share with all of my colleagues” • “I ensure I take the correct steps when assessing a safeguarding situation”
Overall Rating (out of 5):	

General Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I found hearing personal experiences really valuable as you hear first-hand what people need when being on the receiving end of those conversations” • “Really helpful!” • “I felt the facilitators were knowledgeable and insightful into what can/could be a difficult topic to address”
Evidence of Impact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The course has helped impact our practice, by providing staff members including myself with equipped knowledge to address difficult conversations” • “It is helped me and the team that I support, to consider the impact on the woman that we are having the difficult conversation with. Sometimes we focus too much on getting the information across and rather than the information may be received” • “I have been considering all the factors that can impact communication when interacting with both young people and adults”
Overall Rating (out of 5):	

Right Help, Right Time	
General Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Friendly nature from colleagues delivering , possibility to join in either via microphone or in the meeting chat. Helpfulness of colleagues in answering questions” • “It was quick, convenient and easy to understand” • “the trainers answering questions as they were raised and enabling people to interact!”
Evidence of Impact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can honestly say that this course helped me to understand the vital aspects of spotting when help is needed and gave me more confidence and understanding to make the necessary enquiries and actions if I have concerns” • “It has given me the confidence to make referrals to Mental Health and other agencies and MASH” • “The course has provided valuable insights that I have been able to integrate into my work, especially with early help set up” • “I found the training has helped my practice because there were some cases of safeguarding where I felt I may have

	<p>misjudged the level of support required for that young person/ family”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was a new starter when I was on the course. I found it very helpful in the way I have carried out my role”
Overall Rating (out of 5):	

National Reforms

The Children’s and Education Bill was introduced in December 2024. Part 1 of the bill contained reforms to children’s social care. Following this the Department for Education published the Families First Partnership Guidance in March 2025, the full document can be found here: [Families First Partnership programme - GOV.UK](#)

The key changes outlined in this document are:

- Family help- a seamless offer of Targeted Early Help and Child in need
- The Family Help Lead Practitioner role (FHLP)
- Multi-agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) and the introduction of the Lead Child Protection Practitioner role.
- Embedding Family Group Decision making across the system of help, support and protection

Work is now underway looking at what these changes might look like in Coventry including:

- visiting local authorities who were awarded funding to test out elements of these changes-these are called Pathfinder sites.
- Impower have been commissioned to support the the project for a time limited period.
- a local project team is being established.
- a multi-agency Families Forst Partnership Board has been established
- a series of multi-agency workshops are being held.

Case study 4

A 6-year-old male was admitted to University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire due to weight loss and vomiting whilst having feeds via gastrostomy. The medical care took into consideration the needs of the child and there is evidence that his wishes were known. This was captured with the use of play therapy and engagement with those who knew the child best. The child was known to the children's disability team as well as the community nursing team and there is early evidence of good communication to aid forward planning for the child's care needs.

All members of the Multi Agency Team worked collaboratively to provide optimal care, centred around his needs, preferences, and in his best interests. There were some minor delays to the discharge process but this was explored and an appreciation of everyone's roles and responsibilities was understood. Childrens Services fully supported a safe discharge and did bring mother to the ward and transported her home again due to transport difficulties. This was key to ensure that the child was supported and had contact with his mother, at what was a challenging time for them both.

The adaptations for discharge included a safety plan which was agreed with the parents, planned visits by all professionals involved and moving of furniture in the home to support a bed space for the child to sleep. This required co-ordination and flexibility from all involved.

There have been no known concerns since the discharge home evidences that the multi-agency team have worked well together to endure the safety and welfare of this young person.

Financial contributions

Each of the safeguarding partners contribute to the combined Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership and Adult Board budget. The contributions can be seen in the table below:

Agency	Contribution	Percentage of budget
Coventry Local Authority	£267, 940	72%
West Midlands Police	£31, 627	8%
Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated care Board	£73,736	20%

These funding contributions support the business unit to co-ordinate all of the activities of the CSCP, including the cost of statutory reviews, the Independent Scrutineer, learning and development, communication and quality assurance.

Safeguarding partners and Relevant Agencies offer their time and expertise to the activities of the Partnership. These activities include participating in meetings, multi-agency audits, child safeguarding reviews, analysing and submitting data, delivering training and ensuring the roll out of key learning and messages.

Engaging frontline practitioners

Engagement with frontline practitioners is a priority for Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership as it is recognised that it is vital for learning to reach the frontline in order for there to be a positive impact for children, young people and their families. The CSCP utilises a number of methods to engage frontline practitioners in the work of the CSCP.

STAG

The Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership hold a frontline practitioner forum called the Safeguarding Together Action Group (STAG). The STAG's purpose is to bring people together in a new way to safeguard children across the partnership. There are currently 210 members across over 100 agencies, some of which have never worked directly with the Safeguarding Children Partnership before. The discussion topics in the STAG fall mainly into the below categories:

- ≤ To share information from Safeguarding Practice Reviews, audits and national learning so that information can reach front line professionals more effectively.
- ≤ To ensure that professionals are kept up to date with emerging safeguarding issues across the City.
- ≤ To help cross-agency working

≤ To look at the effects of action on front line practice ≤ To increase awareness of new policy and procedures

≤ To identify emerging safeguarding issues

Organisations are invited to put forwards speakers, presentations and items that are of interest to the forum members. Partnership updates are also shared via the Forums mailing list. Meetings have taken place once a quarter over the past year, covering actions recommended in rapid reviews and topics recommended by members. This included:

May 2024

The STAG session included a presentation from: Mountain Healthcare around the Sexual Assault Referral Centre; Coventry Haven around Female Genital Mutilation Awareness; Coventry City Council Commissioning around the Mental Health System; The Holiday Activities and Food Programme and an update around the Joint Targeted Area Inspection.

September 2024

The STAG session included a comprehensive presentation around the Early Help System and Offer; Child Friendly Cov & the Participation Team; Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Training Programme and a new resources around Information Sharing.

January 2025

The STAG session included a workshop delivered by the NSPCC and the work being undertaken at their Midlands hub, a further presentation around the Early Help System in Coventry; a presentation from Horizon around the Exploitation Team and their referral route and service; an awareness session around the Safer Spaces initiative in Coventry and an overview of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

April 2025

The STAG included a workshop from Guy's Gift around their bereavement support for children, an overview of Private Fostering, a presentation around Race & Racism following a national report; a further presentation around Mental Health Services in Coventry & the local picture in the city. An overview around a newly published 'low risk exploitation guidance' from Horizon, and the e-learning offer within the Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Meetings continue to be recorded and shared with members so they can be used in training sessions and by members unable to attend.

Newsletter

The newsletter is sent out on a quarterly basis and contains a breadth of useful and timely information, ranging from the most recent One Minute Guides, highlighting local services, promoting practice tools and referral pathways and signposting to upcoming training and events. The newsletter has 3,392 subscribers who are able to access

further information through web links through the newsletter. <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/coventry-local-safeguarding-children-board/newsletters>

Resources

The CSCP recognises that frontline practitioners have a range of learning styles and often have busy daily roles which necessitates resources being developed that are informative and concise and suit a variety of learning styles. The CSCP has developed one-minute guides, podcasts and webinars.

Case study 5

An adult male was identified as a risk to children and vulnerable persons, through crime reports, arrests, disclosures and range of intel. Police action had been taken however he had not been charged or convicted of a Modern Slavery offence despite several ongoing investigations. As the risk remained and other measures such as Child Abduction Warning Notices and bail conditions were seemingly not effective a Slavery Trafficking Risk Order was considered as a next step.

There was a review of information held on police systems and liaison with legal services with a draft application. The draft application was reviewed with legal services and a date arranged for a hearing for INTERIM Slavery Trafficking Risk Order with officer in attendance at court. The INTERIM Slavery Trafficking Risk Order was granted at the Magistrate's Court. The conditions / prohibitions were targeted at subjects' behaviour to protect children and vulnerable persons and to ensure compliance with the terms of the order. Subject successfully charged and plead guilty with a first series of breaches, mainly over non-disclosure of phone and contact with children. The subject later arrested again on suspicion of further breaches, charged and remains on remand. Sentencing is anticipated at Crown in due course.

Workforce

In line with the national picture Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership are facing challenges in terms of workforce recruitment and retention. The following measures have been put in place in an attempt to mitigate this:

Coventry Local Authority	Coventry Integrated Care Board
<p>Coventry Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy 2023-2025 sets out the commitment to achieve (i) diversity and inclusion, (ii) a stable permanent and highly skilled workforce, (iii) an effective wellbeing offer and (iv) a comprehensive learning and development provision to the workforce to support the delivery of better outcomes for children.</p> <p>The Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES), led by Skills for Care, is a continuous improvement programme designed to support social care organisations achieve anti-racist workplaces. This is the second year that Coventry have been actively involved working jointly with Adults Services and has made good progress in providing data for all nine workforce data metrics, collected and analysed by the SC- WRES, compared to five in 2024.</p> <p>This demonstrates commitments towards evidencing the standard of equity in Social Work Services and Coventry can now display the SC-WRES logo as a symbol of transformative change journey towards race equity. It illustrates the local authority is serious, brave, and authentic about dismantling systemic racism.'</p> <p>The Workforce Development Strategy focuses on meeting the needs of our communities to have a workforce that is reflective of the people the service provides a service to. A staff Diversity and Inclusion Group was established in 2024 to promote and raise awareness on three key areas: Anti Racism, Allyship and Neurodivergence. The group are supporting services to develop and deliver actions to address disparities within services.</p>	<p>Development of Legacy Mentorship roles (Supporting late career retention by directing support to early years). Nationally this has been used to support newly qualified into role but in our system, we focused on new to or aspiring ward managers/ newly appointed leaders. We were experiencing both retention issues and individuals not applying for such posts. The assumption in this work was also that there would be a positive impact for teams given the support for new to leadership posts. We know people often cite leadership in their work area as a reason for leaving.</p> <p>Launch of flexible rostering across all acute providers, allowing staff to have control over their work patterns within a set of guidelines – as a result we have seen significant improvements in our flexible working staff survey scores.</p> <p>We are launching 2 further retention schemes: looking specifically at mental health and well being and moral injury following a significant increase in sickness rates and looking at enabling movement through the creation of rotational posts, system wide job swaps and short-term movement for development purposes.</p> <p>We held a workshop to look at our priorities for further system wide retention work – our priority group is support workers where rates of turnover are high and costly. The intention is to hold a listening forum with support workers to find out what would make them want to stay and then work on the outputs of that.</p> <p>In addition, we have –</p> <p>Groups-looking at compassionate leadership and compassionate culture and have launched inclusive recruitment training and active bystander.</p> <p>People Development is targeting support workers and have launched a Higher Development Award (L3) which covers generic competencies such as team working and communications – this has initially been</p>

	<p>targeted at social care support workers where our turnover is particularly high. This group is also looking at how we can create Pathways from T levels into entry point apprenticeship; improving access to work experience so people make the right career decisions and stay. They are also reviewing delegated tasks for social care to both enhance the experience of social care support workers and address unnecessary admissions challenges.</p> <p>Under workforce transformation we are focused on improving workforce productivity and reducing our dependency on temporary staffing – the excessive use of which can have a negative impact on the workforce.</p>
<p>University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire</p> <p>UHCW recognise that it is important that staff wellbeing is supported in order to optimise patient care as well as retain staff. The health and wellbeing offer includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 employee assistance programme • Wellbeing webinars, such as menopause • Psychological support • Mindfulness activities • rest and recharge areas including a wellbeing walk • GP Helpline for staff and their children • Disability & carers passports for staff • Access to work scheme • Covid & Flu vaccination programmes • Free eye tests • Cervical screening on site • Diagnostic fast track • Flexible working panel • Continued application of NHS Retention Toolkit <p>Within paediatric nursing they utilise a Band 5-6 initiative. This means staff with 2 years' experience are able to complete competencies in order to be offered a Band 6 post.</p> <p>Over the last financial year there has been an improved position on the vacancy rate, which will be attributed to all of the above.</p>	<p>South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT)</p> <p>SWFT offers a wide range of initiatives to support staff recruitment and retention, including Career Conversations, which provide staff with opportunities to explore support and learning and development options to make informed career choices. The Organisation also provides a health and well-being resource pack, and benefits from the support of the Organisational Development (OD) team. OD is a Foundation Group Team dedicated to empowering leaders, supporting teams, and promoting staff development and well-being through a 'growing our own' approach. Additionally, Coaching and Mentoring programmes are available, along with a dedicated staff support team that ensures employees feel cared for at work and understand the importance of inclusion and the Freedom to Speak Up. In addition, staff de-brief sessions and supervision can be offered as required to support staff.</p>

Future planning

Safeguarding Children's Partnership Business Plan 2024-2026

Priority 1: Neglect		
Action	Target Date	Lead
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review and update the Neglect Strategy.	December 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to understand the profile of neglect across the city.	June 2024	Chair of Audit and Performance
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to develop multi-agency neglect training.	September 2024	Chair of Implementation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to promote the neglect toolkit.	December 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to engage with frontline practitioners through the Safeguarding Together Action Group to understand barriers to identifying and responding to neglect.	December 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that agencies are trained and supported to use the early help assessment to ensure that families receive co-ordinated and appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.	December 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to promote the step up/ step down procedure.	December 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to undertake an audit of cases where neglect is a feature that have been subject to step up/ step down.	March 2025	Chair of Audit and Performance Subgroup
Share the learning from the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel across the partnership and implement the learning across the system.	June 2025	Chair of Implementation Subgroup

Priority 2: Exploitation / SYV

Action	Target Date	Lead
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to share the findings of the Serious Youth Violence Joint Targeted Inspection across the partnership.	July 2024	CSCP Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to understand the profile of exploitation/ Serious Youth Violence.	June 2024	Chair of Audit and Performance Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review its workforce development offer in relation to exploitation/ serious youth violence.	December 2024	Chair of Implementation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to undertake awareness raising in relation to professional curiosity.	December 2024	Chair of Implementation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to make exploitation/serious youth violence the theme of its conference in 2025.	June 2025	Chair of Exploitation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review and promote the exploitation screening tool.	December 2024	Chair of Exploitation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to develop its approach to out of hours strategy meetings.	December 2024	Delegated Safeguarding Partners.
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to raise awareness of the Trauma Vanguard across the city.	March 2025	Chair of Implementation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to monitor and understand any issues of disproportionality and put strategies in place to address any issues that arise.	September 2024	Chair of Audit and Performance
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to undertake an exploitation/serious youth violence case file audit.	June 2025	Chair of Audit and Performance

Priority 3: Making the system work		
Action	Target Date	Lead
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to publish new arrangements	September 2024	Lead Safeguarding Partners
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review the Safeguarding Practice Review toolkit	September 2024	Chair of Safeguarding Practice Review Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to develop mechanisms for engaging VCSE and Sports Clubs	September 2024	Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review threshold document	December 2024	Chair of MASH/EH
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that National, Regional and Local learning is disseminated to frontline practitioners	June 2025	Business Manager, Chair of Implementation Subgroup
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to further develop mechanisms to understand the Voice of the child and parents	June 2025	Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to deliver quality assurance activity as laid down in the Quality Assurance framework	June 2025	Business Manager
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to deliver quality assurance activity as laid down in the Quality Assurance framework	June 2025	Chair of Audit and Performance
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership to deliver a multi-agency training Programme	June 2025	Chair of Implementation Subgroup

Conclusion

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership is resolute in their ambition to make Coventry a positive place for Children to live and thrive. The Safeguarding Partners recognise the challenge of balancing increasing demands, many of which are of a complex nature, which shrinking financial resources and workforce pressures but partnerships in Coventry are strong and mature and there is a recognition that better outcomes for children and families require collaborative and innovative solutions.

Across 2025-2026 we will be working together to implement the Social Care Reforms and we recognise that this is an opportunity to build on strengths that already exist across the city whilst at the same time examining how we can go a step further to work together to improve outcomes for children and their families.



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 22nd January 2026

Subject: Coventry Holiday Activities and Food programme

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 This note provides an update on the Coventry Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the information provided on the Coventry Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Overview of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme

- 3.1 The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a national initiative, aimed at addressing holiday inequalities through a blend of free positive activities and experiences coupled with healthy food and support to families.
- 3.2 The national aims of the programme are to ensure a high-quality experience that will result in children:
- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
 - maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
 - being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
 - developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health related issues
 - taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development and well-being
 - feeling safe and secure
 - getting access to the right support services
 - returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn
- 3.3 Families should also be able to benefit from this support, and this could be through:
- providing opportunities to get involved in sessions, for example cookery classes

- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities
- 3.4 Coventry City Council is in receipt of an annual Department for Education grant of £1,604,150 for 2025/26 with a further investment of £50,000 from Coventry Building Society. Coventry City Council will receive indicative HAF funding of £1,667,120 2026/27 (including expected Local Authority capacity spend of £96,030). Coventry City Council leads a multi-agency partnership to deliver activities in the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holiday periods.
- 3.5 The core eligibility criteria is statutory school-age children (reception to year 11) who are entitled to benefits-related free school meals. Local Authority areas have discretion to broaden eligibility and Coventry have extended this to include children assessed through a Children and Families assessment, undertaken by Children's Services, as in need, on a child protection plan, in care, a young carer, assessed to be in financial hardship (through an early help assessment), part of the Ukrainian Family Scheme or the Home for Ukraine programme, receiving Free School Meals through having no recourse to public funds. Children and young people in years 12-13 are eligible if they are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals (FSM) and have an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) or are receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support at their place of education. There is also discretion for professionals to refer appropriate children.
- 3.6 The national roll-out of HAF took place in 2021, with the first Coventry face-to-face delivery taking place in the 2021 summer holiday. In January 2025, the programme was extended for a further year for 2025. On 28 August 2025, the government announced a 3-year funding settlement of over £200 million each year for the national HAF programme (i.e. through to March 2029). This funding forms part of the Children, Youth and Families Grant within the local government finance settlement.
- 3.7 Further information on the national programme (2026/27) is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2026-to-2027>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-grant-allocations/holiday-activities-and-food-and-local-authority-capacity-support-2026-financial-year-expected-allocations>
- 3.8 Further information on the Coventry HAF offer is available at <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/haf>.

4 Summer 2025 delivery

- 4.1 The 2025 school summer holiday programme was the most successful HAF holiday programme that Coventry has delivered. Highlights included:
 - 4,491 eligible children and young people benefitted (up from 4,141 for summer 2024);
 - This included 1,637 eligible children with SEND plus other family members;
 - Over 22,000 sessions were delivered and meals provided;
 - Over 100 different activities/clubs were delivered;

- 43 providers were directly funded (see Appendix 1) with several other providers/partner organisations being sub-funded by these providers; and
- Families gave a 4.4/5-star feedback rating on the activities.

4.2 Other key highlights from our Summer 2025 programme included:

- Use of a wide range of venues and locations including 24 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, 4 special schools, 2 universities, 10 community centres, 4 family hubs, 10 leisure centres/sports facilities, 4 arts venues, 27 other locations/venues (see Appendix 2);
- Improved sensory arts initiatives (e.g. sessions focused on children with visual impairments, hearing impairments, neurodivergent and physical mobility);
- Continued development of our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) offer (e.g. future engineers, STEM for girls, coding, AI labs, summer enterprise challenge) as well as life and practical skills (plumbing and tiling);
- Greater diversity of activities (e.g. AI labs, Doze Under Dippy the dinosaur – a family sleep over event at the Herbert Art Gallery, making a musical in a week, Esports, HADO (Augmented reality combining physical activity and e-sport), an increased number of girls-only events; and
- Our improved booking system (eequ) is now fully embedded offering an enhanced parental/customer experience.

4.3 Coventry HAF has a strong focus on inclusion and on children with SEND. Approximately 36% those who participate in the programme are children with SEND. This has been achieved by:

- Training and up-skilling of HAF providers;
- Communication with parents/carers and providers - ensuring the specific needs of individual children are shared through an “All about me” focus;
- Additional funding for providers for staffing to increase ratios;
- SEND family experiences; and
- SEND special school initiative – funded by Coventry Building Society for a third summer and working with Coventry Special Schools.

4.4 Providers are assessed according to a range of standards including their activities, provision of healthy food, nutritional education, safeguarding, health and safety, and information shared with families. This assessment is both prior to awarding grant funding and post-delivery (based on delivery performance, visits, feedback from parents/carers and children).

4.5 There was significant promotion of the summer programme through provider and programme marketing including: brochures and letters to eligible households, promotion through schools, social media, texts and promo-videos and a video capturing the HAF summer 2025 programme has been produced.

5 Winter 2026 programme

5.1 Our Winter HAF programme took place over the Christmas school holidays with a wide range of activities – including festive themed activities. This included a wide range of activities. Data on this is being finalised but we expect to exceed the Winter 2024 number of eligible children (2,114).

6 Areas of focus for Coventry HAF 2026/27

- 6.1 Coventry HAF is a well-developed programme with excellent feedback. The three-year funding settlement provides an opportunity for medium term development and planning. Areas of focus will include: continuing to increase the number of children benefitting from HAF, joining up the offer for Coventry children and families, a focus on secondary-age children, further development of our inclusion/SEND offer.

7 Health Inequalities Impact

- 7.1 Addressing inequalities is a key part of the HAF programme and the programme has a positive impact on health inequalities through provision of positive activities, healthy food, and food education. The Summer 2025 programme continued to focus on food quality.

Appendix 1: Summer Holidays Providers

Appendix 2: Locations and Venues

Appendix 3: Types of activities included in the summer programme

Name of Author: Adrian Coles

Job Title: Education Programme Manager

Organisation: Coventry City Council

Contact details: Adrian.Coles@coventry.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Summer holiday providers

The following delivery providers were directly funded:

Aptitude, Ascension Dance Company, Barr's Hill School, Canley Community Centre, Central Building and Welding Academy, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Outdoors, Coventry Rugby Community Foundation, Coventry SDA, Coventry Trampoline and gymnastics academy, Creative Optimistic Visions, CV Life/Culture Coventry, Edgewick Primary School, Epic Academy/SCCU, Fit4Kids, Get Golfing, Go Go Makers, Guardian Ballers, Guiding Young Minds, Harvey Sports Group, Holbrooks Community Care Association, Holy Family Primary School (Larks and Owls club), Jam Coding, Kingsbury Academy, Ladybug Lodge, My Activities, Northwinds 5's Limited (GOALS), Onside Coaching, Pet-Xi, Pilot IMS, Plumb Learning, Project Number 5, Razzamataz Theatre Schools, Rising Stars, Riverbank Academy, SDH Academy, SportsCool, , Sky Blues in the Community, Staffordshire Winter Sports Club (Planet Ice), University of Warwick Holiday Scheme, Vanny Radio, WATCH/Hillz FM, and Woodfield School.

Appendix 2: Locations and venues

Activities took place in a wide range of locations and venues, including:

- **Primary schools:** Aldermans Green, Allesley Hall, Broad Heath, Charter, Courthouse Green, Edgewick, Frederick Bird, Gosford Park, Grangehurst, Henley Green, Holy Family, John Gulson, Keresley Grange, Leigh C of E, Longford Park, Manor Park, Moat House, Our Lady, Radford, Sacred Heart, Sidney Stringer Primary, Stoke Heath, Stretton C of E, Walsgrave C of E
- **Secondary schools:** Barrs Hill, Blue Coat, Cardinal Wiseman, Finham Park, Finham Park 2, Grace Academy, Meadow Park School, President Kennedy, Sidney Stringer, Westwood Academy
- **Special schools:** Kingsbury, Riverbank, Tiverton, Woodfield
- **Community Centres/facilities:** Broad Horizon Enterprise Centre, Canley Community Centre, Coventry Boys and Girls Club, Coventry Central SDA church, Hagard Community Centre, Holbrooks Community Centre, St Peters – Hillfields, Stoke Park Youth Centre, The Crez (Jubilee Crescent Community Centre), WATCH
- **Family Hubs:** Families for All, Harmony, Mosaic, Park Edge
- **Leisure Centres/sports Facilities:** Centre AT7, CBS Arena, Coventry Rugby (Butts Park Arena), Ansty Golf Centre, Moat House Neighbourhood and Leisure Centre, Planet Ice/ Skydome Arena, Xcel Leisure Centre, HADO Arena, The Wave, The Alan Higgs Centre,
- **Arts:** Coventry Transport Museum, FarGo Village, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Lunt Roman Fort
- **University:** Cardiff Met University, University of Warwick (Avon Building and Warwick Esports Centre)
- **Other locations:** All things wild, Aqualand – Cliff Lakes, Aztec Adventure – Upton Warren, Bayton Road Industrial Estate, Barry Island, Blackpool, Blackwell Adventure, Coombe Abbey Country Park, Electric Wharf (Plumb Learning), Drayton Manor Theme Park, Hatton Farm/Adventure World, Liverpool World Museum, , PET-Xi (West Oak House), Steeple House Business Centre, Tamworth Snowdome, Ten-pin bowling, The Cube Academy, Twycross Zoo, Western-Super-Mare
- **Other locations (SEND family experiences):** Ash End Farm, British Motor Museum, Kenilworth Castle, Little Jungle Soft Play and Party, Perkisound, Red Kangaroo Trampoline Park, Spencers Retreat, Twycross Zoo

Appendix 3: Types of activities included in the summer programme

Activities aim to appeal to eligible children and young people. The following are examples of the types of activities included in the programme:

AI labs, Animation, archery, art master classes (creative journaling, floral water-colours, illustration skills, oil painting, street art murals), BBQ, badminton, basketball, bouncy castles, breakfasts, broadcasting, bushcraft and survival, chef academy, cheerleading, choreography, coding, circus skills, climbing, combat archery, cooking, crafts (tie dye, quilling, origami, gemtastic jewellery and fabric), creative journaling, cricket, dancing, drama, doze-under-Dippy, drawing, DJ-ing, E-sports, films, fitness, football, engineering, forest school, fun days, giant board games, go- karting, gadgets, gaming, gardening, gymnastics, horse riding lessons, ice-skating lessons, inflatable air track, inflatable bungee, karaoke, inflatable assault course, lacrosse, laser tag, lego building, lava lamp making, MicLab (sustainable stations, stop motion animation, stitch in time, connections and innovations), movies, movie making, multi-activity clubs (crafts, sports, arts etc.), music workshops, netball, open theatre, ninja warrior, paintballing, performance (parkour, free running and contemporary dance), performing arts, photography, physical theatre, picnics, podcasting, plumbing lessons, pool, pool parties, pottery, radio, rap, robotics, roller skating, rounders, rugby, singing, science, SEND sensory corner, skateboarding lessons, stable management, stadium tour (CBS Arena), sports day, stop-motion animation, swimming lessons, team building, tennis, trampolining, tree-top adventure, tug-of-war, The Wave, trips (*Aztec adventure, Western Super Mare, Drayton Manor, Go-Ape, Hatton Farm/Adventure Park, Hoar Farm, Red Kangaroo, Tamworth Snowdome, Lunt Roman Fort*), ultimate frisbee, videography, water sports, water-colour/ink painting, zip wire and much more...

Last updated 9 December 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

10 July 2025
Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities Draft Work Programme 25-26
11 September 2025
Outdoor Education The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care
16 October 2025
Adoption Service Annual Reports Fostering Annual Report Progress on LGA Peer Review Action Plan
27 November 2025
Child-Friendly Cov Children in Care Pledge Children Absent from Education
22 January 2026 - Coombe
Safeguarding Annual Report Holiday Activities and Food Programme Site visit to Outdoor Education Service
26 February 2026
School Performance Data Annual Report SEND Strategy Update
26 March 2026
Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life Family First Partnership (Social Care Reform) Regional Placements
2025-26
School Places Sufficiency Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer (25/26) Children's Front Door MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry Youth Provision in Coventry Health and Wellbeing in Schools Family Health and Lifestyles Service Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign on smart phones in school Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027 Family Valued and Reunification Project Breakfast Clubs Families First Partnership Programme Uptake of FSM and impact on school budgets Child-friendly Cov Exclusions

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Page 62

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
10 July 2025	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	To invite Cllr Sandhu and Cllr Seaman to identify their priorities for the coming year, for Scruto to be able to identify future items and hold Cabinet Members to account	Cllr Sandhu Cllr Seaman
	Draft Work Programme 25-26	To consider the draft work programme and to identify any additional items or task and finish groups	Cllr Kelly G Holmes
11 September 2025	Outdoor Education	To cover the work being delivered on Outdoor Education, including the extended offer as well as plans for celebrating Dol Y Moch's anniversary.	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care	Looking at the complexities of homes for children, including placements, and the associated costs.	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
16 October 2025	Adoption Service Annual Reports	Annual report – including information about the diversity of the adoption panel and adopters as well as support to birth mothers after their children have been adopted	Cllr Seaman Matt Clayton
	Fostering Annual Report	To consider performance of the fostering service including support to foster carers from their perspective	Cllr Seaman A Whitrick
	Progress on LGA Peer Review Action Plan	As a follow up to the item received on 13 Feb 2025, Members requested a more detailed progress report	S Sen Cllr Seaman
27 November 2025	Child-Friendly Cov	Progress update on impact and recommendations made at the meeting on 17 th October 2024 BN CMCYP - Child Friendly Cov.docx	Matt Clayton Cllr Seaman
	Children in Care Pledge	Progress on the pledge for children in care and care leavers	Matt Clayton Cllr Seaman
	Children Absent from Education	To establish a T&F to look at this in more detail. Covering Elective Home Education, Child Missing Education, SEND without an appropriate place	Rachael Sugars, Cllr Sandhu
22 January 2026 - Coombe	Safeguarding Annual Report		Rebekah Eaves Cllr Seaman
	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	Update including progress on recommendation to Cabinet Members BN CM ES HAF Dec 24.docx	Adrian Coles Cllr Seaman

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Site visit to Outdoor Education Service	Following an item on 11 September, Members wanted to see first hand the in-city outdoor education offer	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
26 February 2026	School Performance Data Annual Report	An annual report on looking at performance and progress against national indicators	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars
	SEND Strategy Update	To consider the refreshed strategy following co-production with children and parents. To specifically look at SEND provision in mainstream schools – possibly to include Behaviour Strategy and alternative provision	Jeannette Essex Cllr Sandhu
26 March 2026	Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life	To come in 2025 and to include progress on actions requested on 17/7/24 re: oral and dental health – links with Best Start in Life	R Sugars/J Moffat Cllr Sandhu and Cllr Seaman
	Family First Partnership (Social Care Reform)	Update on social reforms and the Council's response.	Cllr Seaman S Sen, C Heeley
	Regional Placements	Also to include progress on West Midlands Safer Centre	S Sen Cllr Seaman
2025-26	School Places Sufficiency	Primary, Secondary and Special – to look in more detail at the delivery on the One Strategic Plan – refer to Scrucro for Cabinet Report.	
	Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer (25/26)		
	Children's Front Door	An aspect of the LGA Peer Review.	S Sen Cllr Seaman
	MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry	Looking at the impact of the new partnership threshold document in reducing inappropriate referrals into MASH, as well as diversion to Family Hubs.	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
	Youth Provision in Coventry	How and where we work with outside partners (and specifically the third sector) to deliver it	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	Health and Wellbeing in Schools	To look at what is being done to promote health and well-being in schools and universities – including the school nursing service	

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Family Health and Lifestyles Service	To looking in more detail at how the service is tackling health inequalities and targeting services at those in need on a localised basis. School nurse provision. Also how the service is supporting Early Help BN CM CYP & PHSW - Early Help.docx	Bill McCann, Angela Baker Cllr Caan
	Child Sexual Exploitation	Work of the Horizon Team – links with the police and health.	Cllr Seaman Chris Heeley
	Campaign on smart phones in school	Looking at the impact on behaviour, mental health and attention span	Cllr Sandhu
	Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027		
	Family Valued and Reunification Project	Pick up outstanding items from 24-25, cost of care proceedings, ethnicity, cost of different levels of intervention	
	Breakfast Clubs		
	Families First Partnership Programme		
	Uptake of FSM and impact on school budgets	Following a query at Scruto on 20 November 25, an item on the impact of universal FSM in KS1 and having to claim beyond that age.	Rachael Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	Child-friendly Cov	A follow up from meeting held 27 November 25 to consider widening the inclusion of schools across the city in Child-friendly Cov activities	Angela Whitrick Rachale Sugars Cllr Sandhu Cllr Seaman
	Exclusions	Following an item on Children Absent from Education a further item on Exclusions was requested by the Board	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart

